

**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INDIAN AND WESTERN
PHILOSOPHY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIAN
PHILOSOPHICAL PROSE WRITER****DR S. D. DESHBHARATAR**Associate Professor
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India is a country of sages, saints and philosophers. Our great saints started enlightening the world through their teachings. Indian philosophy spread throughout the world and created a tremendous impact on the Western school of philosophy. The philosophical treasures, which they have kept for us are beneficial to the society and individual. In fact it is very relevant in the present scenario for the entire world. Great men are never born for any nation, caste, creed and sect. They are for the entire humanity, they cross the border of human limitation. The present research paper undertakes the comparative analysis of Indian and Western philosophies on various aspects to bring out the similarities and differences.

Keyword: Philosophical, Realization, Prose

In the Indian context, philosophy is taken to *darshana* or *tattva*. the etymological meaning of 'philosophy' co-relates itself with *darshana* or *tattva*, *Drishyate anena it darshanam* – the one through which it is seen. The word 'seen' can be taken either literally or philosophically. To 'see' in the philosophic sense means to 'realise'. *Darsana*, therefore, means to realize. The verb 'realise' is a transitive verb. To say that we realize 'nothing' is to accept that there is no realization at all.

The word *tattva* was derived from two words *tat* and *tva*. *tat* means 'it' or that and *tva* means 'you'. Therefore, *tattva*, etymologically, means 'you are that'. 'tat' stands for Indian thought. It suggests reality or 'ultimate' reality. This is also what one part of philosophy, i.e., metaphysics talks about. The word 'it', which suggests in the meaning of *darshana* stands for *tat*, i.e., ultimate reality. Since *darshana*, is knowing reality, it shows not only an important metaphysical component but also an important epistemological component. Hence, the summation of these two components more or less satisfactorily completes the meaning of philosophy as *darshana* in the Indian context.

There is another component i.e., 'you' (*tva*) it stands for knower, i.e., the epistemological subject and by identifying the epistemological subject with reality. Indian thought are not distinguish between reality and the person or epistemological subject and hence etymologically, knowledge in Indian thought became inward. Wherever man is involved, directly or indirectly, value is involved, so axiology surfaces. When man is identified with reality, and the whole lot of issues related to reality gain value-overtones. Hence, in the

Indian context, value is not merely a subject matter of philosophy, but philosophy itself taken to be regarded as 'value'.

The English word 'philosophy' derives from the Ancient Greek (philosophia), which literally means 'love of wisdom'. The introduction of the terms 'philosopher' and 'philosophy' has been connected to the Greek thinker Pythagoras. A 'philosopher' was used as a word with refer to 'sophist'. Travelling sophists or 'wise men' were considered important in Classical Greece. They often earned money as teachers, whereas philosophers are 'lovers of wisdom' and not professionals.

Indian philosophy commence with the *Vedas* where questions related to laws of nature, the origin of the universe and the place of man in it are asked. In the famous Rigveda's *Nasadiya Sukta* Hymn of Creation the poet says:

"Whence all creation had its origin, he, whether he fashioned it or whether he did not, he, who surveys it all from highest heaven, he knows--or maybe even he does not know" (Rigveda, Nasadiya Sukta).

In the Vedic view, creation is taken to the self-consciousness of the primeval being (*Purusha*). This plunges to the inquiry into the one being that underlies the diversity of empirical phenomena and the origin of all things. Cosmic order is termed *rta* and causal law by *karma*. Nature (*prakrite*) is taken to have three qualities (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*).

Traditionally, school of Indian philosophy are identified as orthodox (*astika*) or non-orthodox (*nastika*) depending on whether they regard the *Veda* as an soul source of knowledge. There are six schools of orthodox Hindu philosophy and three heterodox schools. The orthodox are Nyaya, *Vaisesika*, *Samkhya*, *Yoga*, *Purvamimamsa* and *Vedanta*. The Heterodox are Jain, Buddhist and materialist like (Carvaka). However, Vidyaraya classified Indian philosophy into sixteen schools where he includes schools belonging to *Saiva* and *Rasesvara* thought with others.

The main school of Indian philosophy was developed chiefly between 1000 BC to the early centuries AD. Later on centuries produced commentaries and reformulations continuing up to as late as the 20th century. Competition, rivalry and integration between the various schools were intense during their formative years, especially between 800 BC to 200 AD. Some like the Jain, Buddhist, *Shaiva* and *Advaita* schools survived out of these competition, while others like *Samkhya* and *Ajivika* did not, either being assimilated or extincted.

The term Indian philosophy comprehends to several schools of philosophical thought that originated in the Indian subcontinent, including Hindu philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, and Jain philosophy. Having the same or rather intertwined origins, all of these philosophies have a common underlying vein of *Dharma* and *Karma*.

The period between fifth and ninth century BC was the most brilliant epoch in the development of Indian philosophy as Hindu and Buddhist philosophies developed side by side. The non-dualistic *Advaita Vedanta* emerged as the most influential and most dominant school of philosophy. The major philosophers of this school were Gaudapada, AdiShankara and Vidyaranya.

Indian and Western concepts, whether ancient or modern, are best explained when they are compared and contrasted. Ancient Greeks used the principle 'knowledge for the sake of knowledge', which had given impetus to birth and growth of pure science. In contrast, post-renaissance age upheld the contrary principle, 'knowledge is power'. This dictum used by Bacon changed forever the very direction of the evolution of science. However, ancient Indians showed a very different mindset. While medicine and surgery evolved to meet practical needs, astronomy and mathematics developed for unique reason, neither purely spiritual nor purely mundane, in order to perform *Yagas* to meet practical ends and *yajnas* to achieve spiritual gain. At any rate, ancient Indians never similar in Greek dictum. If we consider knowledge as value, then we have to conclude that it was never regarded as intrinsic, on the other hand, it was mainly instrumental.

Knowledge was not only 'power' but became a powerful weapon for the westerners to manage their economic and political agenda. At no point of time westerners look upon the knowledge as a means to achieve anything even remotely connected to spiritual goal. Just as the Charvaka is an exception in Indian context, Socrates and Spinoza can be regarded as exceptions in western context. Indians, did not regard worldly pleasure as ultimate. Indian tradition maintains a certain hierarchy of values different than western tradition. It refers to the fact that ignorance or *avidya* is a hindrance to attain spiritual goal in particular and any other goal in general. One who has acquired true knowledge, acts and thinks, very differently, different from ignorant, a characteristic. Socratic thought in Indian context. While Socrates and Spinoza are at the one end of the thread, Bacon and Heidegger are at the opposite end. The significant thing is that in Indian tradition, philosophy and value are inseparable, whereas in the West it is not so.

After 1850 from Rajaram Mohan Roy and onwards, Indian thinkers and philosophers came into the contact with Western World. The impact of Western philosophy was clearly seen on the early period of British reign, but later on, the vast treasure of Indian philosophy and Spiritual knowledge were made available to the West by great Indian philosophers and thereby enriching the English language. They contributed for the development of philosophical prose in Indian writing in English. Following are the few remarkable philosophers who show the depth of Indian philosophy while writing in the English language.

The remarkable name who contributed to enrich the Indian philosophical prose writing in English is **Ananda Kentish Coornaraswamy** (1877-1947). The term "national idealism" was Coornaraswamy's term. By this Coornaraswamy meant an alternative conception of a nation that what prevailed in Europe.

Rabindranath Tagore deals largely with universal themes of God, divine experience and also with spirituality. This term conveys the message of self-consciousness. He gives the theory of *Spiritual Humanism*. Tagore's philosophy of life is regarded as more idealistic. He was the apostle of truth, virtue and beauty (Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram).

Radhakrishnan wrote authoritative exegeses of India's religious and philosophical literature for the English speaking world. He was one of India's most influential scholars of comparative religion and philosophy. A bridge was build by Radhakrishnan between the East and the West.

Mahatma Gandhi was more a political leader than a philosopher. His philosophy is characterized as naturalistic in its setting. Idealistic in its aim and Pragmatic in its method and programme of work. His philosophy is also non-violent and practical.

Nehru was a philosopher and a politician of National independence. That was the real nerve of his thought and action. Like any other true philosopher Nehru tried to seek truth, he said: “Perfection is beyond us for it means the end, and we are always journeying, trying to approach something that is ever receding” (Nehru 561).

Iqbal’s philosophy revolves around God as one, all knowing and omnipotent. He believes in Monotheism. A notion of God satisfies both the religious urge of man and metaphysical curiosity.

Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya a Philosopher at Calcutta University was considered as an important figure in contemporary India. His main focus was on the central questions of Hindu philosophy. He wanted to know that how mind, life or consciousness creates an apparently material universe.

As far as above minor philosophical prose writing is concerns, their philosophical prose lacks comprehensiveness. Their writing is typically philosophical but lacks comprehensive literary aspects.

The major contribution in philosophical prose was made by Swami Vivekananda, Sir Aurobindo Ghosh and J Krishnamurthy. They were not simply a thinker or orator, they preached what they have experienced, that is the basic differences in Indian philosophy and Western philosophy. India is having a great tradition of enlighten philosophy (Bhuddhatva) like Charvaka, Buddha, Mahavir and many more, the real greatness lie in the eternity of that same tradition with more comprehensive and contemporary aspects with modern philosopher like Swami Vivekananda, Sir Aurobindo Ghosh and J Krishnamurthy. Swami Vivekananda preached ‘Advaita Vedanta’, while Sri Aurobindo Ghosh termed the spiritual path as ‘Internal Yoga’. J Krishnamurti is different in his preaching ‘Truth is pathless land.’

Conclusion

Indian philosophical writing in English has immensely contributed to the enrichment of Indian English Literature. It is characterized by a depth of divine sublimity and transcendental mysticism. Our great saints started enlightening the world through their teachings. Indian philosophy spread throughout the world and created a tremendous impact on the Western school of philosophy.

India has a great tradition of Philosophical writing and talking in English from Rajaram Mohan Roy to J. Krishnamurti. Their philosophical writing has become the vehicle of expression of a rare vision of life and understanding of the universe. Among these immortal philosophers, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh and J Krishnamurti: the Big three, have pre-dominantly occupied the center of the entire scenario of Indian philosophy in the modern world.

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