



Full Length Review Article

VIVEKANANDA'S EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND LIBERATION OF HINDUS *JATIS* (CASTES) FROM UNJUST HINDUS SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL

*Dr. Nosheen Zaheer

Assistant Professor Islamic Studies Department Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's
University Quetta, Pakistan

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 17th September, 2016
Received in revised form
22nd October, 2016
Accepted 29th November, 2016
Published online 30th December, 2016

Key Words:

Terms,
Atman,
Brahman,
Guna,
Vedanta.

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the endeavors of Vivekananda in empowering women and liberating Hindus from caste prejudice that were prevailing in Nineteenth Century Bengali society. Vivekananda tries to elevate women by adopting the equality of women to men through the equal sharing of divine soul (*atman*). He highlights those Hindu sacred texts that revered women and adopted a skeptical approach towards those Hindu holy texts that bitterly criticize women. Similarly, he rejects the superiority and inferiority of caste by bringing the metaphysical equality of Advaita Vedanta to the physical world. He further incorporates the *gunna* theory to reinterpret Hindu caste system on the basis of the qualities with which one born than tom the caste he inherits. He considers many prevailing socio-religious practices the innovations of the priestly class among those he was not ready to accept the practice of *sati* (widow burning) and caste system.

Copyright©2016, Dr. Nosheen Zaheer. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

INTRODUCTION

Women's liberty always appeared to be restricted in the Hindu religion that assigns man's dominance over women which establishes patriarchal society. Hindu sacred texts do not allow woman to assert independence in any circumstances. The males of family such as (father, husband and son) are considered to be her custodian (*The Laws of Manu*, 1886, p. 195). Her subordinated condition is further aggravated by the contemptuous approach of the Hindu sacred texts towards women. These texts consider women's nature emptied of virtues and describes women the composition of vicious desires (Mill, 1990, p. 291). The Laws of Manu expresses the reason of women's nasty nature firstly, for being passionate for men. Secondly, due to their immutability and stubbornness, they are not loyal to their husbands (*The Laws of Manu*, 1886, p. 330). Moreover, it adds that women have no divine right to perform religious ritual and her *moksha* (liberation) resides in serving her husband (*The Laws of Manu*, 1886, p. 196). These women destitute of Vedic knowledge are thus impure and represent falsehood (*The Laws of Manu*, 1886, p. 330).

Beside this treatment of women, in Hinduism the religious duty is inseparable from social grouping (*varnas*) and four successive stages of life (*ashrama*) that results in hierarchy of the four major social groups are called *Varnashrama Dharma* (Lochtefeld, 2002, p. 741). The term *varana* in Sanskrit have different meanings as "color, description, explanation, interpretation, praise, extension, observation, perception, form, beauty, caste, race, type" (R. K. Sharma, 2004b, p. 11). In most text of Rig Veda the word *varna* appears with the meanings of color or light. In Rig Veda the term *Asuryam Varnam* (dark complexion) is used for *Shudra* tribe. Taittiriya Brahman during a comparison between *Brahmin* and *Shudra* uses light *varna* for *Brahmin* and *Asurya* (darkness) for *Shudra*. While Rig Veda describes *Brahmin* and *Kshatriya* without mentioning of the term *varna*. Therefore, the word *varna* in Rig Veda is used to denote the color discrimination between *Brahmin* and *Shudra* (R. K. Sharma, 2004a, p. 11). The earliest reference of caste system can be traced in the hymn of *Parusha Shukta* in Rig Veda. This hymn describes the origins of the four casts *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaisyas* and *Shudras* from *Parusha*, the Supreme Being. The *Brahmin* comes from his mouth, *kshatriya* from his arm, *Vaisyas* from his thighs and *Sudras* from his feet. This scheme of creation uses the allegorical descriptive style. *Brahmin's* creation is done from the mouth of *Parusha* that represents *Brahmins*

*Corresponding author: Dr. Nosheen Zaheer,
Assistant Professor Islamic Studies Department Sardar Bahadur
Khan Women's University Quetta, Pakistan.

duty of teaching and interpreting sacred text. *Kshatriya* represents the function of warriors due to their origination from *Parusha's* arms. *Vaisyas* being agriculturist due to their birth from the thighs and *Shudras* function is to serve other due to their origination from the feet of *Parusha*. Hence caste system can be traced in the period of the Rig Veda but the caste system till this period is nothing more than the explanation of the social obligation of these castes. The final conclusion regarding superiority or inferiority of any class cannot be derived from this hymn of *Parusha Shukta* (Singh, 2005, p. 100). The evolution of Hindu caste system remains in its initial position "from the beginning of the Vedic period to the middle of the Sutra" (Singh, 2005, p. 100) just a mere presentation of the- four classes with their assign functions. The highly developed evolutionary mature form of caste system with the description of the superiority of *Brahmin* and with doctrine of non-mobility among four castes makes their appearance in the Laws of Manu.

These laws were compiled by *Manu* that dates back to around fifteen century BCE (Srinivasan, p. 72). *Manu* While describing *varuna* system believes that there are four castes and no fifth one. He assigns *Brahmin* the designation of the lord of other castes on the basis of their origin and sanctification. He further formulates superiority chart of the other three castes on their respective degree of divergence in their creation from the body of *Parusha*. He places *kshatriya* after *Brahmin* and *Vaisyas* after *Kashatriya*. These three classes were considered as twice born and were superior to *Shudra* that born once (*The Laws of Manu*, 1886, p. 174). The Women and low castes received the prescribed treatment from their respective Hindu society and they were contended with such treatment. This contentment was challenged many times when these women got exposed to other religions like Islam and Christianity. The impact of Christian religion in posing challenges to Hinduism was very different and far reaching when compared with Islam. Christianity in general and Christian missionary criticism of Hindu religious rituals and customs regarding a female and caste issue in Nineteenth century Bengal were the main reasons that forced Hindus to revisit and reform their society.

Hindu Women and Nineteenth Century Bengal

Social status of women in Nineteenth century Bengal could be evaluated from their educational system, the family system and gender arrangement that evolved out from the Hindu religious traditions. These religious traditions feel satisfaction not only in placing women as weak sex but also gives her the most humiliating and contemptuous status. She was not considered fit for the studies of Vedas. In family life she was completely dependent on her father, husband and then son (Chatterjee, 1989, p. 622). Hence regarding the sacred teachings of Vedas the women shared the equal status of *Shudras* but some *Vaishnavites* women were allowed to learn the Puranas (Forbes, 2004, p. 35). The authority of these women in religious education was also restricted in the oral transmission of the *smrti*, music, ballad and folklores. The women of the upper classes were allowed for home learning but in seclusion. The women who were not considered intellectually fit for religious education were well equipped with the household art. They were equally trained to be obedient enough to perform their household duties of serving father, husband and son in religious realm that would enable them to attain *moksha* (Bhattacharya, p. 200).

These Indian secluded women were trained as beast of burden by keeping them away from self realization and self awareness of their right as a human being. These Hindu women were given the subordinate inferior status of life as part of their dharma This whole scenario enabled Orientalists and missionaries to consider Hinduism the combination of meaningless rituals and barbaric religious customs that provoked the reformation of women status and position in Bengali society. Thus, all efforts for emancipating the women status were not started by women themselves but by Hindu men. Among these Hindu men some were inspired from the west and some were cultivated generation of western education named as *Bhadhriloka*. The earliest flag holder of women emancipation was Ram Mohan Roy who condemned *sati*, *kulin* polygamy and debated for the women's right in property. Thus from here the women emancipation became the basic tenet of the social reform movements (Basu, p. 1). The list of these reformists' appears incomplete without appreciating and acknowledging the services of Vivekananda in improving women's status in Bengal society.

Vivekananda's Efforts for Empowering Women

Vivekananda (1863-1902) was Hindu religious and social reformer in colonial India who appeared before the Parliament of Religions in Chicago (Dr Takashi Shogimen, 1988, p. 56). The consequences of these reformations are noticeable in reinterpretation of Women's status by Vivekananda (Verma, 2009, p. 209).

Reverence of Women

He defines womanhood a visible manifestation of divine (Vivekananda, p. 145). Vivekananda equates the height of all feminine types in Indian mother (Vivekananda, p. 132) because she is the center of the family. She is representing God on earth as a mother of universe (Vivekananda, p. 64). He envisions fearless women to revive their traditions of Sanghamitta, Lila, Ahalya Bai and Mira Bai as a mother who bears Heroes due to their purity, selflessness and in strength the manifestation of God (Ete, 2010; Ramkrishna Mandal, 2010, p. 5). He further adds that the perfect womanhood can be seen in character of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti (Vivekananda, p. 395) or in other words the idea of perfect womanhood is hidden in her perfect independence (Vivekananda, p. 132). He opines that Sita is the Ideal woman; the embodiment of purity, chastity, faithfulness and holy (Vivekananda, p. 64). He believes in empowering women that will enable them to realize their uniqueness, potentialities and powers in all spheres of life. Vivekananda worked hard for empowering Hindu women. He not only rejected the discriminating behavior of India men towards women but he also denies the authority of that sacred text that considers women less in competency and devotion than men. He opines that it was the period of degeneration when women were deprived from their rights by priest; otherwise Vedas and Upanishad were emptied of virtuous women's names. He further adds that contrary to this Hindu religious texts not only revered women but also entitled them as soul of spiritual knowledge ("Swami Vivekananda Quotes," 2004). He further claims the equality of both sexes because according to him "soul has no sex, it is neither male nor female" (Vivekananda, p. 285). Vivekananda believes that women are as courageous as men (Vivekananda, p. 31). They have "infinite patience and infinite perservance" (Vivekananda, p. 107).

Woman must go forward otherwise she will become idiots and soulless object in the hand of tyrant lords (Vivekananda, p. 275). So, educate your women and give them liberty to groom themselves (Vivekananda, p. 112). If you will allow them you will be able to explore their hidden lioness but if you suppress then they will become fox (Vivekananda, p. 26). He emphasizes that the best thermometer to the success and welfare of world resides in the good treatment of women because they constitute the second half besides men (Vivekananda, p. 132). Similarly there is no future and hope of society and country without respecting and reverencing of women (Vivekananda, p. 33). He elevates women to the equality of man by sharing the same divinity. He emphasizes on providing equal chances of education to women as men. He offers women the equal opportunity for monastic life on the basis of their spiritual qualification ("Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America: Native American," 2006, p. 668). Vivekananda does not identify women with sexual being and feels no hesitation in portraying and supporting his idea of independent women from Mahabharata from the character of Draupadi. He criticizes the status of Hindu women in the nineteenth Century as the sole reason of the downfall of the Hinduism generally and retardation of progress of Hindu society particularly. He portrays the contemporary Hindu women as decadent lots whose main concern of life is eating, drinking, gossiping and scandals. While explaining the barbaric Hindu custom of widow burning he adds that Hindus never believe in widow burning but this custom is observed by those wives who in their fanaticism immolated themselves in the funeral pyre of their husbands (Sil, 1997, pp. 69-72).

Vivekananda's Rejection and Reinterpretation of *Sati*

Vivekananda rejects *sati* because he considers this act that represents fanatic widow psyche. His rejection of *sati* as religious custom demands enlisting of his opinions on *sati* and the possible interpretation of this custom from his viewpoint. He addresses this issue in the context of his sister who after the death of her husband resolves to burn herself in the funeral pyre of her husband. Vivekananda calls the death of his sister a suicide rather than *sati*. He experiences the grief of his sister's death, but he also has to tolerate the painful and miserable condition of his mother after losing her daughter. This seems to be the reason that he considered *sati* as suicide and *Brahminical* innovation that should be eradicated from Hindu society (Badrinath, 2006, pp. 153-154). His inspiration and inclination towards the reform movement of the Ram Mohan Roy and *Brahmo Samaj* also plays vital role in his rejection and abolishing of the *sati* (Rana, 2005, p. 19). As Ram Mohan was the first Hindu who rejected *sati* because he believes that *sati* has attained the form of unhappy religious symbol of fear that terrorized Hindu women (Hawley, 1994, p. 23). His denial of *sati* is also embedded in his wanting to revive and reform Hinduism on humanitarian and utilitarian point of view to save Hinduism from missionaries' criticism. They considered Hindu religion accumulation of degenerated and barbaric customs and practices. And in his scheme of reformation *sati* is misfit due to the wastage of important human life for just maintenance of tradition (Hawley, 1994, p. 28).

New interpretation of the Hindu Caste System

Vivekananda accepts the caste system as social order of Vedas but he rejects the superiority of one caste on other due to equal

sharing of divinity (Richards, 1985, p. 70) by utilizing Advaita frame of Shankaracharya.

Shankar Advaita Vedanta and Hindu Caste System

Shankaracharya emphasizes metaphysical oneness of all things that constitutes his concept of reality. But all caste differentiations and social barriers constitute Shankaracharya's *maya*. Shankaracharya's *Advaita* destines the self in transcendental unification of *Brahman* but this unification does not dissolve the social barriers in equating all self to sameness. Because *varna* system loses its relevancy with relation to absolute unity but it maintains its position among the interrelationships of social stratification (Eli Franco, 2007, p. 133). The *jnani* of *Brahman* While experiencing identification with *Brahman* is beyond the empirical boundaries of caste as that time the unification with *Brahman* releases him from the limitation of space and time. This further frees *jnani* from the empirical boundaries of creations. Or in other word this *jnani* at the stage of experiential unification with *Brahman* realizes and experiences reality by disappearance of *maya* (the whole world), which includes caste system. But when *jnani* is not experiencing that mystical experiential unification then caste barriers attain the designation of reality in worldly sense (Halbfass, 1991, p. 383). Therefore Shankaracharya annihilates all social differences and caste at the transcendental level during mystic-experiential *Brahman* and insists on the conservative's persuasion of social stratification in everyday life. Shankaracharya not only accepts this *varna* system and social stratification but he strengthens it. He suggests that *Brahmins* due to their natural inclination for detachment and renunciation of world are particularly chosen as wandering monks. He further highlighted the superiority of the *Brahmins* by insisting that only *Brahmins* and three upper class males are qualified for spiritual instruction (Dempsey, 2007; *Spiritual But Not Religious?: An Oar Stroke Closer to the Farther Shore*, p. 20). Shankaracharya's position is very clear that *Shudras* may not be allowed to the study of *Vedas*.

He further adds that *Shudras* should be excluded from the textual, educational and also from the *Vedic* ritual scarifies. According to him the *varna* system is embedded in the birth and physical association with the family. So, the metaphysical unity of *Advaita* cannot in any way be taken in social and religious equality in an empirical sense. He supports his viewpoint by citing many passages from the *shruti* and *smrti*. His approval of the *varna* system can be checked from his inclination towards the rule in Gautama's Dharmashatra that describes the punishment of filling the ears of *Shudra* with molten tin who illegitimately listens Veda (Halbfass, 1991, p. 380). Shankaracharya being a classical *Advaitin* accepts the caste discrimination. The comparison between Shankaracharya's *Advaita* and Vivekananda's *neo-Vedanta* regarding cast system remains incomplete without evaluating that social factors that demands Vivekananda to reinterpret cast system in term of *guna's* theory. In Nineteen Century Bengal society where the different religious civilizations were encountering the validity of the *Hinduism* was challenged in the realm of social customs by Christian missionaries. They considered these Hindu *varna* practices inhuman and cruel. They did not feel satisfied in mere rejection of these social customs of caste system and widow burning rather felt contended by invoking the feeling of severest disapproval of these religious social practices in the hearts of *Hindus* (Rambachan, 1994, p. 13). These challenges of the

missionaries threatened the survival of Hinduism among those religions who believes in the equality of mankind. This was the situation that motivated the *neo-Vedantins* generally and Vivekananda particular to strengthen Hinduism through social activism (Ricc, 2012, p. 76; Ricci, p. 76).

Vivekananda's Social Activism and Hindu Caste System

Vivekananda's policy of social activism envisions a society strengthen by the pillars of equality and justice. Vivekananda's proposed society is free from the cast and gender prejudices. He bases his propose society on his ideology of social activism with right attitude. His right attitude works for the betterment of the society and it is considered by Vivekananda the only mean to attain and actualize the transcendence. He utilizes the *karma yoga* for promulgating his social activism among the monks and nuns of Ramakrishna order to achieve *moksha* (liberation). That will elevate the Hindu society by spiritually awakening of masses with the Practical *Vedanta*. Therefore, he sows the seed of rejection of the caste system when he admits every caste among the rank of *sanyasi* in Ramakrishna mission. He justifies his negation of caste among *sanyasis* on the basis of classic Hindu notion that *sanyasis* transcend caste system (Ricc, 2012; Ricci, pp. 79-81). He accepts the *varna* system as one of the greatest social institution gift by Lord to man. He believes that although this system needs readjustment to avoid the apparent defects that have crept in this system due to foreign persecutions and undeserving *Brahmins* (Figueira, 2002, p. 138; 2992). However Vivekananda readjusted the *varna* system as a social institution in Hinduism by redefining caste or *jati*.

Vivekananda's Definition of Caste

He defines caste scientifically in term of composition of *gunas* rather *dharma* (Mohapatra, 1996, p. 73). He defined *jati* as "freedom of the individuals to express his nature in *Prakriti*" (Sil, 1997, p. 66). He on the footsteps of his apologetic predecessors re-interprets caste system in *Samkhiya* philosophy by utilizing *gunas* theory of *Prakriti*. *Samkhiya* philosophy basically concerns with investigation of the different categories of existence by seeking discrimination of *Parusha* from *Prakriti* for salvation (Larson, 1979, p. 2). The failure of discrimination of *Parusha* from *Prakriti* bears the fruits of *samsara* (rebirth) While disunion of these two will result in isolation of these two. But here releasing of the *Parusha* from *Prakriti* does not mean merging to *Brahman* but only freedom of the *Parusha* from the bondage of *Prakriti* (Sivananda, 1999, p. 118). The nature of *Prakriti* and *Parusha* are completely contrary to each other. *Parusha* is the representative of consciousness, inactive and destitute of *gunas*. *Prakriti* is representative of non-consciousness, active material that is composed of three *gunas sattva* (purity), *raja* (passion) and *tamas* (darkness) respectively (Sivananda, 1999, p. 118).

However, *guna* theory describes man in the context of *samsara* then what sort of relationship can be found between *guna* theory and social duties (*varna* system)? The classical *Samkhiya* neither extend any relationship to man social life nor does it have any relation with *varna* system. But one could not ignore the possible link of the *Samkhiya* with social life in general and *varna* system in particular in the context of Bhagavadgita. That states the *varna* system as a socio-religious institution that work according to the distribution of

the *gunas* and work (*karma*) among men. Work is related to the specific social duties distribute by *dharma* among the different *varna*. The specific work for each cast attains the name of *svadharma*, the way of *moksha* for each *varna*. Similarly, Law of Manu also utilizes this Bhagvadagita's *svadharma* and *guna* theory for supporting the hierarchical *varna* system. Anugita from Mahabharta applies these three *gunas* to four *varnas* by assigning *tamas* to *Shudras*, *rajas* to *Kshatriya* and the highest *guna sattva* was given to the *Brahmins*. Therefore, Vivekananda's explanation of *varna* system by *guna* theory receives support from the above mentioned philosophical and cosmological explanation of *varna* system (Halbfass, 1991, pp. 356-361).

Vivekananda's Reninterpretation of Caste System

Vivekananda's explanation and interpretation of the caste system belongs particularly to his personal philosophy having no overlapping concepts with classical *varna* system and Shankaracharya's Advaita *Vedanta*. When, he considers the rigid superior and inferior classical division of the caste the root evil that has degraded Hindu society (S. K. Sharma, 1996, p. 177). He formulates his *varna* system by selective collection and combination of different philosophies. He establishes his *varna* system by shifting Shankaracharya's transcendental Advaita *Vedanta* unification (of *Brahman* is *atman* and *atman* is *Brahman*) to *Brahman's* penetration in empirical world. That enables him to equate four castes on the basis of equal sharing of divinity in them. He tries to support his *varna* foundation of equality by re-interpreting *guna* theory. He emphasizes that man's supremacy cannot be decided on his caste rather it lies in his inherent qualities (*gunas*). Vivekananda who always claimed to formulate and approve every theory by utilizing the rational and scientific approach failed to support his *guna* theory empirically. How Vivekananda was able to conclude the cosmological composition of the *Shudra* shared the equal *sattva* of *Brahmin* mere in the rewards of his (*Shudra's*) good and ethical behavior.

If this is the case then why that *Shudra* cannot become *Brahmin*? The same objection could be noticed in Hindu scholars who tried to defend *varna* with an example that donkey due to all his hard work cannot become horse (Halbfass, 1991, p. 360). He rejects cast barrier of his time by assigning Hinduism the terms of Don't-Touchism and Kitchen religion. The former term is describing Hinduism empties of the path of knowledge and restricts to the mental disease of "Don't- touchism". While the latter describes Hinduism as a religion emphasizing dining rules between the members of different castes the violation of which will impure the higher castes. Here Vivekananda very rationally questioned the authority of the superiority and purity of the *Brahmin* that gets pollute by *Shudras* breath and touch (Ricci, p. 82).

Critical Evaluation of Vivekananda's point of View

The critical evaluation of the Vivekananda's caste system illustrates that somehow he fails to escape from the spell of Hindu *varna* system. He accepts the lowliness of *shudras* not only with their failure to absorb *Brahmins* teachings regarding *Sanskrit* culture but also regarding their ugly looks. That can be noticed on the occasion when he is comparing and teasing his neighbor girl face with *dom's* due to her ugliness. He further admits the cultural inadequacies of the *Shudras* While

predicting the advent of the *Shudra* regime in the world. He describes the characteristics of this regime as lowering of culture, distribution of ordinary knowledge and scanty of extraordinary genius classes. He names his enemies *pariahs*, which he uses to humiliate them. Therefore his approval of *Shudra's* meekness becomes evident from his admiration of the upper Hindu classes. When as a *sanyasi* he feels proud to call himself belonging to *Kshatriya* class. His discrimination can be notice in his proposed solution for getting rid from this caste system. He claims that the solution of this problem cannot reside in degrading *Brahmin* by lowering them to *Shudras* as these *Brahmins* depict the ideal pattern of Hindu humanity. But the real solution is present in elevating the lower up to the level of higher (Sil, 1997, pp. 68-69). His rejection of cast system on the base of superiority and inferiority of caste becomes suspicious when he on one hand denies caste among *sanyasi* and on other hand he feels proud in claiming himself *Kshatriya*. The main tenet of his proposes cast system becomes endanger when he feels bringing of *Brahmin* to *Shudras* degrading While feels relieve in elevating *Shudras* to *Brahmin*. The new aspects of Vivekananda's cast system gets reveal when it is compared with Shankaracharya's *Advaita*. Vivekananda's claim of equality of all castes in Hinduism on the basis of *Advaita Vedanta* negates Shankaracharya's acceptance of the caste discrimination. That can be seen in Vivekananda's criticism to Shankaracharya when he forbids *Shudras* from the *Vedic* rituals that include the higher modes of worship and knowledge (Shetty, 2009, p. 523). It is noticeable that his message of equality of all Hindus is more often discuss and highlights in front of Western audience. His indigenous lecture lacks such assertion of equality of all cast. Vivekananda's explanation of cast system in the context of *guna* theory also appears superficial and unconvincing.

Conclusion

In the end it can be concluded that Vivekananda constitutes women empowerment through the adoption of axiom of equality of men and women. He not only rejected their prescribed status that equates these women to *shudra's* rather he tries to elevate their position by giving them reverences. He emphasized on those Hindu texts that revered women as a goddess, mother, daughter and wife. He encouraged women to realize their potentialities through education. Besides these he rejected the Hindu customs of *Sati* (widow burning) as a Brahman innovation. While his rejection of the caste system on the base of superiority and inferiority of caste becomes suspicious when he on one hand, he denies caste among *sanyasi* and on the other hand he feels proud in claiming himself *Kshatriya*. The main tenet of his proposes cast system becomes endangered when he feels bringing of the *Brahmin* to *Shudras* degrading While feels relieve in elevating *Shudras* to *Brahmin*. The new aspects of Vivekananda's cast system gets revealed when it is compared with Shankaracharya's *Advaita*. Vivekananda's claim of equality of all castes in Hinduism on the basis of *Advaita Vedanta* negates Shankaracharya's acceptance of the caste discrimination. That can be seen in Vivekananda's criticism to Shankaracharya when he forbids *Shudras* from the *Vedic* rituals that include the higher modes of worship and knowledge. It is noticeable that his message of equality of all Hindus is more often discussed and highlights in front of Western audiences. His indigenous lecture lacks such assertion of equality of all castes. Vivekananda's explanation of caste system in the

context of *guna* theory also appears superficial and unconvincing.

REFERENCES

1. Badrinath, C. 2006. *Swami Vivekananda, the Living Vedanta*. New Delhi: Penguin Book.
2. Basu, A. Indian Women's Movement. *Human Rights, Gender and Environment*.
3. Bhattacharya, S. (Ed.). *Education and the Disprivileged: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century India*: Orient Longman.
4. Chatterjee, P. 1989. Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonized Women: The Contest in India. *American Ethnologist*, 16.
5. Dempsey, C. 2007. Book Review: "Spiritual But Not Religious? An Oar Stroke Closer to the Farther Shore. *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies*, 20.
6. Dr Takashi Shogimen, D. V. A. S. (Ed.). 1988. *Visions of Peace: Asia and The West*. England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
7. Eli Franco, K. P. (Ed.). 2007. *Beyond Orientalism: The Work of Wilhelm Halbfass and Its Impact on Indian and Cross-Cultural Studies* (1 ed.). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
8. Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America: Native American. 2006. In M. C. Rosemary Radford Ruether Rosemary Skinner Keller (Ed.). Indiana: Indiana University Press.
9. Ete, R. k. M. M. 2010. *Women in North East India: Role and Status of Arunachal Women*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
10. Figueira, D. M. 2002. *Aryans, Jews, Brahmins: Theorizing Authority through Myths of Identity*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
11. Figueira, D. M. 1992. *Aryans, Jews, Brahmins: Theorizing Authority through Myths of Identity*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
12. Forbes, G. 2004. *Women in Modern India* (Vol. 4). New York: Cambridge University Press.
13. Halbfass, W. 1991. *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought*. Albany: State University of New York.
14. Hawley, J. S. (Ed.). 1994. *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse the Burning of Wives in India*. New York: New York Press.
15. Larson, G. J. 1979. *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of Its History and Meaning* (2 ed.). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited.
16. *The Laws of Manu*. 1886. (G. BÜHLER, Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
17. Lochtefeld, J. G. 2002 *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism: N-Z*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group.
18. Mill, J. 1990. *The History of British India* (Vol. 1). New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.
19. Mohapatra, K. (1996). *Political Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda*. New Delhi: Northern Book Centre.
20. Rambachan, A. 1994. *The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Vedas*. USA: University of Hawaii Press.
21. Ramkrishna Mandal. 2010. *Women in North East India: Role and Status of Arunachal Women*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.

22. Rana, M. A. M. A. B. S. 2005. *The Immortal Philosopher of India Swami Vivekananda*. Delhi: Diamond Books(P) Ltd.
23. Ricc, G. R. (Ed.). 2012. *Politics in Theology Religion & Public Life* (Vol. 38). USA: Transaction Publishers.Ricci (Ed.). *Politics in Theology*
24. Richards, G. (Ed.). 1985. *A Source-Book of Modern Hinduism*. Richmond: Curzon Press Ltd.
25. Sharma, R. K. 2004a. *Indian Society, Institutions and Change*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.
26. Sharma, R. K. 2004b. *James G. Lochtefeld*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.
27. Sharma, S. K. 1996. *Indian Political Thought*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.
28. Shetty, B. V. 2009. *World as Seen under the Lens of a Scientist*. USA: Library of Congress
29. Sil, N. P. 1997. *Swami Vivekananda: A Reassessment*. England: Associate Press.
30. Singh, E. 2005. *Caste System in India: A Historical Perspective*. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications.
31. Sivananda, S. S. 1999. *All About Hinduism*. India: The Divine Life Society. *Spiritual But Not Religious?: An Oar Stroke Closer to the Farther Shore*. Srinivasan, A. V. *Hinduism for Dummies*
32. Swami Vivekananda Quotes. 2004. <http://www.swamivivekanandaquotes.org/>
33. Verma, R. 2009. *Faith & Philosophy of Hinduism*. Delhi: Kalpaz Publication. Vivekananda, S. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Vol. 8)
