

Nature and Scope of Philosophico-Literary Research in Yoga*

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(Received on July 21, 2004)

ABSTRACT

Philosophical and Literary Research is, primarily, concerned with qualitative aspect of Yoga. It has four broad dimensions namely, Ethical, Social, Philosophical and Spiritual. Research in Yoga explores these dimensions of Yoga theoretically by way of critically understanding the true import and reliability of various concepts, practices, ideas, values etc. available in traditional Literature with a view to apply ancient Yogic knowledge for all-round development of humanity. While talking about the Methods and Methodology for literary research Sanskrit could be utilized as a profitable research tool for any discipline such as Historical Research, Descriptive Research, Analytical Research, Comparative Research pertaining to Philosophy and Religion, Ancient Medical Research etc. Research Methodology has a wider scope in comparison to research methods. In the process of research methodology certain steps are used to execute a research problem effectively. In the paper a few practical suggestions have also been forwarded in view of the specific nature of Yogic research.

Key Words : Analytical Research Comparative Research, Descriptive Research, Historical Research,, Methodology, Philosophical and Literary Research, Spiritual, Yoga

Introduction

One of the deep impulses of human mind is craving to know. We wish to understand the world around us, its source, its meaning and its probable

* This paper was presented in the workshop on *Research Methodology in Yoga* organized by Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, New Delhi, in Feb.2006.

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future. Systematic execution of this urge may be called Research. The dictionary meaning of the term *research* is a careful investigation or enquiry especially through search for finding new facts in any branch of knowledge'. Research has been defined variously by authorities like Kothari C. R., Redman L. V. and Mory A. V. H., John W. Best and many others. Ultimate import of research is to expand the boundaries in any branch of knowledge with which one is concerned.

In Sanskrit 'Research' means *shodha* (refinement) *gaveshana* (quest) and *samshodhana* (rectification). The whole idea of research thus represents a frame in which there is a systematic structure of investigation which advances the knowledge in different ways and forms.

In this pursuit, researchers try to identify the unresolved issues and provide in-depth knowledge of that issue to find out the solution by using certain methods which are accepted as adequate in a particular field e.g. inductive method is used in Scientific field because science relies on the objective knowledge which is certain and fully organized whereas in Philosophy one wants to know the ultimate explanation of things, their first cause, their purpose, their meaning and their values. Science uses observational and experimental methods for rationalizing those facts which are perceived by the mind through senses whereas Philosophy rationalizes super sensuous experiences of reality as in philosophy the subject matter of enquiry is universal and the grasp of that universal or absolute reality is often beyond the range of senses but always within the range of reasoning and intuitions.

The method of enquiry in Philosophy therefore is not only inductive like science but also *intuitive* and thus Research is an attempt to know super sensuous reality in philosophical pursuits. In Indian thought the term Philosophy stands for *Darshana* i.e. '*vision*' as a means for self realization through self purification which claims to end the threefold suffering of mankind.

Nature of Philosophico-Literary Research in Yoga:

Yogic phenomena are multi-dimensional in nature and that is the reason why no one branch of knowledge can exhaust its full nature. Philosophico-Literary Research branch is primarily concerned with Qualitative aspect of Yoga which broadly has four dimensions: Ethical, Social, Philosophical and Spiritual. Research in Yoga, that explores these dimensions of Yoga theoretically by way of critically understanding the true import and reliability of various concepts, practices, ideas, values etc. available in traditional Literature with a view to apply ancient yogic knowledge for all-round development of humanity, is called Philosophico-Literary Research in Yoga and therefore, its **objectives** should be-

- To unfold/explore the ancient Yogic knowledge, which is embodied in Sanskrit language, scattered in different scriptures or still hidden in manuscript forms;
- To arrive at most authentic readings of traditional yogic texts pertaining to different concepts and practices etc. without distorting their originality.;
- To critically analyze, interpret, conceptualize-the various ideas, values, concepts, precepts, practices and their effects in a systematic manner so as to make them available to common people.

To achieve these objectives researchers have to evolve methodology suitable to theory- practice- experience-continuum of Yoga. Generally the methods utilized in literary research are:

- a. Survey of several types which aims at accessibility of source material on Yoga;
- b. The methods applied for the preparation of critical editions of (published & unpublished) traditional Yogic texts
- c. In analytical research, on the other hand, the researchers have to use facts or information already available in the literature and to analyze them to make a critical evaluation of the source material and to represent the same in organized manner.

Methodology for Literary Research:

In India, the ancient literature is available in Sanskrit language- which is considered as the source of all knowledge - while talking about the Methods and Methodology for literary research Sanskrit could be utilized as a profitable research tool for any discipline such as Historical Research, Descriptive Research, Analytical Research, Comparative Research in Philosophy and Religion, Ancient Medical Research etc.

Researchers have to bear in mind that there is difference between research methods and research Methodology. Methods may be defined as procedure adopted by the researcher during the course of study in his research problem whereas research Methodology is a systematic way for finding the solution of the problem. In research Methodology, the researcher has to clearly mention the basis of reaching any conclusion so that other can verify his conclusions and therefore, Research Methodology has a wider scope in comparison to research methods wherein one has to give rationale for using a particular method.

In the process of research methodology the certain steps are used to execute a research problem effectively. These steps can be outlined as under:

- a. Identifying the problem
- b. Review of the related literature
- c. Formulation of Hypothesis
- d. Research design/plan
- e. Data collection
- f. Analysis of data and Discussion
- g. Reporting the findings while writing the report following procedure should be adopted:
 1. Title page,
 2. Content page,
 3. Introduction,

4. Main report which includes- problem and procedure, analysis of data with table, if any,
5. Discussion,
6. Conclusions and recommendations,
7. References that includes Bibliography of Books & Journals, Appendixes and Index or glossary.

Traditional Researchers have developed many devices for a systematic understanding of a particular subject e.g. Nyayadarshana's (Philosophy of Reasoning) way of understanding contains five requisite qualifications:

- a) **pratijna** : the hypothesis to be proved
- b) **hetu** : the casual element
- c) **udaharana** : examples in support of the hypothesis
- d) **upanaya** : verification/testing/establishing the co-relation
- e) **nigamana** : conclusion

Above mentioned methodology is also characterized by Mimamsakas which takes into consideration the following seven principles for systematic understanding/presentation of the problem. They are:

- a) **upakrama** : Introducing the problem
- b) **upasamhara** : the hypothesis
- c) **abhyasa** : general outlines in support of the hypothesis
- d) **apurvata** : indication of originality
- e) **phala** : the result-oriented-ness of the of the problem
- f) **arthavada** : argument in support of the solution or observation and refutation of others views, if any.
- g) **upapatti** : establishing/discovering the truth.

The number of such techniques, according to Lele, W. K., amount to be thirty-nine. He pointed out that these are employed as follows:

- a) 'To express a topic which cannot otherwise be explicitly expressed?
- b) To suggest the reader the ways and means of reconciling the contradictory statements

- c) To express certain topics tangentially and to leave the further understanding thereof to the imagination of the readers.
- d) To express certain topics in peculiar phraseology
- e) To refute the statement of a wicked disputant
- f) To conceal the meaning intentionally and direct the readers to explore it and
- g) To throw light on the secrets of a particular subject.

There are some other considerations of postulating techniques, which have some direct learning on the theoretical perspective of a subject.'

A brief of such ancient devices may be understood in the following manner:

1. **atikrantavekshana** (Ref. to previous investigation) To prove the present truth one has to take the previous investigation into account.
2. **atidesha** (Ref. to the interrelated topics) Extension of application of certain principles the similar and analogous
3. **adhikarna** (Topic under discussion) It contains five aspects
 - i. **vishaya** (subject)
 - ii. **vishayashcaiva** (the doubts about it)
 - iii. **purvapaksha** (prima facie view)
 - iv. **uttarapaksha** (its reputation)
 - v. **nirnaya** (conclusion)

Above mentioned traditional devices are not only useful in developing a theory while conceptualizing the ideas, thoughts, values etc. available in Traditional Sanskrit Literature but also help the readers in understanding the traditional lore of Yoga systematically. The author himself has applied Mimamaskas devices for understanding 'The Concept of *Samatva* in Bhagavadgita - A Conceptual Study' (Ritambhara (Hindi) Vol.3, July, 1990)

Scope of Philosophico-Literary Research:

'The Literary Research Department of Kaivalyadhama is in itself an attraction for the erudite scholar and is likely to provide him with lifelong work. Ancient Yogic texts are to be edited in the style and critical spirit of the modern philologists. To meet this end old Mss are to be studied, accurate reading are to be ascertained and critical notes are to be written.'

The above quoted statement had appeared in **Sunday Edition of Bombay Chronicle in the year 1929** and the same was reproduced in *Yoga Mimamsa* (Y.M. Vol. III (2nd Ed., 1930). This is a remarkable statement which speaks itself about the scope of Literary Research in the field of Yoga.

It will not be out of place to mention that Kaivalyadhama, a pioneer research Institute in the field of Yoga, since its inception in 1924, is engaged in this field as per the guidelines set forth by its founder Swami Kuvalayanandaji, who pioneered, promoted and developed the thought of synthesizing science and spirituality for tackling scientifically the highest states of human experiences by way of bridging the gap between theory and practice, philosophy and science, subjectivity and objectivity, library and laboratory while blending successfully the traditional techniques of Yoga with scientific findings for a long period of two decades. He was fully aware that unless we understand the Traditional Yogic lore through literary research no scientific studies/experiments can be carried out and therefore, in 1944 he established a full-fledged department for Philosophico-Literary Research in Yoga which is engaged in continuing his legacy to this date. The department has at its credit several works - *Descriptive Catalogue of Yoga Manuscripts, Bibliography, Critical Editions of Traditional Yogic Texts, Popular Books on Yoga, Yoga Concordance, Yoga Kosha, Monographs etc.* - which are only a few examples of Philosophico-Literary researches in the field of Yoga.

Philosophico-Literary Research Department of Kaivalyadhama has visualized its Scope as under :

PHILOSOPHICO-LITERARY RESEARCH DEPARTMENT (P.L.R.D.)

BASIC WORK

ACCESSORY WORK

- A. CATALOGUE OF YOGA MANUSCRIPTS
- B. COLLECTION / SELECTION OF YOGIC MANUSCRIPTS
- C. BIBLIOGRAPHY
- D. INDEXING (PROPOSED)

TEXTUAL WORK

- A. EDITING OF UNPUBLISHED YOGA TEXTS
- B. CRITICAL EDITION OF YOGA TEXTS
- C. RECONSTRUCTION OF EXTINCT YOGA TEXTS
- D. PREPARATION OF POPULAR BOOKS ON YOGA

ANALYTICAL WORK

CONCEPTUAL / METHODOLOGICAL

- A. ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF YOGA
 - a. YOGA KOSHA
- B. YOGA CONCORDANCE
- C. MONOGRAPHS

COMPARATIVE STUDIES

- A. INDIAN SPIRITUAL SYSTEM
 - a. VEDIC
 - b. NON-VEDIC
- B. NON INDIAN SPIRITUAL SYSTEMS
 - a. JUDAISM
 - b. CHRISTIANITY
 - c. ISLAM
 - d. Sufism
 - e. ZOROASTRIANISM
- C. CONTEMPORARY SPIRITUAL TRENDS.

- 1. TRANSLATION WORK
- 2. RESEARCH PAPERS

(For detail please refer the Brochure of Philosophico- Literary Research Department, Kaivalyadhama, and Lonavla.)

In order to carry forward the torch of Literary Research in Yoga on the same line following are a few suggestions:

1. The material related to Yoga is still lying hidden in manuscript form it requires an effort to collect all material, critically analyze it and to present the same in a systematic order so that horizon of Yogic knowledge can be expanded. In this direction, Govt. of India through its AYUSH Dept., Ministry of Health, has already taken steps (in the form of TKDL Project) in reviving the Traditional Knowledge of India by way of creating Digital Library. Govt. is also helping financially to those Institutions engaged in preserving and explores the wealth of Indian heritage. Digitization of old manuscripts is initiated and the workshops are also being organized to train the young scholars.

2. Yoga is being accepted all over the world as a method for healthy life and living because of its universal and secular nature. However, to establish this fact Literary Researchers have to play their role by undertaking **Comparative studies** on different religious systems.

Swami Kuvalayanandaji himself had visualized the possibility of unifying different religious systems on the ground that all religious systems of the world, in some way or other, use Yogic methods for the highest realization without mentioning their names (Yoga Mimamsa, 1930, Vol. III, No.3 & 4, p 318). He has also written - 'Yoga has complete message for humanity'. - In this direction the researchers of Kaivalyadhama have started the work on humble scale. However, there is a need to make this aspect more prominent.

3 In Yogic literature we find the mention of various concepts, which basically belong to other disciplines such as Ayurveda, Tantra, Jyotisha (Indian Astrology) etc. We cannot understand/ justify these concepts without the help of other disciplines and therefore, there is

need to undertake *interdisciplinary* joint projects for understanding and applying these concepts with authoritativeness.

4. Yoga is being applied in various fields such as Therapy, Education, Physical Education, Psychology etc. In doing so, modern literature on yoga is also coming up which need to be reviewed with a view to authenticate them for furthering Yoga research in the field of Philosophico-Literary Research.

5. In our contemporary world we come across many spiritual trends such as T.M, Osho Meditation, Sudarshan-Kriya etc. which are needed to be understood in the light of Classical Yoga. This would be helpful in developing/ promoting the universal and secular form of Yoga.

6. There is a need to collaborate with modern science with a view to interpret and re-interprets the conceptual terms available in Yogic literature.

7. There is a lot of scope in the field of Philosophico-Literary Research in relation to Yoga education with a view to integrate Yoga in contemporary education system and to make it reach farthest corner of the world. Following are a few steps:

- To bring out the rationale behind various Yoga techniques and processes.
- To remove hypocrisy, the tendency to make tall claims and the gap between doing and thinking and listening the discourses on Yoga.
- Creating awareness in the learners about the value system and the development of Yogic values for the development of oneself.
- Recognition of modern sciences and the value of their experimentation and findings.

Conclusion:

On the basis of above considerations-

- It can be stated that the main aim of Philosophico-Literary Research in Yoga is to unfold and explore the traditional Yogic yore by way of critically understanding, analyzing, interpreting, conceptualizing the various ideas, values, concepts, precepts, practices & effects thereof in a systematic manner so as to make them available to common people.
- No methodology can be imposed on the data. Thus, in research there is a transition from vagueness to concreteness. However, the achieved concreteness is always tentative and not the final. This is especially true in the qualitative realm of Yogic Research.
- It is the nature of data that determines the methodology to be adopted for research and not the vice versa.
- The researchers should also keep in mind that uncertainty and not the certainty is the starting point of any research and thus trial and error method too has its apt application.
- Thus the tentativeness, workability, elucidation, applicability etc. would be a few parameters and not the finality.

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Author's Note:

The author is grateful to Swami Maheshanandaji, Chairman and Director of Research, and Shri O. P. Tiwariji, Secretary, Kaivalyadhama S.M.Y.M.Samiti Lonavla for their inspiration. My sincere thanks are due to Dr. I. V. Basavaraddi, Director, MDNIY for motivating me to write this Article and all the researchers of Kaivalyadhama, especially to my colleagues Shri G. S. Sahay and Shri R. K. Bodhe, for going through the draft copy of this article and for their valuable suggestions. My thanks are also due to Mr. P. H. Raut for the tedious typographical work.