

PHILOSOPHY OF VIVEKANANDA: CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE

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Abstract

Swami Vivekananda is one of the pioneers in social reforms in India. Indian renaissance owes to Swamiji and he was one of the ardent spokesmen of women education, mass education and social service. He clearly highlighted that to uplift the status of nation and society, education is the powerful tool. He realized that poor, backward Indians have to be educated truly for their wellbeing. Thus it is important for us to revisit the educational thoughts of swami Vivekananda to empower the nation.

Key terms: mass education, women education wellbeing, renaissance

Introduction

The idealist philosopher Vivekananda realized the only aim of human life is to know about Brahma, i.e., the supreme power and only way to realize Brahma is called education. To spread education Vivekananda emphasized on religion and spiritualism but he wholeheartedly accepted western science. Vivekananda wanted to open a new horizon in education with the combination of western science and Indian Vedanta. He emphasized the role of women education, mass education and social service for the construction and conservation of our nation and its values. He considered that ultimate aim of education and all institutions to make real man and manifestation of the man. At the same time, he has given special attention to character formation through education and for that he suggested a few components of education such as good habit, learning from experiences, moral and aesthetic values ,good habit etc.

Swami Vivekananda understood that if the aim of education is to make real man, the usual curriculum used in universities, colleges and schools would not be effective. Vivekananda wanted to implement a new system of education which is similar to heuristic method of modern educationists. In this system the teacher implores the spirit of inquiry in the pupil so the child is able to find out things for himself under proper and bias free guidance of the teacher. It is clear that Vivekananda was more faithful in utilitarianism, than curriculum.

Women education

The wise men of the whole world those who have been enlightened thought about women education; obviously Swami Vivekananda was one of them. Swamiji had a vivid idea that women are main makers of their family and society. So, the responsibility of making family structure and also social structure has been laid on women. If we do not give proper education to the women, our individual family and whole family will suffer and be ruined shortly. Swamiji was hurt seeing the misery of Indian women. He realized that the dearth of education is the main cause of the pathetic condition of Indian women. Swami Vivekananda felt that, the thermometer of the progress of a nation is its treatment of women It is impossible to get back pride and honour of our nation unless Indians try to uplift the condition of women. According to Swamiji, men and women are considered as the two wings of a bird, so it is not possible for

a bird to fly with one wing. So, he said, there is no chance for welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. Education of women is essential for all round development of the nation and also for the improvement of women's condition in India.

Swami Vivekananda opposed the marginalization of women. He visited England in 1895 and met with Margaret Elizabeth noble an Irish lady who was in the midst of learning about the Buddha's preaching. The power of swami Vivekananda's thoughts influenced her and she became the first western women to be a Sanyasini named Bhagini Nivedita. Sister Nivedita played an important role in promoting the rights of women in rural India. In November 1899, according to Swamiji's instruction; she started a school for girls for the basic education. Now it is known as 'Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Sister Niveditha Girl's School'. It is situated in Bagbazar, Kolkatha.

Mass education

Vivekananda strongly expressed his views on Mass education. He said education must not be confined to a few; education has to be spread out among the entire people of the country. He said that one of the great national sins is the neglect of our masses and that is the main cause of our downfall. Swami Vivekananda's most unique contribution for the making of new India was to open the minds of Indians to their duty towards the illiterate masses. Like Gandhiji Vivekananda also accepted the downtrodden as god's own people. Swamiji continuously spoke about the role of the labouring classes in the production of the country's wealth. Swamiji was the first religious leader in India to speak for the welfare of masses, formulate a definite philosophy of service, and organize large-scale social service. Therefore, for a sustainable regeneration of India, if not for anything else, top priority must be given to educating the masses carefully and restoring to them their lost individuality. They should not only be given education to make them self-reliant, but also ideas, moral training and an understanding of their own historical situation so that they can act for their own salvation. Furthermore, they must be given culture, without it there can be no hope for their long-term development

Social Service and education

Vivekananda believed with heart and soul that the first and foremost duty of education is to serve the people with any interest. Education should not be confined to self-development and self-realisation. Education has to be used for the people's work and society's work through and through this the service-oriented mentality and sense of nationalism will grow. He believes that perfect education could not be completed without service to others. In short we can say that observing and realizing the social condition of India at that time, Swamiji wanted to introduce a new system where the education was to be for the poor, ill-treated and persecuted people for their self-development, self-realization and self-dependence.

At the end we can say that realizing the social condition of India Swamiji wanted to introduce a new education system where education was to be for women, illiterate masses and thus for the society. For a sustainable regeneration of our nation women education, mass education and social service play a major role. By achieving all these, people will develop self-development, self-realization and self-dependence.

References

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