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Swami Vivekananda is one of the greatest thinkers and pioneers in social reform. Indian Renaissance owes much to Swami Vivekananda. Among the contemporary Indian philosophers of education, he is one of those who revolted against the imposition of British system of Education in India.

Swami Vivekananda considered that the system of Education introduced by the British did not conform to India’s culture. He considered that it turned men into slaves. He also felt that the education system in those days is no better than an efficient machine which rapidly turns men into clerks.

The system Education deprived people of their faith and belief. It made the people believe that Gita was false and the Vedas are nothing but folklore. It made the learner (student) to feel that there is nothing noteworthy and appreciable in Indian culture and tradition.

Swami Vivekananda also criticized the British Education system from the humanistic view point. He says “it is not a man making education. It merely and entirely a negative education. A negative education or any training that is based on negation is worse than death. The child is taken to school and the first thing he learns is that his grandfather is a fool, the second thing is that his grandfather is Lunatic, the third thing is that all his teachers are hypocrites, the fourth is that all the sacred books are lies. By the time he is sixteen, he is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless”\textsuperscript{134}.

\textsuperscript{134} Swami Vivekananda on Indian and her problems P - 48
Such an education has made them indolent and unproductive. Swami says that “the result is that fifty years of such education has not produced one original man in the three Presidencies. Every man of originality that has been produced has been educated elsewhere and not in this country or they have gone to the old university once more to cleanse themselves of superstitions”.\textsuperscript{135}

**Aims of Education**

Any educational system functions on certain aims and goals. They are also based on needs and the cultural background of a country or region. In contrast to the contemporary system of education, Vivekananda advocated education for self development.

Swami Vivekananda said, “By education I do not mean the present system, but something in the line of positive teaching. Mere book learning won’t do. 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. What we want are western science coupled with Vedanta, ‘Brahmacharya’ as guiding motto, and also Sraddha and faith in one’s own self”\textsuperscript{136}. These words by Vivekananda represent the characteristics of the aims of Indian Educational system.

Education according to most of the western educationalists aim at Man’s adjustment with the environment. But, according to Indian educational thinkers, Education is the realization of the knowledge inherent in man. They consider the true knowledge does not come from outside. It is discovered within the individual, in the self which is the source of all knowledge.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid
\textsuperscript{136} Swami Vivekananda on Indian and her problems P-51
Swami Vivekananda says “all knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the precious links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the Law of Gravitation”\textsuperscript{137}.

According to Vivekananda Education is the process of self development. He says “you cannot teach a child any more than you can grow a plant. The plant develops its own nature”\textsuperscript{138}. Further, a person’s education is not judged by the number of books he has read but by the thickness of the cover of ignorance on his mind. The thicker is this cover, the greater is ignorance. As the light of knowledge dawns, this ignorance will gradually be shattered. The job of the teacher is to uncover knowledge by his guidance. His guidance makes the mind active and the student himself unveils the knowledge lying with in him.

Swadharma in Education

Vivekananda felt that there is Svadharma in Education. Everyone has to grow according to his nature. One should not copy others. On this basis he condemned the imposition of foreign education. He questioned “Getting by heart the thoughts of others in foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degree, you can pride yourself as educated. Is this education?”\textsuperscript{139}.

\textsuperscript{137} Swami Vivekananda Complete works (1984) Vol.1P-28
\textsuperscript{138} Vol. 5, P – 324.
\textsuperscript{139} Vol. VII, P – 146
Vivekananda says that there should be no external pressure of any type on the child. Only in an atmosphere of freedom, love and sympathy alone the child will develop courage and self reliance. He says “if you do not allow one to become a lion, he will become a fox”\(^{140}\). Therefore, education should be modified to suit the individual nature of the child. Every child should be given an opportunity to develop according to his own inner nature.

Vivekananda is a staunch champion of freedom in education. It is because; self development is not possible without freedom. He says “you cannot teach a child any more than you can grow a plant…. You can take away the obstacles, but comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily, put hedge around it, see that it is not filled by anything and there your work stops. You cannot do anything else. The rest is a manifestation from within its own nature”\(^{141}\).

The teacher should not exert any type of pressure on the child. The child should be helped in solving his problems himself. The teacher should have an attitude of service and worship.

**Building Character**

The purpose of education is to mould the character of the students. Defining character, Vivekananda said “the character of any man is the aggregate of his tendencies, but the sum of the total bent of his mind. As pleasure and pain pass before his soul, they leave upon it different pictures and the result of these combined impressions is what is called a man’s character”\(^{142}\).

\(^{140}\) Ibid p 20  
\(^{141}\) Centenary Volume P – 474  
\(^{142}\) Complete works of Swami Vivekananda (1984) Vol I P-25
The teacher should present high ideals before the student. The best way to develop character of the students is only by the personal example of the teacher. Swami Vivekananda says “without the personal life of the teacher there would be no education. One would live from his very boyhood with one whose character is like a blazing fire, and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching”\textsuperscript{143}.

Character formation is possible only through hard work. While living in all types of comforts and avoiding all types of labour, by living a life of inactivity and laziness no one can build up good character.

Formation of character requires traits such as purity, thirst for knowledge, perseverance, faith, humility, and obedience; respecting the elders etc. These qualities are learnt by the teachers’ example and pupils’ earnestness.

Vivekananda says, without faith, humility, submission and veneration with our hearts towards the teacher, there cannot be any growth with us. In those countries which have neglected to keep up this kind of relation, the teacher has become a mere lecturer, the teacher is expecting his five dollars and person taught expecting his brain to be filled with the teachers’ words and each going his own way after this much is done. The true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student soul and see through and understand through his mind\textsuperscript{144}.

\textsuperscript{143} Swami Vivekananda on India and her problems P- 57.
\textsuperscript{144} Swami Vivekananda on India and her problems P- 58.
Character

Character is intimately connected with habits. Good habits make for good character. Modern Psychology accepts the value of habits in one life and it shapes the behavior of the individual. Swami Vivekananda has pointed out the value of habits not only in the present life but also in lives to come.

The teacher or the guardian helps one to shape the conduct. But it is the individual who should have firm resolve to shape the character. One should have firm will to mould self.

The student should be allowed to commit mistakes in the process of character formation. The progress requires courage and strong will. Strong will is the sign of great character, which will make men great.

Swami Vivekananda himself was an ideal teacher. His words worked like magic and inspired millions of people both in India and abroad. Presenting his own example, Vivekananda asked the people to build up their character and manifest their real nature which is the effulgent, the even pure.\textsuperscript{145}

Means of Education

According to Swami Vivekananda education should be based upon love. That is why Vivekananda’s Philosophy of Education is known as education for man making. The teacher’s aim should be neither money making nor attainment of fame but only bestowing human love. This love with in the educator is the real source of his influence upon the student. The relationship between Sri Ramakrishna and

\textsuperscript{145} Trends in contemporary Indian Philosophy of Education. G Ranjit Sharma P 4
Vivekananda is a fine example of the relation between the teacher and student. “It was the force of spiritual love in Ramakrishna which helped Vivekananda to god realization. It is thus which makes the educator to take the educand from untruth to truth, darkness to light, death to immortality.”

The educator can guide the educand because he himself has the experience of treating on the path and knows how to face the difficulties. Vivekananda has not only presented high ideals of education but also developed a sound system by which these ideals may be achieved.

**Concentration**

According to Indian Tradition, the key to true knowledge can be obtained only through concentration. While for some persons concentration is spontaneous and easy, for many it is difficult and requires long training. So the teacher must organize teaching in such a way that it may be helpful to each student separately and try to solve the problems of the student to achieve concentration.

**Brahmacharya**

Brahmacharya or abstinence is the first means of achieving concentration. It bestows psychological and spiritual powers to the student. It transforms sexual drive into spiritual force. Brahmacharya also implies purity of thought, deed and action.

Brahmacharya improves and sharpens various Psychological processes such as learning, remembering and thinking. Swami Vivekananda therefore strongly emphasized the need for the student to observe Brahmacharya. It leads to mental and

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146 Trends in contemporary In Philosophy of Education. G. Ranjit Sharma P - 43
physical development. Firstly it controls distractions. Secondly it improves the body and mind so that they may become effective means of knowledge.\textsuperscript{147}

**Discussion and Contemplation**

In addition to concentration, the other means of education are discussion and contemplation. Discussion should be carried out in an informal atmosphere. Contemplation should be practiced in a calm and quite atmosphere. Further education process requires faith and reverence of the student in the teacher.

Without faith and reverence, no true knowledge can be achieved. Faith and reverence are the foundations for all character development and self education. The teacher can expect faith and reference only if he leads an exemplary life.

**Medium of Instruction**

Swami Vivekananda, like many Indian Educational thinkers felt that the child should learn through his mother tongue. He also felt that there should be a common language to keep the country united. He also felt that teaching of Sanskrit is necessary in view of its classical nature. He felt that Sanskrit is the source of many of the Indian languages. Vivekananda considered that this language granted power, ability and prestige to the nation. He felt that we can become aware of our cultural heritage and its greatness, only through our knowledge of the language.

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid p -45
Teaching Methods

Swami Vivekananda elaborately discussed about teaching methods in physical, moral and religious education. He gave equal importance to all these three aspects of education.

Physical Education

Vivekananda laid particular stress on the value of physical education in curriculum. He said “you will be nearer to Heaven through football than the study of Gita…. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman, when your body stands firm on your feet and you feel yourself as man”\textsuperscript{148}.

One must know the secret of making the body strong through physical education. For a complete education it is necessary to develop both mind and body. Vivekananda himself took physical exercise every day. He glorified strength and opposed weakness in any form. Power is life and weakness is death. Because of the need of strength and power, he emphasized the importance of physical education particularly for young men and women\textsuperscript{149}.

Moral and Religious Education

Swami Vivekananda gave importance to moral and religious education. He says “Religion is the inner most core of education…… Religion is as the rice and everything else, like the curries. Taking only curries causes indigestion and so is the case with taking rice alone”\textsuperscript{150}.

\textsuperscript{148} Vivekananda. S C.W. Vol III. P242  
\textsuperscript{149} Indian Philosophy of education. P47  
\textsuperscript{150} Vivekananda.S C. W. Vol IV. P358
To counter the effects materialism and its evil influence, religious education is necessary. It is only by a synthesis of religion and science that man may reap the advantages of both. For the modern society both science and religion are necessary.

Religious Education should be only a part of the curriculum. It should be taught along with other disciplines. Here Religious Education does not mean teaching about a particular religion or dogma or about a particular denomination. It should be taken as Tagore called “The Religion of Man”.

Swami Vivekananda did not distinguish between secular and religious education. He said “we have to give them secular education. We have to follow the plan laid down by our ancestors that is to bring all the ideals slowly up, raise them to equality. Impart…. secular knowledge through religion”\textsuperscript{151}

The best way of imparting religious education is to present the high ideals of saints and religious men before the student. They should be taught to worship saints to follow their ideals. Among the great souls, Vivekananda pointed out some. They are Sri krishna, Mahavir and Ramakrishna.

Vivekananda said about Sri Krishna “Keep aside for the present the brindavan aspect of Sri Krishna and spread far and wide the worship of Sri Krishna roaring out the Gita with the voice of a lion and bring into daily use the worship of sakti - The divine mother, the source of all power”\textsuperscript{152}.

\textsuperscript{151} Swami Vivekananda on Indian and her problems. P 71
\textsuperscript{152} Vivekananda. S C.W. P.303 Vol III
Thus Vivekananda wanted men and women to develop qualities according to their particular sex and their role in society. He wanted young men to be dynamic and strong. Even in the religious matters he gave importance to courage and bravery.

**Need for Service and devotion**

Besides courage, Vivekananda prescribed service and devotion in religious education. He considered Hanuman as an example of service, devotion and courage. He deplored the dramatic imitation of Raslila because it is against the interest of the country at present. Even in music Vivekananda advised young men to adapt religious practices according to the needs of the time.

According to Vivekananda India, today needs a religion which should be harmonious with science and teach patriotism, service and sacrifice and then only religious education becomes useful to the nation.

Generally the influence of religion on man is total and all pervading. It can inculcate not only refined qualities but also tough qualities. Swami emphasized the need of strong and virile qualities. He exhorted young men by saying “never allow weakness to overtake your mind. Remember Mahaveer, remember divine mother and you will see the all weakness, all cowardice will vanish at once”\(^{153}\).

**Self Confidence**

Vivekananda considered that such a moral and religious education will develop self confidence among young men and women. Self confidence also means confidence in humanity for Vivekananda religion is humanistic in spirit.

\(^{153}\) Ibid p 232
For Vivekananda, ethics and religion are one and the same. As god is always on the side of goodness, fighting for goodness is serving the god. Swami Vivekananda abhorred timidity and weakness, and considered weakness as the source of all evils. It is root of all violence, hatred and enmity if man can seen own self, no fear reaches his mind.

Swami Vivekananda considered truth to be god long before Gandhi. He considered that seeker after truth should search for it in every aspect of life. He considered that truth is power and untruth is weakness. Knowledge is truth and ignorance is untruth. Thus truth increases power, courage and energy\textsuperscript{154}.

According to swami Vivekananda, moral and religious education will develop self confidence among men and women. Self confidence is the real religion. It leads to world brotherhood and love of humanity. A person having self confidence sees self everywhere. Self confidence means confidence in humanity. Thus Vivekananda’s religion was humanistic.

Vivekananda considers that religion is the source of all powers and the source of all goods. He also considers that ethics and religion are one and the same. As god is on the side of goodness, to fight for goodness is to serve the god.

Weakness is the source of all evils. It is at the root of all violence, hatred and enmity. The real nature of self is fearlessness and power.

Long before Gandhi identified truth with god, Vivekananda called truth as god. Truth is power and untruth is weakness. Knowledge is truth, ignorance is untruth. Thus

\textsuperscript{154} Indian Philosophy of education. P - 49
truth increases power, courage and energy. It is light giving. It is therefore necessary for
the individual and well as collective welfare”\textsuperscript{155}.

**Worship of Power**

Vivekananda recognized the importance of power. This power is not physical or biological. It is spiritual power. India in his time was under the British rule. It was groaning under slavery. So he recognized the need of strength and power. Therefore he asked the Indians to shed all types of weakness and march-forward with courage, strength and power. He asked the people to speak less and work more. If there is power, we can achieve everything, he said, “first of all our young men must be strong, religion will come afterwards”\textsuperscript{156}.

**Curriculum for Religious Education**

In the curriculum for religious education Vivekananda gave importance to scriptures like Bhagavad-Gita, Upanishads and the Vedas. These are the eternal sources of the life force of Indian culture. For our spiritual education study of these scriptures is necessary as they are full of spiritual wisdom.

These ideas of Vivekananda reveal his true love for the masses and his concern for the uplift of each and every individual. He wanted to make education as instrument for the uplift of the masses. Like Mahatma Gandhi of later years, he felt the need for the uplift of the down trodden. In a way he inspired many Indian leaders of the later period, to work for the uplift of the masses through education.

\textsuperscript{155} Indian philosophy of Education. P – 49
\textsuperscript{156} Complete works. Vol iii P - 242
Vivekananda pleaded for universal education so that the backward people may come up well and catch up with the forward classes. He said “A nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence is spread among the masses. The chief causes of India’s ruin have been the monopolizing of the whole education and intelligence of the land under handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it by spreading education among masses.”

Thus education should spread to every household in the country, to factories, playing grounds and agricultural fields. If the children are reluctant or unable to come to school the teacher should reach them. Two or three educated men should team up, collect teaching aids, and go to the villages to impart education to the children. We find some of his ideas implemented through literacy missions, and various educational extension programmes of central and state government to achieve cent percent literacy among the children of 7 – 14 age group.

**Women Education**

In the education of women, Vivekananda laid stress of chastity and fearlessness. He conceived an ideal institution for women and called it as ‘math’. Regarding the curriculum he said “other matters such as sewing, culinary art, rules of domestic work, and upbringing of children will also be taught, while ‘japa’. Worship and meditation etc shall form an indispensable part of the teaching. The duty of teaching in school ought to devolve in every respect on education by widows and ‘Brahmacharinis’. It is good to avoid in this country any association of men with women’s schools”.

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157  Ibid, Vol IV, P - 415
158  Swami Vivekananda on India and her problems.  P -100
Swami Vivekananda presented a comprehensive, curriculum for women. So that they may develop high character, courage and confidence. He presented the high ideal of Gita to Indian women. Like males he advised females also to observe ‘Brahmacharya’. Which gives solid foundation for any kind of education?

Vivekananda considered women to be the incarnation of power and asked men to respect them in every way. He felt that unless Indian women secure a respectable place in this country, the nation can never march forward.

Vivekananda considered that regeneration of Indian women depends upon proper education. Women’s education should be in the hands of women. He said “After five or six years training in this math” the guardians of the girls may marry them. If deemed fit for ‘yoga’ and religious life, with the permission of their guardians they will be allowed to stay in this math. Taking the vow of celibacy. These celebrate nuns will in time be the teachers and preachers of the math.

In villages and towns they will open centers and strive for the spread of female education. Through such devout preachers of character there will be the real spread of female education in this country…. Spirituality, sacrifice and self control will be the motto of the pupils of this math, and service or ‘Seva Dharma’ the vow of their life… If the life of the women of this country be moulded in such fashion, Then only will there be the re-appearance of such ideal characters of Sita, Savitri and Gargi159.

**Critical Evaluation**

Swami Vivekananda can be considered as true humanist. He said “look upon every man, women and every one as god…. The only god to worship is the human soul

in the human body. Of course, all animals are temples to, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of temples. If I cannot worship in that no other temple will be of any advantage.\textsuperscript{160}

The humanism of Vivekananda was different from naturalistic humanism. It is in the background we have to understand his concept of man making education. Man according to him is the highest of all living beings so much, so that according to Vivekananda ever the angles will have to come down again and again for salvation through a human body.

Education generally is defined as the process of the all round development of the child. Such a development can take place only from within, while the external environment provides occasion for such development. The teacher has to provide the environment so that the child may become aware of the treasure of knowledge laying buried in his mind.\textsuperscript{161}

Psychologists point out that in every individual; there are dormant powers, which can be brought out through proper educational methods. The teacher has to identify the problems that come in the way of Childs educational development.

The teacher is like a gardener who prepares grounds for the growth of his plants, protects them and nourishes them so that the plants may grow properly. Similarly the teacher takes care of the child, provides him a suitable environment and looks after his proper growth. Thus, though education comes from within, the teacher is an indispensable part of it. While the motivation comes from within the teacher is an

\textsuperscript{160} Vol Complete works P - 321
\textsuperscript{161} Indian philosophy of education P – 53
indispensable part of it. The teacher motivates and activates the child and encourages the child to use mind, body and sense organs.\textsuperscript{162}

Swami Vivekananda said “Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. I look upon religion as the innermost core of Education”\textsuperscript{163}. In his philosophy of Education Vivekananda synthesized spiritual and material values. He felt that India needed a system of education based on the ancient vedanta but at the same time worthy of making individual earn his livelihood. He maintained that no profession is bad provided it is done with a sense of service and self–sacrifice.\textsuperscript{164}

Long before Mahatma Gandhi, Vivekananda pleaded for the worship of God in the poor. He said “So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who having been educated at their expense pays not the least heed to – them”\textsuperscript{165}.

Swami Vivekananda asked young men to change the situation and pleaded for universal, compulsory and free education. He asked the educator to reach every village and every hutment so that the whole country may become literate and awake from ignorance.\textsuperscript{166}

\textbf{Assimilation of Ideas}

According to Swami Vivekananda education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life…. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid p 53
\textsuperscript{163} Complete works. Volume IV, P 358
\textsuperscript{164} Indian philosophy of Education – P 53
\textsuperscript{165} Complete works. Volume V, P 45
\textsuperscript{166} Indian Philosophy of Education. P 53
than any man who has got by heart a whole library. If education were identical with information, the Libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopedias the Rishis.\textsuperscript{167}

**The needed Education**

Vivekananda says that 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.\textsuperscript{168} what we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own and with it the English language and western Science; He further says that we also need technical education and all else that will develop Industries, so that men instead of seeking for service may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day\textsuperscript{169}.

**Man making Education**

Swami Vivekananda says that what we need is man making education. He says what our country now want are muscles of Iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion. even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean, meeting death face to face.\textsuperscript{170} It is man – making religion that we want. It is man making theories that we want. It is man making education all round that we want.\textsuperscript{171}

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\textsuperscript{167} Volume III, P 302
\textsuperscript{168} Volume V, P 342
\textsuperscript{169} Volume V, P 368-9
\textsuperscript{170} Volume III, P 190
\textsuperscript{171} Volume III, P 224
**Method of Education**

The very essence of education is concentration of mind. From the common man to the highest yogi, all have to use the same method to attain knowledge. The chemist who works in laboratory concentrates all the powers of mind, brings them into one focus, and throws them on the elements; the elements stand analyzed and thus knowledge comes. The astronomer concentrates the power of mind and brings them into one focus, and throws them on objects through the telescope, then stars and systems role forward and gives up their secrets. So it is in every case; with the professor in the chamber, the student with his book, with every man who is working to know.\(^\text{172}\)

**Results of Concentration**

Vivekananda says “All success in any time of work is the result of concentration. High achievements in arts, music etc., are the result of concentration.\(^\text{173}\) The Greeks applied their concentration to the external world and the result was perfection in art, literature etc. The Hindu concentrated on the internal world, upon the unseen realms in the self and developed the science of yoga.\(^\text{174}\) The world is ready to give up its secret if we only know how to knock, how to give the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow comes through concentration.\(^\text{175}\)

According to Swami Vivekananda the very essence of education is concentration of mind and not mere collection of facts. He says “If I had to do my education once again, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of

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\(^{172}\) Volume II, P 390
\(^{173}\) Volume VI, P 37
\(^{174}\) Volume VI, P 124
\(^{175}\) Volume I, P 130
concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument, collect facts at will.\textsuperscript{176}

**The importance of Brahmacharya**

Vivekananda says “power comes to him who observes unbroken Brahmacharya for a period of twelve years.\textsuperscript{177} Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power.\textsuperscript{178} He says the chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent and this is what gave them power.\textsuperscript{179} He says chastity in thought, word and deed always and in all conditions is what is called as Brahmacharya.\textsuperscript{180}

**The importance of Shraddha**

What makes the difference among man is the difference in the Shraddha. What makes one man great and another week and low is this Shraddha. If a thinks man day and night that he is miserable, low and nothing, nothing he becomes. Vivekananda says – we are the children of the Almighty. We are sparks of the infinite, divine fire, we are everything, ready to do everything; we can do everything. This faith in themselves was the motive power that pushed them forward in the march of civilization.\textsuperscript{181}