

A Historical Survey: Swami Pranabananda Maharaj and the Bharat Sevashram Sangha

Dipak Hazra

Assistant Professor,
Department of History,
Nabadwip Vidyasagar College,
Nabadwip, Nadia, India.
dipakhazra82@gmail.com

Structured Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to highlight the establishment, activities, and scope of Bharat Sevashram Sangha in the historical context of Pranabananda. In the initial phase, Bharat Sevashram Sangha presented the ideal of religious service but its detailed history was not recorded. It is also the purpose of this research to review.

Study Method: So many textbooks and newspapers have been read for this research work. Primary sources and secondary sources are very important for this research also the interviews to be conducted to accomplish the study.

Finding: Several questions arise in this study such as-1. What was India's social and political context at the time of Pranavananda? 2. What was the source behind the development of Pranavananda's spiritual thought? 3. Why did he give precedence to Seva Dharma? 4. Why did he go to establish the Sangha? etc.

Originality: Spiritual and cultural trends have been flowing in India since ancient times. Swami Pranavananda Maharaj was one of the people who planted the seeds of this spiritual trend in human society. India was blessed with its emergence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries because of its constructive activities, reformist mentality and service ideals. In conducting the present research work, I will try to show off his ideals and philosophy, the reason for the inception of Bharat Sevashram Sangha. The researcher will also find out the impact of the sangha on the society.

Keywords: Pranavananda Maharaj, Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Philosophy, Service

Paper Type: Research Paper

Introduction

Since the beginning of civilization, spiritual culture has flourished in India. The hymns composed by the Aryan sages were a kind of message of universal humanity. It supported the Aryan-Hindu way of life. Whenever the Indian masses deviated from this ideal, the darkness of dharma engulfed society. To suppress the power of this irreligious demon, many sages and saints have appeared in incarnations over the ages, and India has regained its vitality. In this

way, we have Buddha, Shankaracharya in ancient times, Sri Chaitanya in the Middle Ages, Ramakrishna in modern times, and Vivekananda. Another name to be pronounced with this is Sri Sri Swami Pranabananda. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Bengal and the people of India were blessed to have a strong-minded, reforming, constructive yogi monk. The scope of his work was wide. In this study, I will try to give a brief life introduction to Swami Pranabananda. The source of his thinking, his philosophy, the reason for building Bharat Sevashram, service, and religion in the eyes of Pranabananda First of all, I will see the spread and activities of this Sangha and the influence it had on society.

The purpose of this research is to highlight the establishment, activities, and scope of Swami Pranabananda and his established 'Bharat Sevashram Sangh' in a historical context. Bharat Sevashram is one of the religious organisations in Bengal. There was a time when this Sangh presented the ideal of religious service. But its detailed history is not recorded. Highlighting this detailed history is one of the objectives of this study.

The inspiration behind Pranabanandji's ideas: Pranabanandji's mind-formation formula should be said to be the first admission from a psychologist's point of view. His personality type is introverted. He was taciturn but, in very few words, could make large points clear and concise with effortless skill. He was not just a lover of showmanship. (Exhibitionism) Naturally, he was a promoter of self-publicity, had a self-willed character, a mass-oriented approach, and an organised personality. For more than two and a half decades, he worked with unceasing speed and untiring energy, but almost entirely in silence and in private.

Basic Philosophy: Undoubtedly, the Upanishads are the basic foundation of Pranavananda's philosophy. Swami Pranavananda especially preached the Nishkam Karma Yoga of the Upanishads among his disciples and protégés. His Sangha Geeta and Sanghavani convey the idea that the Upanishads are the primary source of human guidance.

Religion according to Pranavanandji: Pranavanandji was a Hindu by religion. Hinduism While saying that Hinduism is eternal, this religion has no origin, and there is no account of its age. No one can say when this religion was born. Krishna, Buddha, and Shankara — none of them are the founders. Everyone is just its servant. Through the cycles of Satya, Treta, Dwapar, and Kali, Hinduism has been the ultimate refuge for peace-loving people. How many religions and Hindu castes have arisen and perished in the world, but Hinduism and Hindu castes are still alive and will continue to exist? This religion is eternal. Acharyadeva determined the essence of religion by churning all the scriptures and said that religion is

renunciation, restraint, truth, and celibacy. Swamiji said Hinduism is founded on sacrifice and devotion. This religion has no place for right or claim; there is duty or authority. By performing all worldly actions and accepting sacrifices, man can attain the ultimate object. Pranabanandaji Maharaj emphasised the release of self-bonds and the overall service of the human race for spiritual development. (Service to people) He realised that an association is needed to expand the scope of work for the overall development of human beings, irrespective of caste, creed, and caste.

Brahmachari and his group of loyal youths in the village observed various philanthropic vows and encouraged them to practice moderation and celibacy. Brahmachari saw the lack of restraint and moral degradation among the students and youth and became concerned about how to save them. He used to tell the youth that renunciation of celibacy, moderation, truth, and celibacy should be the ideals of everyone's life.

Reasons and Thoughts for Building Bharat Sevashram: Pranabananda Maharaj was originally inspired to build the Bharat Sevashram Sangh for the spread of social work and spiritual thought. It is pertinent to mention that he wanted to spread his spiritual thoughts through ancient Hinduism. He saw in his mind's eye that only through ancient traditional Hinduism did he engage in the service of humanity through universal love and a good life. He realised that the self-emancipation and upliftment of human beings would be possible through spiritual development. The main reason for building this association was to serve people. He recorded what he realised in a magazine called Sangh Geeta.

Expansion of Bharat Seva Sangh: Bharat Seva Sangh is a private Hindu service organization. This organisation has more than 100 branches in India. It should be noted that most of the branches are in the shrine. Branches of Bharat Seva Shram in Ahmedabad, Agartala, Unkimath, Allahabad, Kurukshetra, Kedarnath, Kanyakumari, Gaya, Guwahati, Gorakhpur, Gaurikund, Ghatshila, Jamshedpur, Jabbalpur, Dimapur, Delhi, Dwarka, Nasik, Puri, Pandu, Varanasi, Vrindavan, Badrinath, Bhupal, Mumbai, Madras, Joshimath, Rameswaram, Raipur, Shillong, Haridwar, and Hyderabad, besides this branch of the association, are present in various parts of the East. For example, Raiganj, Ranaghat, Siuri, Burdwan, Siliguri, Malda, Medinipur, Mahishadal, Balurghat, Beldanga, Farakka, Purulia, Nabadwip, Tarapeeth, Jalpaiguri, Siliguri, etc., and Borhi-India, and many of their branches are present in Britain, America, Canada, Fiji, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Syria, Lebanon, etc.

Functions of Bharat Sevashram Sangh:

Since its inception, Bharat Seva Sangh has been continuously working according to the multifaceted plans of pursuing the traditional spiritual and moral ideals of India and keeping up with the times, namely: 1. Propaganda 2. Pilgrimage reform, 3. Education reform, 4. Public service, 5. Establishment of Hindu Milon Temple, 6. Formation of Hindu Rakshidal, 7. Prevention of untouchability, 8. Tribal welfare, 9. Promotion of Indian culture abroad.

Since the birth of the Sangh Janam Lagna, public service has provided comprehensive and multifarious services, including famine, flood, lack of rain, earthquake, epidemic, and other natural disasters. Apart from this, there is free treatment through charitable organisations and education through schools. It is needless to say this service is distributed to needy men and women regardless of caste, religion, caste, food, clothes, medicine, bedding, clothing, etc., as well as helping with house construction, drinking water, etc. This service of the Sangh was during the cyclone in East Bengal in 1919, the Khulna famine in 1920–21, the rural organisation in the Sundarban region in 1922, the North Bengal flood in 1923, the Orissa famine and flood in 1925, the Puri Rath Yatra Mela in 1926, the Pabna communal riots, Annaku in Sonpur, and Kashi. Of service at fairs, etc. Get a sample. It is associated with dealing with natural calamities and has extended its helping hand for the overall welfare of India's backwardly scheduled castes and tribes. Currently, the Sangh has set up schools in villages and towns, students' residences, and various hospitals. Young students are being given IT courses so that they can be self-reliant in the future.

Impact on society: At the time of the advent of Swami Pranabanandji in the last decade of the 19th century, Bengal and India had a dilapidated and corrupt society and religion. He realised with his divine eye that they should be developed as a nation through the reformation of Hinduism. Since childhood, the desire to do something for the country and the nation has been instilled in him. He wanted to work for human welfare through the Sangh. He built Pranava Math as his first sangha. Bharat Sevashram was formed after this Kendra Krei. The Bharat Seva Sangh, founded by him, has profoundly influenced Indian society today.

Conclusion: Today's social life is very busy and mechanical. As a result of keeping pace with this mechanical life, human life has lost its inner essence, its humanity. Corruption, selfishness, and greed have ruined human life. Religious society can show the path of light to this complicated life journey, and human society is immersed in darkness. Reading the lives of the sages and their words can guide our way of life. In this context, if we can associate

ourselves with the tireless efforts of Bharat Sevashram at the national and international level, it will be a path on our way. Swami Pranabananda's life is not only history but the history of making history. In the place of history, where he stands in imperishable glory, it is impossible to express his full identity in a single day or a single work. Swami Pranabananda is the latest form of the current movement of many sadhanas that have developed in this sacred land of India since ancient times. Through this essay, it is possible to know oneself, to know India, to know the source of national experience, and to know the eternal form of Hinduism only by trying to know the love of modern times.

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