



# Swami Vivekananda's Educational Thoughts and its Implications in Present Scenario

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## Abstract:

Swami Vivekananda was a well versed, spiritually enlightened monk. He was a great Vedantist who preaches the ideas of Vedas. In his very short life he affected the whole world and tried to modernize India while keeping its culture intact. His ideas encourage the spirit of humanity and they are reliable for all times.

Swami Vivekananda's idea of education is harmonious development. He believes in all kind of physical, intellectual, social, moral and spiritual development. He opines that education must develop ability to reason along with character building and man making. His thoughts are for all times and culture. His views are the best foundation for reconstruction of modern education in India. He practiced the idea of Vedas throughout his life such as self knowledge, self reliance, fearlessness and concentration. He preaches the central idea of Veda the universal oneness throughout his life. He was true when he said that world must learn Indian philosophical thoughts along with western sciences.

## INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda is not just a name but it is a philosophy which influenced the world. He gave deep thought to various problems of human life. His region of concern were religion, philosophy, social and political systems, education system, position of woman, honour of nation and many other areas. His views on various problems gave a new direction to the nation.

He says, "Education is the discovery of the inner self." He believes in comprehensive development of personality through education. Swami Vivekananda believed that "education is the manifestation of perfection already in man". "Perfection is already inherent in man, and education is the manifestation of the same". "All knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside, it is all inside."

He identified the problems which were root cause of all other problems that is domination by alien rulers, class distinction, learning only for privileged and masses were ignorant, superstitious and resistant to change. These issues had killed their initiative, self reliance and self confidence. Swami Vivekananda's philosophy transforms people spiritually, morally, socially and physically.

### **Early life of Swami Vivekananda**

Swami Vivekananda was born on 12 January 1863 in the family of Vishwanath Dutta and Bhubaneswari Devi on the auspicious occasion of Makar Sakranti at his ancestral home in Calcutta. His family was a traditional Bengali family. His father being related to the profession of law was of progressive and rational attitude and his mother was a religious lady. The reflection of his parent's attitude is clearly seen in the young Narendra. Narendra was very furious, disobedient and active child.

Narendranath had varied interests. The various subjects of interest were philosophy, religion, history, the social sciences, arts, literature. He had read the various Hindu Scriptures like the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata with curiosity and quest. He had keen interest in music, art, physical exercise, sports and other organizational activities. He had rational attitude and he questioned various superstitious customs at very young age.

Narendra began his education by home schooling then in 1871 he joined the Metropolitan Institution of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. Their family shifted to Raipur in 1877 for 2 years. For those 2 years he discussed spiritual topics with his father as that time there were no good schools in Raipur. In Raipur he learned Hindi and for the first time he questioned the existence of God. The two years 1877 to 1879 spent in Raipur was turning point of his life and it is credited as the "Spiritual Birthplace" of Swami Vivekananda.

His first interaction with Ramakrishna was through William Wordsworth's poem The Excursion and the poet's nature-mysticism. While explaining the word trance in the poem, his professor encouraged students that if they wanted to understand the depth of word trance know, they should visit Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar. Narendranath along with some of his fellow visited the Ramakrishna.

### **Influence of Ramakrishna Paramhansa**

The concept of God ignited the mind of Narendra, he asked the question to the leaders of various religions, "Have you seen God?" but he was never satisfied with answer. His quest for this question came to end by the reply of Ramakrishna Paramhansa. He replied: "yes, I have, I have seen God as clearly as I saw you, only in a much deeper sense."

Narendra was not clear either to accept Ramakrishna or reject him. He was in confusing state but he keep on visiting Ramakrishna. He reason out Ramakrishna according to his nature and even Ramakrishna never asked him to abandon reason and answer his question with patience and enthusiasm.

Once after accepting Ramakrishna his guru it took five years of extensive training, practice and meditation that an impatient, restless, puzzled and perplexed youth changed to mature man. He understands the purpose and depth of human life. He was prepared to leave this materialistic world for realization of God. He had completely surrendered himself to Ramakrishna along with his brother disciples.

### **World Parliament of religions**

When he was roving all over India he got to know about the world parliament of religions being held in Chicago, America 1893. He was eager to represent India, Hinduism and his Guru Sri Ramakrishna's philosophies in that meeting. It was hard for him to arrange for that meeting but his wish get completed when he was meditating.

On 11 september 1893 when he began his lecture with the opening phrase "My brothers and sisters of America" forced the whole audience to give standing ovation to Vivekananda as these were not just words but that were his emotions coming straight from his heart. He kept on explaining the ideas and philosophy of Vedanta and the audience kept mesmerizing. He put Hinduism on the world map. His first journey to America got extended for next two years after that he also delivered lectures in UK. The whole western world was keen to learn Vedas. He was first Indian monk who took the idea of spiritualism to the western world. This journey leads him to global recognition and acceptance of his ideas.

### **Concept of Education**

Vivekananda believes, "Education is not measured by the amount of information that is imparted to the pupil but that it must lead to life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas." He was utterly dissatisfied with the system of education that was prevalent under the British rule. Vivekananda proclaimed that "We must have the whole of education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines, and through national methods as far as practicable."

Every bit of knowledge therefore, worldly or eternal, is within us. The knowledge and powers of whole world are within. Whatever we name it power, almighty everything is in soul. The knowledge and power are pre existing in human being what man does is its discovery and manifestation.

Swami Vivekananda believes that the framework of Education should be so designed that one realizes that infinite knowledge, power resides in him and education is means to reach the same. "The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand thing."

### **Aims of Education**

Swami Vivekananda opines that education should create character, intellectual ability, fearlessness, oneness and ability to fulfill one's materialistic goal. The aim of all education and training is to realize man its nature and manifest it.

The ultimate aim of education is character building. He wants to modernize the structure of education by adding western sciences but its soul was the ideas of Vedanta. He advocates the Indian method of teaching. He emphasized on personal contact between student and teacher and teacher should be highest living example of character, morality and ethics. He opines that only by the means of concentration one can attain knowledge. He advocates one who learns with concentration definitely perform better in various spheres of life. He considers that following are chief aim of education.

- Education for Physical Development
- Education for Intellectual Development
- Education for Religious Development
- Education for Character Formation, Morality and Spirituality
- Education for Brotherhood
- Education for Vocational Efficiency
- Education for Self Confidence and Self Reliance

**Curriculum According to Swami Vivekananda:** Vivekananda advocates that curriculum should be so designed that it leads to holistic development of a child. He recommends the study of Vedas, religion, philosophy along with western science, engineering and other modern subjects. A broad curriculum can be drawn out from his educational thoughts; some of its aspects are discussed below.

- Confluence of Science and Vedanta
- Education of Arts
- Regional language
- Broad academic curriculum
- Vocational Education

### **Teaching Method:**

Swami ji believes that indigenous methods of teaching are best possible ways to teach. He says different methods of teaching must be used by teacher. Vivekananda recommended the following principles of teaching:

- Concentration and meditation
- Brahmacharya
- Faith (Shraddha and reverence)
- Discussion
- Study of scripture
- Service to others



- Congenial atmosphere based upon freedom and discipline.

### **Teacher according to Swami Vivekananda**

Vivekananda laid great emphasis on the personal contact of the pupil with the teacher - “Guru grihavasā”. The child should be living with his teacher from very young age whom he considers a living example of character and intellect. The first essential thing for the teacher is sinlessness. The question is often asked: “why should we look into the character and personality of the teacher.” It is necessary who preaches to follow the truth, purity of soul and heart himself have these, only then his words are valuable.

The second essential thing for a teacher is that he must understand and believe in spirit of the scriptures. The whole world reads various scriptures of different religions, but they merely go through words, syntax, and etymology philology which are merely the encryptions of religion. The teacher who speaks day and night must know the spirit of scriptures as it is only through him the idea of various scriptures can be realized in true sense. The third essential thing is related to the motive. The teacher must have infinite patience and love as with only these two spiritual forces he can impart his knowledge.

The fourth essential thing is that the teacher should not boast that he can only make the child arise. “You cannot teach a child to grow,” he said, “you can only guide. One is teacher for oneself. The outer guide only creates the suitable environment which ignites the internal spirit.

Vivekananda had the most modern approach about the role of the teacher. Swami Vivekananda opines that the teacher should work to arouse inner powers of child rather than scolding him. The teacher has to make the pupils conscious that ultimate goal is to reach perfection latent in him.

The teacher and student should be able to share their ideas as a friend. The teacher should understand the confusion and challenges of student. The teacher should help the student in self analysis and self-discovery. The teacher should develop the creativity, reasoning and strength in a child. The greatest thing in which teacher can help a child is in developing of ‘Atamshradha’ that mean faith in one self.

### **Education of Women:**

Swami Vivekananda was disheartened at the pathetic situation of women in India. He opines progress of nation lies in progress of women. He quotes from the Manusamriti. “Where women are respected, there the gods delight; and where they are not, there all works efforts come to naught.” He boldly says, the family or country where women are not happy, they can never rise. He strongly recommends that daughters must be nurtured as sons. He believes women should be given chance to realize the idea of chastity because these ideas would bring them strength for reaching their perfect womanhood. He considers Sita as an ideal for the Indian women. He remarks that any attempt to modernize women which takes the women away from the ideal of Sita is vicious and must be stopped immediately.

Swami Vivekananda was against child marriage, as it is hurdle in the complete development of girls. The girls married at such a tender age are never able to evolve their personalities. It is a loss both at individual level and at national level. He believes a nation cannot progress without including women in mainstream. He had high reverence for women. He believes without uncovering the possibilities of women, we cannot reach to our goals. Women education is first and foremost requisite of development of a nation.

**Education of the Masses:** Swami Vivekananda was affected by the pathetic condition of the masses in India as he had traveled across length and breadth of India. The poor, the marginalized have no one to say their heart in India. Every day they feel the blows and sink lower and lower. Swami Vivekananda says he holds everyone traitor who have been educated at the cost of millions of people who live in hunger and ignorance, but they never did anything for them.

Swami Vivekananda believes the reason of our all miseries is pathetic condition of the masses. He considers education is the only solution to change the condition of masses. It is only through education that there self esteem can be restored. He regrets that nothing substantial has been done for educating the poor. He pleaded for mass liberation. According to him, it is the duty of each and every educated person to help the poor and the uneducated by way of giving them some new idea, rest they will learn and to with their own efforts.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda “If the mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him. There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing sanyasins in our country, going from village to village, and teaching religion. If some of them can be organized as teacher of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching but teaching also.” This is a firm stand of Swami Vivekananda about mass education of this country.

### **Educational Implications in Present Scenario:**

We can have following implications of Vivekananda’s educational thoughts:

1. Education must develop self confidence and self reliance.
2. Education must promote universal brotherhood.
3. Education must produce zeal, curiosity, fearlessness and rational thinking.
4. Education should ensure employability and it should reach to the masses.
5. Education should be rooted in Indian philosophies but at the same time it should promote science and technology.
6. The process of education should be lively and it should be in psychological manner.
7. Education should promote self realization and one should able to realize the eternal truth of human life.

## Conclusion

Swami Vivekananda who was born more than 150 years ago and died at very young age has guided the whole world. He showed the world path of progress. His region of concern were religion, philosophy, social and political systems, education system, position of woman, honour of nation and many other areas. He suggests that solution of all problems of mankind is through comprehensive education structure. Swami Vivekananda believes education system should have its foundation on character building, morality, spirituality, universal oneness, freedom from fear and it should also fulfill materialistic needs. He defines education is the mean to realize the truth of human life that we all are the incarnation of same God.

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