

**THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY
JAMSHEDPUR**

THE FORTY-FIFTH REPORT

From April, 1965 to March, 1973

The Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Society has completed the 53 years of its useful career from its inception in 1920 in the town of Jamshedpur. The Local Managing Committee of this Mission Centre have great pleasure in presenting to the public a report of its activities during the period from April, 1965 to March, 1973.

1. Inception and early phases of activity: A little over fifty years ago a group of young energetic workers of the Steel City met together and decided to devote themselves to the task of uplifting their personal moral and cultural life and to propagate the same among their friends and coworkers as far as practicable. Most of them were fortunate enough to have previously come in close contact with the senior monks of the Ramakrishna Order and imbibed thereby the spirit of dedicated service as preached by the

illustrious Swami Vivekananda, who revolutionized the thought-current of the modern age and brought about an era of spiritual renaissance in the three continents of the civilized world in an incredibly short period.

There was at that time practically no public life nor any civic or social consciousness amongst the citizen or the slum-dwellers of the Steel City. The moral and cultural atmosphere was not better than as usually prevail in factory towns. So the nascent activities of the small band of educated workers were destined to fulfil a great need.

These few young men were not only eager for self-improvement but were also fired with the zeal of service to humanity, especially to the sick, the poor and the ignorant and the downtrodden.

As chance would have it, opportunity came in their way when there was an outbreak of cholera epidemic at Jugsalai and the slums at the outskirts of the town. The staff of the Health Department of the Company was not adequate enough to cope with this

unprecedented, wide-spread epidemic. At this juncture this band of pioneers voluntarily offered their services for nursing and also for other allied jobs. Moreover, they used to cremate the unclaimed dead bodies and to assist all and sundry in cremation if asked for.

In quick succession small pox came in epidemic form in the wake of the cholera epidemic and these band of brave young men offered unstinted services. They nursed in isolation hospitals and did all for removing infected patients to hospitals— a task for which they had to take great pain for persuasion because the slum-dwellers especially, were averse to vaccination. So these pioneers came forward with their glib tongue and persuaded the ignorant to come forward for vaccination.

The Company appreciated thankfully the activities of these few young men for their efficient humanitarian services and made a proper assessment of the usefulness of the existence of such philanthropic organization in the City.

In December, 1920 an association was formed by

these young men and it was named the Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur. The Company also offered the Society a plot of land at Bistupur with this end in view that the Society known for its beneficent work will have a permanent existence and will be able to carry on its much-needed philanthropic work they have been doing in the past. The foundation stone of the first building of the Society was laid by his Holiness Srimat Swami Abhedanandajee Maharaj, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva on 20th November, 1923.

It is a matter of sincere pride that His Holiness Srimat Swami Vijnananandajee Maharaj, a direct disciple of Bhagvan Sri Ramakrishna Deva paid holy visits to this Ashrama twice and initiated a group of devotees in this ashrama.

For a number of years since its inception the Society had to carry on its philanthropic work keeping their activities con-fined to the following: —

- Managing of Beggar Asylums.
- Welfare work in slums, of which the main aim

was to redeem the poor depressed classes from the clutches of the unscrupulous money lenders.

- Relief work whenever necessary.
- Nursing of patients in hospital and also at private residences.
- Cremation of dead bodies.

2. Inception stage being over, the Management of the Society so far not affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur Math, strongly felt the necessity of having direct supervision and guidance of the experienced monks of the Holy order founded by illustrious Swami Vivekananda in the philanthropic works they would carry on.

Accordingly, to give a permanent and bonafide shape to the organization the **Society was affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, in the year 1924.**

Members of the first Executive Committee formed in 1920

- Sri Satyesh Ch. Gupta, M.A.—President

- Sri Upendra Lai Mukherjee, B.Sc— Hony. Secretary
- Sri Hirendranath Hazra— Hony. Asstt. Secretary
- Sri Satish Ch. Ghosh— Hony. Treasurer
- Sri Kiran Ch. Das
- Sri Prafulla Narayan Guha
- Sri Upendra Ch. Ghosh
- Sri Sivatosh Dasgupta

Some of those institutions are still functioning as Middle Schools and U.P. Schools. The Society has until now from May 1923 onward one Upper Primary School specially earmarked for the Harijan students, which is situated in the locality where most of the dwellers are Harijans. This is being maintained upto dates incurring annual financial loss to keep up its unique character.

This Committee handed over the Vivekananda Society with its assets to the Governing Body of Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, and was affiliated with it in 1924. It was renamed as Ramakrishna Mission

Vivekananda Society. The Society continued to be managed as a Branch Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission in accordance with its constitution and byelaws embodied in the Memorandum of Association under Act XXI of 1860.

Since then the scope and sphere of activity of the society was enlarged and its attention was focused on the spreading of education amongst the depressed classes in slums. With this end in view the Society started free night classes for the boys and girls of Harijans in different localities. Also some free day-classes including free supply of books and slates were organized for the children of the depressed classes. It won't be out of place to mention here that the Society initiated this move long before Mahatma Gandhi started his Harijan movement.

3. Beginning of a new phase of activities from 1936

(a) Within a short time *pari passu* with the expansion of the Steel Company the residents of the different localities of Jamshedpur pressed their demands for

starting educational institutions for the boys and girls who were the children of the Tisco employees and also other residents who were non-Tisco employees, especially in Bengali Medium. In response to this pressing demand, the Society started expansion of their educational activities from the year 1936 onwards. Some of them, thanks to the untiring zeal and dedicated service of the Ramakrishna Mission monks and Brahmacharis and the sustained efforts of lay devotees and honorary workers, have developed into big higher Secondary Schools with bilingual medium of instruction—Hindi and Bengali.

(b) During the year 1942-43 at the time of Bengal Famine a Destitute Boys' Home in houses with tiled roofs was started by the Society on the northern side of the town on the bank of the Subarnarekha river. This Boys' Home has today grown up into an imposing student' Hostel with the patronage of the Tisco authorities and the charitable public. Grateful thanks are due to Sri Nagin B. Parik for his generous help to start the construction of this big building. As it stands now there will be adequate accommodation for 80 boys from rural areas of Bihar where there is no

facility for studies in higher Secondary classes. Boys of rural areas of Bihar can prosecute studies in local schools of the Mission with minimum expenses, as there is no seat rent or electricity charge payable by the boarders. Meritorious Boys of indigent circumstances get concession or free-ships in boarding charges also. Until now more than 300 boys from rural areas of Bihar have passed out of this Home receiving education either in Mission Schools or Local Colleges. It may be mentioned that preference is given to Harijan and tribal students from rural areas to get admitted in the Home and receive religious training along with secular studies in schools and colleges. Another Students' Home on similar time was also in existence in the Ashram premises at 'L' Road with accommodation for 12 students from the year 1936. This home will be merged with the Home on the bank of Subernarekha River in stages.

4. After the Independence the activities of the society increased in all directions. The society has played an important role all these years in the formation of an elevated social and cultural life of the

City. Through His Grace it has attained a remarkable success in catering to the spiritual needs of all classes of citizens by organizing religious functions in the Shrine of the Ashram, spiritual discourses on many occasions, K during the Durga Puja festival held annually with Birth Anniversary .festivals of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda.

It may be mentioned that Society organized Birth Celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva, and Swami Vivekananda in 1936, 1954 and 1963 respectively in an imposing scale with appropriate programme as chalked out by the Central Centenary Committees at Calcutta under direct supervision of Belur Math authorities.

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