

Education in the Revelation of Swami Vivekananda: An Overview

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“A platform to share knowledge and insights to help Indians reconnect with their heritage and build a glorious future together”. Swami Vivekananda

Abstract

Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. Education is an important activity in any society; it gives an opportunity to man to understand and the knowledge about things in the world around him and provides his place in it. In the ancient times the human was completely at the mercy of nature which was a complete mystery to him. Education, properly speaking, understandable, should develop a spirit of inquiry and rational thinking in the youth so as to enable them to understand the society and change it wherever it is found lacking. Swami Vivekananda believed that education is the manifestation of perfection. He contemplated that the existing education system is not enable to make a person stand on his own feet, as it did not teach a person self-confidence and self-respect. To him education wasn't just a compilation of information, but it was rather something meaningful. He considered education to be character-building and life shaping phase. This paper is going to identify the basic thought, ideas and visions of Swami Vivekananda about education teaching.

Keywords: Education, Knowledge, Issues and challenges

Introduction

Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of others, but may also be autodidactic.

Essence of Education

Swami Vivekananda believed education is the manifestation of perfection already in men. He thought it a pity that the existing system of education did not enable a person to stand on his own feet, nor did it teach him self-confidence and self-respect. To Vivekananda, education was not only collection of information, but something more meaningful; he felt education should be man-making, life giving and character-building. To him education was an assimilation of noble ideas.

“Education is not the amount of information that we put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life building, man making, and character making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library...”

Positive Education

Swami Vivekananda stressed on giving the public only positive education, because negative thoughts weaken men. Swami Vivekananda told, if young boys and girls are encouraged and are not unnecessarily criticized all the time, they are bound to improve in time.

In New York, Vivekananda used to observe the Irish colonists come – downtrodden, haggard-looking, destitute of all possessions at home, penniless, and wooden-headed – with their only belongings, a stick and a bundle of rags hanging at the end of it, fright in their steps, alarm in their eyes. Vivekananda observed a completely different spectacle in next six months- the man walks upright, his attire is changed. In his eyes and steps there is more fright. Swami Vivekananda tried to find out the cause, he told, if this incidence is seen by the explanations of Vedanta, that Irishman was kept surrounded by contempt in his own country – the whole of Nature was telling him with one voice – "Pat, you have no more hope, you were born a slave and will remain so". Having been thus told from his birth, Pat started believing in it and hypnotized himself that he is very low. While no sooner had he landed on America than the shout went up on all sides – "Pat, you are a man as we are, it is man who has done all, a man like you and me can do everything; have courage!" Pat raised his head and saw that it was so; the self-confidence within him woke up again. Swami Vivekananda feels likewise, the education that young boys and girls receive is very negative. He thinks they do not gain confidence or self-respect from this education, so according to Swami Vivekananda only positive education should be given to children.

Here is an interesting perspective of what education is, and what it is not, in the vision of Swami Vivekananda-

What is Education?

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.

The training by which the current and expression of will is brought under control and become fruitful is called education.

Education may be described as a development of faculty, not an accumulation of words, or, as a training of individuals to will rightly and efficiently.

Real education is that which enables one to stand on his own legs.

If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.

We must have life building, man making, and character making assimilation of ideas.

What Education is not?

Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that...

Education is not an accumulation of words....

Education is not the collecting of facts...

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life.

If education were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopedias would be the Rishis.

Education is not filling the mind with a lot of facts.

...is that education as a result of which the will, being continuously choked by force through generations, is now well-nigh killed out; is that education under whose sway even the old ideas, let alone the new ones are disappearing one by one; is that education which is slowly making man a machine?

The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle of life, which does not bring out the strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion — is it worth the name?

Well, you consider a man as educated if only he can pass some examinations and deliver good lectures...

The present system of education is all wrong. The mind is crammed with facts before it knows how to think. Control of the mind should be taught first.

The education that you are receiving now in schools and colleges is only making you a race of dyspeptics. You are working like machines merely, and living a jelly-fish existence.

Type of Education

There are three forms of learning defined by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): formal education, informal education and non-formal education.

1. Formal Education

Systems of schooling involve institutionalized teaching and learning in relation to a curriculum, which itself is established according to a predetermined purpose of the schools in the system. Schools systems are sometimes also based on religions, giving them different curricula.

a. Curriculum

The term preschool refers to a school for children who are not old enough to attend kindergarten. It is a nursery school. Preschool education is important because it can give a child the edge in a competitive world and education climate. While children who do not receive the fundamentals during their preschool years will be taught the alphabet, counting, shapes and colors and designs when they begin their formal education they will be behind the children who already possess that knowledge. The true purpose behind kindergarten is "to provide a child-centered, preschool curriculum for three to seven year old children that aimed at unfolding the child's physical, intellectual, and moral nature with balanced emphasis on each of them.

b. Primary Schools

Primary (or elementary) education consists of the first 5–7 years of formal, structured education. In general, primary education consists of six or eight years of schooling starting at the age of five or six, although this varies between, and sometimes within, countries. Globally, around 89% of primary-age children are enrolled in primary education, and this proportion is rising. Under the Education for All programs driven by UNESCO, most countries have committed to achieving universal enrollment in primary education by 2015, and in many countries, it is compulsory for children to receive primary education. The division between primary and secondary education is somewhat arbitrary, but it generally occurs at about eleven or twelve years of age. Some education systems have separate middle schools, with the transition to the final stage of secondary education taking place at around the age of fourteen. Schools that provide primary education are mostly referred to as *primary schools*. Primary schools in these countries are often subdivided into infant schools and junior school.

In India, compulsory education spans over twelve years, out of which children receive elementary education for 8 years. Elementary schooling consists of five years of primary schooling and 3 years of upper primary schooling. Various states in the republic of India provide 12 years of compulsory school education based on national curriculum framework designed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training.

c. Secondary Schools

In most contemporary educational systems of the world, secondary education comprises the formal education that occurs during adolescence. It is characterized by transition from the typically compulsory, comprehensive primary education for minors, to the optional, selective tertiary, "post-secondary", or "higher" education (e.g. university, vocational school) for adults. Depending on the system, schools for this period, or a part of it, may be called secondary or high schools, gymnasiums, lyceums, middle schools, colleges, or vocational schools. The exact meaning of any of these terms varies from one system to another. The exact boundary between primary and secondary education also varies from country to country and even within them, but is generally around the seventh to the tenth year of schooling. Secondary education occurs mainly during the teenage years. In the United States, Canada and Australia primary and secondary education together are sometimes referred to as K-12 education, and in New Zealand Year 1–13 is used. The purpose of secondary education can be to give common knowledge, to prepare for higher education or to train directly in a profession.

d. Special

In the past, those who were disabled were often not eligible for public education. Children with disabilities were often educated by physicians or special tutors. These early physicians (people like

Seguin, Howe, Gallaudet) set the foundation for special education today. They focused on individualized instruction and functional skills. Special education was only provided to people with severe disabilities in its early years, but more recently it has been opened to anyone who has experienced difficulty learning.

1. Non-formal Education

a. Anarchistic Free Schools

An anarchistic free school (also anarchist free school and free school) is a decentralized network in which skills, information, and knowledge are shared without hierarchy or the institutional environment of formal schooling. Free school students may be adults, children, or both. This organizational structure is distinct from ones used by democratic free schools which permit children's individual initiatives and learning endeavors within the context of a school democracy, and from free education where 'traditional' schooling is made available to pupils without charge. The open structure of free schools is intended to encourage self-reliance, critical consciousness, and personal development. Free schools often operate outside the market economy in favor of a gift economy. Nevertheless, the meaning of the "free" of free schools is not restricted to monetary cost, and can refer to an emphasis on free speech and student-centered education

b. Alternative

Alternative education, also known as *non-traditional education* or *educational alternative*, is a broad term that may be used to refer to all forms of education outside of traditional education (for all age groups and levels of education). This may include not only forms of education designed for students with special needs (ranging from teenage pregnancy to intellectual disability), but also forms of education designed for a general audience and employing alternative educational philosophies and methods.

Alternatives of the latter type are often the result of education reform and are rooted in various philosophies that are commonly fundamentally different from those of traditional compulsory education. While some have strong political, scholarly, or philosophical orientations, others are more informal associations of teachers and students dissatisfied with certain aspects of traditional education. These alternatives, which include charter schools, alternative schools, independent schools, homeschooling and autodidacticism vary, but often emphasize the value of small class size, close relationships between students and teachers, and a sense of community.

Alternative education may also allow for independent learning and engaging class activities.

c. Autodidacticism

Autodidacticism (also autodidactism) is self-directed learning that is related to but different from informal learning. In a sense, autodidacticism is "learning on your own" or "by yourself", and an autodidact is a self-teacher. Autodidacticism is a contemplative, absorbing process. Some

autodidacts spend a great deal of time reviewing the resources of libraries and educational websites. One may become an autodidact at nearly any point in one's life. While some may have been informed in a conventional manner in a particular field, they may choose to inform themselves in other, often unrelated areas. Notable autodidacts include Abraham Lincoln (U.S. president), Srinivasa Ramanujan (mathematician), Michael Faraday (chemist and physicist), Charles Darwin (naturalist), Thomas Alva Edison (inventor), Tadao Ando (architect), George Bernard Shaw (playwright), Frank Zappa (composer, recording engineer, film director), and Leonardo da Vinci (engineer, scientist, mathematician).

d. Vocational

Vocational education is a form of education focused on direct and practical training for a specific trade or craft. Vocational education may come in the form of an apprenticeship or internship as well as institutions teaching courses such as carpentry, agriculture, engineering, medicine, architecture and the arts.

2. Informal Education

a. Indigenous

Indigenous education refers to the inclusion of indigenous knowledge, models, methods and content within formal and non-formal educational systems. Often in a post-colonial context, the growing recognition and use of indigenous education methods can be a response to the erosion and loss of indigenous knowledge and language through the processes of colonialism. Furthermore, it can enable indigenous communities to "reclaim and revalue their languages and cultures, and in so doing, improve the educational success of indigenous students.

b. Education through Recreation

The concept of education through recreation was first applied to childhood development in the 19th century. In the early 20th century, the concept was broadened to include young adults but the emphasis was on physical activities. Educationalist Lawrence L.P. Jacks, who was also an early proponent of lifelong learning, best described the modern concept of education through recreation in the following quotation "A master in the art of living draws no sharp distinction between his work and his play, his labour and his leisure, his mind and his body, his education and his recreation. He hardly knows which is which. He simply pursues his vision of excellence through whatever he is doing and leaves others to determine whether he is working or playing. To himself he always seems to be doing both enough for him that he does it well. Education through recreation is the opportunity to learn in a seamless fashion through all of life's activities. The concept has been revived by the University of Western Ontario to teach anatomy to medical students.

Systems of Higher Education

Higher education, also called tertiary, third stage, or post secondary education, is the non-compulsory educational level that follows the completion of a school providing a secondary education, such as a high school or secondary school. Tertiary education is normally taken to include undergraduate and postgraduate education, as well as vocational education and training. Colleges and universities are the main institutions that provide tertiary education. Collectively, these are sometimes known as tertiary institutions. Tertiary education generally results in the receipt of certificates, diplomas, or academic degrees.

Higher education generally involves work towards a degree-level or foundation degree qualification. In most developed countries a high proportion of the population (up to 50%) now enters higher education at some time in their lives. Higher education is therefore very important to national economies, both as a significant industry in its own right, and as a source of trained and educated personnel for the rest of the economy.

University Systems

University education includes teaching, research, and social services activities, and it includes both the *undergraduate* level (sometimes referred to as tertiary education) and the graduate (or *postgraduate*) level (sometimes referred to as graduate school). Universities are generally composed of several colleges. In the United States, universities can be private and independent, like Yale University, they can be public and State governed, like the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, or they can be independent but State funded, like the University of Virginia.

a. Open

Higher education in particular is currently undergoing a transition towards open education, e-learning alone is currently growing at 14 times the rate of traditional learning. Open education is fast growing to become the dominant form of education, for many reasons such as its efficiency and results compared to traditional methods. Cost of education has been an issue throughout history and a major political issue in most countries today. Open education is generally significantly cheaper than traditional campus based learning and in many cases even free. Many large university institutions are now starting to offer free or almost free full courses such as Harvard, MIT and Berkeley teaming up to formed X Other universities offering open education are Stanford, Princeton, Duke, Johns Hopkins, Edinburgh, U. Penn, U. Michigan, U. Virginia, U. Washington, Caltech. It has been called the biggest change in the way we learn since the printing press. Many people despite favorable studies on effectiveness may still desire to choose traditional campus education for social and cultural reasons.

b. Liberal Arts Colleges

A liberal arts institution can be defined as a "college or university curriculum aimed at imparting broad general knowledge and developing general intellectual capacities, in contrast to a professional, vocational, or technical curriculum." Although what is known today as the liberal arts college began in Europe, the term is more commonly associated with Universities in the United States.

c. Community Colleges

A nonresidential junior college offering courses to people living in a particular area.

Vivekananda's Philosophy of Education

The real education according to Swami Vivekananda is that which prepares the individual for struggle for existence. Education prepares a man for social service, to develop his character and finally imbues him with the spirit and courage of a lion. For getting degree is not an education, the proper education must be viewed on the basis of character, mental powers, intelligence and inculcates. Self-confidence and self-reliance in the individuals. Swamiji has emphasized that all the knowledge which we get from worldly or spiritual lies embedded in the human mind. It was covered with a veil of darkness and ignorance. Education is a tool to open from the darkness and ignorance, after getting of education, the knowledge will shine out dazzlingly. The teaching and learning are the one way of process. The teacher only guides, suggests, points out and helps the student. Self learning and self getting knowledge is the real education. The teacher only motivates and encourages the students to find out the hidden treasure of knowledge that lies dormant within him. He condemned and refused the bookish learning and rote memory education. Condemning the theoretical and academic education, he spoke emphatically for practical and experimental education. He warned his countrymen saying "you will have to be practical in all spheres of work. The whole country has been ruined by mass theories.

Vivekananda's Means of Education

According to Vivekananda, the means for education is love. Love and character building are the best means for education. Love is the best inspiration in character building. Love in the minds of the educator is the real source of his influence upon the educated. The true education, gives the growth and expansion of personality. He wanted that the education for total human development was the main vision. "Character, efficiency and humanism should be the aim of all education. Vivekananda strongly pleaded that development of character through the service of his fellowmen, the utilization of his talents for ensuring the happiness and welfare of the millions of his less fortunate fellow-citizens should be the aim of the education." The child should be taught through by love, it makes fellow feelings and love for human beings. Education must help the individual to recognize his cultural heritage and to use it in his struggle of life. Education is a life-long process towards the

fullest development of human personality, self-discovery, self-perfection, self-awareness and self-manifestation.

Vivekananda's Aims of Education

Vivekananda wanted all-round development of education to heart and mind, to strengthen character and national consciousness, to help in the cultivation of strength and energy, nurture the brain and intellect and stir feelings of kindness and sympathy. He emphatically said:

“We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet. What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries. So that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for them and save against a rainy day. The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training, by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and a nerve of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it means going down to the bottom of the ocean, meeting death face to face. It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want.”

Vivekananda's Principles of Education

Like Rabindranath Tagore, Vivekananda also prescribed the same ancient spiritual methods of teaching, where Guru and his disciples lived in close association as in a family. The following are the basic principles of education.

Education is not only for getting information; rather it should develop character, mental powers, intelligence and inculcate self-confidence together with self-reliance.

Education should develop the child physically, mentally and spiritually.

While giving educational qualification, the technical education was necessary for the Industrial growth which would lead to the economic prosperity of the nation.

Practicing of Brahmacharya is very essential for getting knowledge. The concentration is the key to all the knowledge.

Religious education should be imparted through sweet impressions and fine conduct in preference to books.

Education should be foster spiritual faith, devotion and self-surrender in the individual and should foster full development through service and sacrifice

Education should develop character, mental powers, intelligence and inculcate self-confidence together with self-reliance.

All the subjects must be included in the curriculum which promotes the material and spiritual advancement of a child.

Vivekananda's Views on Education

Vivekananda's views on education deals with physical education, moral and religious education, medium of education, women education and education for weaker sections of society.

Moral and Religious Education Vivekananda said, "Religion is the innermost core of education. I do not mean my own or anyone else opinion about religion. Religion is as the rice and everything else, like the curries. Taking only curries causes indigestion and so is the case with taking rice alone." Therefore, religious education is a vital part of a sound curriculum. Vivekananda considered Gita, Upanishads and the Vedas are the most important curriculum for religious education. For him, religion is a self realization and divinization. It is not only individual's development but also for the transformation of total man. The true religion cannot be limited to a particular place of time. He pleaded for unity of world religion. He realized truth while practicing of religion. The truth is the power, untruth is the weakness. Knowledge is truth, ignorance is untruth. Thus truth increases power, courage and energy. It is light giving, therefore, necessary for the individual as well as collective welfare. In the Vivekananda's point of view, ethics and religion are one and the same. God is always on the side of goodness. To fight for goodness is the service to God. The moral and religion education develop the self - confidence among the young men and women

Medium of Education

Like Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, Vivekananda also emphasized education through the mother tongue. Besides mother tongue, there should be a common language which is necessary to keep the country united. Vivekananda appreciated the greatness of Sanskrit that it is the source of all Indian languages and a repository of all inherited knowledge; with the absence of this knowledge, it will be impossible to understand Indian culture. It is like a store house of ancient heritage, to develop our society it is necessary that men and women should know this language, besides the knowledge of the mother tongue.

Physical Education

Without the knowledge of physical education, the self-realization or character building is not possible one must know, how to make our body strong through physical education, for to attain a complete education, it is necessary to develop both the mind and the body. In particular, Vivekananda stressed the value of physical education in curriculum. He said, "You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of Gita. You will understand Gita better by your biceps, your muscles a little stronger. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glary of the Atman, when your body stands firm on your feet and you feel yourself as man.

Man Making Education

The educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda is a harmonious synthesis between the ancient Indian ideals and modern Western beliefs. He not only stressed on the physical, mental, moral, spiritual and vocational development of the child but also he advocated women education as well as

education of the masses. The essential characteristics of his educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda are idealism, naturalism and pragmatism. In a naturalistic view points, he emphasized that real education is possible only through nature and natural propensities. In the form of idealist view point, he insists that the aim of education is to develop the child with moral and spiritual qualities. In the pragmatists view point, he emphasized the great stress on the Western education of technology, commerce, industry and science to achieve material prosperity. In short, Swami Vivekananda an idealist at heart. First of all he emphasized spiritual development, then the material prosperity, after that safety of life and then solving the problems of fooding and clothing of the masses.

Education for Weaker Section of Society

Vivekananda pleaded for the universal education so that the backward people may fall in with others. To uplift the backward classes he chooses education as a powerful instrument for their life process. Thus education should spread to every household in the country, to factories, playing grounds and agricultural fields. If the children do not come to the school the teacher should reach them. Two or three educated men should team up, collect all the paraphernalia of education and should go to the village to impart education to the children. Thus, Vivekananda favoured education for different sections of society, rich and poor, young and old, male and female.

Conclusion

After lots of discussions we have conclude that Swami Ji knew that education can be delighted to the society and it may help to the people in upliftment of life in terms of social, moral and economical. His views on education bring a light of its constructive, practical and comprehensive character. By giving education, he tries to materialize the moral and spiritual welfare and upliftment of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality or time. By the way of his scheme of education, we can get the strong nation with peace and harmony and without caste and creed. He builds a strong nation for our sake.

Definitely our career can be set up through education and many more things are ultimately depend on this; of people life. Education always been sunlight for everyone and we have always taken these rays. We may hope for better future for doing well with others.

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