

THOUGHTS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON TEACHER AND TEACHING METHOD: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Swami Vivekananda's ideas on education are extremely relevant in the present educational context and it can bring positive transformations in Indian education system. He is well aware about the fact that education plays a crucial role in curing the evil of the society and in moulding the future of a nation. Therefore, it should be given utmost importance. The present paper will attempt to explore the role of teachers in the present scenario with regard to the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda and to find out the method of teaching as proposed by Swami Vivekananda. Qualitative research approach has been adopted for the purpose of the study. Data have been collected from both the primary and secondary sources. Findings suggest that a teacher should be a friend, philosopher, guide and he should adopt a teaching method where a child will try to find his inner-self through education. A teacher should be moral, his life will be based on the ideal of renunciation and service, his professional ethics will be very strong and above all he will be a role model to the students so that vicarious learning can be possible.

Keywords: Swami Vivekananda, Role of Teacher, Method of Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda's ideas on education are extremely relevant in the present scenario since his education puts special emphasis on 'man-making' and 'character building'. Once, he claimed, "The true education however is not yet conceived of amongst us" and our society should propose an education system which will cure the evils of the society and will protect and mould the destiny of our nation. He defines education as the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man. Therefore the only duty of the teacher in both cases is to remove all obstructions from the way" (1970 : 438). Therefore, a teacher should work as a mediator in the classroom whose primary duty will be to remove the obstacles and to help the students to explore their inner-self. So, according to Vivekananda, Guru (teacher) shows a bright path for future life. He teaches to live in a new way through the internal prosperity of a

student. By citing man-making education, Swami Vivekananda called, "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there undigested all your life." He said, "We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas." So according to him, we want that education by which character is formed, the strength of mind is amplified, the intellect is stretched out and by which one can stand on one's own feet. He was also highly critical of the educational system itself with its western bias and its lack of attention to the development of mental ability and moral character in its students. He wanted a thorough reorientation of the educational system to make it an integrated man-making and character-building system, with emphasis on pride in national heritage, love for the masses, self-confidence, strength and willpower, and cultivation of the mind rather than mere memory. In this context, he said, "The end of all education, all training, should be man-making." Democratic outlook is another important constituent of his philosophical teachings where complete freedom for self-actualization is defined as an inseparable part. As the teacher is the torch-bearer of any nation and helps us to move from darkness to light, thus, the present study attempts to analyse the thoughts and ideas of Swami Vivekananda on the role of teacher and method of teaching.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper attempts to address the following objectives:

- I) To analyse the role of teachers in the present scenario with regard to the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda.
- II) To explore the method of teaching as proposed by Swami Vivekananda.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The information and data for this study have been collected from two sources i.e., Primary sources and Secondary sources. Primary sources of data include the writings of Swami Vivekananda. Secondary sources of data include the writings of several erudite scholars on Swami Vivekananda. Various books, journals and articles were analysed thoroughly for the purpose of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective wise findings with discussions of this study have been given below:

I) ROLE OF TEACHER

The teacher played a crucial role in the optimal development of society. The teacher plays a role as an architect of our future generations. Vivekananda believed that there is no education

without a teacher and the students will learn significant things from the life of teacher. He said,

“My idea of education is Gurugriha. Without the personal life of the teacher, there would be no education. One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is a blazing fire and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching. In our country the imparting of the knowledge has always been through men of renunciation. The charge of imparting knowledge should again fall upon the shoulders of tyagis”.

Therefore, the teachers should be like ‘tyagis’ who will renounce all the evil desires from his life and will lead a transparent life. This kind of lives will be the blazing example to the students. A teacher should be empathetic to his students and he should dedicate his whole force. Without real empathy, one teacher can never teach properly and a teacher should not disturb the faith of any man. Teacher should play the role of a transformer and a transmitter who can transform the lives of the students and transmit good thoughts and positive vibration in them. He also criticizes the role of traditional teacher. He argued,

“No one can teach anybody. The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Thus Vedanta says that within man is all knowledge-even in a boy it is so-and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of a teacher.”

Therefore, the teacher should not think that he is helping the child to grow. He will work just as an assistant in the entire process. He will help the students to develop their thoughts, consciousness and true spirit. The teacher must be pure by her/his heart. He should be free from all kinds of motif whether it be money, name or fame. His work must be simply out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large. The only medium through which spiritual force can be transmitted is love. Any selfish motive, such as the desire to gain name or fame, might destroy the purity of mind. Vivekananda also emphasised the importance of the teacher winning his pupil through personal interest and affection and building up his self-confidence. According to him,

“The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a moment’s notice. The only true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student’s soul and see through the student’s eyes and hear through his ears and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else. All these negative, breaking-down, destructive teachers that are in the world can never do any good.”

To sum up the idea of Swami Vivekananda on teachers :

- The teacher should come down to the level of the students and transfer her/his soul to the student's soul.
- A teacher must have a missionary zeal and angelic motive behind the act of teaching.
- The teacher provides the proper environment to her/his classroom for the child to grow naturally.
- The teacher should be a Friend, Philosopher, Guide and a Tyagi for moulding her/his student into a good human being full of love and dedication for serving mankind.
- A teacher must be dedicated to the teaching profession to render selfless service like an ancient Guru.
- The teacher must give positive attitudes to her/his students so that they will grow up to be good human beings and learn to stand on their own feet.
- The teacher should inspire her/his students to discover their own abilities, potentials, and talents.
- The teacher should motivate her/his students to acquire scientific temperament, secular outlook and serving attitude to mankind.

Thus, according to Swami Vivekananda a person with an attitude of renunciation have the capability to influence his students. He can remove all the difficulties in learning through his love and compassion.

II) METHOD OF TEACHING

The philosophy of education as expressed by Swami Vivekananda is the outcome of his analytical and interpretative approach to ancient Indian Vedantic School of philosophy along with western schools of philosophy such as idealism, naturalism, pragmatism and to some extent touching the ingredients of existentialism and transcendentalism. As regards the method and means of Bhakti Yoga, Vivekananda quoted from the statement made by Sri Ramanuja on the Vedanta Sutra,

“The attaining of that comes from discrimination, controlling the passions, practice, sacrificial work, purity, strength and suppression of excessive joy.”

He insisted on the importance of concentration and affirmed, according to him,

“To me, the very essence of education is the concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. If I had to do my education once again, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then, with a perfect instrument collect facts at will.”

Swami Vivekananda also laid great emphasis on education through the heart. He said,

“We may be the most intellectual people the world ever saw and yet we may not come to God at all. It is the heart that takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach. Always cultivate the heart. Through the heart, the Lord speaks.”

He knew that self-confidence was more than half the secret of success in life and it required careful and sympathetic nurturing at an early age. Hence, his emphasis on the need for the methodology of teaching is to cultivate the students' self-confidence rather than just load them with bookish knowledge. Amongst his offered methods, yoga, meditation, lecture method, discussion method, constructive debate, heuristic or enquiry based learning, self-study, question-answer technique and illustration and so on are some important instructional methods to educate students. Being an advocate of integrated philosophy he urged all those methods of teaching which help teachers to come down to the level of students and assist them for their self-actualization and character-building. Thus, according to Swami Vivekananda, a teacher, in its truest senses is a friend, philosopher and guide capable of providing proper and right direction and guidance to his pupils and awakening their power of self-learning capabilities. The teacher has to understand the needs, desires, internal tendencies, and read the mind of the students and guide their learning and activities accordingly.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have tried to discuss the role of an ideal teacher and method of teaching in the light of Swami Vivekananda's thought. In conclusion, it may be said that teacher should be pure-minded from the core of her/his heart and brain and he will assist the student to make their spiritual progress. Through this process, the teacher can transmit some metaphysical energy to students' minds which seems quite similar to the works of Alexander who once remarked on students, “I am indebted to my father for living, but to my teacher for living well”. Swami Vivekananda very rightly said,

“The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a moment's notice. The only true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through the student's eyes and hear through his ears and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else.”

His attempt of commingling Vedantic spiritual, moral and ethical education and the western material concept of education has greater relevance to our modern Indian society for the holistic overall progressive development of child's embryonic potentialities. His concept of self-education and

man-making education and education for character and nation-building are the essences for founding the bedrock of the present system of education at different levels and for different courses.

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