

A Brief History on the Contributions of Ramakrishna Mission (RKM) to the development of world culture

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Abstract: According to Indian tradition, a person's religious growth is complete when he discovers the world within himself. Hindu scriptures are being interpreted in a new way by a Bengali temple priest named Sri Ramakrishna. Even though he had little academic education, he had an unmatched ability to convey the spirit of the texts. After gaining a thorough understanding of the rapidly changing social landscape, he realized the need for a humanist religious practice. The purpose of this essay is to emphasize Sri Ramakrishna's contribution to global culture from a contemporary perspective. Through a systematic sociohistorical analysis, this work synthesizes the literature based on documents, books, and journals. Education, humanity, literature, and spirituality are all important aspects of the Ramakrishna Mission movement to Indian civilisation. The role they play in creating independent-minded, self-respecting, and brave citizens toward British colonialism in India is still significant, even though they do not participate in politics.

1. INTRODUCTION

A number of organizations attempting to restore Hinduism were founded in the 19th century as a result of the growing nationalism of Indians, including the Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, and Ramakrishna Mission. The birth of Sri Ramakrishna, also known by the name Gadadhar Chatterjee, on February 18, 1836, in Bengal's Hoogly District, coincided with the start of the Ramakrishna Mission Movement. He was from a traditional, low-income Brahmin household. He didn't attend classes to receive a formal education. At the beginning of his life, he served as a priest in the Dakhineswar Temple, leading devotion to the revered Kali. The Sankaracharya-follower Tota Puri gave him the name Ramakrishna. Young men began to come up to Sri Ramakrishna, asking him questions and expressing their own concerns. The Ramakrishna Order of monks was established in the 19th century by a saint by the name of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who is regarded as the movement's spiritual founder [2]. The Ramakrishna Mission was inspired by Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who had visionary realizations in Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity as well as Bhakti, Tantra, and Advaita Vedanta spiritual experiences. He concluded that all religions lead to the same heavenly realization based on these experiences [3]. Through their lectures and writings, Keshab Chandra Sen and other Brahmos spread Ramakrishna's teachings to Bengal's populace [4]. The discovery of Sri Ramakrishna was one of the Brahmins' biggest contributions to Bengali intellectuals in the nineteenth century. On March 15, 1875, Keshab Chandra Sen saw Sri Ramakrishna for the first time and was awestruck by the simplicity and profundity of the man [5]. He said in his report of the experience, "We encountered one (a true Hindu devotee) not long ago, and were impressed by the depth, penetration, and simplicity of his spirit." To inspire such folks, he continued, Hinduism "must have a strong sense of beauty, truth, and goodness in it." Keshab Chandra Sen was greatly

influenced by Sri Ramakrishna [6]. Despite the fact that there have been several studies on the Ramakrishna Order, the majority of them focus on the Mission's philosophical principles and epistemological underpinnings. Only descriptively are the rare works that do call attention to the service component. Although some sociological studies [7, 8] have focused on the Mission's contributions to development, they haven't attempted to connect these altruistic efforts to the concepts of civil society and global culture, which the proposed study tries to investigate.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

A Hindu religious and spiritual institution, the Ramakrishna Mission is the center of the Vedanta Movement or the Ramakrishna Movement. Many people were inspired to engage in spiritual sadhana by Sri Rama Krishna, one of the world's best-known spiritual leaders. His influence on the spirituality industry was subtle. The Ramakrishna Mission was established in 1897 [9] by Swami Vivekananda, a dedicated follower of Ramakrishna. Its dual purpose was to work for individual emancipation and global welfare. Hinduism, in particular the Vedic writings, was altered by both of them.

Arya Samaj and Brahma Samaj movements were influential on Ramakrishna Mission fundamentals after Hinduism was modernized in the 19th century. The close relationship Ramakrishna had with the followers of the Brahma Samaj movement is proof of this. His relationship with them made him susceptible to their religious and ethical convictions. As a result of the Brahma movement, the Ramakrishna Mission movement was founded in India in the 1870s. It was Sri Ramakrishna who founded the Ramakrishna Mission movement. Twelve years after experiencing spiritual things for 12 years, he began experiencing them in the 1870s. As Swami Shivananda, Swami Vivekananda's close friend, said, "We didn't find this order." He was the one who made it throughout his illness. Others present at the moment, including Swamiji (Vivekananda), were given instructions on how to carry out this order.

According to Locklin 2017 [10], Ramakrishna's final message, "Keep my Boys Together and Teach Them," led to the establishment of the Ramakrishna Mission organization, which is where the movement's roots may be located. After Sri Ramakrishna's death, Swami Vivekananda assumed leadership of the movement, and he continued to do so until it grew and became well-known on a global basis. The Ramakrishna Mission movement started out as an informal group. In September 1886, it was founded in Barahanagar, Calcutta, India. In November 1891, it moved to Alambazar, and on December 9, 1898, it moved once more to Belur, a village adjacent to the Ganges River. The Ramakrishna Mission Movement was formally founded in 1897, following Swami Vivekananda's return from the United States. On May 1, 1897, a gathering in Calcutta led to the founding of the Ramakrishna Mission movement.

3. Basic Teachings of Ramakrishna Mission

The principles of Ramakrishna Mission teachings are different from the teachings of Hinduism. Through his own experience of the various religions that exist in the world, Sri Ramakrishna concluded that every religion has the same ultimate goal but through different paths [11]. According to him, Kali (God Mother) and Brahman are two aspects of one reality (2 in 1). He had studied Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. According to him, all religions *The Contribution of Ramakrishna Mission (RKM) towards World Culture*

are true. God may be known by various names but in fact one is not many. At this stage Sri Ramakrishna is seen to have taken the basics of Islamic teachings that practice the concept of monotheism.

Sri Ramakrishna practiced meditation or asceticism [12]. Women and gold can hinder the spiritual development of a human being. Both represent worldly elements in the form of lust (women) and gold (worldly greed). Human lust can only be overcome when all women are considered the incarnation of Kali (God Mother) and greed for the world will be overcome when all worldly and worldly attractions are removed from the eyes of a human being [13]. This world is an illusion and man is deceived by the world. They forget the reality of self and can only be overcome by leaving the world to lead to the reality of eternal truth. Ramakrishna Mission rejects the caste system that exists in society. According to Sri Ramakrishna, the rejection of the caste system is proof that the love of God is still bestowed on human being.

4. Ramakrishna Mission Teachings as a Basic Guide

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5. Result and Discussion

- **Worshipping God by Serving Humanity**

The different spiritual services of the Ramakrishna Mission aim to serve the humanity without any discrimination of caste, creed, race or nationality. By total uplift it means the development of body, mind, and soul. It means the fulfillment of all physical, mental, and spiritual requirements. A person is not a lump of flesh alone; he or she has a mind and a soul too. Total upliftment means to fulfill the requirements of these three aspects.

Furthermore, a maternity clinic was established in southern Calcutta and in 1970 it was transformed into a large hospital and was known as Sri Ramakrishna Seva Pratistan. Apart from that, several medical centers have been established among them in Benares, Kankhal, Allahabad and Veindaban in India. A Tuberculosis Clinic in Ranchi and Vivekananda Polyclinic in Lucknow was established in 1970 and is one of the largest polyclinics in India. Treatment at the clinic is provided free of charge to help the underprivileged. This movement does a lot of charity work in India, among them are:

- i. Assistance for famine victims (1896) in 72 districts for example in Bihar and famine disaster in Bengal (1943). With the help of this movement, this movement has succeeded in saving thousands of human lives.
- ii. Assistance to flood victims (1899) in 78 districts such as floods in west Bengal.
- iii. Medical assistance:

- Plague (1899-1900)
- Cholera (1913)
- Small pox (1936-1937)
- Influenza (1918-1919)
- Malaria (1943)
- iv. Hurricane relief
- v. Fire assistance
- vi. Landslides and earthquakes relief such as the earthquake in Koyna.
- vii. Assistance of refugee victims and resettlement of refugees from Bangladesh.

• **Contribution Towards Education**

The following are the major types of institutions started at different times during the 118 years of Ramakrishna Mission's existence in India to actualize Swamiji's educational vision as described above:

- i. A special school for female students in Calcutta founded by Sister Nivedita (1898).
- ii. Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deo-Ghar, Bihar; schools and hostels which are one of the earliest educational institutions established by this movement.
- iii. Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya in Coimbatore, Madras; a college, school and industrial institute.
- iv. Ramakrishna Mission Boys Home. Rahara, Bengal. Started as an orphanage (1943), it is now transformed into a school, college, social education center and basic training college.
- v. Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Navendrapur, Bengal. It started as a dormitory for Calcutta college students (1943). It is now a college, school, polytechnic and social training center.
- vi. Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College in Madras. It is the best college in southern India. A few thousands of students (children, men, women) are being benefited every year through a few hundred institutions belonging to the above mentioned categories. The main inspiration behind all of these is the educational vision of Swami Vivekananda. One of the main characteristics of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission institutions imparting education, which in fact forms the very backbone of these institutions, is the active involvement and dedicated service of a large number of the monks, devotees and other aspirants of the Ramakrishna order.

• **Publication and Literature**

The Sri Ramakrishna Mission also contributed a lot in the aspects of publication and literature. Bengal language, the mother tongue of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and English, the language in which Sri Ramakrishna's teachings were spread throughout the world, were used in publishing newspapers and magazines. The Ramakrishna Mission has three English language magazines:

- Brahmavadia (1895)
- Prabuddha Bharata (1896 to the present)
- Vedanta Keshari (1914)

In addition, many other magazines have been published by this movement in various languages, including:

- Vedanta and The West, 1938 (Hollywood Center of America).
- Jivan Vikash, 1967 in Marathi (Nagour).
- Sri Ramakrishna (in Telugu).
- Sri Ramakrishna (in Tamil).
- Vivekhyati, in Rajpur (in Hindi).

A newspaper company, Basumati was published by Upumpang Nath Mukerjee, one of Sri Ramakrishna's students. It is published in Bengal. The publication of this newspaper greatly

helped the Ramakrishna Mission Movement and became a major contributor to the Ramakrishna Mission orphanage in Rahara, West Bengal. This movement also publishes many books in the form of religion and literature. Among them is Sri Ramakrishna Vathamrith which is published in 3 volumes. It is very popular in Bengali literature. Swami Vivekananda was inspired by modern Bengali prose, Chalia Basha and Modern India, Bartaram Bharata during his lifetime. In addition, many literary works have been published, namely:

- Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings (Max Muller)
- Life of Vivekananda: Eastern and Western Disiples
- Life of Ramakrishna (Advaita Ashrama)
- Life of Ramakrishna and Life of Vivekananda (Romain Rolland)
- The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda (8 volumes) Advaita Ashrama

In terms of art, many artists are influenced by the spiritual elements in the teachings of Ramakrishna Mission. One of the example is Nandalal Bose. The architecture of the Ramakrishna Mission temple in Belur Math is the result of the influence of Hindu temple architecture, mosques and churches. It was the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda who combined the three religions in their teachings and practices. The architecture reflects the basic principles of the Ramakrishna Mission.

- **Activities carried out by the Ramakrishna Mission worldwide**

Apart from India, followers of the Ramakrishna Mission also exist all over the world. In Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, for example, this movement focuses on communal activities as well as emphasizing the spiritual element in their daily lives. Meanwhile in the United States, Europe, England and France, the movement focused heavily on intellectual and spiritual activities. Since the time of Swami Vivekananda, the United States has been the cultural activity center of the Ramakrishna Mission in the west. No wonder they have the most members there ever. There are also Ramakrishna Mission centers in Gretz, France, London, Berkeley, Boston, Hollywood, New York, Portland, Providence, San Francisco, Seattle, St. Louis and Buenos Aires. Followers of the Ramakrishna Mission are usually taught about the culture and spiritual elements of Hinduism. One interesting thing is that it is well received by the intellectual community there. Among the famous figures who represented this movement in the United States were Swami Pravabananda and Swami Vikhilananda.

In Malaysia, followers of Ramakrishna Mission can be found in the cities of Kuala Lumpur (Bangsar, Brickfield) and Butterworth, Penang. They did the same activities as the followers of Ramakrishna Mission in India such as doing charity work, helping the poor, providing dormitory facilities to students as in Brickfield, Kuala Lumpur. According to [15], among the characteristics of Ramakrishna Mission followers in Malaysia are:

- i. They will say haariwm instead of naleme for greetings when met each other.
- ii. There are three long white mark on the forehead of the followers of Ramakrishna Mission.
- iii. Followers of Ramakrishna Mission are usually modest, polite, courteous and humble.
- iv. They do not eat meat, only eat vegetables (vegetarian) that they grow.
- v. They usually hang out with each other in their community.

6..Concluding Remarks

Therefore, we can conclude that the Ramakrishna Mission has been strongly influenced by Christianity and adheres to the idea of a worldwide religion. According to them, all faiths are valid, and all of them should be respected. Additionally, this movement has made significant contributions to Indian civilization in the areas of spirituality, literature, humanity, and education, in addition to making significant contributions in other areas as well. In fact, Swami Vivekananda himself wished that Hinduism could use its inherent spiritual power in order for

India to gain a greater share of the world's wealth. There are many benefits associated with yoga, and it is one of them.

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