

SWAMI VIVAKANANDA AS A GREAT EDUCATOR OF MODERN ERA: A BRIEF REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION:

When our cultural values and deep-rooted Indian civilization were massed by the western civilization based on materialism, a wandering monk, Swami Vivekananda with no material possession except his walking stick and begging bowl with full surrender to Almighty, became the Messiah for India. Being a practical sagacious savant, Vivekananda rejuvenated and vitalized the Vedic wisdom and preached the gospel of Vedanta in the light of interpretation of Sri Ramakrishna, his preceptor, and regenerated his holy Motherland i.e., India in tune with her ancient hoary heritage and inherent genius. He propagated the essence of truth, Vedanta, brotherhood of men, unity of humanity, harmony of religions and supremacy of spiritualism over materialism. He could be able to bring a synthesis between spiritualism of the East and materialism of the West. Swami Vivekananda was a pure Vedantist. He gave us a new concept of sages and saints. He was a practical saint, dynamic world mover and humanist who loved mankind more than anything else. At the crossroads of Indian culture, his renunciation is not to be away from 'samsar' but renunciation of one's selfish and narrow goals and ideas. Knowledge can be acquired by many paths. But he has said that concentration is the best way of assimilating knowledge within a limited period. Concentration paves the path for salvation. He has been regarded as the forerunner of many with regard to vocational educational. He realized the cause of poverty and miseries and suggested that education with vocational training will be panacea for many odds and evils. Emphases on self-knowledge, self-reliance, concentration, brahmacharya, attainment of perfection etc. are his real contributions. He was not only the spiritual leader of India, but also a perfect patriot who loved 'Bharatamata' heart and soul. Although he was a 'sanyasi, he loved mankind all through. He preached the gospel of universal brotherhood which is badly needed in the perplexed modern world. The aim of education nowadays is all-round development of individual-intellectual, spiritual, physical, vocational, religious and moral. Long before this Vivekananda advocated all-round development of personality as the aim of education. After the death of Sri Ramakrishna in 1886, Swami

Vivekananda organized the master's disciples into the illustrious Ramakrishna Mission. He devoted most of the last fifteen years of his strenuous life to communicating his universal message of unity and tolerance. The impact of dynamic personality and brilliant oratory was often overwhelming by his utter sincerity and informality.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH:

The following objectives are to be considered for the discussion:

- To analysis the Philosophical and Educational Ideas of Vivekananda
- To know the aims of education given by Vivekananda
- To overview the role of teacher and teaching and learning.

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH:

We know, there are different types of methodology for any study. Here the historical method of research/study is used. In the present study and the approach is qualitative in nature. The work has been conducted in the following ways:

- Collection of primary and secondary sources
- Detailed of the reliable and valid sources
- Comparison of different sources
- Making generalization from the sources.

SOURCES OF DATA:

Here two Types of data were collected. These were:

I. Primary sources of Data:

- Compositions of Swami Vivekananda.
- Letters and writings of Swami Vivekananda.

II. Secondary Sources of Data:

- Educational philosophies and profiles of Swami Vivekananda, written by several authors.

- Newspaper reports and articles published by different authors in books, journals and websites regarding the educational aims, teacher, teaching and philosophical ideas of Swami Vivekananda.

DISCUSSION OF THE OBJECTIVES:

❖ PHILOSOPHICAL AND EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF VIVEKANANDA:

Philosophical Ideas of Vivekananda:

- **Idea on God:** The sagacious savant Swami Vivekananda was a staunch propagator of supremacy of Almighty. God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Man is the incarnation of God on earth. He is manifested in men. Soul is divine and immortal.
- **Broad vision on religion:** Vivekananda was not at all a fanatic like other religious preachers. He has a broad vision. He was a real secularist. He says, “If anybody dreams exclusive survival of his own religion and destruction of others I pity him from the core of my heart.” He fanned the flame of Vedantic concept of equality of humanity. He wrote to a Muslim friend, “How I would long to see India as an Islamic body with the Vedantic head”. Again he stressed, “If you are born a Christian, be a good Christian, if you are born a Hindu, be a good Hindu, if you are born a Muslim, be a good Muslim”.
- **Humanism:** He had an implicit faith in the welfare of mankind. Worship of man is the real worship of God. He realized the dignity and divinity in man. In his words, “If you cannot worship your brother-man, the manifestation of God, how can you worship a God who is unmanifested?” He did not appreciate man to be self-centred. He propagated the salvation of all but not one. “Go hell yourself to buy salvation for others-was his call. There is no *mukti* on earth to call my own.” Individual happiness lies with the universal happiness.
- **Optimism:** Out and out Vivekananda is an optimist. He left no stone unturned to instill optimism in the individual. He inspired the young by his dictum, “Stand up, behold, be strong, you are the creator of your destiny.” Awake, arise and stop not until the goal is reached.” This is also proclaimed in the Vedas. Again he rejuvenated the youth, “All the strength is within you, do not brood over weakness, mistake of the past.” He always emphasized youth to get rid of pessimism.
- **Socialism:** In a pamphlet he has categorically stated, ‘I am a socialist’. Being a socialist he did not advocate for an armed struggle between the classes but he stressed on a complete fusion of all classes and castes. He wanted to make an end to caste conflicts going on through the ages and to begin an era based on egalitarianism and equality. He heralded the advent of a new classless society by uplifting the condition of lower strata through education and generation of mass consciousness.

- **Respect to women:** He attached a great deal of importance to women. He says, “With five hundred motivated men it will take me fifty years to transform India. With fifty motivated women it may take only a few years.” National resurgence depends on the extent of development of women. He says, man and woman are two wings of a bird-nation. If one wing is weak, how can the bird fly properly? Similarly, national development requires the smooth and prosperous unless women folk are given due importance. Since national reconstruction and resurgence need wholehearted involvement of men and women, it is very wise to give women due place in society. No country can be prosperous whose women-folk are neglected and underprivileged.
- **Idea on freedom and mukti:** In order to attain freedom and *mukti*, he suggested four-fold paths, i.e., work, worship, contemplation and knowledge. In the Gita four-fold paths, i.e., Karma Yoga, Vakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Gnyana Yoga are recommended. Swami Vivekananda is of opinion that in order to attain salvation, a man can pursue any one or more Yogas according to his background, ability and temperament.
- **Practical ideology:** Although he was a spiritualist in the true sense of the term, he beautifully blended spiritualism with science and technology for economic well-being of men because according to him, ‘Religion is not for empty bellies’. In order to undertake any spiritual activity, a man must be self-dependent economically.

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF VIVEKANANDA:

Swami Vivekananda, being a spiritual leader of practical significance, suggested that a sound education would be a panacea for many evils in India. As a result, he devised certain concrete ideas for education of individual. Education is not a mere acquisition of certain information. Real education, according to him, is that which enables one to stand on one’s own feet. Education, as he says, is the manifestation of Divine perfection. On the other hand, the essence of education is concentration of mind but not accumulation of facts. He, therefore, contended that salvation of India lies with the alleviation of poverty of the masses through provision of sound system education. Hence, he defined’ education is one by which character is formed, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one’s own feet’.

- **Knowledge resides within individual:** According to Swami Vivekananda, knowledge is inherent in individual. The individual child is to discover or realize it. Similarly, perfection is already in the individual, education is manifestation of Divine perfection already existing in the individual. In fact, every man is in the process of perfection; education is a means to attain it.

- **Self-education:** The individual does his own growing. Like Froebel, Vivekananda believed in auto-education. It implies that the child develops his own nature as the plant does its own growing. The plant grows itself naturally; the gardener helps it in growing. Similarly, the teacher has to provide conducive environment to the child's own growing. Knowledge emanates to the child by his own power of perfection and thought but not by external imposition.
- **Education according to the tendency of the child:** Every child is unique. He has had his own strengths and weaknesses. No one can be same with others, even parents. As such, education is to be imparted according to innate tendencies of the child.
- **Concentration of mind:** Concentration of mind but not mere collection of information and facts is the first and best way of acquisition of all learning. He opines that the treasure-house of all knowledge can be opened only by the key of concentration.
- **Observance of continence:** In order to have concentration of mind, one is required to maintain one's continence or 'Brahmacharya'. It is the gateway to concentration of mind and concentration is the means of quick and effective learning. According to him, continence is the chastity in thought, word and deed.
- **Education for all:** Swami Vivekananda is the harbinger of the clarion call 'education for all.' The degree of development of a country depends on the extent and quality of education of its people. Illiteracy of a big slice of population in India deeply pained him. So, he sloganed on mass education. He says, 'No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses of India are once more well-educated, well-fed and well-cared for.' Mass education would be a panacea for many socio-economic ills and political backwardness.
- **National system of education:** No country can be prosperous and can have high identity unless it has got its own system of education based on national ideals and identity. We have got now our national system of education. Credit goes to Vivekananda because he sounded a note of urgency to devise of system of education based on our national needs, problems, aspirations, etc. He even told this during the British period.

❖ AIMS OF EDUCATION AND VIVEKANANDA:

Swami Vivekananda has given importance to man. So the ultimate aim of all education and all training should be man making. Every child is not a man at the time of birth. He is simply an individual. Thus, through education, individual is to be transformed into the personality of man. However, he recommends the following aims of education.

1. Immediate aims/Proximate aims of Education:

- a) **Development of Moral Character:** Education should stress on the formation of good moral character. Education without character is no education. Swami Vivekananda said, “We want education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one’s own feet.”
- b) **Stress on Practical Side of Life:** He could realize the pitiable plight of the starving millions of India. He was of opinion that it was due to their ignorance. He thought of providing education that bears practical utility in life. Education should enable each individual to stand on his own feet. Thus, he aims at providing education for different vocations such as agriculture, craft, engineering, technology, etc.
- c) **Mere Book Teaching is no Education:** He was not in favour of providing bookish education. According to him, true education is to realize divinity residing in man. Education, thus, aims at the development of infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite patience and infinite courage in man.
- d) **Mass Education:** education should be given to all irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. It should help the common people to get training in struggle for life and cultivate in them self-reliance and self-confidence.
- e) **Mental Development:** Swami Vivekananda believes that mental development and spirituality are the things for which we strive, but mental developmental development would enable the individual to attach knowledge leading to Bhakti and Yoga and finally to the realization of the self.
- f) **Vocational Education:** Self-sufficiency in education is another aim as has been advocated by Swami Vivekananda. Education should develop the capacity within the child to earn his own bread and salt and lead a comfortable life. Children should be educated for their appropriate Karma Yoga.
- g) **Brahmachrya for Concentration:** the important aim of education should be to help the adolescents to transform their physical energy into spiritual energy by observing Brahmachrya or complete continence. An individual can master all learning within a very short time by observing strict Brahmacharya. By Brahmacharya. He means control of sex drives and chastity of thought, word and deed. Practice of chastity of Brahmacharya will develop the power of concentration, which is the basis of all education.
- h) **Self-realization:** Introduction of Yoga in education helps a child to realize the harmony between the inner and outer life. Yoga opens the layers of gross mind and penetrates deeply into realms of the mind and gets deeper knowledge, which leads towards self-realization.

2. Ultimate aims of Education:

- a) **Integrated Development of Personality:** The ideal of all education and all training is man-making. Education gradually transforms ego-centricity to sociability. It should enable the child to possess sound personality. Vivekananda says that in making a real man, personality has two-third role whereas his intellect and work have one-third contribution.
- b) **Creation of Faith in one's Own Self:** Soul resides in the child. He has potentialities in him. Education should make a person conscious of his latent or hidden powers. He has the immortal soul which is not perishable. He discovers and realizes all knowledge within himself. Thus, man should have complete confidence in himself and try to attain ultimate goal of life. Self-confidence leads to self-realization. One person who possesses self-confidence leads to self-realization. One person who possesses self-reliance can perform marvelous things individually and socially.
- c) **Promotion of Universal Brotherhood:** Swami Vivekananda was not only a patriot and nationalist but also a great internationalist. Education should cultivate in children a feeling of universal brotherhood. Soul is same in all from animal to man. The difference lies in its manifestation. He says from the highest God to the meanest grass, the same power is potent in all. Therefore, there is no difference between man and man. Education should enable the child to realize this feeling of oneness.
- d) **Service to Mankind:** Swami Vivekananda was a ardent lover of mankind. He was deeply pained at the suffering of the poor, downtrodden, ignorant, helpless and destitute. Man must not worship idols of God in temples but God in man. Thus, he advocated **to serving** the poor. Education should teach the pupils that service to mankind is service to God.
- e) **Developing a Sprit of Renunciation:** Education should aim at generating a spirit of renunciation. Without renunciation man cannot do well for others. With renunciation man views all alike. Renunciation, according to him, is the feeling of doing work for others. Education should develop an altruistic tendency in child.
- f) **Spiritual Development:** Education should be aimed at physical and spiritual development of individual. He wanted that a man should possess a strong body with iron muscles and nerves steel.

❖ ROLE OF TEACHER AND TEACHING:

Swami Vivekananda has innumerable words for the teacher. Much weight is given to piousness and character of the teacher than the competence. He says that teacher should possess certain qualities viz.

- A teacher should be a ‘*tyagi*’ in the real sense of the term. He should possess a sound moral character and lead an ideal life. He should remember that example is better than precept. So, he should influence his pupils through his ways of living, feeling, behaving and doing.
- A teacher must be dedicated to the teaching profession with a view to rendering selfless service like an ancient ‘*Guru*’. The teacher should love his pupils. He should be sympathetic to his students. Without the sympathy he cannot teach to the students.
- A teacher must have a missionary zeal and angelic motive behind the act of teaching. The role of a teacher is like a gardener, who prepares a ground for his plants, protects them, gives manure, water and makes the plants grow.
- Vivekananda laid great emphasis on the personal contact of the pupil with the teacher-“Guru grihvasa”. One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is blazing fire and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching.
- The most necessary condition of a teacher is sinlessness or transparency.
- Another important condition of a teacher is that he must know the spirit of the scriptures.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A TEACHER:

- a) **Purity:** The first condition necessary for the teacher is spinelessness. The question is often asked: ‘Why should we look into the character and personality of the teacher?’ This is not right. The ‘sine quo non’ of acquiring truth for oneself, or for imparting to others, is purity of heart and soul. He must be perfectly pure and then only comes the value of his words.
- b) **Knowledge of the spirit of scriptures:** The second condition necessary for a teacher is that he must know the spirit of the scriptures. The whole world reads Bibles, Vedas and Korans; but they are only words, syntax, etymology, philology-the dry bones of religion. The teacher who deals too much in words and allows the mind to be carried away by the force of words loses the spirit. It is the knowledge of the spirit of the scriptures that constitutes the true teacher.
- c) **Spiritual Force:** The third condition is in regard to the motive. The teacher must remember that the only medium through which spiritual force can be transmitted is love.
- d) **Teacher as a Guide:** The fourth condition is that the teacher should not think that he is making the child grow. “You cannot teach a child to grow”, he said, “You can only help. A child teaches itself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things”.

TEACHING OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA:

Vivekananda suggested the following methods of teaching along with his role.

- **Observance of continence (Celibacy):** It is the *summum bonum* of the students. Brahmacharya can help one immensely to have concentration of mind. As per to him, concentration is the royal road to acquisition of all knowledge. So concentration is suggested as the best method of learning.
- **Sradha (Respect):** According to him, the method of learning is sradha. Interest or faith in students helps students immensely in acquiring knowledge. One should cultivate shraddha or faith in the subject to be studied and should have reverence for the same.
- **Gurukul method:** In our ancient Gurukul system of education a close and intimate interaction between teacher and taught was stressed, Swamiji feels that Gurukul parampara is also a good method of education which helps the learner develop many good qualities as well as knowledge due to close contact with the teacher
- **Yoga:** Self- realization is the ultimate goal of life. In the Gita, four types of Yogas, viz, *Karma Yoga, Vakti Yoga, Jnyana Yoga* and *Raj Yoga* have been recommended. An individual is required to follow any one or more according to his suitability to attain the ultimate goal of life. In the yoga, concentration of mind is the key factor. Yoga helps one to have control over one's mind. So, yoga is suggested in his scheme of education.

CONCLUSION:

The exposition and analysis of Swami Vivekananda scheme of education brings to light its constructive, practical and comprehensive character. He realizes that it is only through education that the uplift of masses is possible. To refer to his own words: Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people and I used to shed tears. Who made the difference? "Education" was the answer I got. Swami Vivekananda is an ideal and living legend to the youth. He has inspired modern youth a great deal. His teaching and preaching have a greater bearing on the people even now. Indian cultural heritage and her global view could be known due to Vivekananda all over the world. He played a significant role in all the fields of education. So he is called the great educator in the modern India as well as the World. He will remain as unchallenged sage of practical wisdom for any years to go.

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