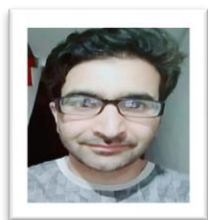


# Swami Vivekananda's Educational Philosophy with Reference to India



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## Abstract

From time immemorial, India, the land of dharma, has produced great philosopher personalities. Swami Vivekananda (affectionately called as Swamiji) stands out among them. Besides patriot, social reformer and educationist he is saint. While he is student in college at seventeen years of age, he comes under the influence of Sri Ramakrishana Paramhansa. Before he becomes a monk, his name is Narendra Nath Datta. As a saint, he does for the gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa which Saint Paul do for the gospel of Christ. He broadcasts the truths of Vedanta in India, Europe and America, as realized in the experience of his guru Sri Ramakishna Paramhansa.

To know the India first hand, he under takes extensive travel all over India as a wandering monk and as such comes in direct contact with real India. This makes him realize at first hand that centuries of neglect and exploitation by upper classes has reduced the Indian masses to ignorance and poverty. He also comes to know that masses have lost the capacity to take initiative for their own betterment. He feels pain to see the utter neglect of women folk. Swamiji ascribes exploitation and utter neglect as the main causes for India's degradation.

Deeply concerned about Indian people, Swamiji sit in meditation on the last rock of India in Kanyakumari and realizes that education alone can regenerate India. For this he advocates Man-making education which has roots in Vedanta and Upanishads as well as Positive Education.

**Keywords:** Swami Vivekananda, Educational Philosophy, India.

## Introduction

Swamiji believes that education is the manifestation of perfection already existing in man. Therefore to Swamiji education is not mere book learning and rote memorization. It is not the amount of information, put into ones brain which may lie there undigested all one's life. It is rather a life building assimilation of ideas. Swamiji says that if you have assimilated few ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. He further says that if the libraries were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopedias, the greatest Rishis

Swamiji stresses 'Positive Education'. He feels that existing system provides only 'Negative Education'- an education which takes us away from our culture, religion and original thinking. It does not train our will and inner conscience. According to him real education is 'Positive Education' because it is the training by which the character and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful. That is not 'Positive Education' which makes a man machine. In fact that is 'Positive Education' which develops the will and enables one to realize the divinity latent in him, produces infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage and infinite patience. He writes that by education I do not mean the present system but something in line of positive teaching. Mere book learning will not do. We want that 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.

## Objectives of Study

1. To study and understand that Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy of Education has contemporary relevance in Indian setting.
2. To study and understand that Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy of Education is panacea to all contemporary issues those are contributing to decay of our rich cultural heritage.

3. To study and understand that Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy of Education counters all those extant factors that hamper the development of an individual hence nation.
4. To study and understand that Swami Vivekananda's Man-making and Positive education is the way forward towards emancipation of all , irrespective of sex, caste, class, creed, religion and region.
5. To study and understand that Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy of Education equips common masses for struggle for life and to stand on their own feet.

**Discussion****Meaning of Education**

To Swamiji education is the manifestation of perfection, already in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it resides in the human mind. The individual simply discovers it with education.

According to Swami Vivekananda, "You cannot teach a child, child teaches himself. The child develops his own nature as the plant does his own. The function of education is to remove the obstacles in child's path of self development."

The education which does not help the masses to equip themselves for struggle for life, bring about strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of lion are worth the name, Swamiji believes.

The education you are receiving in schools and colleges is only making you a race of dyspeptics. You are working like machines merely and living a jelly fish existence. The real education is that which enables one to stand on one's own feet, Swamiji also believes.

To realize the dream of real education (Man-making and Positive Education) we have to question suitability of western model of education in India and we have to develop system based on our own culture, history and civilization, Swamiji holds.

**Principles of Education**

According to Swamiji the following principles should be the basis of education:

1. The education should not serve mere purpose of getting information rather it should develop character, mental powers and inculcate self confidence together with self reliance.
2. The education should foster spiritual faith, devotion and self surrender in the individual as well as full development through service and sacrifice.
3. Bramacharya and concentration should be practiced because Brahmacharya is very essential for getting knowledge and concentration is the key to all knowledge.
4. Religious education should be imparted through sweet impressions and fine conduct in preference to books.
5. All the subjects must be included in the curriculum which promotes the material and spiritual advancement of a child.

**Aims of Education**

Swami Vivekananda wants all round development of educand to serve mankind effectively.

Therefore recommends physical, mental, moral, spiritual and character development as immediate aims of education. The other immediate aims of his education are manifestation of perfection, developing the spirit of renunciation, searching unity in diversity and promotion of universal brotherhood. The ultimate aim of all education according to Swami Vivekananda is Man-making. Every child as it comes to this world is not man in the real sense of the term. He is only an individual. It is through 'Man- making' and 'Positive Education' that his individuality is transformed into the personality of man, fit for civilized social life of the time.

**Medium of Education**

Swami Vivekananda emphasizes education through mother tongue. Besides mother tongue there should be a common language in curriculum to keep the country united necessarily. He appreciates the inclusion of Sanskrit in curriculum. According to him Sanskrit is the source of all Indian languages and repository of all inherited knowledge; with the absence of this knowledge, it will be impossible to understand Indian culture. It is like a store house of ancient heritage. To develop our society it is necessary that men and women should know this language besides mother tongue.

**Contents of Education**

Swamiji is not in favour of the prevalent education system in the country because it does not help the common people to equip themselves for the struggle of life and stand on their own feet. Therefore Swamiji recommends different branches of knowledge, quite independent of foreign control. He especially recommends the study of Sanskrit language for all, to enable them to go through religious scriptures due to his consideration of religion as the innermost core of education. Along with Sanskrit and other Indian Vernaculars he also recommends the teaching of English language and literature, the study of humanities with special reference to Indian culture, sciences and technology, physical education and vocational subjects.

**Methods of Education**

To swami Vivekananda, there is only one par excellence method of attaining knowledge and that is concentration. More is the power of concentration; great is the knowledge that is acquired. Swamiji says that high achievements in arts, science, literature, et cetra are the result of concentration. When the mind is concentrated and turned back on itself, all within us will be our servant and not our master. In addition to concentration method he also lays emphasis on discussion and contemplation method.

**Education of Masses**

Swami Vivekananda is an ardent advocate of universal education. He holds that education is the birth right of every human being. It is a biological, social and spiritual necessity. He believes that a nation is advanced as education and intelligence spread among the masses. By this way, he exhorts to his countrymen to know –"I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. 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.”

#### **Women Education**

Swami Vivekananda is an ardent advocate of women education. He believes that uplift of the women must come first and then only can real good come about for the country. He says that there is no hope of rise for that family or country where there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness. For this reason they have to be raised first. So he recommends that daughters should be brought up and educated just as sons. He wants to give women an education which may form character and may increase the strength of mind and may enable them to stand on their own feet. Such mothers will produce ideal citizens. Female education according to him is to spread with religion at its centre. He wants to teach some women the ideals of renunciation, so that they may take up the vow of lifelong education to God. He wants to train some Brahmacharins who will take up the education of women. According to him centers have to be started for teaching women, wherein women should be taught history and the puranas, housekeeping and the arts, the duties of home life and the principles which develop an ideal character. These subjects should be taught with the help of modern science. He wanted that girls are trained up in ethical and spiritual life. Swamiji's educational philosophy reflects empowerment of women through education.

#### **Education for Weaker Sections of Society**

He is a genuine friend of the poor and the weak, particularly the helpless masses of India, and he is the first Indian leader who sought a solution to their problems through education. He insists that it was the duty of the upper classes, who receive their education at the expense of the underprivileged, to come forward and uplift them through education. In fact Swamiji's mission is the education for weak. Once he says that there must be equal chance for all or if greater for some and for some less – the weaker should be given more chance than strong so that they can stand on their own feet. To uplift the backward classes he chooses education as powerful instrument.

#### **Physical Education**

He recognizes the importance of physical education when he feels that both self realization and character building are impossible in absence of physical development. As such he recommends both physical and mental education should go hand in hand and one must not be emphasized over other. He remarks, “Make your nerves strong. What we want is muscle of iron and nerves of steel. We have wept long enough. No more weeping but stand on your feet and be men. It is man making education all round that we want.”

#### **Religious Education**

Swamiji says that religion is the innermost core of education. I do not mean my own or anyone else opinion about religion. Religion is as rice and everything else, like the curries. Taking only curries causes indigestion and so is the case with taking rice alone. Therefore all religions must be accepted and only their essential spirits should be included in the

curriculum. In fact, he pleads for one universal religion, without any rituals or dogmas, name or stamp. He believes that such religion can serve the foundation stone of universal love and brotherhood. He also believes that temples and churches, books and forms are simply the kindergarten of religion. They are mere preliminaries. He says that one must enter into the heart of religion, that is, one must realize it in his own life because to him religion is neither word nor doctrine but self realization and divinization. According to him that religion must be a living experience with oneself.

For imparting religious education in schools, he recommends that children should be taught the lives of great saints of all lands as well as Gita, Upanishads and Vedas.

#### **Conclusion**

From the analysis of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of education, the uplift of masses is possible only through Positive education. His philosophy of 'Positive Education' is an attempt towards human welfare and upliftment irrespective of sex, caste, creed, color, religion and region. We can have the strong nation with peace and harmony and without caste and creed with his scheme of education. Swamiji says that main objectives of education are self development, fulfillment of swadharma, freedom of growth and character formation. He has realized long ago that mankind is passing through a crisis and the predicament will keep escalating in due course of time. The tremendous emphasis on the scientific and mechanical ways of life is fast reducing man to the status of a machine. Moral values are being undermined. Ignorance of the fundamental principles of civilization is rampant. Manner, habit and ideal conflicts are pervading the atmosphere. Disregard for everything has become fashion of the day. 'Man-making' and 'Positive Education' is the solution of all these social and global evils, Swamiji holds.

#### **Source**

The source of this manuscript is P. G. Dissertation (Education) titled “Educational Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and its Relevance to Contemporary System of Education in India” submitted to IGNOU in 2015 by Rafeeqa Akhter.

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