



**CONTEXTUALIZING SWAMI VIVEKANANDA VISION ON  
EDUCATION IN PRESENT SCENARIO**

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*You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.*

*-Swami Vivekananda*

INTRODUCTION: Swami Vivekananda (1863 – 1902), a great thinker and reformer of India, embraces education, which for him signifies ‘man-making’, as the very mission of his life. Vivekananda realizes that mankind is passing through a crisis. The tremendous emphasis on the scientific and mechanical ways of life is fast reducing man to the status of a machine. Moral and religious values are being undermined. The fundamental principles of civilization are being ignored. Conflicts of ideals, manners and habits are pervading the atmosphere. Disregard for everything old is the fashion of the day. Vivekananda seeks the solutions of all these social and global evils through education. With this end in view, he feels the dire need of awakening man to his spiritual self wherein, he thinks, lies the very purpose of education.

**SWAMI VIVEKANAND AND HIS EDUCATIONAL AIMS**

He told that what is education? Is it book learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education.

The very essence of education is concentration of mind and Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.

Vivekananda points out that the defect of the present-day education is that it has no definite goal to pursue. A sculptor has a clear idea about what he wants to shape out of the marble block; similarly, a painter knows what he is going to paint. But a teacher, he says, has no clear idea about the goal of his teaching. Swamiji attempts to establish, through his words and deeds, that the end of all education is man making. He prepares the scheme of this man-making education in

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the light of his over-all philosophy of Vedanta. According to Vedanta, the essence of man lies in his soul, which he possesses in addition to his body and mind. In true with this philosophy, Swamiji defines education as ‘the manifestation of the perfection already in man.’ The aim of education is to manifest in our lives the perfection, which is the very nature of our inner self. This perfection is the realization of the infinite power which resides in everything and everywhere-existence, consciousness and bliss (satchidananda). After understanding the essential nature of this perfection, we should identify it with our inner self. For achieving this, one will have to eliminate one’s ego, ignorance and all other false identification, which stand in the way. Meditation, fortified by moral purity and passion for truth, helps man to leave behind the body, the senses, the ego and all other non-self elements, which are perishable. He thus realizes his immortal divine self, which is of the nature of infinite existence, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss. In his scheme of education, Swamiji lays great stress on physical health because a sound mind resides in a sound body. He often quotes the Upanishadic dictum ‘**nayamatma balahinena labhyah**’; i.e. **the self cannot be realized by the physically weak**. However, along with physical culture, he harps on the need of paying special attention to the culture of the mind. According to Swamiji, the mind of the students has to be controlled and trained through meditation, concentration and practice of ethical purity. All success in any line of work, he emphasizes, is the result of the power of concentration. According to Swami Vivekananda, a nation’s greatness is not only measured by its parliamentary institutions and activities, but also by the greatness of its citizens. But the greatness of citizens is possible only through their moral and spiritual development which education should foster.

#### **Curriculum And Method**

According to Swami Vivekanand, the prime aim of education is spiritual growth and development. But this does not mean that he did not advocate material prosperity and physical well-being. He feelingly advocated the inclusion of all those subjects and activities, in the curriculum, which foster material welfare with spiritual advancement.

For spiritual perfection Swamiji prescribed Religious, Philosophy, Puranic lore, Upanishads, Company of saints and their preaching’s and for material advancement and prosperity he recommended Languages, Geography, Science, Political Science, Economics, Psychology, Art, Agriculture, Industrial and Technical subjects together with Games, sports and other Physical exercises.

Swamiji prescribed the same ancient spiritual methods of teaching wherein the Guru and his disciples lived in close association as in a family. The essential characteristics of those religious and spiritual methods were as under:-

1. To control fleeting mental faculties by the practice of Yoga.
2. To develop the mind by concentration and deep meditation.
3. To gain knowledge through lectures, discussions, self- experience and creative activities.
4. To imitate the qualities and character of teacher intelligent and clear understanding.
5. To lead the child on the right path by means of individual guidance by the teacher.

Swamiji lays a lot of emphasis on the environment at home and school for the proper growth of the child. The parents as well as the teachers should inspire the child by the way they live their lives. Swamiji recommends the old institution of gurukula (living with the preceptor) and similar systems for the purpose. In such systems, the students can have the ideal character of the teacher constantly before them, which serves as the role model to follow.

Although Swamiji is of the opinion that mother tongue is the right medium for social or mass education, he prescribes the learning of English and Sanskrit also. While English is necessary for mastering Western science and technology, Sanskrit leads one into the depths of our vast store of classics. The implication is that if language does not remain the privilege of a small class of people, social unity will march forward unhampered.

### **Relationship between the teacher and taught**

the teacher-taught equation. Anticipating in his usual forward-looking style, the concept behind a currently popular term

„faci Everyone would be able to hone his/her own mind and soul to become teachers. For them he had another format of litator “as a synonym for teacher he said: Do you think you can teach even a child? You cannot. The child teaches himself. Your duty is to afford opportunities and to remove obstacles. The teacher is warned here: not to feel a sense of superiority but rather be humble i.e. *.vidya dadati vinayam* a dictum which seems to have been overshadowed by a market-driven, exhibitionist culture. Instead Swami ji puts forward his views on what a teacher should and should not do by

Saying: “he [the teacher] . . . [should] not teach with any ulterior motive, for money, or fame or anything else, but simply for love, pure Love for you.”

Not for nothing has a teacher been deeply revered in our culture from time immemorial. But the custodians of education today need to do some serious introspection to assess how they measure up in this calibration of Vivekananda. Of

Course, Swamiji’s prescription is not for teachers alone. An ideal teacher would need a worthy pupil. As he suggests, “The conditions necessary in the taught are purity, a real thirst for Knowledge and perseverance.”

These three crucial requirements, if met, would certainly ensure excellence in education, irrespective of the curricular flaws, so to say.

### **THE BASES OF MODERN EDUCATION**

Vivekananda felt that modern education all over the world has so far concentrated on ‘the learning to do’ aspect and not on the ‘learning to be’ faculties of education. He says that education must focus on the requirement of the human mind. His philosophy of education is based on universal principles of morality and ethics. He wanted to teach the common masses of India the ideals of synthesis, tolerance and universal harmony. His philosophy gives equal importance to the claims of spirit and matter. To him diversity is as real as unity. Matter is only ‘veiled spirit’. Thus he creates a metaphysical synthesis reconciling the claims of spirit and matter, and makes it one of the chief bases of its philosophy of education.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF ‘YOGA’ IN EDUCATION**

Vivekananda wants to place maximum emphasis on concentration and meditation in the teaching-learning process. In the practice of yoga as it is in the practice of general education, five

elements are necessarily involved-the teacher, the taught, the aim, the subject and the method. He convinced of the fact that all knowledge is in the human mind and that the same can be experienced by practicing concentration and meditation.

### **TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE**

To Vivekananda, all teaching implies giving and taking; the teacher gives and the student receives. Here he stresses the need for effective participation in the teaching-learning process. Teacher should motivate the students to acquire knowledge and develop in them scientific temper, secular outlook and civic responsibility.

### **LEARNING THROUGH ACTIVITY**

Vivekananda anticipated many modern thinkers in suggesting that learning through activity should be the guiding principle of any scheme of education. He wanted every activity in Indian schools and colleges-dance, drama etc; Inter-school and inter-collegiate competitions are also required in order to enable the students learn how to sacrifice personal and selfish interests for the sake of the larger interests of society.

### **THE IDEAL OF WOMANHOOD IN INDIA**

Vivekananda suggested that the women should be made ambitious through a good system of education. He made a strong appeal for raising the status of women along with that of man. He felt that it was much against the ancient ideal of India that women were not given enough opportunities for self-development. Swami Vivekananda warned it is completely unfair to discriminate between sexes, as there is not any sex distinction in *atman* (soul), the soul has neither sex, nor caste nor imperfection. He suggested not to think that there are men and women, but only that there are human beings. Swami Vivekananda felt, The best thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of its women and it is impossible to get back India's lost pride and honor unless they try to better the condition of women. Vivekananda considered men and women as two wings of a bird, and it is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing. So, according to him, there is no chance for welfare of the world unless the condition of woman is improved.

Swami Vivekananda noticed almost everywhere women are treated as playthings. In modern countries like America, women have more independence, still, Vivekananda had noticed, men bow low, offer a woman a chair and in another breath they offer compliments like "Oh, how beautiful your eyes.." etc. Vivekananda felt, a man does not have any right to do this or venture so far, and any woman should not permit this as well. According to Swami Vivekananda such things develop the less noble side of humanity. They do not tend to noble ideals.

According to Vivekananda, the ideal of womanhood in India is motherhood – that marvelous, unselfish, all-suffering, ever-forgiving mother. Vivekananda felt, in India, there are two great evils – trampling on the women, and grinding through the poor through caste restrictions.

According to Swami Vivekananda, Sita is typical of India – the idealized India. Swami Vivekananda assured if world literature of the past and world literature of the future are thoroughly exhausted, yet, it'll not be possible to find out another Sita, because Sita is unique, the character was depicted once for all. Swami Vivekananda felt there may have been several Ramas, perhaps, but never more than one Sita.

Vivekananda felt:

“ All our mythology may vanish, even our Vedas may depart, and our Sanskrit language may vanish forever, but so long as there will be five Hindus living here, even if only seeking the most vulgar patois, there will be the story of Sita present. ”

Sita was a true Indian by nature, Vivekananda concluded, who never returned injury.<sup>[</sup>

## **RELEVANCE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S IDEAS IN MODERN EDUCATION**

### **VALUE EDUCATION**

Here, education is conceived in the broad sense; everything in the society plays an educational role. The formal education system is but part of the culture and values in the system are inevitably determined by the culture. Education is seen as an instrument for harnessing human drives, and as consequences, it becomes to some extent a method of behavior modification. Education preserves rather than changes social values. Education is seen to abide by existing culture norms of the society.

### **PEACE EDUCATION**

Constructive education for peace must aim to reform humanity so as to permit the inner development of human personality and develop a more conscious vision of the mission of mankind and the present conditions of social life as was so emphatically averred by Swami Vivekananda as well. What we need today is an education that is capable of saving mankind from the present predicament. Such an education involves the spiritual development of man and the enhancement of his value as an individual and preparing the young people to understand the time in which they live.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

Environmental education is viewed as an integral part of the education process. It is taken to be centred on practical problems and can be an interdisciplinary character. It should aim at building up a sense of values, contribute to public well being and concern itself with survival of the human species. Its force, therefore, should aside mainly the initiative of the learners and their involvement in action and it should be guided by immediate and future subject of concern. Environmental education enables them to manage the environment in which they live through a judicious use of resources

## INFLUENCE OF SWAMI JI

Viewed in the light of contemporary thought, Vivekananda was actually an epoch capsule into a life span of less than forty years updating his mother country to fight against all kinds of social evils. 'Equilibrium' and 'synthesis' were the watchwords of Vivekananda. Contemplation and devotion to duty were unified in his personality. He had gone deep into the social and political decline of India and attempted to prescribe a workable formula to eradicate all social inequalities. The awakening and liberation of modern India as viewed by him was a stage for the realization of universal love and brotherhood. He gave his fellow brethren, a dynamic gospel of supreme fearlessness and strength. He mercilessly denounced the arrogance and sophistication of the upper classes of Indian society. He was one of the great thinkers in India to offer a sociological interpretation of Indian history.

## AREA OF STUDY

Swami ji, in his scheme of education, meticulously includes all those studies, which are necessary for the all-around development of the body, mind and soul of the individual. These studies can be brought under the broad heads of physical culture, aesthetics, classics, language, religion, science and technology. According to Swamiji, the culture values of the country should form an integral part of the curriculum of education. The culture of India has its roots in her spiritual values. The time-tested values are to be imbibed in the thoughts and lives of the students through the study of the classics like Ramayana, Mahabharata, Gita, Vedas and Upanishads. This will keep the perennial flow of our spiritual values into the world culture. Education, according to Swamiji, remains incomplete without the teaching of aesthetics or fine arts. he cites Japan as an example of how the combination of art and utility can make a nation great. Swamiji reiterates that religion is the innermost core of education. However, by religion, he does not mean any particular kind of it but its essential character, which is the realization of the divinity already in man. He reminds us time and again that religion does not consist in dogmas or creeds or any set of rituals. To be religious for him means leading life in such a way that we manifest our higher nature, truth, goodness and beauty, in our thoughts, words and deeds. All impulses, thoughts and action which lead one towards this goal are naturally ennobling and harmonizing, and are ethical and moral in the truest sense. it is in this context that Swamiji's idea of religion, as the basis of education should be understood. We note that in his interpretation, religion and education share the identity of purpose.

## CONCLUSION

The exposition and analysis of Vivekananda's 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: Traveling 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. When made the difference? "Education" was the answer I got.'

It is in the transformation of man through moral and spiritual education that he finds the solution for all social evils. Founding education on the firm ground of our own philosophy and culture, he

shows the best of remedies for today's social and global illness. Through his scheme of education, he tries to materialize the moral and spiritual welfare and upliftment of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality or time. However, Swami Vivekananda's scheme of education, through which he wanted to build up a strong nation that will lead the world towards peace and harmony, is still a far cry. It is high time that we give serious thought to his philosophy of education and remembers his call to everybody – 'Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached'.

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