

Inculcating Values Through Education–Perspectives from Swami Vivekananda

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses Swami Vivekananda's perceptions on Value oriented education. According to him education is the real and final solution for all problems. He was against the existing educational system. Education, according to Swamiji, is not merely the accumulation of facts and information, but the assimilation of knowledge and wisdom, inherent in man. He strongly recommended life building, character forming, and man making educational system by which one can increase the strength of mind, intensify faith in oneself, cultivate the will power, develop the power of concentration, expand the intellect, and also one can stand on one's own feet as an ideal perfect being. Teaching eternal values to the students is of great importance in man making and character building education.

Key Words : Education, Values, Existing educational system, Value education

INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda is the first Indian to present a glorious version of a new India and he wanted to achieve it through education. He had a clear vision about the needs of the future. His views are practical and relevant at all times because they are grounded on the concrete foundation of truth and knowledge of the evolutionary trends of various thoughts, patterns and insights. He pleaded for 'man making' education which must have its genesis in the spiritual culture of India. According to him education is a process of development, a development of the latent inherent capacities of a child to the fullest extent. It inculcates in a child higher moral and social ideals together with spiritual values, so that he is able to form a strong character useful to his own self and to the society. It develops all his intellectual and emotional powers, and as a result he is able to meet the challenges of life and solve them successfully. It is a method of training that transforms the whole human personality, consequently bringing about social transformation.

Critic of present educational system :

Swamiji was a critic of the existing system of education. He may be the first Indian to repudiate the idea of Macaulay on Indian education and stressed the need for discovering the roots of our culture as the basis of our system of education. The present Indian education is detached from the living realities of Indian life. In recent times for a variety of socio-cultural reasons, the effective objectives of education such as the inculcation of feelings, values and attitudes have suffered serious neglect in our educational institutions. The commercial and consumerist approach prevailing in our times have made education deteriorate into a process of information transmission with its primary goal as the attainment of material success in a competitive world.

The existing system of education in India purely aims at developing only the intellect and it does not touch the important phases of a student's development. It does not include a love of virtue and righteousness, a sense of self-respect and personal dignity. This may be the reason why a student who succeeds in his/her academic examinations fails miserably in the examinations of life.

Criticising the present system of education Swami Vivekananda says “In the first place it is not a man making education; it is merely and entirely negative education. A negative education or any training that is based on negation is worse than death”. Modern day parents are more concerned about the careers with an emphasis on money making potential of their child than about their acquiring knowledge or values. Now the only business of educational institutions seems to be facilitating this demand of the parents. The student’s growth is nobody’s concern. The emphasis is on which course of study will give maximum returns in terms of income.

In this age of rapid social change influenced by modern science and technology, there appears a value crisis in society. The present situation in India demands a system of education which must strengthen social solidarity through meaningful and purposeful constructive value education.

Significance of inculcating values through education:

Values are the guiding principles of life which are conducive to all-round development. They reflect one’s personal attitudes and judgments, discussions, and choices, behavior and relationships, dreams, and vision. They influence our thoughts, feelings and actions. They guide us to do the right things. Thus values give meaning and strength to a person’s character by occupying a central place in his life. In other words, values are a set of principles or standards of behaviour.

In character formation the role of values are very significant. Swami Vivekananda thought that by teaching values the creation of a balanced personality could be a reality. So he had contemplated an educational system which is capable of man making and character building. Teaching eternal values to the students is of great importance in man making and character building education.

Value education means imparting a sense of humanism, a deep concern for the well-being of others and the nation. It teaches us to preserve whatever is good and worthwhile in what we have inherited from our culture. Value education has the capacity to transform a diseased mind into a very young, fresh, innocent, healthy and thoughtful mind. The transformed mind is capable of higher sensitivity and intense level of perception. This leads to the fulfilment of the evolutionary role in man and life

Value education is education for ‘becoming’ and is concerned with the transformation of an individual’s personality. Swamiji perceives the development of personality as an important aim of education. Personality is linked to individual character. As such it involves all the three phases of personality, that is, knowing, feeling and doing. The child should be made aware of the right and good, to feel the appropriate emotions and embrace the values in thought, word and deed.

To realize the different aims of education such as the development of human personality, pursuit of knowledge, preservation of culture, development of character, promotion of social justice, scientific outlook etc., we need a planned and systematized special curriculum which should secure the fullest possible development of body, mind and heart and a fruitful channelisation of the life energy that contribute to the growth of both internal and external personality

Value oriented education assumes special significance in the Indian context today, where young men and women are passing through a crisis of character. A serious inadequacy in the curricula during the present times is the absence of regular and systematic instructions in social, moral and spiritual values. So, conscious and organised attempts should be made for imparting education in social, moral and spiritual values with the help of the ethical teachings of great religions. Value based education is instrumental to unfold and nurture the ideals of life. It is a great necessity because it is intimately bound up with the formation of character and inculcating ethical values to pupils. Swamiji called this as ‘man making and character building education’. To quote Swami Vivekananda “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”. Therefore the only sure and effective way of regenerating India is to impart right type of education.

Swami Vivekananda emphasized the importance of teaching eternal values to the students. He has laid stress on the following values

- Cultivation of heart
- Fearlessness
- Non injury
- Purity - not only personal purity but social purity
- Self-sacrifice
- Service to others

Consciousness of values should pervade the entire curriculum and all the programmes in the educational

institution. All activities could be utilized effectively for the development of moral and spiritual values. Such activities are expected to promote the respect for values and regard for character. Values are better exposed by living them than by preaching them.

Conclusion :

At present India is passing through a period of value crises in several fields. In this scenario that is rapidly worsening, it is important to provide a proper value orientation through our educational system. Value based curriculum is the need of the hour to overcome value crisis. With a well-designed system of curriculum it is possible to make education a powerful tool for the cultivation of desirable ethical, spiritual and social values. Education which imparts universal and eternal values like compassion, courage, honesty, tolerance, truthfulness etc. will help in developing balanced individuals and balanced society. The education that does not help to promote human values will not do any good to the society. If our educational system produces individuals who are self-centered, aggressive, greedy and competitive, we cannot have a society that is non-violent, peaceful, co-operative and harmonious. It is not possible to bring a fundamental transformation in society unless the individual is transformed.

Values form an important element of the personality of individuals which influence their thought and behaviour. As such the value aspect of education is kept in close touch with the aims of education. So it is the need of the hour that India should build up its system of education to express and encourage its unique socio- cultural identity

and also to meet the challenges of the time.

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