

ABSTRACT
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**THE PHILOSOPHY OF PROF. S. S. BARLINGAY:
A CRITICAL SURVEY**

BY

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Teacher, educationist, social reformer, journalist, political activist and philosopher all rolled in one, Professor Surendra S. Barlingay (hereafter SSB) is known for his strikingly unorthodox views on different fields of knowledge in philosophy ranging from logic, epistemology and ontology to ethics, aesthetics and social as well as political philosophy. He was also known for his variety of literary writings. As a freedom fighter, he was closely associated with the mainstream of our national life and after independence he continued his dynamic activities as an educationist, philosopher, literary person and administrator.

The present study attempts to describe and discuss the perspectives of SSB on various philosophical issues.

This thesis is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1: S. S. Barlingay's reflections on the nature of concept of Philosophy.

Chapter 2: The core aspects of S. S. Barlingay's philosophy.

Chapter 3: S. S. Barlingay's reflections on the nature of Indian Philosophy.

Chapter 4: The socio-political philosophy of S.S. Barlingay's

Chapter 5: A brief survey of S. S. Barlingay's views on Indian Logic,

Ethics and Aesthetics.

Conclusion.

Chapter 1: SSB's reflections on the concept of Philosophy.

The first chapter entitled 'SSB's reflections on the concept of Philosophy' gives the survey of his reflections on the concept of philosophy. The question 'What is Philosophy?' is a peculiar kind of question for SSB. He has got his own view regarding the nature of philosophy. For him it is a kind of intellectual exercise which takes place all over the world in different time periods irrespective of the geographical limit, race-limit, etc. This is a human *expression* as well as an *endeavor* and has got its own significance in the history of mankind. This activity of producing philosophy is an apex intellectual exercise. For him Philosophy is an action. It is not just contemplation and speculation in air. He does not allow the word 'speculation' to be applied for this activity since he believes as action oriented in the true sense of the term. For him it is a worldview expressed by sensible, articulated, neat, sensitive humans in entire human race. He analyses these terms in traditional ways and interprets them in modern idiom with special reference to cultures in the world.

For him philosophy is analysis. But the way he analyses various concepts is unconventional. He calls the model of his analysis '*geni-analysis*' and explains it in detail. The titles of his books contain the terms like 'modern introduction' and 'reunderstanding' which indicate his aim and methodological approach, he was trying to introduce in philosophy, particularly Indian Philosophy, and that was to rejuvenate Indian Philosophy in modern idiom.

Chapter 2 : The core aspects of S. S. Barlingay's philosophy.

The second chapter is entitled 'The core aspects of SSB's philosophy.' It discusses SSB's those articles which are central to his philosophical endeavor, e.g. "One World", "Language and the World", "Awareness", "Value, Values and Value Systems", and "Distinguishables and Separables". The views presented by SSB in these articles are like regulative principles that govern almost his entire philosophical discourse.

In the essay "One World" SSB's explains a certain philosophical position regarding man's relationship to the world by means of a conceptual analysis of two perspectives. One he regards as cosmocentric and the other as anthropocentric. According to the cosmocentric view, the world exists in its own rights. He calls it astronomical world. With human interference this world turns into geographical world. The geographical concept of the world is only a sub-case of the astronomical concept of the world. As against this astronomical-cum-geographical concept of the world, there arises the anthropocentric concept of the world which he also calls Social world. SSB in this article is concerned with the problem how this world will be one human world. He discusses two models of society which he calls funnel model and net model, the first being based on hierarchy and exploitation and the other on equality and freedom. SSB describes and supports Sarvodaya which is an example of net model.

"Awareness" is SSB's another article representing a core aspect of his philosophy. For him awareness is the only distinct characteristic of human being which places him above all in this world and stands to be the instinct for the creation of the anthropological world and history. Here he distinguishes between consciousness and self-consciousness. In terms of this distinction he defines the demarcating line between man and other animals. He also distinguishes between biological consciousness and epistemological consciousness. The epistemological

consciousness is inseparably related with will, desire and awareness. For him self-consciousness is an evolving concept and it is different both from biological consciousness and consciousness as it is ordinarily termed, though it presupposes consciousness in both these senses. In one sense of the term both self-consciousness and consciousness would be a function of certain organization called the body and so both self-consciousness and consciousness would depend on body.

The article "Language and the World" discusses the two conceptions of world with special reference to language. Another important article "Value, values and value systems" presents SSB's basic insights on the concept of Value from meta-normative as well as normative perspective.

"Distinguishables and Separables" provides us a key concept in SSB's entire philosophical discourse. SSB has applied it, as philosophical tool for explaining his claims. He wrote many articles showing how problems in metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, logical, aesthetical fields arise due to neglect of the distinction between separability and distinguishability qua-distinguishability and may be solved by applying this distinction.

For SSB this is a very fundamental distinction and ignoring it, has lead to several philosophical muddles which he compares with Ryle's category mistakes. He brings to our attention that such a notion of category mistake is traceable even in the concept of *Adhyasa*.

With the help of the conceptual frameworks and tools he develops in these articles, he builds the edifice of his philosophical thought. He defines his philosophical thought against mysticism, idealism, traditionalism and totalitarian socialism.

Chapter 3: S. S. Barlingay's reflections on the nature of Indian Philosophy.

The third chapter entitled 'S. S. Barlingay's reflections on the nature of Indian Philosophy' takes into account the various approaches SSB develops in his collection of articles *Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*. SSB has some reservations about the term 'Indian Philosophy.' The concepts, theories and trends in philosophy as they have developed in our sub-continent over the ages, are generally termed as 'Indian Philosophy.' Although this account of philosophy is called 'Indian' he emphasizes that

the issues discussed by the ancient and medieval philosophers are essentially abstract and there is nothing 'Indian' about this philosophy exclusively. Moreover, the understanding of Indian philosophy that has emerged in the past two centuries owes its direction and commitment to indologist of western orientation. SSB's aim is to overview the Indian philosophy as presented by ancient and medieval philosophers and not the 're-routed' interpretation. Hence, he prefers to call it a 'Reunderstanding'.

SSB elaborately discusses the ritualistic philosophy of Purvamimamsa as a challenge before the systems of Indian Philosophy. He re-dichotomises the ideological conflicts in Indian philosophical tradition as the one between Purvamimamsa and the other darsana. By applying his method of gene-analysis he gives a novel interpretation of the schools like Samkhya, Buddhism, Jainism and Vedanta, which presents these darsanas as more philosophical than religious, more secular than other worldly.

Chapter 4: The socio-political philosophy of S. S. Barlingay.

The fourth chapter entitled 'The socio-political philosophy of S.S. Barlingay deals with the survey of his views regarding society with its cultural, economic and political aspects. In this chapter, it has been shown how according to SSB, the second order reality called human construct or the anthropological world is created and through this creation how history comes into existence. Anthropocentric world according to SSB is the world of culture and he explains in his critique of culture how religion, science, philosophy and the other fields of life are interrelated. In his anthology *Poverty, Power, Progress* he analyses the concepts poverty, power, democracy, progress and revolution. His distinction between economics of want and economics of need gives a direction and foundation to his thought on social change and substantiates the ideal of Sarvodaya. While discussing the concept of revolution SSB shows that even revolution has two aspects, destructive and constructive. His articles on Gandhian economics and Sarvodaya give a shape to SSB's ideas concerning ideal society.

Chapter 5: A brief survey of S. S. Barlingay's views on Indian Logic, Ethics and Aesthetics.

The fifth chapter entitled A brief survey of SSB's views on Indian Logic, Ethics and Aesthetics is basically a brief account of SSB's Modern Introductions - A

Modern Introduction to Indian Logic, A Modern Introduction to Indian Ethics and A Modern Introduction to Indian Aesthetic Theory. Instead of darsana wise classification of Indian Philosophy, SSB here is introducing areawise classification and presenting the Indian Philosophical Thought in these areas in modern idiom.

So he introduces Indian Logic – particularly Indian theory of inference by using the apparatus of Symbolic logic and discusses issues concerning inductive logic and scientific method. SSB also discusses Indian philosophy of language – which is closely connected with logic – with special reference to the school of Sanskrit grammar and Sankara's analysis of language.

In his modern Introduction to Indian Ethics SSB discusses how ethical concepts developed in the diverse Indian culture and discusses in detail the concepts like Rta, Rna and Purushartha.

SSB's third 'modern introduction' is *A Modern Introduction Indian Aesthetic Theory – The Development from Bharata to Jagannatha*. He explains that the foundation of the Indian aesthetic theory can be traced to Bharatamuni's Natyashastra where he gave his theory of beauty (theory of rasa) which was later elaborately developed by learned scholars. He examines the development of the rasa theory by various authorities on art and aesthetics and presents his own critical understanding of it. He also discusses Vamana's distinction between constitutive and evaluative parameters of art. Taking clues from the Indian theories of drama and poetry, SSB develops his general theory of art.

Conclusion

The concluding chapter makes general observations based on SSB's philosophical contribution discussed in earlier chapters and brings out its contemporary relevance.

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