

Swami Chinmayananda Birth Centenary Celebration  
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# अद्वैतामृतम्

Advaitāmṛtam



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**THE CONTRIBUTION OF ADVAITA VEDANTA TO HUMANITY**

Chinmaya International Foundation  
and its

CIF Shodha Sansthan

## The Notion of Reflexivity in Advaita: A Critical Evaluation

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**Abstract:** This paper seeks to develop a critique of the reflexivity theory of consciousness as propounded by Advaita. Advaitic philosophy, based on thorough metaphysical interrogation, seeks to evolve a constructive analysis of the nature of consciousness. However, the attraction is not the mere phenomenal conscious experience; rather, it is the transcendental Consciousness that is regarded by the Advaitins as the very basis of all experience. Advaita contends that *svataḥ prakāśa* or reflexivity is the quintessence of consciousness, although the idea has been challenged in many respects. Varied opinions exist currently on the reality of reflexivity among the classical philosophical schools as well as among modern thinkers.

This paper has three parts. In the first part, I introduce the Advaita theory of *svataḥ prakāśa*, and the major objections to this theory, mainly from the advocates of the *parataḥ prakāśa* theory. In the second part, I measure the responses of Citsukha, a famous Advaita thinker, based on his text *Tattvapradīpikā*. And, lastly, I conclude with some of my thoughts and also point to possible and further required directions in research.

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Consciousness, the ultimate underlying principle, exerts influence on the entire philosophical development of Advaita. The immensity of Advaita is embedded in analysing the nature of consciousness in great depth. Any discussion, therefore, regarding the Advaitic notion of consciousness is not just bound within the domain of empirical or individual consciousness; it also explicitly leads us to the concept of transcendental Consciousness or Brahman, the reality of which has been admitted as the foundation of every individual consciousness.

The one and the same Self is in all beings, and they are in It just as all beings are in the ether. As by the ether, everything is pervaded by the Self which is considered to be pure and consisting of the Light of Pure Consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

In Advaita, consciousness is the very basis for the being of the entire world. Consciousness is the only prerequisite by which one can affirm or discard the existence of any entity. It is the necessary cause of all manifestation, either known or unknown, near or far, extant or not. Consciousness is ever present, it is certain. So, the doubter of the Self, though he may doubt his

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<sup>2</sup> Swami Jagadananda (trans.) (2012), *Upadeśa-sāhasrī* of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, Chennai: Sri Ramakrishna Math Printing Press, p.154.

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## **Crisis in Higher Education: An Integrated Approach of J. Krishnamurti**

*Munmun Chakraborty*

In simple and ordinary sense, education implies the process of teaching and learning in schools, colleges and other educational institutions. However, in the wide sense education pervades all experiences, which covers the whole human existence. In Indian education system, higher education and primary education are interconnected. Since, the achievement of higher education is impossible without a sturdy and intense primary education. Accordingly, the quality of higher education implies the achievement and growth of the country. Unfortunately, the status of both higher education and primary education in our country is extremely poor especially in the North-East region. There are several factors that are responsible for the decline of higher education in the North-East as well as in other parts of India especially in the rural areas, like - adverse socio-economic condition, poor quality of infrastructure, lack of professional course oriented education institution, lack of implementation of policy and planning, low level of

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# **QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS**



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# KNOWLEDGE, THEORIZATIÓN AND RIGHTS:

RENEGOTIATING THE CONNECTIVES

Edited by  
**Pius V Thomas**



## Contextualising Rights: An *Advaitic* Perspective

Munmun Chakraborty

'Human rights' or 'rights' per se are entitlements or privileges that we human beings claim and also approved by the society either on social or legal or moral ground to expand our abilities, to evolve our personalities and to make our lives secured. The notion of rights thereby, has an intense implication in the domain of ethics for any moral practice. This paper has made a distinctive attempt to contextualize the discourse of 'rights' in *Advaita*; a philosophical system that is known for its metaphysical conviction on the doctrine of 'Oneness'. It argues that Advaitic notion of 'Oneness' has multifarious connotations enfolding mystical, religious, moral and even metaphysical aspects, which indeed has both theoretical and practical influences.

The paper does not in any way overlook the modern Western contributions in the development of the notion of human rights and its expertise in meeting the issues and challenges which are constantly steaming on human rights discourse. Yet, it challenges any such contention that instinctively generalised that human rights discourse is a formulation of modern Western thought which is totally lacking in Indian ethics. However, an attempt here is made to reveal that *Advaita* along with Hindu ethics is far-reaching to incorporate rights in a wider notion of duty as well as in universal notion of Oneness. In this context it is imperative to talk about Arvind Sharma, a leading contemporary thinker, who methodically highlights the notion of human rights rooted within classical Hinduism. As he argues, 'it is not, however, being proposed that the issues pertaining to human rights discourse were already fully anticipated as such in classical Hinduism. It is, rather, being proposed that these issues are not such as were entirely unanticipated, in some measure, in the literature associated with classical Hinduism'<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, in his essay titled, '*Hindu Narratives on Human Rights*' Arvind Sharma ventured in modify-