



MAN MAKING EDUCATION IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Dr. Manoj Kumar Tomar

Department of Sociology

Govt. Girls College, Sawai Madhopur

INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda, the pioneer among modern Indian thinkers and a great social & spiritual leader wonderfully blended the modern science and technology with the basic principles of Vedanta. He conceptualizes education as a man-making process. He observed that the British legacy of education system could not suit the needs and aspirations of our countrymen as it was structured for the benefits of imperial interests not for the Indians. The sole objective of British education in India was preparing clerks that may serve their imperial interests. The present system of education is suffering from the same problems that Swami Vivekananda had indicated... The education system of India is producing a crowd of degree-holders who wander here and there for earning their livelihood. The present century needs the workforce equipped with skills and knowledge. The mere degrees can no more help unemployed youth. Besides, knowledge and skills, what we need is values and cultural heritage. Some of the western countries ignored the spirituality and values and they have suffered much. So we have, to restructure our education system, redefine its aims, reframe the curricula, choose new methods of teaching and create a new ethos in our educational institutions. The ideas of Swami Vivekananda, beyond doubt, can lead us in right direction and we can go in hands with liberalization, privatization and globalization of the twenty first century. Swami Vivekananda conceived the idea of 'complete man' and his promotion through 'man-making education'. According to Swami Vivekananda complete man is not a 'body alone' or 'mind alone' or 'spirit alone', but an amalgamation of the three.

The human is divine and his divine nature can be discovered and known. Knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge come from outside; it is inside. 'Education' to Swami is 'the manifestation of the perfection already in man.'¹ He held that all knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind.² Swami said, "Like fire in a piece of flint knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out."³ The very aim of education should be

development of human excellence. Human excellence is a composite of four human qualities: intellectual, spiritual, moral and emotional. Each one of these constitutes an independent dimension of human excellence yet they are highly interrelated. We should reorient our system of public education to meet the challenges of this holistic concept of human excellence. Swami has said, "We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet."⁴

Vivekananda realizes the mankind is passing through a crisis. Vivekananda seeks solution to all these problems through education. Swami ji developed his educational ideas based on Vedanta. According to Vedanta the essence of human is in his soul which he possesses in addition to his body and mind. An ideal product of Swamiji's educational scheme would be physically strong; emotionally stable, intellectually sharp and above all he should be devoted to the welfare of all beings.

Aims of Education

Aims of education advocated by Vivekananda are a blending of social and individual aims of education. The aim of education can be summed up in a phrase 'atmano mokshartham jagata hitaya cha'. About the aims of education Vivekananda has summed his ideas in one sentence, "The end of all education and all training should be man making". Education should create self-confidence and self-reliance through concentration, developing moral character and useful in day-to-day life of the individual. It should also promote universal brotherhood. Vivekananda educational philosophy emanated from his philosophy of eternal values and eternal religion. The highest goal of education is nothing less than complete development of divinity within. Vivekananda considered every soul divine and its duty of education to manifest this divinity by controlling nature, external and internal. Vivekananda considered complete education, to be an amalgamation of imparting knowledge, physical strength, moral strength and character. Education for Vivekananda is both for change and preservation. A dynamic education is forward looking and welcomes changes. Concentration is the essence of education. The treasure house of knowledge can be opened only with the key of concentration.

Devotion towards One's Country

It is one's utmost duty to serve his/her motherland before serving some other country. Swamiji held that we should utilize our potentialities and energy for the cause of our country and try to prevent the brain drain. While serving our country we can simultaneously enjoy the

company of our friends & family, which is not possible while living abroad. This also helps in preserving our culture. All love is life. Our duty to others means helping others doing well to the world.

Health is Wealth

Only healthy body & mind can help in achievement of the highest goals. Healthy mind resides in the healthy mind. So, physical education and training must be given due place in the curriculum at every stage of education. One can concentrate on his studies only when his body is healthy and mind is tension free. In Swami's words, "Stand and die in your own strength: if there is any sin in the world, it is weakness, avoid all weakness for weakness is sin, weakness is death."⁵

Values

Vivekananda whole scheme of education is based on the absolute values of truth directed towards self-realization. It must cultivate values in human beings. According to Vedanta God is the ultimate truth and all living and non-living objects of the universe are His manifestation. So each creation of God should be treated with utmost sympathy. This is the concept of "vashudhav-kutumbkam". It becomes the duty of education to spread this view in the society. As a practical prophet Vivekananda stressed on inculcation of values like love, sympathy, sacrifice, non-violence, patriotism, freedom, tolerance, truth, faith in man and God, humanity, non-violence and he sense of service. Science has brought immense fruits and now man has conquered the nature in many ways, but man has lost peace of mind. With having all means of pleasure people are not really happy. Only spirituality can bring peace in human mind. The scientific progress has resulted in ecological imbalance and two great wars. The inculcation of values in citizens will help in taming the science otherwise it will do away the very existence of human being as well as other life on the earth. Swamiji gave us the message work as a master not as a slave. Derive pleasure in your work.

Encouragement and Inspiration to Youth

Youth is the biggest capital of any country for they are full of immense energy. This is the duty of society in general and teachers in particular to harness this energy for some creative work. Therefore adequate attention should be given to proper development of valuable attributes among the youth right from their childhood. In this context values identified by Swami Vivekananda and methodology of inculcating these values developed on the basis of his ideas

are worth taking consideration. Swamiji laid stress on strengthening of will power. Faith in one self, positive thinking, positive attitudes towards failure in life, service of mankind, self-reliance and renunciation are the necessary attributes for the personality development. Swamiji time and again stressed that "All power is within you, can do believe that you are weak stand up and express the divinity within you." Education should create faith in one's own self. It must create self-confidence and self-reliance through concentration. Education should aim at the development of infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage and infinite patience in man. Education should also generate a spirit of renunciation in man.

Women Education & Mass Education

Another major concern of Swamiji was the deplorable condition of women in India. He believed that the progress of a society could be judged by the status of its women. In order to solve the problems of women he felt that they should be given proper education so that they can be in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. Swamiji had firm belief that cause of India's poverty is neglect of masses. The women from almost half of the population of the country and their education cannot be ignored. Swamiji asserted that if we educate one woman, we are educating the whole family. Girls and boys should be provided with equal opportunities of education. Swamiji was among the pioneers of Indian leaders to emphasize the need for raising the masses and restoring to them their lost individuality. The uplift of masses through proper education received topmost priority in his programmes for national resurgence. His greatest concern was the common mass and he wanted to equip them for the struggle for life. He observed, the education which does not help the common life, which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for life, which does not bring out strength of character a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of lion is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on one's own legs."⁶ If India has to be a world power, mass literacy programmes have to be run. Fortunately, India is running many programmes to eradicate mass illiteracy and got initial success. In twenty first century only knowledge based society can lead the world.

Integration of Science and Religion

Science and religion are not contradictory but complementary to each other. Science ends in sorrow and evils without integrating the religion. All rounds development of the individual is possible only through its integration. Religion is nothing but the continuous search for truth. Religion and philosophy in India, as given to us in our Upanishadic tradition is the scientific

search for truth at the sense data level to the higher aesthetic, ethical and spiritual levels of experience. From the time of Upanishads to our own time, India has sought in religion not a finished dogma to believe in but a method and a means to pierce the veil that hide the ever present truth behind man's nature. It was the absence of this approach that made religion in the west less and less equipped to meet the challenges of advancing knowledge. Swami Vivekananda has shown that religion as developed in India is her Vedanta and modern science, are close to each other in spirit and temper and objectives. Religion deals with the truth of metaphysical world just as chemistry and other natural sciences deal with the truths of physical world. According to Vivekananda, there are two worlds, the microcosm and macrocosm; the internal and the external. We get truth from both of these by means of experience. The truth gathered from internal experience is psychology, metaphysics and religion; from external experience the physical science. In spite of the all the vast knowledge the science has revealed, the scientists feel that they have only scratched the surface of the nature that they are far away from the heart of the universe. Einstein had once said, science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind scientific attitude removes superstition and religion helps in inculcation of value and ethics. Science helped in rationalizing the religion and making it free of superstitions.

Swami Vivekananda says, "You must bear in mind that religion does not consist in talk or doctrines or books, but in realization, it is not learning but being."⁷ It is in this sense that India understood religion, and it is this idea of religion that Swamiji expounded in the west and east through his powerful voice, the end and aim of religion as our ancient teachers put it, is the experience, anubhava of God through the steady growth in man's spiritual awareness. Swamiji met the challenges of modern science by showing that religion is as scientific as science itself. Modern civilization has overrated science and technology just as the older civilization had underrated it. There is the need to view science in its proper perspective- the perspective of human knowledge and welfare.

Our education system must give place to science as well as religion for harmonious development of personality. Education has to enable all students to achieve at least a fraction of synthesis of East and West, Spirituality and Science, Contemplation and Action. It is the science of spirituality, the paravidya, the supreme science that fortifies in man, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual values including the moral values associated with pure science.

Method of Teaching

Vivekananda was in favor of Indian system of education characterized by close contact between teacher and students. According to Swamiji there is only one method of acquiring knowledge and that is concentration. Higher the ability of concentration, higher is achievements in science, arts, music and literature etc. The only key to the treasure house of knowledge is the power of concentration. Vivekananda stressed on education I Tom within, learning from concrete to abstract, keeping in mind the individual differences, positive suggestion to individuals, faith in one self, reverence for the guru or the teacher, freedom, purity in thought, speech and act.

Though there are various methods of acquiring knowledge but concentration is the basic ingredient of all of them. Concentration helps in retention of the learnt matter and increases memory. This fact should be given a due importance in teaching – learning process.

Role of Teacher

Vivekananda attaches great importance to the character and personal life of teacher. Person with an attitude of renunciation should enter in teaching profession. Teacher should live an exemplary life to students. He should teach in accordance with the needs, abilities and interests of the students. Vivekananda was a supporter of Gurukul system of education. Swamiji spoke of four essential qualities in a teacher – purity of thought and action, knowledge of the scriptures, spiritual force and family a guide.

Swamiji stressed, "the only true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through the student's eyes and hear through his ears and understand through his mind."⁸

Curriculum

Vivekananda was not satisfied with the then British education being imparted in India. The common people to equip themselves for the struggle for were it strengthening the character. Similar is the condition of present education system. Education should fonn character, increase strength of mind, expand intellect and make one stand on his own feet. For such an education he recommended the study of different branch of knowledge, quite independent of foreign control. He recommended the study of Sanskrit language by all to enable them to go through the vernaculars, English humanities with special reference to Indian culture, science, technology and physical culture. He emphasized on a curriculum based on the concept of all round development of personality of the child.

The present day curriculum is rigid, divested of life, irrelevant to individual needs and does not promote individual growth. It is examination oriented; it is only informative with little depth of understanding. It should be flexible, cater to individual needs helps the individual grow in all dimensions, help him to use this leisure time properly, and enable him to get vocationally trained.

Discipline

Discipline is an important aspect of a person's character. Vivekananda considers external discipline useless. Teaching a child or disciplining a child from outside is only a myth. This discipline should come from within. Undue domination and excessive authority would only stunt the natural growth of a child. He very rightly remarked, "If you don't allow a child to become a lion he will become a fox." "Dos" and "don'ts" have to be reduced and freedom should be given to students. Instead of trying to discipline the child the teacher can set an example with his own life. Students learn more from their teacher than books and lectures. The concept of discipline of Vivekananda based on religious, moral relevant and spiritual foundations seems to be more relevant for the India and also the world. Teacher should not be authoritative in developing character and maintaining discipline. Educational institution should provide right type of environment in their campuses. Swamiji mentioned, "If good impression prevail the character becomes good, if bad, it becomes bad. If a man continuously hears bad words, thinks bad thoughts, does bad actions, his mind will be full of bad impressions and they will influence his thought and work without his being conscious of the fact.⁹ Child learns many things from his surroundings. If the atmosphere is good he cannot, but become good. For character building Vivekananda had repeatedly emphasized on the need to control the internal and external senses. Mind should be trained to be the master of his action and thoughts.

The educational institutions should promote corporate life in students and provide them ample opportunities in the management of activities and events in the school. This will inculcate in them a sense of participation and sense of achievement. Democracy had been conceived as the best system of government and most of the countries of the world including India are being ruled by this system. Liberty, equality and fraternity are the three philosophical bases of democracy. Education must cater to the needs of the democratic system of government and develop democratic outlook in the citizens.

Conclusion

A through appraisal of educational philosophy of Vivekananda reveals that it is in consonance with the present needs of the world and, of course, India. This man making education alone can build the nation's base strong and make it stand with the developed nations of the world. The material development with spiritual development alone can lead to a prosperous world; ignorance of any of these two will result in misery and sorrow. The educational system need to be restructured and overhauled and be developed on the lines of views of swami Vivekananda. The educational ideas of Vivekananda stand good for all time because they are very practical. Education must give due consideration to the physical, mental and spiritual possibilities of man and help him to make his own destiny. Only then can every individual and nation of the world can achieve its fullest growth.

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