

## VIPULANANTHAR - A MULTIFACETED SCHOLAR IN EASTERN PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS - AN ANALYSIS

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**ABSTRACT** The oriental ideology has a long history and study of the ideologists and groups is a key to understand and compare this with diversified ideology. Swami Vipulananthar (Saint) and Sri Rama Krishna Mission have been considered to be prominent stakeholders of oriental Ideology in the last century, especially in the field of South Asian Philosophy. Learning Swami Vipulananthar, his thoughts and deeds will provide a clear picture of Modern Tamil Cultural History and the tradition of South Eastern Ideology as he was not only a monk, but also contributed in many ways in the fields of school founder, education, University education, literature, critics and many more in the colonial era at the juncture of nationalism was at its peak against the colonialism. In this research article analyze the scholarly works of Swami Vipulananthar. The result indicates that teacher, principal, lecturer, professor, newspaper and magazine editor, poet, translator, author, researcher, creative writer, ect

**Keywords** - Realist, Educator, Spiritualist, Translator, Yal nooll, Mathankasulamani

### INTRODUCTION

Swami Vipulananthar,(1892-1947) was born in Karaitivu of Eastern Sri Lanka, who is mainly considered as an eminent scholar of Tamil language , Tamil education revivalist, and monk of Rama Krishna Mission of India, which was founded by Swami Vivekananda based on Vedantha Ideology<sup>1</sup>. However, Swami Vipulananthar played roles as a teacher, principal, lecturer, professor, newspaper and magazine editor, poet, translator, author, researcher, creative writer, skilled person in languages like Tamil, English, Sanskrit, ect. He was a met physicist, spiritual guide, founder of schools,<sup>2</sup> member of educational bodies, an excellent orator, formulator of terminologies, president of societies and forums, and many more. Born as Mayilvaganam, he received primary education in the home town karaitivu in Kalmunai, and then moved to Batticaloa for secondary level education. He passed Cambridge Senior examination and became a teacher. Then he completed Bachelor of Science degree from the University of London, and also became the first Sri Lankan Tamil Pandithar, which is similar to a degree from a linguistic academy in Tamilnadu . He started his profession as a teacher and served in Batticaloa and in Jaffna.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are number of books and articles which have appeared in Tamil and English languages dealing with Vipulananthar. Most of the studies are available in the general aspect of Vipulananthar, but they did not proof him man as a multiple scholar in Eastern thoughts ‘.Swami Vipulananthar’s religious thoughts by Arunasalam expresses (1990) ‘the historical background of Vipulananthar and also some thoughts of his view. ‘Swami Vipulananthar Speech and writing’ by Arankarajan explain (2009) major works of swami specially his Articles, books , Text books , translation work, and editorial works in his book. ‘Adicalar Padivamalar’ an edited work by Satkunam (1969),in this many valuable articles were writer by scholars and academics. ‘Tamil arinjar

<sup>1</sup> Many .P.S, (1992), Swami Vipulandhar , Maderas, Manikkavasar press

<sup>2</sup> Arunasalam,.K, (1990), Swami Vipulandhar religious thoughts , millath publication, Madras.

Valvum pannikalum hundred years essay collection,' by, (1992) , Hindu Culture Department, explains: Vipulananthar education thoughts,, Yallnool creator, poet creator, language thoughts, A brief note on Swami Vipulananthar a pioneer in literary criticism, Vipulananthar social activity, Ramakrishna mission and Vipulananthar, Vipulananthar's times his life and works, Tamil Scholar Vipulananthar by Sivasupramaniyam,(1993) , explain contribution and works of the Vipulananthar. 'Vipulananthar Thoughts and Action' : by K.Kanesarajah edited book on Swami Vipulananthar 125<sup>th</sup> memorial function ( 2017)., explain many contribution to develop the society through education , and human religious ethics.' Vipulananthar valvum vallamum' (life and source) by Sabarathenam(1994), explain Vipulananthar thoughts of views.<sup>3</sup>

#### Vipulananthar and Ramakrishna Mission

He had joined Ramakrishna Mission of India as a probationer monk with the 'Chaitanya' in 1923 and the became a monk in 1924 in India. Later, Swami also became a Professor in Tamil Language for the Annamalai University, India and University of Ceylon. Swami Vipulananthar contributed immensely in building nationalist ideas between Sri Lanka and India. His masterpiece is considered as the "Yarl Nool"- the which deals mainly with ancient Tamil literature and Tamil Music under the principles of Physics.<sup>4</sup> Many more books, articles and literature have been contributed by Swami Vipulananthar. As the Head of Ramakrishna Mission in Sri Lanka, Swami Vipulananthar has built many Schools and orphanages for the betterment of the children. Based on his monastic following, he might not be fitted only to the ideology of Rama Krishna Mission. This ideology has three characteristics: it is modern in the sense that the ancient principles of Vedanta have been expressed in the modern idiom; it is universal, that is, it is meant for the whole humanity; it is practical in the sense that its principles can be applied in day-to-day life to solve the problems of life. However, Swami Vipulananthar had a great understanding of himself and preferred liberal thinking rather than the traditional and ritual based (Agamic) theory of spirituality.<sup>5</sup> Association with non-agamic worship of Goddess Kannaki from his childhood may also have made him for these thoughts. His ideology of spiritualism was simple and clear. These thoughts must have been transmitted to Swami Vipulananthar through his direct Guru, Swami Shivanatha. Swami Shivanantha is one of the twelve direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The teachings of Swami Shivanantha are as follows.

Low thoughts will come and go. Don't mind them. Through His grace, as a result of constant practice you will get strength. Devote your whole mind to japa, meditation, worship and the study of the scriptures, whichever appeals to you for the time being.

Mere mechanical japa does not help much. You must have love for the Lord. But then, even mechanical japa has some results; after all, it is the Lord's name that is being repeated.

Pray to the Lord for strength, knowledge and dispassion. Pray to Him with all your heart for His grace and for devotion and faith. It is not possible for everyone to practise hard austerities, but then, through prayer everything is attained.

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<sup>3</sup> "Ideology" , Belur math, <http://belurmath.org/ideology/> (2020)

<sup>4</sup> Satkunam.M (1969), Vipulananthar Padivamalar, Karaitivu, KSK press

<sup>5</sup> Sivasubramaniyam.V, (1993), Vipulananthar tharisanam Batticaloa, Holy Sapeater press

Following two factors may also have contributed in shaping up Swami's point of view. Firstly, the readings by Swami on the life and teachings of his supreme Guru, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who had been very humble and his preaching's were more excellent. Secondly, his association with Swami Sithanaikuddy, a sage born in Southern India and lived in his home town, Karaitivu who never followed customary rituals nor even wore religious symbols. Another Sage whom Swami Vipulananthar associated was Yoga Swamigal of Jaffna. According to Swami Vipulananthar, they were true Sadhus, in the true sense of the term. They who he considered true children of nature who have so patterned their life as to be in harmony with nature. Therefore, Swami Vipulananthar actually didn't follow a rigid religious code to follow except that he borrowed from Saiva Sannithnams of South India. His attraction of listening to the twelve volumes of Saiva devotional songs the "Panniru Thirumuragal" admiring the beauty for Tamil literature as well as the rich divinity. Swami placed a high premium on these devotional hymns for the personality development of a man.

Swami Vipulananthar represented Rama Krishna Mission which accepted pluralism. Their Supreme Guru Sri Ramakrishna, taught a universal acceptance of all religions which he claimed leads to the direct experience of God.<sup>6</sup> His experiments on self realization of God made him to follow Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity, not in matters of doctrinal truths but the actual attainment of God-realization. His Hindu worldview, being intrinsically pluralist, encouraged him to discover whether or not such pluralism was valid not only within Hinduism but also in other religions. These factors and Swami Vipulananthar's association with the Muslim community who lived in the Eastern Province, specially near his hometown has also influenced Swami to work together with the people of other religious faith. According to A.M.A. Azeez Ceylonese civil servant, educator, social worker and member of the Senate of Ceylon, Swami was highly regarded by all communities even before he became a monk.

"I first personally met Swami Vipulananthar in the year 1939, Since then, I became closely associated with him. Swami Vipulananthar delivered a lecture on the subject of "muththamil" at the Ramakrishna Mission Tamil School in Karaitivu, and I was bestowed with the great honour of presiding over this function. It was during this period that Swami Vipulananthar had taken up the position of Professor at the University of Ceylon. We became very close friends. " We discussed matters for long and in detail. I had the good fortune of knowing a multitude of matters on Education from him. <sup>7</sup> The Swami, very often stressed the importance of doing social services. He, on several occasions spoke about the Sivananda Vidyalayam in Batticaloa and about the common culture possessed by both the Muslims and Hindus, in the Eastern Province. He used to say that despite the advancements made in the modern era, treasures of our old heritage like the folk songs etc. should be compiled and documented before such treasures pass into oblivion. Swami Vipulananthar was particularly very happy over the establishment of new schools in the Eastern Province. He was very concerned about growing items of food to eradicate hunger and poverty amongst the people.

The Swami was very much interested and concerned with some Arabic words which were commonly used by the Muslims, like Barakath, Rahmath, Mowth, Hayaath etc. and was anxious to compile such words. During his stay with me, I was able to observe his purity in conduct and reverence in God worship. I also saw the mercy

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<sup>6</sup> Kanapathippilai. K., (1991), Vipulananthar, A biography the man and his achievement, Colombo, State Printing Cooperation.

and kindness he extended towards the needy and poor. I was also taken up by his respect to the religion of Islam. I was personally amazed at his knowledge on books, knowledge and research.

He was no less an educationist of outstanding ability and vision.<sup>8</sup> Although there was not much of originality in the Educational System envisaged, and put into effect by him, it was, in a sense, altogether a novel approach, different from the then-prevailing system of Colonial Education designed by Lord Macaulay and introduced into Sri Lanka with the help of the imperialistic Christian Missionaries by the British Raj. There was something more, something novel, something original, something bizarre — so the Department of Education and the Missionaries thought — in Vipulananda's system of education.

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<sup>7</sup> Raguparan K, (2019) "Swami Vipulananthar in Tamil Pani", Swami Vipulananthan Sinthani Seyal, 125vath Ninaivu Thina Sirappu Malar.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander M.S. (2003), Educational Philosophy of Swami Vipulananthar (1892-1947), Swami Vipulananthar Ninaivu Vizha Sirappu Malar, "Vipulam", Swami Vipulananthar Mandram - Canada.

In this context, there came to the mind of Vipulananthar — the Guru Kula system of education of the Aranyan Schools or Forest Universities. So the traditional way was to have gurus to instruct young men in the great values of life ethic, spiritual progress, means of livelihood. It would certainly have been extremely difficult for young Vipulananthar to dream of the ancient Gurukula System of Education, to envisage it, to implant it in the Eastern Region in Sri Lanka. Hence Vipulananthar had an immovable faith in the efficacy of Gurukula system of education.

There is a purity, a rare clarity, and a sweet suavity in this way of establishing the great contacts with one's ambiance. The Guru Kula is no other than the extension of the warmth and comforts of the family. There is no wrenching away, no breaking, no leaving the home, no giving up of one's members and the congenial atmosphere of the family hearth, and no pains, no pangs of separation from one's kith and kin. In this system of Education the pupil meets the guru. His heart goes to the guru and the guru's heart comes to the pupil and they meet half way and they coalesce. This is one of the great conjunctions taking place at the vignana know ledge level (cognition) of experience. The tow minds mix and mingle the potent and the expectant. The poornam - perfection - that is has met the poornam that is to be and the grand process of being and becoming has to evolve into the sublime process of having become.

Swami Vipulananda's back ground plays an important role in bringing out, not only spiritual aims of Education but also creative visions in various aspects of Education. During the period 1950 to 1960, Educationist of the world assembled together to contemplate on the aim of Education. After a long discussion, they came to the conclusion that Education is about Man and his environments. So the Educational thinkers proclaimed their definitions based on their wealth of experiences, research and from the contemporary experiences of the world. Swami Vipulananda's definition of Education arose from the wealth of Heritage Education and his great personal achievements in the present system of Education in various fields then.<sup>9</sup>

He loved his mother tongue - Tamil Language very much and had studied ancient literature and grammar from various Tamil scholars. Swami Vipulananthar is a great man of self confidence, deep knowledge and clear thinking. He wished to do volunteer service to his mother - tongue. So he wrote scientific, philosophical and research articles on various subject in scientific journals and in Western Heritage . His knowledge of various languages, paved way for translating the best of articles, poems from English and Greek literature to Tamil. His diction in his style of writing guided other to write (Senthamil) best prose and poems in Tamil. He had brought a value in Education to accept the best of things, with no concern for the language of origin. He had stated that learning various languages would pave the way for better style of writing in ones own Language. Swami wished good books on various subjects to be translated in to Tamil. He had given excellent translation to various books of English and Sanskrit. That itself has become master pieces of writing in Tamil. Swami Vipulananthar's contribution for Tamil Language is immense. He has contributed in many ways for Tamil Language in addition to being a Tamil Scholar, his knowledge in other languages science and music made him a unique and diversified Tamil Scholar. Basic interest on Tamil Language has been influenced by "Silapathigaram" the tale of Godless Kannahi whose ancient temple was situated in Swami's birth place. Further, his association with Pandithar S.Kanthaiyapillai, Vithuvan C.Thamotharampillai, Vithuvan C.Kailasapillai made him to concentrate on ancient Tamil literature of Sangem Period.

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<sup>9</sup> Salvanayaham.T.D, (1965), Vipulandhar Swaimi, Jaffna, Lanka book publication.

In 1921, Swami Vipulananthar, he was as Mayilvaganam established Aryan Dravidian Language Develop even society and conducted “Bala pandithar”, Piravesa Pandithar” and pandither exams which were equivalent to foundation entry and degree level exams. Swami had a good relationship with veteran Tamil Scholar Maraimalai Adigal and as a result, Swami joined Tamil only movement. It encouraged his disciples Prof.K.Kanapathipillai, Prof.S.Vithyanathan, M.Peethamparam to join the same movement. After joining Ramakrishna Mission Swami worked as the editor of “Ramakrishna Vijayam” magazine and contributed a lot by his articles. As per the request of fellow Tamil Scholars, Swami wrote “Mathanga Soolamani” a drama oriented book on William Shakespeare. Swami was very much close to Mathurai and Korantha Tamil Societies and wrote many articles in their magazines’ Senthamizh and Thamizh Pozhil’ respectively.

As per the initiates of the Indian Government, the Annamalai University was established and Swami Vipulananthar was appointed as the first professor in Tamil Language in the world. His tenure in the university associated with many Tamil Scholars and worked together for the advancement of Tamil Language.

Later in 1943, Swami Vipulananthar was appointed as the first Professor in Ceylon for Tamil Language in the University of Ceylon. The award Muthamil Vithagar<sup>10</sup> - expert in three form of Tamil (Written &Spoken, music, Drama) was awarded because he exhibited such skills in forms of orations articles, and in books Swami’s contribution in creation of Tamil terminology has also a rememberable contribution.

His Contribution to all three forms of Tamil as follows

### **Iyal**

He wrote numerous articles like “Meatisai Selvam”, “Vinganan Theepam”, He served as the chairman of Tamil Science Terminology Society, comprised of nine branches of Science. He had Translated so many English articles in to Tamil & Vice Versa. He wrote many critical essays based on Tamil literature. He wrote may Poems like “ Kangayil Viduththa Olai”,and “Eesan Uvakkum Inmalar Moondru”

### **Isai**

He wrote YaalNool - the masterpiece of Swami. A Vipulandhar book on ancient Tamil Music was analyzed with physics. Music claim the mind. In music there are three ways to change the pitch of a vibrating string so is the voice of a human. String instruments are tuned by varying the strings tension.Musical Instruments such as Vil Yarl, Paeri Yarl, Mahara YArL, Sengoti Yarl, Sagoda Yarl, were dealt in the Yarl nool reaesrch work. it is the outcome of 14 year research work by Swami Vipulananthar.<sup>11</sup> He visited various place in Tamil Nadu to do research. And also he wrote many articles lie\_ “Ennum Isayum Kuzhalum, Yaazhum”, “Sangeetha Maharantham”. “Sangeetha Paarijatham”, etc.

### **Naadagam**

He wrote ‘Mathangaculamani’, a translation of 12 plays by Shakespeare with commentaries. Vipulananthar wrote “Paavalar Virunthu”, “Malayaman Sozhiyavenathi Thirukkannan”ect.

Vipulananthar believed that Education should make a perfect man. Perfection in Education is an ideal aim of Education. How to get perfection through Education is a long process of knowing, feeling and doing. Now the

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<sup>10</sup> Alakaratham.S., (1998), Swami Vipulananthar education thoughts and services, Sri Lanka, Josithera Publication.

<sup>11</sup> Pon Kulendiren(2012), Vithakan, Kanada, Kanada Arts society publication.

educationists called this as knowledge attitude formation and behavioural aspects of application of contents studied real situation of life. Swami Vipulananthar gives more emphasizes to mental Education. It is an international Truth, that mind is the real basis for various responses to create a bright and blossoming life. Swami Vipulananthar bases the mental development of education from the Educational thoughts and life of great educational philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.<sup>12</sup> The path way of human soul through life may be pictured as containing two segment or arcs. The lower segment aims in preparing a child to live democratically and harmoniously in this society and to do the duties of a good citizen. The higher segment aims at developing spiritual development for attaining free soul and to get knowledge of God. The purpose of life is fully realized after entering the upper arc or segment.

True Wisdom consists in appreciating the interdependence of various limbs that constitutes in the organization of a society. So Swami Vipulananthar indirectly gives that fundamental aim of Education is the “Unity in diversity”. Education should bring spiritual realization and submission to a supreme authority (God). Education should develop innate abilities and attributes of the human personality through the medium of humility and worship. Education should create self reliance to foster creativity. So the Education must be given to all to eradicate ignorance and avoid deceit among masses. School is an extension of society, but the schools of early twentieth century gave over emphasis for intellectual Education. Elders and the school masters gave more marks for pupils who can memories, without understanding the contents of lessons.<sup>13</sup> The children who excellent in healthy sports meet were degraded, because they got less marks than other book worms.

Competition imported from the west was undermining our social order. Most Westerners consider life as a race. He who runs best wins. Eastern do not have such a turf-idea. They hold that life is a thing beauty and a work of art which must be calmly taken up and carefully accomplished. The word success should not elate us, nor failure should depress us. The whole scope of Education is to attain perfection in manhood.

The curriculum must pave way for attaining perfection of manhood. Teachers’ method of teaching is more important like the content of their teaching. Swami Vipulananthar stresses on the subjects in the school curriculum and suitable method for liberal Education. Multiplicity of subjects hamper teachers for and students. At first must be taught two to three basic subject together information. So that they could speak, read and write with the help of these basic subjects of their interest by which they can maintain discipline in life.

Secondary Education must be complete in itself. It is wrong to say that Secondary Education is a preparatory course to study in universities. Secondary create an educated man. As the school reflects society, it has to see that the aim of creating an education man, must be the scope of Secondary Education.

Swami Vipulananthar says that unemployment is in large numbers great due to the lack of vocational Education. Education, should prepare pupils for intellectual and not for jobs. Education they received did not have any connection with the world of jobs. The attitude about jobs must be changed. The system of Education must have link to a job of one’s interest. So that economical development could be achieved. Swami Vipulananthar felt the real needs of Indians and Sri Lankans and stated his views on Education for the wellbeing of learners. It echoes our ancient classic view of “Every country is my country and Every man is my Kinsman. It is the International

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<sup>12</sup> Russell, Bertrand, (1972), *The Problems of Philosophy*, London, Oxford University press

<sup>13</sup> Wilson.J, (1977), *Philosophy and practical Education*, London, Routledge Kegan.

vision of seeing life and man as one and Divinity through situation of life and Sharing the Educational values among all.<sup>14</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Swami Vipulananthar was a grate scholar of Tamil language and scholar of the South Asian Philosophical thoughts. He had contributed for the development of language, education and culture. Swami Vipulananthar's works proofed his caliber in education. He was the first Tamil language professor from Annamalai University, India. He played a multifaceted or multi-disciplinary role and uplifted society. His contribution of the Muthamil: Iyal, Issai, And drama were great asset to the Tamil society. As an Educationalist, his ideas on educational development was highly practiced. Number of notable Tamil literature books, article and drama were published by him. His ideology with Swami Vivakananthar made him to join as a head of the Ramakrishna Mission in Sri Lanka., He had achieved his aims through divine power. Divinity was his soul and his works had contributed for the development of young society as a whole.

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<sup>14</sup> Jkanathan.S.(1992). Inrum kekkum Kural Vipulandhar, Madres, Rasakkeli Publication



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