Chapter - V

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In the preceding chapter, we have discussed the various aspects of Vivekananda's philosophy of education as the manifestation of perfection that is already there in the human being. In this chapter, we propose to deal in detail with the relevance of Vivekananda's conception of education for the social reconstruction of India. Here, we shall discuss the issues of education for self-reliance, equality, service, and unity. We shall also discuss the education that India in general, and its masses, women and the youth in particular, require.

I. EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL REFORM THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE

Vivekananda was a great champion of social reform. He was very much concerned with the removal of social evils in India. He wanted to liberate India from the evils like untouchability, poverty, child marriage and so on. He sought to remove these evil through educating the people. More than the legislation of laws, educating the people about the evils is important. Referring to the caste system and untouchability in Hinduism, Vivekananda said that a Hindu should seek to uplift himself by being a servant of all. He or she should not look for any help from either religion or law. A Hindu should be ready to serve even a pariah. He should practice the ideals required for social reform. It is no good to preach the
ideal. "One ounce of practice is worth twenty thousand tonnes of big talk".

Education is absolutely necessary for the total eradication of evils. It is not possible to bring about "root and-branch reform" without educating the people about the evils. Legislation of laws can bring about reform by little bits only. Real reform is possible by the subjective approach to it. That is, it is by bringing change in the attitude of the people that we can reform a society. Reforming for the sake of reform is no good. Reform for the sake of reform is fanaticism. Fanatical reforms are counter productive. History of reforms all over the world has proved that fanatical reforms have defeated their own ends. Vivekananda cites the reform of Negroes in America as an instance of reform by law or fanaticism which resulted in the worsening of the condition of the Negroes there. He says, "No greater upheaval for the establishment of right and liberty can be imagined than the war for the abolition of slavery in America. You all know about it. And what has been their result? The slaves are a hundred times worse off today than they were before. The Negroes were the property of somebody, and, as proper, they had to be looked after, so that they might not deteriorate. Today they are the property of nobody. Their lives are of no value; they are burnt alive on mere pretences. They are shot down without any law for their murderers; for they are niggers, they are not human beings, they are not even animals; and that is the effect
of such violent taking away of evil by law or by fanaticism. Such is the testimony of history against every fanatical movement, even for doing good.3

Vivekananda therefore emphasizes the importance of educating people before formulating laws for reform. The sanction of the people for reform is essential. The power of the people is necessary for reform by legislation. No nation can be moved for reform by law without it being first educated. Education of the people about the need for reform goes a long way in accomplishing the reforms. Education means going to the root of the persistent evil in a society. Without educating the masses to reform themselves first, legislative reforms would only be ornamental. Radical reforms must begin from the masses who have to be educated. It is no use if only the educated minority tries to reform the masses. It is also no good if the reforms are confined to the upper castes. The fire of reform must begin with the masses and then burn upwards. Only then can India make a nation. Vivekananda says, "First educate the nation, create your legislative body, and then the law will be forthcoming. First create the power, the sanction from which the law will spring. The kings are gone; where is the new sanction, the new power of the people? Bring it up. Therefore even for social reform, the first duty is to educate the people, and you will have to wait till that time comes."4
Swami Vivekananda holds that education should reform the society by making the individual to be self-reliant. Education should make the people to stand on their own legs. It should equip them for the struggle of life. Education does not mean passing some examinations. It does not mean getting degrees and titles. It is not the ability to write books and delivering lectures. Education is that which "brings out the strength of character and a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion". More than this, education should be such that it should equip the individual with the skills for earning a livelihood. The really educated are those who can produce the entire wealth of the land. The masses of people like the farmer, the cobbler, the sweeper and so on are really educated. They have been toiling for ages to produce the wealth. But those who are educated in schools and colleges are working like machines. As Vivekananda puts it the modern education is making the pupils "a race of dyspeptics".

The so-called educated are living like a jelly-fish. But the artisans with their inborn talents are really creative. They are lively and productive in true sense. Unlike those who have undergone modern education, the artisans do not seek for employment from the government. They are independent and self-reliant in their struggle for existence. They are indeed the backbone of all nations. They might not have read books and not accustomed to tailor-made civilization. But they are producers of food and clothing that
India needs. If, for instance, the sweepers stop doing their work the whole nation will be paralyzed and depopulated with the outbreak of epidemics. They have been toiling for ages with human intelligence. The clever educated have been enjoying the substantial portion of the fruits of their hand labour. The lower classes have no time for acquiring knowledge. But now the times have changed. They are gradually awakening to the fact of their being exploited. Vivekananda says, "The peasant, the shoe-maker, the sweep and such other lower classes of India have much greater capacity for work and self-reliance than you (the educated youth). They have been silently working through long ages and producing the entire wealth of the land, without a word of complaint. Very soon they will get above in position. Gradually capital is drifting into their hands, and they are not so much troubled with wants as you are. Modern education has changed your fashion, but new avenues of wealth lie yet undiscovered for want of the inventive genius. You have so long oppressed these forbearing masses, now is the time for their retribution. And you will become extinct in your vain search for employment making it be-all and end-all of your life."  

Nevertheless, Vivekananda sees some positive impact of modern education on the masses to become aware of their condition. They are becoming conscious of the fact that they are being suppressed by the upper castes. They are beginning to
question the monopoly of the religious books of the Brahmins. The non-Brahmins are slowly rousing against the authority of the Brahmins who have been treating other races as being low and vile. Modern education has enabled the Indian masses to refute the strange, immoral and unreasonable doctrines introduced by the Brahmins. They are trying to liberate themselves from the slavery imposed on them for thousands of years. Swami says, "If you tell a man, 'you are low, you are vile' in season and out of season then he is bound to believe in course of time that he is really such. This is called hypnotism. The non-Brahmin classes are now slowly rousing themselves. Their faith in the Brahmanical scriptures and Mantras is getting shaken. Through the spread of Western education all the tricks of the Brahmins are giving way, like the banks of the Padma in rainy season".

II. EDUCATION FOR THE ETHICS OF EQUALITY AND SERVICE

According to Advaita Vedanta everything we see around us is the evolution of the Absolute Spirit. Advaita metaphysics says that the entire world is the manifestation of one Soul. In other words, the Absolute has 'become' the whole of Nature. The unchangeable and immutable Self chooses to appear as the changeable and the mutable. The one Soul out of its (His) own choice chooses to appear as the many. The undifferentiated becomes the differentiated. What it appears to be is not a reality. The soul does not indeed change. It does not really become the many. The whole
universe is merely an appearance. The parts with their differentiations are only the phenomena and not the noumena. It is because we see the Absolute within the framework of space and time that we see the differentiations. It is also because we apprehended the Soul in terms of causality that we see the plurality. "God has not changed at all, and has not become the universe at all. We see God as the universe, because we have to look through time, space and causation. It is time, space, and causation that make for this differentiation apparently, but not really."9

Vivekananda holds that the metaphysics of Advaita is not the same as the Western idealism which says that the world does not exist. Advaita does not say that the universe does not exist at all. It exists but it is not what we take it to be. The world is like a stump that appear to be different to different people in darkness. A superstitious person mistakes it to be a ghost. A robber will take it to be a policeman. And another person may mistake it for his friend. In all these instances, the stump remains to be the stump. But there are apparent changes in it. These changes were in the minds of those who perceived it. Of course, the perceived objects—the ghost, the policeman, and the friend—are founded on the stump. They cannot be without the stump. It is on the background of the stump that different people have been able to conceive different things. All appearances are possible because of the real.
The changing is because of the changeless. It is basing on the real that we see the 'unreal'. Therefore everything in the universe, according to Advaita, is that Absolute only. "You are the whole of that Absolute, and so are all others, because the idea of part cannot come in it. These divisions, the limitations, are only apparent, not in the thing itself. I am complete and perfect, and I was never bound, boldly preaches the Vedanta"\textsuperscript{10}, says Vivekananda.

True education is that which teaches that man was never bound. Vedantic education holds that the Soul is ever free. It proclaims "that we have been free always, and shall remain free for ever"\textsuperscript{11}. Spiritual education is that which liberates man from the fear of death. It says that we never change or die, because we are never born. The phenomenal world is only a manifestation (Vivārtta) of the Absolute which does not change. It takes place due to Maya, otherwise known as space, time and causation. The Absolute is not at all affected by Maya. It is beyond space, time and causality. It is Nature that evolves, and not the Absolute. It evolves further and further till the Absolute manifests. The Absolute exists in everything including the amoeba. In some, the absolute manifests less and in some more. Nevertheless, it manifests in all beings. Its manifestation is different in degree only and not in its essence. So everything is essentially of the nature of the Absolute. So there is no scope for superiority or inferiority. "In speaking of the soul, to
say that one is superior to another has no meaning. In speaking of the soul, to say that man is superior to the animal or the plant, has no meaning; the whole universe is one. In plants the obstacle to soul-manifestation is very great, in animals a little less; in man still less, in cultured, spiritual men still less; and in perfect men, it has vanished altogether. Thus the Advaita metaphysics of the spirit leads to the ethics of equality. Education should seek to eliminate all kinds of privileges to those who are more strong and intelligent. It should inculcate in the student the idea that all are really equal to one another. We are all fellow passengers. The plants and animals are also our fellow travelers. Even the so-called wicked and the brute are one with us. All are of the nature of the same spirit. We are all going towards the same goal. All are in the same stream. Each one of us is passing toward the infinite freedom. So we should have love for every being in the universe. Everyone is the embodiment of infinite knowledge, eternal Bliss and eternal Existence. Thus the Advaitic metaphysics of oneness has implications for the ethics of equality.

Vivekananda argues that the Vedantic morality constitutes its practical side. The practical side of Vedanta is as much relevant today as it was in the past. The present education should teach morality based on the Vedanta metaphysics. It should aim at the eradication of privileges basing on the apparent inequalities.
Vivekananda says that the attitude of claiming privileges has become more intense in these days. As the knowledge without holiness is on the increase, people are prone to clamour for privileges. People with intellect and power have become devilish. They are oppressing those who are less intellectual. Education should try to break down the suppressing of the souls of people. It should teach the student to look upon the Brahmin, the outcaste, the elephant and the dog with the same eye. It should create sage like people who treat the rich, the learned, the poor and the illiterate in the same way. It should bring about the wise pupil who can fix their mind on the sameness by detaching it from the difference. It has to emphasise the idea that “those who have this sameness for all, and are pure, are said to be living in God”.

As it has already been mentioned Vivekananda deplores that the idea of privilege has become a bane of our life. There is an urgent need for the breakdown of privilege through the process of education. Breakdown of privilege brings more light to a race. It helps in the progress of a society. Privilege in the form of the strong over the weak, the rich over the poor, knowledgeable over the ignorant has to be eradicated. Vivekananda contends that even the spiritual privilege has to be destroyed. That is, the superiority of claiming that one knows more of spirituality than others has to be eliminated. Spiritual privilege of imagining that one knows more of God is the worst kind of privilege. To think that one is the
messenger of God and all others have to follow him is stupidity. Monopolizing spirituality and expecting all others to follow is ignorance. True Vedantin does not accept any privilege whatsoever, for everybody is potentially the same. Vivekananda declares, “None can be Vedantists, and at the same time admit of privilege to anyone either mental, physical, or spiritual; absolutely no privilege for anyone. The same power is in every man, the one manifesting more, the other less; the same potentiality is in everyone.”

Vivekananda maintains that all knowledge is there even in the most ignorant. The ignorant are those in whom knowledge has not yet manifested. The ignorant has not been able to manifest knowledge, because he or she could not have the suitable opportunity. The environment surrounding the ignorant may not be conducive to the manifestation. But the ignorant can definitely manifest the potential knowledge when the opportunity arises. So there is no basis to think that one is born superior to the other. That one caste is superior to the other is also wrong. It is unethical on the part of any caste to treat the other one an inferior. So also no race or no nation is superior or inferior to the other. Everyone, every caste, every race or nation can grow provided the opportunities are given. They can manifest the favourable intelligence if they are put in the same circumstances.

Vivekananda says that education should inculcate in the student the spirit service to others. Selfless service to the poor, the
illiterate and the downtrodden is possible only when the sense of privilege is eradicated from the mind. The greatest privilege is to serve the human kind in general. Service to the less fortunate is service to God. God is there in all the human beings. He is the soul of all beings. There are no special messengers of God. All beings are equally the manifestation of God. All are equally struggling to express the eternity. The immortality will express itself in suitable circumstances. The infinite message is there imprinted in every person. Even the ignorant or the child is as great a messenger of God as any other person. "Wherever there is a being, that being contains the infinite message of the most high",\textsuperscript{16} says Vivekananda.

The hardest task before education is the breakdown the scourge of privilege. The problem of privilege for a few is rampant in India, the birth place of Vedanta, which does not allow any privilege. Vedanta is less active in the land of its origin. Privileges of birth and of spirituality are persistent in India. Vivekananda says that Buddha tried to eradicate these privileges in India. Indeed, Buddha was the breaker of castes and privileges. He was the preacher of equality of all beings including the flora and the fauna. Vivekananda, at the same time, says that Vedanta has given religious freedom to people. It brought about the freedom of religious thought. That is why India has been enjoying it throughout its history. There has been no religious persecution in
India. People have been enjoying perfect freedom of religion. Education should uphold the freedom of religion by putting an end to privilege of all kinds.

Vivekananda says that 'equality among people is possible only when people are inwardly transformed. The world of equality is possible only when people realize the sameness in all. It is the subjective world that rules over the objective world. It is by changing the subjective that we can change the objective. It is by purifying oneself that we can purify the world. "This one thing requires to be taught now more than ever before" observes Vivekananda. He deplores that we expect change in others without we changing ourselves. We see evil in others but we fail to recognize evil in us. But the truth, according to Vivekananda, is that I cannot see evil unless I be evil. One can eradicate evil from oneself only when one arrives at the state of equality. Realization of sameness in all is the ultimate freedom. It liberates oneself and the world from all problems.

Education means attaining freedom 'within' and so freedom 'without'. This holistic freedom is salvation. This salvation is here and now and it should be at this moment. This is what every spiritual teacher has taught to humanity. Salvation to all beings is the fountainhead of all beautiful thoughts and actions. Saints and sages of all religions have taught this idea only. They may differ in their expression. The language in which they spoke the same truth
may be different. It is on the basis of the idea of sameness that the
brave spiritual souls in every nation have tried to transform
society. They have tried to raise the condition of the poor.
Education should teach the student the life and work of these great
souls that have strived for the radical change of the society basing
on the Vedantic spirituality. Vivekananda says that the Vedantic
idea of the sameness should not be limited to theory only. The
equality of all it preaches should be practiced by all. True
education should bridge the gap between theory and practice
regarding equality. Equality in practice is possible here and now.
There is no need for time to bring it about. It is wrong to say that
it will take millions of years for the practice of the truth of
equality.

Education should aim at practical equality which is inherent
to the spirituality of Vedanta. It should take Vedantic truth as its
ideal for the transformation of the social reality. Education cannot
be blind to the Vedantic ideal of sameness and unity of all. The
educator should not think that it is difficult to put the ideal into
practice. He should at least keep on striving to reach the goal. He
should create hope in the student that the goal of eradicating
privileges can be achieved sooner or later. He should work for that
knowledge which will bring the feeling of sameness towards all
mankind. Vivekananda says that the educator should teach the
student that believing in any kind of privilege is a barrier to
freedom. This belief is the cause of ignorance and the bondage of the Soul. Feeling proud that one is superior to others is like forging a chain to one's feet. Pride of privilege brings about misery unto us. Education should be built on the eternal truth that 'God in you is the God in all'. It should strive to put an end to differences of all kinds among people. It should create a society of liberty, equality and fraternity by spiritualizing the student community. Social reality should be built on the foundation of the spiritual truth of the oneness of all. Education should centre round the ideal: "It is all one. Every being is the temple of the most high; if you can see that, good, if not, spirituality has yet to come to you".

III. EDUCATION FOR UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Swami Vivekananda holds that unlike the Western education, Indian education is religious in character. It is religious in the sense that it aims at finding unity in diversity. It aims at discovering the law governing the sameness in everything. Externally, the universe appears to be composed of parts which are distinct from each other. God, Nature and man appear to exist separately by themselves. The flora and fauna also seem to be distinct and separate. But in reality they all are the manifestation of one reality, namely, Brahman. The idea of separateness is completely wrong. There is a connection among all those that appear to be distinct. There is a unity that pervades the entire
universe. The trees, animals, the men and Gods are all one. The Jñāni perceives the oneness of all. The Advaitin is one who reaches the acme of the oneness. He declares that all are expressions of the one reality. The metaphysical reality and the physical world are one. The so-called separateness is what is erroneously perceived. It is called Māya, Avidya or nescience. Realization of the truth behind the untruth, the unity beyond diversity, the one beyond many should be the aim of education. "Knowledge is to find unity in the midst of diversity, to establish unity among things which appear to us to be different from one another. That particular relation by which man finds this sameness is called Law. This is what is known as Natural Law. I have said before that our education, intelligence, and thought are all spiritual, all find expression in religion," asserts Vivekananda.

Vivekananda opines that people in the West are realizing the truth of oneness through science. The erudite scholars in the West are coming to understand oneness through physical research. The question of one becoming the many is still a riddle. It has remained to be a mystery to both the East and the West. Human understanding is limited and unable to solve the mystery. The West have explained the process of one becoming the many through the principle of evolution. Man is not born civilized all of a sudden. We have evolved from the state of amoeba to the present status. Swami says that the western theory of evolution is not new
to Indians. The theory of evolution is the foundation of almost all the Indian schools of philosophy. It has made its way into the western physical sciences in the modern times. But there is a difference between the two types of evolution. In the West, the evolution is based on the principles of the might is right and the survival of the fittest. Basing on these principles the western civilization has grown by destroying the weak. It is by exploiting and exterminating the weaker races that the stronger ones have emerged in the West. But in the East, evolution is based on the principle of unity in the midst of diversity. The stronger have allowed the weaker to grow stronger. The civilization in the East has been generous. The institution of Varnashramadharma aims at protecting the weak. It gives scope for the lower to become higher. The people of Europe have exterminated others in order to survive themselves. The aim of the Aryans was to raise all up to their own level or even to a higher civilization. Their system of division into different Varnas is the stepping stone to civilization. It is for making one rise higher and higher in proportion to one's learning and culture. In the land of Bharata, every social rule is for the protection of the weak.  

Swami Vivekananda wants to unite all Indians through the process of education. Spiritual education is one of the greatest factors of uniting people. It can bring people together for the achievement of the ideal. It can enable people to achieve the
common good of all. Education can make people to have the integrated mind. It can also inspire the poor and the weak to fight for their right of representation in the affairs of the state. Laws cannot perform the task of uniting people. They are useful for administration, revenue collection, management of the army. But it is only laws given by the Rishis that can unite people. They alone can bring about real change and reform all the people. "But at the root of all is the injunction of the Rishi—the word of divine authority, the revelation of God coming through the inspired Rishis. The laws have, it can almost be said, no elasticity in them. Under these circumstances, it is never possible for the people to acquire any sort of education by which they can learn to combine among themselves and be united for accomplishment of any object for the common good of the people, or by which they can have the concerted intellect to conceive the idea of popular right in the treasures collected by which the king from his subjects, or even such education by which they can be fired with the aspiration to gain the right of representation in the control of State revenues and expenditure. Why should they do such things? Is not the inspiration of the Rishi responsible for their prosperity and progress?"^{22}

Vivekananda says the spread of western education in a way is removing the barriers of caste in India. English education has opened new channels of employment. It has attracted the Brahmin
youth to become employees leaving their priestly profession. The Brahmins are trying to earn their livelihood and become rich by adopting the professions of other castes. Other caste people are also entering Government services by getting English education. But Vivekananda regrets that the plight of the Shûdras has remained the same despite the spread of western education. Western education is not able to eradicate the idea that caste is determined by the birth. The qualities of a person are determined by the caste in which he or she is born. It is this belief in the heredity system of caste that is responsible for the backwardness of the Shûdras. "By this very qualitative caste system which obtained in India in ancient days, the Shûdra class was kept down, bound hand and foot".23

The Shûdras remained to be downtrodden because they were not given an opportunity to come up. They were not allowed to acquire wealth or knowledge. They had not been given proper education. They were put to all kinds of disadvantages. If at all there was any Shûdra who could come up in life, the higher class people identified him as belonging to their class. They exploited the wise and prosperous Shûdras. Moreover, the upper caste people degraded the useless people of their community to the Shûdra community. "Vasishtha, Narada, Satyakama Jabali, Vyasa, Drona, Karna, and others of questionable parentage were raised to the position of a Brahmin or a Kshtriya, in virtue of their superior
learning or valour. But it remains to be seen how the prostitute, maidservant, fisherman, or the charioteer class was benefited by these uplifting. Again, on the other hand, the fallen from the Brahmin, the Kṣatriya, or the Vaishya class were always brought down to fill the rank of the Shūdras, says Vivekananda.

Education should be such that there is no monopolization of knowledge by the upper caste people. It should liberate the lower castes from the higher castes who wield the power of wealth and arms. In fact the power of the leadership classes comes from the masses. But the former differentiates itself from the lower. The leading class does not take into account the class from which they draw the power. But the ruling classes destroyed themselves by distancing themselves from the masses. Education should foster the cooperation of the people by bringing together the ruling and the ruled. India would prosper only when it pursues education which is a combination of religion and social reform. Education should enable people to think, to will and feel simultaneously. "What makes a man genius, a sage? Is not it because he thinks, reasons, wills? Without exercise, the power of deep thinking is lost. Tamas prevails, the mind gets dull and inert, the spirit is brought down to the level of matter."

Vivekananda maintains that education is necessary even for nation building. People cannot form into a nation unless they are educated. It is not only the higher classes that need to be
educated. Even the masses have to be educated for the formation of a nation. The British could conquer India only because they were educated and a majority of the Indians were illiterate. The British were a nation whereas the Indians were not a nation. There were very few great men among Indians, whereas a majority of the English were great men. Education made several of the western people great. It gave them the power and ability to rule over other nations. "The whole difference between the West and the East is in this. They are nations, we are not, i.e., civilization, education here is general, it penetrates into the masses. The higher classes in India and America are the same, but the distance is infinite between the lower classes of the two countries," says Vivekananda.

The countries with less population have many talented people. But a country like India with more people has less number of efficient people. We are not able to produce worthy people by educating them. This is the great defect in our nation. The reformers of India have to remove this defect by educating the Indian masses and women in large numbers. The masses and the women have to regain their individuality through education. Education is more important than providing jobs to the masses or remarrying the widows. "Educate and raise the masses, and thus alone a nation is possible. Our reformers do not see where the wound is. They want to save nation by marrying the widows; do
you think that a nation is saved by the number of husbands its widows get? Nor is our religion to blame, for an idol more or less makes no difference. The whole defect is here. The real nation who live in cottages have forgotten their manhood, their individuality....They are to be given back their lost individuality. They are to be educated," says Vivekananda.

IV. EDUCATION THAT INDIA NEEDS

Swami Vivekananda is firmly of the opinion that India can prosper only through right education. No nation can advance when education, whether spiritual or secular, is confined to a few. There should be no exclusion of the lower classes from the process of learning. Education should be all inclusive and all pervading. A country can progress only when all its people all educated. Spread of education is essential for the growth of a nation. India failed to prosper because education has not been given to a majority of its people. India cannot prosper until and unless its masses are educated. Vivekananda says, "I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion to education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolizing of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again we shall have to do it in the same way i.e., by spreading education among the masses."
Education determines the social condition of the people. The condition of our people has been poor by all means. Our people do not have good living conditions. They also do not have self-confidence. They do not have faith in themselves. All this is because the education that the Indians receive is negative. It is negative in the sense that it teaches our people that they are born as slaves and so cannot prosper. But in America there is no suppression of people. There is freedom for anybody to progress. Even the lowest of the lowly can overcome the constraints. There is scope for the freedom 'within' to manifest. They have the courage to do everything there. Everybody is a human being with equal rights and responsibilities. "Pat raised his head and saw that it was so, the Brahman within woke up. Nature herself spoke, as it were, arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached".

India needs education that gives Indians faith in themselves. The faith in oneself wakes up the inherent Brahman. Shradha is required to awaken the Brahman. Shradha is the keynote of the Vedas and the Vedanta. Shradha means tremendous faith in oneself. It is Shradha which emboldened Nachiketa to face and question Yama. Shradha is the power which moves the world. Devoid of it the individual as well as the world will go to destruction. So education should inculcate self knowledge in the individual. The individual should become aware of his potential capacity through education. Education should give the knowledge
by which the individual attains freedom from the bondage of worldly existence. It should bring the material prosperity to the people. It should also impart the ideals of freedom, dispassion and renunciation. It should remove obstacle for the manifestation of inner power. The infinite power expresses itself as soon as it gets an opportunity. "From the highest God to the meanest grass, the same power is present in all, whether, manifest or not. We shall have to call forth that power by going from door to door",\textsuperscript{30} maintains Vivekananda.

Vivekananda wanted the will of the people to express itself through education. Education is neither book learning nor diversified knowledge. Education is the training "by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful".\textsuperscript{31} Education should not smother the freedom of the people. It should not dispel the good ideas and ideals and make the individual a machine. It is better to be uneducated than being automata. "It is more blessed, in my opinion, even to go wrong, impelled by one's free will and intelligence than to be good as an automation"\textsuperscript{32}, says Vivekananda. Education should also teach the virtue of self-sacrifice to people. Self-sacrifice is the most virtuous deed. Virtuous are those who sacrifice their happiness to the welfare of the many. Virtuous deeds should not be the result of superstition. They should emerge out of education and spirituality.
Swami Vivekananda wanted to give India the man-making education. He felt that the Indian youth has to be trained in becoming strong. Education should make man strong physically, intellectually and spiritually. The test of true education lies in its ability to make the student strong in all spheres. Truth is that which strengthens and falsehood is that which weakens. One has to reject like poison that which weakens. Swami says that truth is strengthening. Truth is purity and knowledge. It must be enlightening and invigorating. Truth lies in our scriptures. The Upaniṣads are the embodiment of the eternal truths. So the Indian youth should be taught the truths enshrined in the Upaniṣads. True education means the education of the Upaniṣadic truths. The truths should be devoid of the mysticism surrounding them.

Vivekananda is of the view that the mysticism has degraded India. He does not want to further degrade India by preaching mysticism. Indian race has to give up the weakening mysticisms of all kinds. Education should be the study and the propagation of the shining truths of the Upaniṣads. Upaniṣadic philosophy brightens humanity, for it contains the simplest and the greatest truths. They are as simple and profound as our existence itself. They alone have the power of transforming India. So there is a need for us to go back to Upaniṣads and study the truths. “Hold! And to raise against the degradation of my race. Give up these weakening mysticisms and be strong. Go back to your Upaniṣads—
the shining, the strengthening, the bright philosophy—and part from all these mysterious things, all these weakening things. Take up this philosophy, the greatest truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as your own existence. The truths of the Upanisads are before you. Take them up, live up to them, and the salvation of India at hand.\textsuperscript{33}

Vivekananda wanted to start institutions in India to educate the Indian youth in Upanisads. He wanted to train our youth as preachers of the truths of our scriptures. He wanted to make the young men to spread the eternal truths in India and abroad. He wanted the youth who were committed to learn and preach the Upanisads. He believed that the youth who are "strong, vigorous and believing"\textsuperscript{34} can change the world. A hundred people who are sincere to the backbone can revolutionize the world. People with will power are most essential for the transformation of India and the world. Vivekananda is of the view that will is stronger than anything. The will arises out of God. Since God is the source of will, everything is secondary to will. The will that is pure and strong is all powerful. A person having will-power is omnipotent. The one who has belief in his or her own will-power can achieve anything. The one who believes in his or her will power believes in himself or herself. Those who do not have will power become weak and degrade themselves. They think that they are good for nothing. The one who believes in oneself is the greatest theist. An atheist is
one who does not believe in oneself. Everybody is the manifestation of God. So one who believes in oneself believes in God. One who believes in one's will power believes in the will of God. "Everything must go down before the will, for that comes from God and God Himself; a pure and a strong will is omnipresent".

Vivekananda says that the difference between the Indians and the Englishmen lies in the latter's being self-believing. The Englishmen have faith in themselves, whereas Indians do not. The Englishmen believe in their being Englishmen. So they can achieve anything they want to achieve. Belief in themselves brings out the best in them. It brings out the God within them. So he can do anything he likes without evil. But the Indians have been told that they are weak. They cannot do anything. They are incapable of accomplishing anything significant. For centuries they have been taught theories of degradation. They have been dubbed as being nothing. The Indian masses have been pictured as being sub-human. It is propagated all over the world that they are not human beings. They have been subjugated to the level animals. "They have been so frightened for centuries, till they have been nearly animals".

Thus the Indians have almost become non-entities. There is an urgent need for strengthening them through education. Education should make them believe in themselves. Education devoid of occultism and mysticism alone can make them strong.
Education that is founded on the Upaniṣadic principle of Ātman can strengthen the Indians. The realization of the truth that everybody is the manifestation of the Ātman makes them strong. It enables them to become the equivalent to all. Ātman is immortal, eternal and infinite. It is immutable and one without the second. It is non-dual, indestructible and unthinkable. It is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. It is truth, consciousness and bliss.

Education which is the process of the realization of the Self alone can make man divine. The aim of education should to be to remove the barriers to perfection. "Our education and progression simply mean taking away the obstacles and by its own nature the divinity will manifest itself".37

Perfect men are real and strong. Perfect people do not weep any more over their plight. They overcome the age old sorrow arising out of self-pity. They become self-confident and happy. Swamy says that Indians have been taught that they can do nothing. They are non-entities and becoming worse every day. What Indians want is strength. They have to believe in themselves. Occultism and mysticism may have great truths in them, but they have nearly destroyed us. Indians have to make their nerves strong. "What we want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel. We have wept enough. 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"38, says Vivekananda.
Vivekananda advocates the primacy spiritual knowledge in education. The student has to be taught the wonderful truths of the Upanisads and Puranas. Secular knowledge should follow the spiritual knowledge. Secular education should be founded on scriptural knowledge. Social and political ideas should be based on the eternal truths of the Indian tradition. India has to be flooded with the religious ideas. It is necessary to deluge it with the spiritual lore of the ancient India. The spiritual knowledge was confined to the monasteries and selected people. It has to be brought out of its confines and be scattered all over India. It should be made available to the masses of India without any discrimination. The eternal truths must spread like fire all over the country from Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and from Sindh to Brahmaputhra. Everyone must know these truths. They must be heard, thought over and then deeply meditated upon. Preaching these truths is the greatest form of education. Diffusion of spiritual knowledge is the highest form of education. It is the greatest gift that India can give to other nations also.

According to Vivekananda there are four kinds of gifts that India has preached and practiced. They are the gift of the spiritual knowledge, the gift of secular knowledge, the gift of life, and gift of food. Of all the four, the gift of spiritual knowledge is the highest gift. Education should concentrate on the first two giving primacy to the first one. The gift of political and secular knowledge is spread
by force. It can be spread by means of the enforcement of law. But the gift of spiritual knowledge can be spread only by silence. It implies a silent revolution of transforming the individual. Indian is known for its spiritual power. India has given it to the world wherever it warranted. India has been offering the gift of spiritual education to the world. Swami admits that he is not the first to offer it. Vivekananda says, "Those that tell you that Indian thought never went outside of India, those that tell you that I am the first Sanyasin who went to foreign lands to preach, do not know the history of their own race. Again and again this phenomenon has happened. Whenever the world required it, this perennial flood of spirituality has overflowed and deluged the world. Gifts of political knowledge can be made with the blast of trumpets and the march of cohorts. Gifts of secular knowledge and social knowledge can be made with fire and sword. But spiritual knowledge can only be given in silence like the dew that falls unseen and unheard, yet bringing into bloom masses of roses. This has been the gift of India to the world again and again".

Vivekananda maintains that India has greatly contributed to the growth of spiritual knowledge of the world. It spread the spiritual knowledge to any place that it could travel. The moment any race or nation made transit possible, India readily supplied it the spiritual knowledge. It educated the people with the truths of the Upanisads. It gave her share of spiritual power to the world. It
added to the sum total of the spiritual growth of the world. India has been extending it to the world even before the Buddha was born. Indian spirituality was prevalent in China, Asia Minor and Malaya Archipelago well before the Buddha. Even the western civilization can be regarded as the remnant of the spread of Indian spirituality. Indian spirituality had deluged the West when the Greek conqueror, Alexander the great, conquered the four corners of the world. This spiritual education has to be spread again in the colonial world. England had linked the nations of the world by its rule. It has united them with roads and channels of communications. It has made people to travel from one end of the world to the other. The English genius has brought about trade centres all over the world. India has utilized these means of travel and communication for the spread of spirituality. Vivekananda himself could travel to America and participate in the Parliament of World Religions at Chicago. So Vivekananda advises the youth of India to follow him in spreading the spiritual knowledge. The Indian youth should preach Indian religion and philosophy to the world. Swamy says, "You must go out to preach your religion, preach it to every nation under the sun, preach it to every people. This is the first thing to do. And after preaching spiritual knowledge, along with it will come that secular knowledge and every other knowledge that you want"40.
According to Vivekananda, Advaita is the only true religion. And the person who has realized its oneness, sees it in all. Religion is recognizing the universal humanity and living by it. He says that symbols and ceremonies have no place in universal religion. Religion is pure and simple which can be easily realized. Rituals and rites cannot help us to realize true religion. Vivekananda goes to the extent of saying that true religion does not also depend upon books and teachers. Even saviours and prophets have no role in it. There is absolutely no sense of dependence on anything in religion. Religion is the direct realization of truth. It is oneself becoming truth and living truthfully in daily life. "Religion is that which does not depend upon books or teachers or prophets or saviours, and that which does not make us dependent in this or in any other lives upon others. In this sense Advaitism of the Upanishads is the only religion."41

V. EDUCATION FOR THE MASSES OF INDIA

Swami Vivekananda is of the view that the Indian masses are in need of education. The masses require education which can restore their lost individuality. The condition of the poor in India is so bad that they have become ignorant of their personality. They have forgotten that they are human beings. The foreign conquest has subjugated them. The native priests have suppressed them. They all have trodden the Indian masses for centuries. Swami says that in spite of perpetual oppression, the Indian poor are morally
superior to the poor in the West. The poor in the West are almost like devils. They are beastly and immoral. Whereas, our poor are good and angelic. So it is easier to reform the Indian poor. It is easier to educate them and improve their condition. The root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. The only way to transform them is by giving them education. Education should enable them to recognize their own individuality. They should be made aware of the world affairs. They should know what is going on in the society. Education should broaden their perspective. Then they can work out their future. Vivekananda opines that given the ideas, everyone can work out his or her salvation. Even nations can prosper provided their citizens and masses are properly educated. Educators must put good thoughts in the minds of the people in India. India needs a greater number of schools, where education is free. But the difficulty is that the Indian poor are not in a position to send their children to school. Owing to their poverty, they prefer to send the children for work. Their poverty is such that the poor children would go to agriculture to help their parents. They prefer making a living to going to school. Self-preservation is the first instinct. They should be taught even at their work place. So Vivekananda advocates that the system of education should be such that the teachers should go to the poor people. The teachers should teach the poor children at their homes. Writing to the Maharaja of Mysore in 1894,
Vivekananda said, "The great difficulty in the way of educating the poor is this. Supposing even your Highness opens a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty in India is such that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields or otherwise try to make a living then come to the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mohammad, Mohammad must go to mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him". 43

Vivekananda pointed out that there were thousands of sannyasins in India. They should be trained as teachers who can go to villages to teach the poor. The sannyasins are simple-minded and self-sacrificing. Though they are rooted in religious education of the Vedas and Upanishads, they can also be utilized for secular education. They can visit door to door in the villages. They can not only preach but also teach. Along with spiritual education, they can teach secular education. They can go with maps, a globe, and a camera. They can teach geography and astronomy to the masses. They can educate the masses by telling the stories about different nations. They can give information about the different cultures. They can orally educate the masses without books. It requires a clear cut planning as well as money. There are people in India who can work out a planning. There are also philanthropists who can contribute to the mission of educating the masses. But the rich in India are not sufficiently sympathetic with the poor. They think
more about their own selfish ends than about the difficulties of the poor. Vivekananda therefore entreats the Maharaja of Mysore to contribute to educating the masses of India. He wrote, "My noble prince, this life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive. One such high, noble minded and royal son of India as your Highness can do much towards raising India on her feet again and thus leave a name to posterity which shall be worshipped. That the Lord may make your noble heart feel intensely for the suffering millions of India, sunk in ignorance, is the prayer of—".44

Vivekananda was deeply concerned about the downtrodden. He not only prayed for their welfare but also laid plans for the eradication of their poverty and illiteracy. He felt for the millions of the poor and he loved them so much. He wanted committed young men to educates them. He wanted the united effort of all for the good of the poor. He went to the extent of saying that we all remain to be traitors so long as the poor remained to be ignorant. We have been educated at the expense of the uneducated. So it is our responsibility to reform them through education. We remain to be poor as long as the downtrodden remain to be hungry savages. Vivekananda asks, "Who feels there for the two hundred million of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way out? Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them. Who will travel from
door to door bringing education to them?...Him the Mahatma (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a Duratma (wicked soul).48

Swami V. vekananda is of the view that education should not be confined to the elite sections of the people. It should be extended to the masses of the country. No nation can prosper without its masses being rightly education. Europe has prospered because the percentage of the educated there is very high. India is far behind in development since its masses are not educated. Not only India, the world itself will go to ruins if the people are not educated. Vivekananda deplores that there are in India the old fogies who are against the education of the masses. They want to hide everything from the masses. They have come to the very satisfying conclusion that they are the crème de la crème of this universe. They believe that there is no need to educate the masses. The educated sannyásins are the only source of educating the masses of India. They alone can have "the religious enthusiasm"49 with which they can educate the masses. They are the nucleus of educating masses of men and women. They alone can revive the ancient Hindu religion monopolized by the selfish people who denied education to the general public. The old dogmas and doctrines are of no avail. We need people of character to lead the country by educating the people. The Godmen like Shri Ramakrishna can reform the orthodox Hinduism. He can guide
India along the practical way. Vivekananda also appealed to the rich and the educated Indians to contribute liberally for the education and rehabilitation of the poor Indians. He says that it is at the expense of the poor that the rich and the educated have become what they are. So it is the duty of the affluent to help the poor to overcome their plight. The masses should be made men of character in the sense that they are fearless and physically strong. "What is needed is training them into our method of building up character. The training is to make them obedient and fearless; and the method is to help the poor physically first and then work upto higher religious mentality".47

Vivekananda reiterates that the neglect of the masses is the major cause of India's downfall. It is also the great national sin. He says that the condition of the poor cannot be changed through politics. Education is the only means of their reform. We have to restore the rights of the masses by educating them. Creating awareness of their rights is more important than ensuring them by legislation. He reminds the upper class people that the masses have paid for their education. The low caste work for the upper caste who do not care for the former. The upper caste people would not touch a low-caste but ready to get any help out of them. Vivekananda regards the masses as our gods. It is our duty to create confidence in them by giving them education. He says, "No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India
are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in turn they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India we must work for them. I want to start two central institutions at first— one at Madras and the other at Calcutta— for training young men as preachers. Vivkananda further says that education is the greatest strength that we can give to the masses. Knowledge is power which restores the lost dignity of the Indian masses. The rich can contribute money to the cause of educating the mass. But the teacher must come from the middle class Indians. In all countries it is the middle class people who have done great works. They can sacrifice for others' sake. They can work for educating the masses. They alone can treat the poor as human beings and dedicate themselves for their reform. It is only by imparting education to the masses that India can be reformed.

VI. EDUCATION FOR THE WOMEN OF INDIA

Swami Vivekananda wanted Indian women to be well educated. Women in India are no better than the Indian downtrodden. They are the victims of ignorance and exploitation. They are illiterate and suffer from superstition. Education is the best means of liberating women from all kinds of subjugation. Women should be given that kind of education which gives them self confidence. Education should give them the capacity to stand on their own legs. It will liberate them from the custom of
marrying them very early in life. The custom of marrying girl children to the elderly widowers will also come down. The practice of Sati will also die out if the women are enlightened. Education protects women from becoming a mother at an early age. It saves them from becoming a widow too soon in life. Education should be such that it should give women strength of mind and formation of character. It should give them the spirit of value and heroism. It should enable them to achieve the spirit of self-defence. Education should create women who are as courageous as the Queen of Jhansi. Education in the sense of mere book-learning is not enough. Education should expand the intellect and thinking power of women. "With such education women will solve their own problems. They have all the time been trained in helplessness, servile dependence on others, and so they are good only to weep their eyes out at the slightest approach of a mishap or danger. Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence."  

Vivekananda holds that the Indian women are known for chastity. They can easily understand what chastity is. Chastity is their heritage. Education has to intensify the ideal of chastity in women. The ideal of chastity develops a strong character in them. The strength of character enables them to withstand the troubles and travails in their lives. They are so strong that they will not give
up their chastity at any cost. They may prefer death to losing their chastity. They will not be afraid to face death for the protection of the ideal of chastity. Vivekananda wanted to train some women in the ideal of renunciation of taking up the vow of virginity. Remaining a virgin life-long gives the strength of virtue. Virtue of chastity is in the blood of the Indian women from antiquity. It is their innate quality which education has to preserve. Vivekananda says that along with the ideal of chastity, the women should be taught science and arithmetics. India needs some pure-souled Brahmachārīnīs who are also trained in other disciplines. They are required for the well-being of our motherland. He said, "By their example and through their endeavours to hold the notional ideal before the eyes of the people, a revolution in thoughts and aspirations will take place".\(^1\)

Vivekananda emphasized the primacy of liberating women from poverty and ignorance. Women can think of practicing the ideal of renunciation only when they are assured of a secure life. They should be liberated from the tāmasic life. They should be elevated to the rājasic life of eating and gaining power over themselves and the society. Only then they can really be in a position to practice the virtue of chastity. Women are the living embodiment of the Holy Mother. It is wrong to discriminate against them. It is also wrong to think that they are not competent for knowledge and devotion. They cannot be deprived of the right to
study the Vedas and Upanishads. Erudite women were there in
the ancient times itself. Maitreyi, Gargi and other ladies occupied
the place of Rishis through their knowledge about the *Brahman.*
They challenged the scholarly men in the discussions about the
*Brahman.* Vivekananda asks "Since such ideal women were entitled
to spiritual knowledge, why shall not the women have the same
privilege now? What has happened once can certainly happen
again. History repeats itself." 82

Vivekananda holds that all nations attained progress
because they have payed proper respect for their women. A
country which does not revere women can never become great.
India has not fully developed, since the Indians have no respect for
women. Women are the living images of *Shakti.* Manu says that
wherever women are respected, there the gods delight. Wherever
they are degraded there all works and efforts come to nothing.
Families are prosperous and peaceful only when the women are
esteemed. Women are even worthy enough to be worshipped, for
they are the embodiment of knowledge, devotion and dispassion.
Men can become omniscient by worshipping the Divine Mother.
Even Gods propitiate the Mother Goddess who when pleased
becomes propitious and liberates man from bondage. Vivekananda
wanted to start separate Math for women in order to manifest the
*Brahman* within them. The Math is meant mainly for unmarried
girls and widows who would like to become *Brahmacharinus.*
Devout married women will also be allowed to stay there now and then. As it has already been mentioned, Sanskrit, grammar and religious scriptures will be taught to the inmates of the Math. The celibate nuns who choose to live in the Math permanently will become the teachers and the preachers. They will open centres in towns and villages for the spread of female education. They teach spirituality, self-sacrifice and self-control. They elevate the Indian women from the state of deprivation. "Through such devout preachers of character there will be the real spread of female education in the country".\textsuperscript{83} says Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda maintains that women's position in Hinduism is not satisfactory. Women have to be uplifted through education. The role of the reformers in regard to the position of women has to be confined to giving them education. Women should be put in a position to solve their own problems through education. Indian women are capable of solving their own problems. Women in India are subjected to inequality. They certainly need protection. The main source of making them equal is education. We need not do anything more to them. Our right of interference is limited to giving them education. "Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them. And our Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world".\textsuperscript{84}
Education, according to Vivekananda, is "a development of faculty, not an accumulation of words". He also defines education "as a training of individuals to will rightly and efficiently. In this sense, education should create women who have strong and efficient will and whose faculties are well developed. Education should bring about women like Sanghamitra, Lila, Ahalya and Mira. It should enable women to be fit to be mothers of great men. Basically women are pure, selfless and strong. Education that we give to women should have an element of religion. Religion is the inner core of true education. The core element of religion enables women to develop themselves in their own way. Education should give women freedom for self development without any resistance.

Vivekananda is of the view that India is a home of illiteracy. Of the total literates, the percentage of women and masses is very low. India cannot progress "unless there is spread of education first among the women and the masses". The Brahmachārīnīs and Brahmachārīns who take the vow of Sannyasa alone can educate the masses and women. They can carry the light of education among the destitutes. The Brahmachārīnīs devote themselves to educating women while the Brahmachārīs to the masses of men. Separate education centres have to be started for women. These centres have to teach women history, Puranas and arts. House-keeping and duties of home-life have to be inculcated in them. The principles of character development have also to be
taught. Women must be trained in modern science, along with ethical and spiritual ideals. Women must be given an all-round education. It should include hygiene, cooking and sewing also. Swami opines that it is good not to allow women to read fiction. Women education must be an eye-opener in all matters. "Ideal characters must always be presented before the view of girls to imbue them with a devotion to lofty principles of selflessness."

Educations of women should be such that it should make them the mothers who can produce great people. Great men are born only in the homes of the educated women. Knowledgeable and pious mothers give birth to good children and rear them into noble people. But in India, women are condemned to drudgery. They are reduced to the level of manufacturing machinery. Indian women are basically loving and kind. They are amenable to change easily. Given the proper education and knowledge, they can transform themselves and India at large. India is the sacred land of Sita and Savithri, the women of service, affection, compassion, contentment, and reverence. We can not find such women anywhere in the world. In the West, women do not very often seem to be women at all. They appear to be quite the replicas of men. Swami opines, "In India alone the sight of feminine modesty and reserve soothes the eye! With such materials of great promise, you could not, alas, work out their uplift! You did not try to infuse the light of
knowledge into them. If they get the right sort of education, they may well turn out to be the ideal women in the world."³³

Swami Vivekananda reiterates that women are equal to men in all respects. They are capable of attaining *Brahman* knowledge also. Women are also the manifestation of one reality, namely, *Brahman*. The soul is devoid of sex. At the highest level of the *Parabrahman*, there is no distinction of sex. So it is utterly false to regard women as inferior to men. Women are falling behind only because of the lack of education. They should be educated in such a way that they become self-reliant and wise. They should be liberated from the social structures which have reduced them to lifeless and inert objects. Men are responsible for their miserable condition. They have been deprived of education by men. So men have the duty of raising women again. Women have to be uplifted to the level of the ideal characters such as Sita, Savithri and Gargi. To give them equal status, first of all, men have to overcome the sense of division as men and women. Men have to abjure the sense of sexist prejudices. They have to go to the level of introspection in which there is no distinction as man and woman. Sex distinction exists only on the relative plane. "And the more the mind becomes introspective, the more the idea of difference vanishes. Ultimately, when the mind is wholly merged in the homogeneous and undifferentiated *Brahman*, such ideas as this is a man or that a woman do not remain at all. We have actually
seen this in the life of Shri Ramakrishna. Therefore do I say that though outwardly there may be difference between men and women, in their real nature there is none, ⁵⁹ says Vivekananda.

When one realizes the all illumining Atman, then one will see that the idea of sex-distinction is vanished altogether. Then one will look upon all women as the veritable manifestation of Brahman. Women are also the manifestation of the Divine Mother who is beyond caste and class distinctions. Female education does not mean a smattering of English. It does not mean imitating the western modes of living. Female education means "advancing in the spirit of renunciation, self-control, austerity, Brahmacharya and other qualities conducive to Brahmanāṇāṁ". ⁶⁰ That is, female education, according to Vivekananda, should primarily be religion centered. Training in all other areas is secondary. Education should concentrate on the religious training. It should lead to the formation of character and the observance of the vow of celibacy. But the female education imparted up till now in India, religious training has been given a secondary place. This is due to the fact that those who have taken up the task of spreading female education are not Brahmanāṇis. They are not even Brahmachārins themselves. Only those who have attained the knowledge of Brahman through religious self-discipline alone can educate women in the deepest sense.
Swami also says that Indian women need university education also. He affirms that the Hindu religion is opposed to women pursuing higher education. He says that the status of women in respect of education depends on men. If men are educated and cultured they will allow women also to become educated and cultured. "As to education and culture, it all depends upon man. That is to say, where the men are highly cultured, there the women are; where the men are not, women are not".61 In modern times men are willing to send women to higher education. Men are allowing women to shape their own destiny. "All the mischief to women has come because men undertook to shape the destiny of women"62. There is now greater impetus towards higher education for women on the European lines. In this respect, Indian universities were ahead of the Western Universities. Calcutta University opened its doors to women when Oxford and Cambridge closed their doors to women. The year Swami graduated from Calcutta University, several girls also graduated successfully along with him. Swami holds that women had the privilege of pursuing higher education even in ancient India. It was only later that women were denied higher education. He says, "And our religion does not prevent a woman being educated at all. In this way the girl should be educated; even thus should be trained and in the old books we find that the Universities were equally resorted to by both
girls and boys, but later education of the whole nation was neglected".63

VII. THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN INDIA

Vivekananda was very critical of higher education in India. He subscribed to Lord Curzon's view of abolishing higher education. He also advocated the proposal of reforming the university system. He felt that the graduates who get degrees from the universities despised their own religion and customs. Soon after they pass out of university they begin to think that everything Indian is bad. They begin to praise everything that is western as being good. University graduates bring ruin on our country, for they have no interest in their own culture. They do not have an understanding of their own religion and philosophy. So it is better if the students are given a little of technical education which can give them work. The Indian students should be given a primary vocational education for earning their livelihood. University graduates struggle to get the job of a service class which is difficult to find. Education should train the pupil so much that they are able to apply their intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears, and eyes. It should be founded on the idea of true religion. Religion says that all knowledge is 'within'. Vedanta says that the teacher's duty is only to awaken the knowledge within. It is no good to stuff the mind of the student with several subjects from 'without'. Education should not be devoid of the ideal of
Brahmacharya and Shraddha which generate faith in oneself. Vivekananda held that the aim of higher education is similar to "that of a man who battered his ass, being advised that it could thereby be turned into a horse". He also held that removal of higher education does not make our people stupid. Our people are by nature like lions. Absence of university education cannot make them like jackals. India has nourished the whole world with knowledge from time immoral. It is impossible to turn the sons of this soil as stupid by removing higher education.

Vivekananda says that we are making parrots of our boys and ruining their brains by cramming a lot of subjects into them. Looking from one standpoint, the proposal of reforming or abolishing the University system is gratifying. The country will feel some relief by having breathing time. "It would be better if people get a little technical education, so that they might find work and earn their bread, instead of dawdling about and crying for service".

Higher education does not mean the study of physical and chemical sciences. It does not mean the development of engineering and technology. It is not the production of goods for our daily use. It does not mean the establishment of industry based on machinery. Higher education in its true sense should be such that it should be able to solve human crises. Vivekananda maintains that higher education in the sense of solving human
problem was prevalent in ancient India. Vedic education embodied the remedies for all problems of life. It aims at giving peace and prosperity to humanity. "Does higher education mean mere study of material sciences and turning out things of everyday use by machinery? The use of higher education is to find out how to solve the problems of life, and this is what is engaging the profound thought of the modern civilized world, but it was solved in our country thousands of years ago." 66

Vivekananda deplores that the graduates and post-graduates coming out of colleges and universities are not of proper use to our country. Very few people are going to the level of college and university. Even the few who pass through the university system get into jobs and confine to their family and children. They are not in a position to work for the downtrodden. They do not also have the will to reform their motherland. They are not even aware of the fact that our country is facing several crises. The country needs to be radically transformed. Only young people full of spirit can transform the country. The country needs the people of renunciation. Those who are ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the country alone can change the society. Those who are concerned about their own lives and prosperity are of no use. Only the Sannyásins can go to the poor and enlighten them on their pitiable condition. They can instruct the poor in the ways and means for their welfare. They can also explain to them in simple
and easy language the higher truth of our religion. The masses in
our country are like the sleeping Leviathan which is waiting for
somebody to awaken it. Swami says that only the young
Sannyasins who are trained for this purpose alone can awaken the
Leviathan. The University students have proved to be of no good
for this task. Swami says, The education imparted by the present
university system reaches one or two per cent of the masses only.
And even those who get that do not succeed in their endeavours of
doing any good to their country. But it is not their fault, poor
fellows! As soon as they come out of their college, they find
themselves to be fathers of several children! Somehow or other
they manage to secure the position of a clerk, or at the most a
deputy magistrate. This is the finale of education! With the
burden of a family on their back, they find no time to do anything
great or think anything high. They do not find means enough to
fulfil their personal wants and interests; so what can be expected of
them in the way of doing anything for others?  

Swami says that modern education taught in the universities
is not conducive to the development of character. It does not also
give the spiritual knowledge of knowing Brahman. Swami therefore
wanted to start Monasteries (Maths) where the Brahmacārins are
taught "the ideals which will be the harmony of knowledge,
devotion, Yoga, and work". The Maths will be the centres of
spiritual practices and the culture of our country. They will be
centres of spiritual knowledge which flood the whole world and turn the course of people's lives. They will provide a life-giving impetus to the remotest corners of the globe. The Maths will also be the centres of learning where philosophy, science, grammar, rhetoric, Bhakti and English will be taught. They will be the temples of learning where Brahmacārins live from childhood and study the scriptures. The food and clothing of the Brahmacārins will be supplied by the Math. Their training will be for five years duration after which the student may become a Sannyasin for life or become a house-holder. Only those who are trained in the Maths shall be eligible for Sannyāsa which implies impeccable character and full of spiritual knowledge. Swami says, "The modern system of education gives no facility for the development of the knowledge of Brahman. We must found Brahmacārīya Homes as in times of old." 69

VIII. THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Vivekananda gives a lot of importance to the role of teacher in educating the students. The child learns better in the company of a good Guru. It is through the Guru that spiritual knowledge can be conveyed. A conscientious teacher is required even for learning secular things. No knowledge is possible without a proper teacher. The teacher must be of character and sacrifice. He or she must have dedication and devotion to the profession. The teacher must be like an apostle to the disciple. He should transmit
knowledge with mercy and purity of mind and heart. He should be life giving, strengthening and inspiring. He should be one who has renounced pleasures and practices what he teaches. He should be so positive that he sees good in the students and encourages them. He should be so pure and holy that students get attracted to him instantly and spontaneously. "When the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey, so let the lotus of your character be full blown, and the results will follow."  

Vivekananda emphasizes the need for a teacher to be well versed in the scriptures of all religions. He should be knowledgeable in Vedas, Upanishads, Bibles and Koran. He should also be a realized person of the spirit taught by these holy texts. Mere knowledge of them is not enough. It is only then that the teacher can transmit all his knowledge through the medium of love. At the same time, Vivekananda says that the teacher should not think that he is teaching the student. Education in the sense of self-knowledge cannot be taught by the other, since such knowledge is already there 'within'. Each one has to teach oneself. The teacher is only an aid to the manifestation of the knowledge within. Every child can teach itself when the teacher only offers suggestions. A real teacher is rare and one in a million. And Vivekananda himself was one such teacher. He was a teacher of the soul as well as a friend to his disciples. He was a teacher incarnate and practised what he taught. He was a leader among
teachers. He was one who gave everything to the public without expecting anything in return. His relationship with others had all the tenderness, sweetness and blessedness. He maintained oneness and divinity in his relationships with other people. "No words can paint the love which Swami Vivekananda had for his numerous disciples. He made no distinction among them, whether they were rich or poor, high or low, learned or ignorant, young or old, man or women." 

Vivekananda's empathy for the downtrodden is exemplary. As a teacher he took up the task of reforming the Indian poor. He did everything for their sake. He strived to give them his best spiritual as well as material. He wanted to educate them in both the ways. He proclaimed that he was prepared to take a thousand lives for their sake. True to the Hindu conception of a Guru, Vivekananda wanted to be born again and again until all his disciples attain liberation. His dedication to his disciples was such that he taught them irrespective of whether they deserved his teaching or not. There was never bitterness in him even at those who were not sincere. As a Guru he was so influential that his very presence was magnetic. Not only his discourses, "even his silence was as effective as his most eloquent utterances." 

As it has already been mentioned a true teacher deserves a true disciple. The disciple should also fulfil certain requirements for the teacher to accomplish his task. The first condition of the
disciple is that he should give up the desire for gain. The second condition is that he must be able control his mind and the senses. No spiritual knowledge is possible as long as the mind is restless and out of control. The third condition is that the disciple must possess the power of endurance and perseverance. He should be able to withstand the hardships and failures. He should bear all misery or evil without resistance or unhappiness. He must have the mental power and concentration even to cure his own illness. The fourth and the most important condition is that the disciple must have a strong passion to realize the truth for ultimate liberation. Unlike millions of people who desire for material goals, the disciple should have a strong desire for the spiritual ideal. "These are the conditions which a man who wants to be a disciple must fulfil to come into contact with the true Guru".74 says Vivekananda.

Vivekananda further says that it is also necessary for the student to learn by living with the Guru. "The Guru is the means of realization. There is no knowledge without a teacher".75 But the teacher should one who is of character. His character should be a blazing fire. He should be a living example of the highest teaching. Living with such a teacher from one's boyhood will have a profound effect on the boy. Teachers of renunciation are of utmost importance even in imparting higher education. It is no good to have teachers who monopolize knowledge. "In our country, the
imparting of knowledge has always been through men of renunciation. Later, the Pandits, by monopolizing all knowledge and restricting it, have only brought the country to the brink of ruin. India had all good prospects so long as *Tyogis* (men of renunciation) used to impart knowledge*.76

India will continue to be subservient to the foreign countries as long as our education is not imparted by the teachers of renunciation. Even a student who follows renunciation can achieve the tremendous goals. He can excel even their masters who are mere Pandits. According to Vivekananda Shri Ramakrishna was one such great pupil who could excel the Pandits. Ramakrishna can be regarded as the teacher of teachers. His wisdom was far superior to all the Pandits who worship books. His insights were more profound than those contained in the religious books and manuscripts. When once the Pandits declared that it was not auspicious to worship the idol of Vishnu which was broken, Ramakrishna declared that it is not at all wrong to worship the broken image of Vishnu. Ramakrishna said that abandoning the broken idol would be like a wife forsaking her husband because he has become lame. "What followed? The Pandits were struck dumb, all the Shastric commentaries and erudition could not withstand the force of this simple statement".77

Swami also spoke about the need for education in association with Nature. Nature (*Prakriti*) influences the individual
profoundly. Being in the company of Nature for a long time transforms the individual. Satyakama, the Brahmacarin, who went away to forests to graze the cows of his Guru came back enlightened. It seems some of the animals taught him the Brahmaavidya. On his way back, one of the bulls or some other animal gave him instructions about the Brahman. When the disciple came back, the Guru at once understood that the disciple had learnt the knowledge of the Supreme. Vivekananda says that the moral of this story is that true education is gained by constant living in communion with Nature also.

Vivekananda is of the view that Vedanta is true education. Education devoid of Vedanta philosophy is not complete. History stands a testimony to the fact that the Indian tradition embodies all the soul-elevating ideas. All branches of knowledge in the world are found in it. Proper investigation into the past reveals that all knowledge has its source in Indian thought. Vivekananda stressed the need for studying our scriptures independent of foreign control. We have to pursue different branches of knowledge that is entirely of our own. First, the task of exploring our treasure of wisdom has to be accomplished. Then we may go for technical knowledge and develop our industries.

Thus, Vivekananda argues that the reconstruction of India is possible through the Vedantic conception of education. Political and technological reform cannot truly transform India. Spiritual
education is of primary importance. Spiritual regeneration of Indians alone can regenerate India in the true sense. Education as the manifestation of inner perfection is of supreme importance for the reformation of the individual. So also education of the masses, the women and the youth of India is inevitable for the reconstruction of India. This point has been vindicated in the previous and present chapters.
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