

Advancement of Service to the Mankind: A Case Study on Ramakrishna Mission in West Bengal

Rajesh Biswas

Abstract

This paper discusses the service of Ramakrishna Mission to the mankind. Ramakrishna Mission serves for the humanity continuously since its establishment. This service to the society based on “Siva jnanejiva seva” (Service to man as service to God). During its initial stage Ramakrishna Mission provided service to the distressed for protecting plague, made orphanage, established schools for the students. Then Ramakrishna Mission spread its boundaries of service. Moreover, it is involved in many charitable and compassionate works i.e., setting up of hospitals, Colleges, University, Lok Shikha Porisad etc. Recently Ramakrishna Mission group stood behind Covid 19 affected people to eradicate its side effect. It organizes awareness camp, safe home, vaccination centre. Beside this it extends service for mental health of the youth. In other words, Ramakrishna Mission is serving all and its duty is based on reality. Thus, today Ramakrishna Mission is very transparent and relevant, undoubtably. The monks and the vaktas (followers) of Ramakrishna Math and Mission come forward to make Ramakrishna movement properly. Role of man making, nation building, character building made Ramakrishna Mission special and extraordinary. This paper also focuses on liberal views of Ramakrishna Mission. Serving mankind is the most important service of Ramakrishna Mission. During Flood, Drought, Famine, Epidemic situation Ramakrishna Mission helped the victims. It used to organize free medical camps, mobile Clinic for the health of the needy people. This paper mentions the role of Ramakrishna Mission towards the spread of education. It also deals with the current activities of Ramakrishna Mission i.e., Covid 19 Relief operation, workshop on philosophy of service. Ramakrishna Mission arranged relief work for the sufferers of Cyclone Amphan, Cyclone Yaas, Cyclone Fani, earthquakes, floods, droughts, landslides, tornadoes, Tsunami etc.

Ramakrishna Mission serves for the upliftment of the humanity continuously. It has a great ideology. Beside spirituality its aim was to serve the society. So, it actively works for the social welfare and human need. Activities of Ramakrishna Mission enriched the society. “Siva jnanejiva seva” is one of the main objects of Ramakrishna Mission. Thus, this sermon enriched education sector, health sector and many other developments of the society. This object of Ramakrishna Mission benefited the socio-cultural history of West Bengal.

Keywords: Service, Society, Nation, Education, Health, Covid 19, Cyclone, etc.

Introduction

Ramakrishna Mission serves for the humanity continuously since its establishment. This service to the society based on “Siva jnanejiva seva” (Service to man as service to God). During its initial stage Ramakrishna Mission provided service to the distressed for protecting plague, made orphanage, established schools for the students. Then Ramakrishna Mission spread its

Assistant Professor, Dept. of History, Ramakrishna Mission Residential College (Autonomous), Narendrapur, Kolkata – 700103

boundaries of service. Moreover, it is involved in many charitable and compassionate work i.e., setting up of hospitals, Colleges, University, Lok Shikha Porisad etc. Recently Ramakrishna Mission group stood behind Covid 19 affected people to eradicate its side effect. It organizes awareness camp, safe home, vaccination centre. Beside this it extends service for mental health of the youth. In other words, Ramakrishna Mission is serving all and its duty is based on reality. Thus, today Ramakrishna Mission is very transparent and relevant, undoubtedly.

Preliminary Service

No doubt Ramakrishna Mission serves for the people for the benefit of the society. They are doing this great job continuously year after year. The monks and the vaktas (followers) of Ramakrishna Math and Mission come forward to make Ramakrishna movement properly. Role of man making, nation building, character building made Ramakrishna Mission special and extraordinary. In colonial India Ramakrishna Mission motivated freedom fighters, spread education and Scientific research.¹ It also thought about the economic growth and development of the country.

Swami Akhananda started relief operation in Murshidabad.² Sargachi Ramakrishna Mission served for the Epidemic victims. This Mission was actually fulfilled by the first Branch of Ramakrishna Math and Mission. Beside the spirituality, Ramakrishna Mission emphasizes on reality. It helps Ramakrishna Mission for decision making for the need of the time i.e., Monastic members and followers of Ramakrishna Mission inspired and encouraged Indian nationalist movements, Swadeshi movements etc. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was deeply motivated by Swamiji's idea.³ For its early days Ramakrishna Mission influenced the life and thought of colonial Bengal. The work, action, function, proceedings, and service of its field influenced the people of the country.

In the 19th century Bengal confronted the Renaissance it was mainly an urban issue. So, it reflected mainly in educated society of the urban area, mainly Calcutta. But Ramakrishna movement was spread into the vast area. So spiritual and relief work of the Ramakrishna Mission was not only confined in the urban area, but also, proliferated in the rural area. Beside Belur Math, Howrah, Kolkata Ramakrishna Mission serves far away from Kolkata i.e., Sargachi, Murshidabad. So, Ramakrishna Mission concurred and touched the heart of the people of the town as well as villages. Thus, Ramakrishna Mission sharply and steadily proceeds for the long term with its philosophy and vision.

Worldly Life and Renunciation

Ramakrishna Mission not only concentrates on spirituality, but also eagerly functions for the society for several needs with liberal view. Now-a-days it serves properly in many sectors. Unlike European Renaissance it designs its action for the man. Real man with all good is very important to Ramakrishna Mission. It also zeroed in on the common people's service. So, serving mankind is the most important service of Ramakrishna Mission. During Flood, Drought, Famine, Epidemic situation Ramakrishna Mission helped the victims. It used to organize free medical camps, mobile Clinic for the health of the needy people. It also provides every modern facility to the patients i.e., Ophthalmology, Dentistry, ENT, Cardiology, Electrotherapy, Pathology, Electro Cardiography etc.

Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan, Kolkata was established in 1932. It is a well-known hospital for Medicine, General Surgery, Gynaecology, obstetrics, Urology, Neurology, Paediatrics, Paediatric Surgery, Orthopaedics, Ophthalmology, Dentistry, ENT, Radiodiagnosis. Beside that Ramakrishna Mission had Pathological Laboratory, Blood Bank, Physiotherapy Centre.²² Homeopathy, Allopathy units of Belur, Narendrapur, Sargachi, Manasadwip, Malda, Midnapur, Tamluk, Jayrambati, Kamarpukur, Antpur etc serves regularly for the patients.

Spread of Education

Swamiji says "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man." Education is the most important thing for human development. Ramakrishna Mission understood and took essential steps for proper education of the youth from its early days. Swami Akhanandaji Maharaj established a School at Sargachi. It is the first School of Ramakrishna Mission. Then Ramakrishna Mission opened many Schools, Colleges, University for enriching the Education Sector. It motivated the students of urban, rural and tribal areas of West Bengal. Besides the traditional schools and colleges Ramakrishna Mission established Agricultural School, Language School, Computer School, Blind Boys' Academy, B.Ed. college, Nursing College etc. Ramakrishna Mission Residential College (Autonomous), Narendrapur of South 24 Parganas, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Centenary College, Rahara of North 24 Parganas and Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, Belur Math Howrah are well-known colleges in India for their infrastructure and success rate.¹

Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, Belur has Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira,

Ramakrishna Mission Janasikshamandira, Ramakrishna Mission Samaj Sevak Sikshanamandira, Ramakrishna Mission Shilpavidyalaya, Ramakrishna Mission Shilpamandira (Polytechnic College), Ramakrishna Mission Shilpamandira (Computer Centre), Ramakrishna Mission Shilpamandira (Community Training Centre).¹¹ Moreover Rahara, Baranagar, Purulia, Narendrapur, Ramharipur, Taki, Malda, Midnapur, Kamarpukur, Jairambati, Asansol Ramakrishna Mission are famous for Madhyamik and Higher Secondary Education. Further Ramakrishna Mission Calcutta Students' Home, Belgharia, Kolkata helps the needy students year after year. Manasadwip Ramakrishna Mission High School of Sundarban area is one of the best Education centres¹² where most of the students are from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Communities. Most of the schools and colleges of Ramakrishna Mission have good libraries but Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark, Kolkata is one of the best Libraries in West Bengal.

Current Activities

During the Covid 19 period Ramakrishna Mission takes several initiatives. Covid 19 Relief operation conducted by Ramakrishna Mission almost all the States of India. Beside awareness campaign Ramakrishna Mission served the foods like Rice, Sattu, Muri, Cooking oil, Potatoes, Onion, Noodles, Almonds, Dates, Milk Powder, Tea Leaves, Breads etc. It also distributed face masks, gloves, free medicine for the protection of Covid 19.¹³

During the first phase of pandemic Ramakrishna Mission Narendrapur distributed Sanitizer. Beside that the college students of this ashrama took classes for the school students when the school was closed for lockdown. This college also made safe home for the covid patients.¹⁴ Mental health is very important issue today. Ramakrishna Mission Swami Vivekananda's Ancestral House and Culture Centre took initiative for the youth. It organized online competition like Quiz, Vani Path, Extempore, Drawing, Singing etc. When the class was dissolved for the Covid 19 these steps of Ramakrishna Mission helped the youth to express their activity.¹⁵

After the lockdown period Ramakrishna Mission Swami Vivekananda's Ancestral House and Culture Centre arranged one day workshop on Philosophy of Service.¹⁶ This workshop motivated the college students for their proper upliftment of their mentality. In this pandemic period healthy mind, body and society are very important. This workshop perhaps the right and auspicious steps of Ramakrishna Mission in this situation. Useful and Suitable decision of

Ramakrishna Mission helps its growth and development. Further it also helps the growth and development of the society. Vivekananda was the Master thinker of human development. He wanted to inspire and motivate the people.¹⁷ Now a days the monks of Ramakrishna Mission are continuing that process. So, it become a 'real source of power and glory'.¹⁸ Ramakrishna Mission arranged relief work for the sufferers of Cyclone Amphan, Cyclone Yaas, Cyclone Fani, earthquakes, floods, droughts, landslides, tornadoes, Tsunami etc.

Conclusion

Ramakrishna Mission serves for the upliftment of the humanity continuously. It has a great ideology. Beside spirituality its aim was to serve the society. So, it actively works for the social welfare and human need. Activities of Ramakrishna Mission enriched the society. "Siva jnanejiva seva" is one of the main objects of Ramakrishna Mission. Thus, this sermon enriched education sector, health sector and many other developments of the society. This object of Ramakrishna Mission benefited the socio-cultural history of West Bengal.

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