

Arti Amit - 2018-19

Impact Factor - 6.261

ISSN - 2348-7143

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FELLOWS ASSOCIATION

# RESEARCH JOURNEY

INTERNATIONAL E-RESEARCH JOURNAL

PEER REFREED & INDEXED JOURNAL

February - 2019

Special Issue - 126

## Teaching, Research & Extension in Philosophy : Problems & Prospects



Guest Editor :

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I/C Principal

Mudhoji College, Phaltan,

Dist. Satara (MS) India.

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Ghatkopar (W), Mumbai-400 086, Maharashtra, INDIA



This Journal is indexed in :

- UGC Approved Journal
- Scientific Journal Impact Factor (SJIF)
- Cosmos Impact Factor (CIF)
- Global Impact Factor (GIF)
- International Impact Factor Services (IIFS)
- Indian Citation Index (ICI)
- Dictionary of Research Journal Index (DRJI)

SWATIDHAN PUBLICATIONS



'RESEARCH JOURNEY' International E- Research Journal

ISSN :

Impact Factor - (SJIF) - 6.261

2348-7143

Special Issue 126 : Teaching, Research & Extension in Philosophy : Problems & Prospects

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UGC Approved Journal

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Price : Rs. 800/-

Published by –

© Mrs. Swati Dhanraj Sonawane, Director, Swatidhan International Publication, Yeola, Nashik

Email : [swatidhanrajs@gmail.com](mailto:swatidhanrajs@gmail.com) Website : [www.researchjourney.net](http://www.researchjourney.net) Mobile : 9665398258

## Mystical Philosophy of Karl Jaspers

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### Introduction

According to Andrew Bowie the "holistic conception has been a part of German philosophy since the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and it is the German tradition that many of the key alternatives to an analytical approach to philosophy can be sought. The contrast between analytical and holistic conceptions also relates to contrasting cultural attitudes. Whereas the analytical tradition's orientation is predominantly towards the natural sciences, the German tradition attaches great importance to art and to aesthetics issues."<sup>1</sup>

This is so true of Jaspers also.

Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) - began his career as a psychologist. But, by early 1920s he baptized himself into Philosophy. He exerted influence mainly on three major branches of philosophy - epistemology, the philosophy of religion and political theory. It was not philosophy, but his writings on Governmental conditions in Germany and his ideas on moral-democratic education and reorientation that influenced tremendously on Federal Republic of Germany.

### Need for Research in area of Mystical Philosophy of Karl Jaspers

Why Jaspers? Due to his contributions to political affairs of Germany, Jaspers is more underestimated philosopher in Modern History of Philosophy of Germany. But he was not particular about any single faith; he was influenced by North German Protestantism and religious philosophy of Kant and Kierkegaard. His philosophical contributions were already reflected in his books on psychology, especially his book 'Psychology of World Views' (1919). Though not well doctrinated, the existential view point is reflected in this book, which he tailored in typical Jasper's style. He was severely criticized by Rickert and Edmund Husserl for placing anthropological and experiential questions into philosophy and 'thus of contaminating philosophical analysis with contents properly pertaining to other disciplines.' But the relevant point is he went against Neo-Kantians and restoring Kantian philosophy, he emphasized not on Kant's formalist doctrine of self-legislation but brought to the forefront Kant's metaphysical experience, spontaneously decisive freedom, and authentic inner life.

Here, we can already feel the sparks of mysticism in Jaspers. Married to a Jewish lady, he felt quite threatened by Martin Heidegger's support for National Socialists in 1933. So, his works of 1930s carefully avoided political theories and Jaspers concentrated more on inner religious aspects of his philosophy. We find, on Jaspers, there is a clear influence of Weber, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, and also Nietzsche. Though influenced by these philosophers, he was very much avert to the idea of "progress" and "transcending the past" to move towards true philosophy. He was really interested in the quest for eternal truth and the great traditions offered by China, India

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and the West. The fact that these philosophical traditions offered relative truths about the ultimate of which they had revelations, that was peculiar to their state of mind and condition. These are different paths leading to the Eternal Truth. No doubt for him the post-Darwinian philosophers like Descartes, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Husserl (and according to him, to certain extent, even Kant) gave the relative truth but their idea of giving true 'doctrinal philosophy was something he could not accept.' This made Jaspers distinct as a mystic who refutes doctrinal and theoretical graduation where one tends to become communal where 'real communication' is impossible. This reminds us of mystics singing and narrating stories in the language of the people. In his book 'The Perennial Scope of Philosophy' Jaspers says, "Philosophy proper must reject the idea of progress, which is sound for sciences."<sup>2</sup>

**Essence of the Research Paper**

The concentration on 'Being' where existential problem can be addressed made Jaspers near to mystics (especially Kabir, Guru Nanak and others) who spoke of 'Ek Nirankara' (the only unqualified ONE). He believed that sciences in recent times have inclined to become communal (as they have drawn boundaries among themselves). Stumpf in his book 'Socrates to Sartre' points out that for Jaspers, (like mystics) wanted to have a unified, secular and single science of Being. He writes, "It would seem that a universal science could be formulated by bringing together in some form of unity all the particular sciences. Could not the unified sciences constitute a single science of being, of total reality?"<sup>3</sup> With due respect to science, he accepts the limitation of science as science accepts 'Being' as among other 'beings', makes Being only an object. So, philosophy has to revisit its own field and reconstruct itself. Unlike mystics, "Science, he argues, is sub-philosophic because it does not deal with the unique inner experiences of concrete individual human beings."<sup>4</sup> As an existential philosopher Jaspers believed that 'Existence is something that can never become a mere object; it is the 'Source' whence springs my thinking and acting.'

He could cohere with Hegel who raised philosophy to science. This is because Jaspers could objectify 'truth' as he insisted again like mystic that 'truth is subjectivity'; "that philosophizing means communicating not about objects or objective knowledge but about the content of personal awareness produced by the individual's inner constitution. Existential thinking, says Jaspers, is 'the philosophic practice of life.'"<sup>5</sup> So Jaspers comes to the concept of 'Genuine Communication.' Existence does not deal with hoarding of knowledge, egocentrism and this leading to solipsism; but it involves a dialogue between individuals to further genuine communication of 'becoming real'. According to Ronald D. Gordon who suggests that Jaspers work can be interpreted to give us - a) restoration of "heart" and "soul" to interpersonal communication studies, b) acceptance of the unfinalizability (the process nature) of our subject research, and c) expansion of our disciplinary thinking. Further he suggests that Jaspers works in communication are also identified as - a) the role of communication in forging identity and humanity, b) communication as the source of what comes to be "true" for human beings, c) the need for ongoing communication, and d) the dialogical possibilities of Existenz - with Existenz communication.

**Comparative Analysis in this Research Paper**

From the above mentioned points on interpretation of Jasper's work and his idea of communication we can draw a parallel and compare his mystical philosophy to that of Gurudev Ranade's take on mystics and mysticism. According to him, both the mystics of the West and the East have shown philosophic and mystical wisdom in their work. But the underprivileged caste

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mystic of the East, say – Chokhamela, a pariah has less of philosophical introspection, and more of dictates of heart (this is where Jaspers brings about restoration of “heart” and “soul” to interpersonal communication studies); while Bohme of the West show more philosophical bent and less intervention of heart (in Jaspers – the acceptance of the unfinalizability – the process nature – of our subject research, and expansion of disciplinary thinking).

However, according to R. D. Ranade there are few criterion of mystical experience – they are –

1. The element of Universality – Mystical experiences of different people of different faiths may differ in physical, mental and temperamental context, but there is no difference in the quality of their mystical or intuitive realization. With few differences, Jaspers accepts the element of Universality.
2. The Intellectual Aspect – Without intellectual clarification one can never hope to attain real mystical experience. As said by Ranade, “It is not without reason that great mystics like Shankaracharya, or Yajnavalkya, or Spinoza, or Plotinus, or Augustine, or St. Paul, or Jnanasvara produced the great intellectual works that have lived after them.”<sup>6</sup> So also Jaspers talks about reconstructing philosophy and not to dwell in the illusion of ‘objective knowledge’.
3. The Emotional Aspect – The emotional aspect of mysticism is not sentimentalism of this mundane world, but this aspect in mysticism comprises of ‘pure’ or ‘refined’ emotions. In fact, a mystic keeps his emotions under control by intellect. Spinoza’s view on this matter is important as he talks of transcending this aspect of emotion to ‘the intellectual love of God’. Therefore, knowledge of Jñāna is very important. Here Jaspers, who agrees with Kant’s concept of ‘Being – in – itself’, he calls it “das Umgreifende”, i.e. ‘the Comprehensive’ – known through intellect’s power of insight and transcendence.
4. The Moral Aspect – Ranade distinguishes between two types of mystics – the ‘activist type’ (like Swami Ramdas) and the ‘quietist type’. Gurudev Ranade says, “Then, again, so far as the utility of the mystic to the society is concerned, we may almost regard it as a truism of Mysticism that a Mystic who is not of supreme service to the society is not a mystic at all.”<sup>7</sup> Jaspers showed moral concern by maintaining different philosophical traditions as different paths ultimately merging to arrive at one ‘Eternal Truth’.
5. The Intuitional Aspect – According to Ranade, this aspect is the most important criterion among other mentioned criteria. This personal aspect of mysticism is the ‘spiritual realization’ of a mystic. It is the first-hand ‘intimate, intuitive apprehension of God’. This personal experience is judged by mystic himself or herself. As put by Plotinus, in Enneads, 6.6.18, ‘And yet, we here see but dimly, yonder the vision is clear. For it gives to the seer the faculty of seeing, and the power for higher life, the power by living more intensely to see better, and to become what he sees.’

### Conclusion of the Research

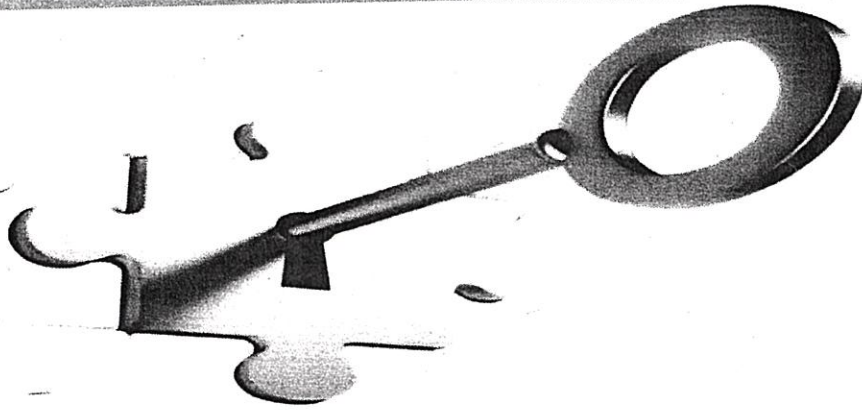
The Intuitional aspect, along with other four aspects are beautifully summarized by Jaspers in his book ‘The Perennial Scope of Philosophy’, (pg. 19f), where he says, “This existential, non-objective, basic, authentic aspect of man is revealed in (1) his dissatisfaction with his empirical achievements, (2) his submission to the absolute (the unconditional moral imperative), (3) his urge for unity – pressing beyond all empirical diversity to its basic source, (4) his indefinable memory of pre-creation, pre-world existence (comparable to Platonic

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Journal Name	RESEARCH JOURNEY
ISSN/EISSN	2348-7143
Country	IN
Frequency	Quarterly
Journal Discipline	General Science
Year of First Publication	2014
Web Site	www.researchjourney.net
Editor	Prof. Dhanraj Dhangar & Prof. Gajanan Wankhede
Indexed	Yes
Email	researchjourney2014@gmail.com
Phone No.	+91 7709752360
Cosmos Impact Factor	2015 : 3.452

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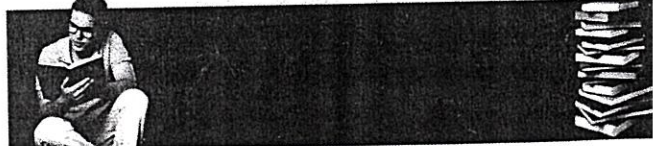


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ISSN	2348-7143
Country	India
Frequency	Quarterly
Year publication	2014-2015
Website	researchjourney.net
Global Impact and Quality Factor	
2014	3.565
2015	0.676



remembrance), and (5) his consciousness of immortality (i.e. his writing even now above time while living in time.).

To conclude, according to Jaspers, man needs to have proper 'philosophic faith' and enquiry. Though, his is a mystical writing, the unavoidable paradox and a 'Necessary Paradox' indeed is inevitable in Jaspers like all mystics, which is beyond logic-proper and possesses over simplicity. Mysticism means I keep my mouth close but, (and), the intuitive 'real truth' demands boundless communication. As put by Dharendra Mohan Datta, "Jaspers believes that the demand of the existential faith on me is as much for exploring inwardly the source of my real existence, as for establishing 'loving contact' with other existentially oriented individuals, and the truths revealed through them. So he strongly advocates increasing communication with other kindred spirits, to whichever place or time they might belong: "Reason demands boundless communication." (Pere. Pg.48). He feels the necessity of an informal existential brotherhood that would corroborate and strengthen the faith and illumination of one another."<sup>8</sup>

The mystical philosophy of Jaspers is the need of the hour. The world is witnessing violent upheavals based on religious and racial diversities. This makes it inevitable to have 'genuine dialogue' which one finds in Jaspers mystical philosophy. It may not be the only solution but a potent one indeed. 21<sup>st</sup> Century in tremendous need of Mystical Philosophy of Karl Jaspers.

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## Components of Field Work in Research of Social Sciences

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### Introduction :-

Field work is an important component of research in disciplines. It has gained growing importance in the social sciences with the stress emphasis on empirical research. In the applied sciences, field work has prime importance. Field work is an integral part of project implementation, and thus importance to development programmes and development administration. In the context of research, sound knowledge of field work practices give the researchers the opportunity to practice what they have learnt.

### The objectives of the section are as follows:

1. To develop capacity of observation and analyzing social realities.
2. To develop understanding of the needs, problems and programmes for the different target groups.
3. To develop process-oriented skills in working with individual, families and groups with special references to social support system.
4. To develop skills in holding interviews and using supervisory skills.
5. To develop skills in observation, interviewing, recording, group discussion and leadership.

### Preparatory phase of Field Work

The selection of survey sample population or of the target group for field work is the first and most vital step. In case of social science or management research when you choose those who will be with you for a period of time so that you are able to complete the field work. You must set limited objectives in such field work.

### Components of Field work. :-

Field work has several important components which must all be integrated in the field work process if the objectives of the project are to be achieved. The following main components can be discerned that indicate the main processes involved in the field work and also the main criteria to be followed by researchers and projects implementers.

#### 1. Component one : orientation visit and collection of basic information :-

As a visitor to the research area or project site you must assess the following in the area: the socio-economic ground realities, the cultural backdrop, the political backdrop, and the other details of past research and development work in the area. The following are the main types of the information which you may collect in this preliminary phase.

**Basic information:** A Form for collecting basic information about an institution/ organization should be created. This Information should include:

- Organizational structure
- History of the organization

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