

## PREFACE

The concept of Character Building based on Sanskrit literature is an outcome of having apparently gone through a varied **professional** and **personal experience** for **last sixty years** by various stages schooling, graduating in **Civil engineering**, joining the **Army** and serving in varied assignments including Chinese conflict of **1967** and Victory against Pakistan in **1971** Operation, Aid to civil power in **flood relief** and **Communal riot operation**. The last leg of service was with the **DRDO** dealing with the subject of **Terrain Evaluation, Snow and Avalanche Study, Advanced Polymer Composites** and **Management**. The post retirement engagement was **studying Sanskrit** Grammar and *Sāhitya* up to the post graduate level of **Ācharya** at The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda and now presenting this **Doctoral thesis** with aim to benefit National mind in Character Building. The idea of including this brief introductory bio data is not for blowing trumpet, but to highlight certain points which may help in comprehending the traditional virtues advocated in Sanskrit literature and ancient wisdom associated with it. I wish to bring to the notice of the **students**, issues related **body** and **mind**, from my own experience, which will go long way in building up a near perfect man. Without going into causes and circumstances, I suffered a **Heart Attack** (A myocardial infarction) at the age of **thirty eight** and **twice** underwent the **Heart Bypass Surgery** (CABG) at the age **44** and **56**. The role played by **Yoga** and overcoming the **bad habits** with **good habits**, has completely changed my life style, without sacrificing my inherent interest of enjoying **Classical music, Sports, Arts** and **cultural activities**; and **family** and **social** commitments. Highlighting this aspect, is basically for understanding that one can lead **normal, fruitful** and **healthy family** life and those who wish to switch over to ascetic religious life can follow that path.

### Introduction

The Vedic literature and Sanskrit literature has always been source for development of Spiritual, Ethical and Mental development of human faculties. It also encompasses gamut of entire human activities, covering the aspects of Governances, Education and Health. These vital attributes are essential ingredient for Character Development of a person. Voluminous work though available on this subject a new look is required to be given keeping in view its necessity in the present environment.

The world has been almost on the brink of annihilation on account of various factors like conventional, nuclear and biological warfare; disasters, pandemics, epidemics and human intervention with nature. Atrocities towards woman, children and down trodden are rampant. What to talk about Terrorism, Communal and Ethnical conflicts? To overcome these problems the solution lies in identification of measures and setting up a mechanism with help of adoption and practicing of traditional rich heritage of Indian sub-continent. India is already equipped with strong Sanskrit literature base, which offers the first stepping stone and spring board for the overall development.

### **Sanskrit literature**

After having chosen the topic for the research and plunged in to it, the realization dawned that Sanskrit literature is an ocean of knowledge and wisdom with vast frontiers and unfathomable depth. It has been also explored, contributed and conquered by subsequent seers, saints, luminaries, and scores of devotees, admirers, philosophers from India and all over the world. Naturally initial scenario was of confusion, trying to cling on to whatever Sanskrit literature came across as research material. However, after lot of deliberation the main emphasis was laid on known source of material as *Bhagavad-gītā* and Complete works of Swami Vivekananda. Additional Sanskrit literature was also surveyed studied and analyzed as supportive material.

### **The beauty and intricacy of Sanskrit language**

Sanskrit language over the period has evolved as perfect language and the script of *Devanāgarī* which is highly researched and phonetically perfect. This perfection sometimes leads to a difficult situation in conveying cruse of the meaning (गर्भितार्थ the meaning which the initiator intents and wants to convey) of Sanskrit to in any other languages in translation, interpretation and analytical study. The problem is further aggravated as some of the earlier text being in aphorismatic form and subjected to rigorous grammatical treatment. *Sandhi*, *Samāsa*, *Vibhakti* and *vibhkti-pratyaya* etc. which leads to the ambiguity at a time. In absence of knowledge about traditional use of certain words and phrases the Sanskrit text is sometimes not correctly interpreted. It is advantageous sometimes for the interpreter in using his imagination and convenience, to deviate from intended purpose. This is proved useful, as Scripture and Vedic literature are holistic in nature, guiding all noble activities of life, where the ultimate goal is realization. It is acceptable so long as truthful effort leads to positive results without harming the grammatical, intellectual and traditional dictums. Idiomatic (natural expression of the

originator) interpretation is always better but efforts are made to convey the *bhāvārtha* (the obvious and intended meaning) mainly to suite the intended purpose. Moreover the efforts are made to crystallize as much understanding as possible to convey the intended meaning through the knowledge and wisdom of the experienced personalities because the words itself have their limitation. The efforts have been made to derive meaning of words what was intended by the originator; however, liberty has been taken to interpret the meaning suited for which this exercise has been undertaken. Few luminaries have therefore been chosen for study, who not only deciphered but interpreted the Sanskrit original literature, cascading their intellect and wisdom by written scripts and following the path, illuminating their life, as well as enlightening the intellectuals and masses.

### **Vedic and Sanskrit literature**

It is beauty of Sanskrit literature that its source can be traced to a single point origin as Vedas and then off shooting in to multifarious topics. The vast expanse of topics and subjects sprouting from these are just like the expanding Universe and can be described as Banyan tree, enunciated in Fifteenth chapter of *Gītā* i.e. *Urdhvamūlamadhaḥśākhamasvattham Prāhuravyayam* (Eternal Banyan tree whose roots are upwards and its branches down). Going in to details of the expanse of Sanskrit literature, various topics have been exhaustively dealt by number of learned commentators and research scholars which covered the four *Vedas*, *Āraṇyakas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Upavedas*, *Darśanas*, *Mahākāvyas*, *Purāṇas* and *Smṛitis*; right up to the grammatical marvel of Pāṇini, literary classics Kālidāsa, poetries, religious discourses and story book of medieval and recent periods. These along with the regional literary composition, are like Prop roots of Banyan tree having untraceable beginning and no human knowledge of its extent and expanse. One such prop root, blooming into full-fledged Banyan tree can be quoted as *Prākṛit Marāṭhi 'Jnāneśvarī'* written by Saint Jnaneshwar in 7<sup>th</sup> century. The expanse of Banyan net can be witnessed in India where peace, knowledge and tranquility rules. One such place is a campus of prestigious institute of learning, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras - Chennai. Once you enter the precinct of this forested Banyan land, with deer freely catapulting and surrounded by educational blocks, the concept of eternity can be experienced. Many more such places were available at Vadodara (Gujarat) hence the name Vadodara, which meant the city of Banyan trees.

### **Focus of the world on Spirituality**

The *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* of Adi Śankarācārya for his thought on Spirituality and Man making was chosen as study material for its excellent exposition. Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Former Scientific Adviser to Defense Minister & Secretary General of Defense Research and development Organization (DRDO), who latter on held the prestigious post of President of India, wrote in a Foreword of the book ‘The message of *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*’ written by Swami Ranganathananda<sup>1</sup> “*Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, with Swamiji’s sparkling commentary, is science of human enlightenment, culture and civilization. It deals with man-making—making of universal men and women.” Spirituality is the single most important factor in Character Building, which is not only attributed to the Indians but world is looking towards India to take up a lead and guide them.

### **The important aspects related to Character Building**

It was also reviled at the end of exercise that there is lot of repetition and unending list of Character-Building aspects and attributes, which are going to confuse the student and also make him disinterested in the subject. Some measures and application areas are indicated to overcome this problem by standardization of age with educational standards, confirming the National policy on Education and interest of the individual. Moreover, certain attributes like Patriotism, Unflinching Faith, responsibility, Equanimity, work performed in sacrificial and unattached mode and so on are highlighted, which are sufficient for developing Character of a man. The choice will rest with the Parents, Educational institute and Society along with National policies overlooking on this issue. It is emphasized that Character Building is almost impossible without having background of spirituality and religious affiliation.

### **Misconception in giving erroneous message of Vedic literature**

The concept of *Brahman* which has been spelled out in scriptures is the key to establish the relationship of human being with the almighty. One of the Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras beautifully defines the Supreme as *tasya vācakaḥ pranavaḥ*. (He the supreme defined by sacred syllable Om) which the scripture indicates as *Brahman* (PYS 1.27). It is through this concept the intellectuals propagated the various deities in Hindu *Sanātana Dharma*, enunciating the principle and value system. These deities which propelled the individual to the path of

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<sup>1</sup> Ranganathananda, Swami, *The message of Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, President, Advaita Ashram, Mayavati, Champawat, Uttarakhand, 2008, p.15.

realization. Similarly misconceptions related to caste system and rebirth, Hypothesis repudiated with solid proof given from the text of *Gītā* and classical theory of ageless body by Dr. Deepak Chopra are covered in this thesis.

### **Deviation from academic convention**

Though the topic chosen for research is “Concept of Character Building in Sanskrit Literature – a Study”, the freewheeling is resorted extensively to study the thoughts of luminaries, who not only unveiled the secrets of scriptural wisdom but added their own interpretive skills to educate the masses, especially for the youth in Nation Building. The major effort is mainly restricted and concentrated on the work and life of Swami Vivekananda. This exercise was absolutely necessary, so that effort is not wasted in reinventing the wheel. This approach invited some criticism from the traditional academician but in the larger interest of the utility of this topic, the same may be accepted. Moreover, the academic research is important but the practical utility should be more appreciated.

### **Acknowledgements**

The first acknowledgment goes to the God Almighty who through his incarnation as saint, seers and luminaries of *Vedāntic* tradition blessed this Indian subcontinent with such rich tradition of spirituality, powerful and logical cognitive capability and abundance of natural resources. Secondly the indebtedness is for the reverend *Gurus* who guided me in all walks of life, particularly for this work Shri Yogesh Oza, Ex Principal of BSM and my guide Dr. Shweta Jejurkar.

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