CHAPTER I

I.1 Character and concept of character-building

Character is a word normally referred to the qualities of a person, though used for good and bad characteristics. However, it will be referred here for good qualities, projecting the upbringing and background. Dictionary meaning of word 'Character' is as follows.

Dictionary meaning

       (a) Distinctive mark, qualities of a person.

       (b) Mental and moral nature.

       (c) Reputation.

       (d) Testimonial and qualities.

       (e) Strong personal characteristics.

       (f) Person's good reputation.

I.1.2 Character – *Caritram*

The equivalent word for 'Character' in Sanskrit language is '*Cāritryam*'. The dictionary meaning of *Cāritryam* is as follows:

       (a) Conduct, good conduct.

       (b) Behavior.

       (c) Peculiar observation or practice.

       (d) Heredity observance.

       (e) Probity (honesty).

       (f) Chastity.

Hereditary observance and chastity are two other aspects which are meant by *cāritram* and have an additional important significance as far as Character Building is concerned. Most of the aspects of word 'Character' are covered in these meanings. However whenever Sanskrit word is being translated in to other languages, additional explanatory note is required to be given as the word in most of the time has deep rooted generic significance as well as historical traditional background. This aspect will be explained and demonstrated throughout the study.

I.1.3 Character building

Building Character is not an overnight concept. It is a deliberate attempt over a long period of time covering the following aspects.

(a) Inheritance of genetic character from generation to generation.

(b) Subliminal impressions being engraved in to mental faculty of a person.

(c) Conscious effort done by varied elements to imbibe the character throughout the life cycle of a person.

Character Building is sum total of these three attributes i.e., inheritance nurtured by the subliminal impressions and deliberate conscious effort. Ancestral Character-Building traits and inherited characteristics are beyond the scope of this study. However, by imbibing right kind of character in a person one can work as long-term strategy for future generation. As far as subliminal impression is concerned, effort can be made for Character Building when child is in the womb of a mother by deliberate education to the parents.

I.1.4 Efforts for character building

The third and the most important aspect of Character Building is by resorting to the conscious effort right from the birth of a child to adulthood. This will be the main theme of this project. According to the Swami Vivekananda whose life, upbringing and philosophical thoughts are greatly influenced by Sanskrit literature gives a simile of lake for the mind. [1] "Each work which we do, each thought we think produces an impression called *Samskara* upon the mind and sum total of their expression becomes the tremendous force which is called character. The character of a man, what he has created for himself, it is result of mental and physical action that he had done in his life."

There is requirement of drawing difference between the two words Character Building and Personality Development. They are, many time used synonymously which are required to be appropriately understood as far as this study is concerned. Character and personality have a different meaning though they are interdependent. The character is a real personality of man. Personality can be deceptive in absence of character. Character Building is something more than personality development. Indoctrination of management principles are useful for personality development whereas mind & intellect plays important role in Character building.

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[1] *The Complete Work of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata, 2013, P.74

Character Building amongst the youth is an important aspect of Human Resource development. India is passing through a critical and transitional phase where Character Building assumes essential requirement, even world is looking toward us in this direction. Great personalities and management experts have done tremendous work in this area and separate ministry as well as it is a specialized subject in management academic curriculum. Some efforts are also available to draw Character Building attributes based on Sanskrit Scriptures and literature. Keeping in view the present environment, a composite approach of parental role, educational expectation, and social and political system condition will be evaluated to establish the answer which are available through Sanskrit literature.

I.1.5 Attributes of character building

Attributes are those caused by sum total of Characteristic belonging to that group exhibiting the ultimate effect of human behaviour. Patriotism for example conveys the love, affection and dedication to own country. However, honesty, sacrifice, courage and action are some of the associated Characteristic which will complete the Character Building of Patriotic person. Some of these attributes are commonly known and accepted are listed below, their significance and subsequent application based on Sanskrit literature will be covered in following chapters.

I.1.6 Significant attributes of character-building

Before embarking on Character Building attributes derived from Sanskrit literature, some the universally accepted norms are given below. The thrust area of this thesis is to awaken the youth to motivate them to these known areas also as practiced and enunciated in Sanskrit literature.

1. Unflinching faith.
2. Spirituality.
3. Education.
4. Patriotism.
5. Daily Routine.
6. Leadership.
7. Yogic practices.
8. Universal Brotherhood.
9. Team work.

I.1.7 Personal characteristics for development of character

Similarly, some the known characteristics which are taught, insisted and expected by parents, school and colleges are listed below, however, their incorporation is far from reality. Efforts are made to convey to the students and regulating authorities the importance of Sanskrit literature for Character Building.

Personal Characteristic – Quality especially typical of a person.

1. Physical & Mental health.
2. Moral Values.
3. Education.
4. Self Confidence.
5. Courage/Fearless Attitude.
6. Concentration.
7. Creative and Innovativeness.
8. Positive Thinking.
9. Honesty.
10. Compassion.
11. Self-Control.
12. Dedication.
13. Chastity and Celibacy.
14. Live in Present.
15. Time Management.
16. Bravery.
17. Etiquettes and mannerism.

I.1.8 Developmental characteristic - through training and effort

Some of the personal traits which are universally accepted and known for development of personality are given below. All the great personalities of the world apart from their excellence in the field of core competency were ardent follower of Art and culture as their hobbies, recreational habits and relaxing techniques. For example, Dr. Raja Ramana who was Scientific Adviser to Defense Minister, Government of India (SA to RM) apart from being Nuclear Scientist of par excellence was an accomplished Piano player. Similarly, Missile man Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, erstwhile SA to RM and former President of India, was ardent lover of Indian Classical music. Both of them were also prolific writers, orator and men of Character. The love

Dr. Kalam for Sanskrit language is well known, all missile developed or being processed by DRDO have Sanskrit name.

There are number of Character-Building attributes which are required to be developed through traditional practices, training and motivation. As brought out earlier the recreational and relaxing techniques are to be developed as per individual aptitude and liking. These aspects of personality development are best nurtured through Sanskrit literature and allied Shastras. These aspects of Character development can be classified mainly in to two categories, personal and contribution from allied Shastras.

    (a) Some Personal Characteristic to be developed.

        (i) Refrain from Materialistic World.

        (ii) Mastery over Speech.

        (iii) Reading Habits.

        (iv) Absence of Jealousy and so on.

    (b) Some examples of Arts and Culture to be developed through allied shastras.

        1. Music.

        2. Dance.

        3. Drawing and Painting.

        4. Arts and Crafts.

        5. Travelling.

        6. Be with nature.

        7. Sports.

        8. Astronomy.

        9. Vedic Mathematics and so on.

I.2.1 Indication where in Sanskrit literature contributes

The activities of Food intake (आहारः), Sacrificial act (यज्ञः), Austerity (तपः) and Gift (दानः) are dealt in the Chapter 17th in BG with varied level of Faith(श्रद्धा), depending upon divergent temperament and tendencies of the seeker. After having faith classified in to three categories, Lord Krishna explains the preference of food intake in each of these categories. Food intake has an immense significance as far as the physical body of sheaths (कोषः) are concerned. Food intake can be Preference of food depending upon type of faith or effect of different type of food on psychological set up of individual. Without explaining as to what is meant by qualities (गुणाः), the understanding of faith will not be complete. The type of any activities depends on

quality of *vāsanās* (Imprints on mind) promoting them. The Gunah refer to the three types of *vāsanās*. *Sattva* is a state of equanimous, serene and poised thoughts, *Rajas* is a state of passion, desire and agitation, whereas *Tamas* is a state of ignorance and inertia.

Coming back to our topic of Faith, Arjuna who is quite intelligent himself and asks Lord Krishna in the beginning of the Chapter 17th of *Gītā* 'Those who worship against the dictates of scripture, what is their state?' By asking this question, Arjuna is aware of these three personalities, however he is not aware or ignorant about how Faith which is motivating force in our life is related to these three *Guṇas*. Lord Krishna answers his question by confirming that Faith itself is threefold, depending upon the inherent nature of the individual, *sanskāras* and *vāsanās*; namely *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmsika*. So, the *śraddhā* with which the individual performs his tasks will exhibit the category or Character to which he belongs.

I.2.2 The concept of supreme and its significance with character building

The concept of Brahman which has been spelled out in scriptures is key to establish the relationship of human being with the almighty. One of the Patañjajali's *Yogasūtras* beautifully defines the Supreme as *Tasya vācakaḥ Praṇavaḥ* (He the supreme is 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 Sanātan Dharma*, enunciating the principle and value system. Personalities of these deities were portrayed in human forms and some mix of animal forms. These deities propelled the individual to the path of realization. However, in recent times some obscene and vulgar practices and cult emerged from which the mankind has to be protected and guarded. The importance scriptural concept like Om, Deities and *Avatāras* (the God incarnate) on Character Building are covered in subsequent Chapters.

I.2.3 Awareness and solution

Character building amongst youth is an important aspect of human resource development. Masses and multicultural youth population has to be trained and redirected to get into the main stream of integrated India. India is passing through a critical phase where large forces of divisive nature are working to destabilise the country. Parental role, educational, social and political systems are unable to extricate or navigate from this crisis. There is unending list of evil forces which are severely affecting the nation leading to the disintegration and chaos. Problem faced by the nation today are combination of hazards of modernization and lack of character. The solution lies in tackling the problem at grass root level by educating the upcoming population in Character Building.

THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF GROWTH

The development of character of an individual is not an overnight concept. These stages are designed in conformity with present educational system prevailing in the country. The stages envisaged at which the type of character-Building aspects can be indoctrinated for this study are given below. These stages are not sacrosanct and even child of advance age will be recommended for indoctrination.

    (a) Embryonic stage: - 9 to 0 month.

    (b) Nascent stage: 0 to 5 years.

    (c) Primary stage: 5 to 12 years.

    (d) Secondary stage: 12 to 17 years.

    (e) College/University stage: 17 to 20 years.

    (f) Adult stage: > 20 years.

I.3.1 Sanskrit Literature

Sanskrit literature has a strong potential to steer through this situation by ushering new era of hope and prosperity. Great and learned personalities have already explored vital aspect of character building from Sanskrit literature. However, there is need to rediscover and put across their teaching aspects in the context of present environment with implementable strategy. Sanskrit literature is vast ocean of knowledge. It is from this repository of Scriptures and literature, known and proven texts like *Bhagavad-gītā*, and other literature from medieval and recent period are source material for drawing the Character Building aspects. Similarly the work of some of the great personalities and their life is studied to bring out the aspects of character building. Following are some of the treatise/ books which are the main source of materials for the study.

    (a) *Bhagavad-gītā*.

    (b) *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*.

    (c) Selected *Upaniṣads*.

    (d) *Nītiśatakam*.

I.3.2 Personalities

There are number of luminaries spread all over Indian subcontinent as well as in other countries who have contributed their might by devotion to the mankind, totally based on Vedanta philosophy and their life style, literary talent, oratory and having unflinching faith in Indian thought. For the purpose of this study, few of them of recent time are selected to demonstrate,

how the Character Building aspects enunciated in our literature have shaped their personalities. The life of following personalities whose life and work is projected with emphasis on Swami Vivekananda.

(a) **Adi Śaṅkarācārya** – He is recognized as world-teacher (Jagadguru) and benefactor of mankind (Loka-Sankara). He was philosopher for intellectuals and spiritual leader for the masses. He was strong believer and practicing saint for India's strength as nation of 'Unity and diversity.' (7 and 8th Century)

(b) **Swami Vivekananda** – Eight volumes of "*Complete works Swami Vivekananda*" have been perused to strengthen, understand and substantiate the Character Building aspects.(18 to 19 century)

(c) **Swami Chinmayananda** – His main mission was Man Making. He has written commentaries for all principle Upanisads and established Chinmaya mission in all major cities in India and abroad. His two volumes 'The Art of Man Making' based on talks on at AIR just after independence covering 18 Chapters of BG were very popular. (1916 to 1993)

(d) **Sri Aurobindo Ghosh** – He was totally brought up in Western environment till Maharaja of Baroda picked him and employed him with State administration and later on as a lecturer and Vice Principal of Baroda College. He was a freedom fighter and dreamt of India leading on the front of spirituality. His published work on analysis of scriptural treatise gives new dimension and outlook. (1872 -1950)

(e) **Dr. Deepak Chopra** – He is known as 'The poet-prophet of alternative medicine'. Has written more than 26 books, which are translated into thirty-five languages. Brought up in Indian traditional environment with education in English medium School and graduated in Allopathic medicine. An ardent follower and student of Ayurveda, having an innovative approach in practicing medical profession. (2020 to 2021- He is still active)

I.4.1 Ancient History

The history of the Indian subcontinent is very interesting. No parallel can be observed with any other region which has undergone such an upheaval. *Āryavarta* (The Empire where Aryan heritage flourished) covered the area from *Hindukuśa* mountain ranges on North to Hind Mahāsāgar in South, with its western extremity in the form of Baluchistan and Brahmadeśa (Myanmar) on the East. Over the period, the decline in standard of moral values in this subcontinent can be witnessed because of the rivalry between fragmented kingdoms,

destruction of wealth and culture by Islamic aggression and later on by European dominance. Regionalism and religious fundamentalism has cropped up further with decline in moral and spiritual value to destabilise united India.

I.4.2 Unity in diversity

It is on this background the traditional culture and unity amongst diverse set up is required. Major effort is therefore required at grass root level to develop the character of the people which will go long way in solving the problem. Great philosophy and implementable strategy is therefore required to be drawn out from Sanskrit literature. Adi Śaṅkarācārya thoughts on this aspect are briefly covered in this study. Such attempt is not only for any one segment of the society, but it would be applicable to all, who owe their allegiance to India, irrespective of their cast, creed and religion.

I.4.3 Multi-dimensional aspects

It is easy to reunite the country where language, religion and cultural backgrounds are same. Whereas, in case of India, all the three variants are diversified. The country has followers of practically from all the religions of the world with different sects. There are more than 22 recognized languages with many more variants. Regional and cultural practices are varying in different parts of the country. Then what is solution? The greatest binding factor still exists in the form of old traditional wisdom embedded in Sanskrit literature. World has already acknowledged this and majority of Indian believe in the same and guidance of parental, educational, social and political bodies is required to be generated.

I.4.4 Solidarity in crisis

Nation has shown awareness and togetherness, whenever it has undergone crisis; be it story of independence, debacle of 1962 or glory of 1971 military operation. There are some signs of awareness to eradicate corruption, nepotism and immorality. However any measures taken would not improve the present situation, unless efforts are made to develop Character of the people in phased manner. The process may be difficult but not unachievable. Character is suggested to be build up at all levels of child development across the country, through the known and proven Sanskrit literature doctrines and dictates advocated by learned personalities whose logic is based on traditional wisdom.

I.4.5 Adoption of traditional wisdom

Āryan never claimed to belong to any particular religion or sect. They were follower and student of universal truth propounded by Vedanta. The philosophy adopted by this elite society, were resident of Indus valley and that is why they were called as Hindus. It is accepted that drastic educational reforms are necessary for improving overall atmosphere of the country. All educational institution and Government are making efforts to improve the educational system. Quite of few of them succeeded in suggesting the means by which such reforms can be achieved. Most of them advocated the acceptance of traditional educational system. However, in the name of secularism, hypocrites are denying this wisdom to be reintroduced in our educational system. Lack of political will, entrenched colonial legacy and unhealthy westernized pattern has prevented the educational reforms to get implemented. Recently new educational policy is announced by the Government and one of the important thrust area should be Character Development.

I.4.6 Spiritual and overall development

Parental education and early introduction of proven educational topics/subjects for a child is essential. Introduction of correct inputs in phased manner of learning is required. Based on Sanskrit literature attempt has been made to develop these inputs as far as the character building is concerned. Reforming curriculum and educational system are separate topic of research and not touched during this study. Spiritual base in education is lacking, even outside world is looking towards India in this respect. The emphasis should be on overall development of a child physically, mentally, ethically and spiritually. Basic nature of a child is innocence, this divinity which has to developed and preserved throughout the life cycle. This divinity is corrupted because of absence of fundamental principles of character building at early stage of child. Excellent efforts are being done at some individual level and in some pockets. They are required to be explored, highlighted and brought to the light for their implementation.

I.5. Conclusion

This chapter briefly highlights the strength, utility and completeness in drawing the concept of Character Building. It also touches upon the history and issues related with 'Unity in Diversity', Language, Caste and Secularism which are hindrance in development of a Nation. The topic of the character building has been chosen because that is the need of the hour. Technological explosion witnessed during last century, continuous expansion of knowledge base and commercialization of life style has strangulated the student community. Wild fire of lust and greed is engulfing the entire youth community, with practically no guidance from the desired

sector. The moral and value systems are degenerated, giving rise to anarchic condition. The youth energy is being dissipated, inviting physical and mental stress. This is where a strong character build up dictum will help the entire youth community in general and Nation at large. The ideas derived from Sanskrit literature, would immensely benefit the youth by citing examples and teaching covered on the aspect of Character Building. The message of Character Building is excellently covered in Sanskrit literature; however same required to be put up in coherent manner and the language understandable in the present environment.

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