



A study of Swami Vivekananda's Social Reforms and it's relevance in present context

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Abstract

Vivekananda played a key role in the rise of Indian nationalism in the nineteenth and late twentieth centuries, encouraging many successes in the West with his success and appeal. His example helped to create pride in the cultural and religious heritage of India and to stand up against the British colonial system. He took part in a large movement against the British. Swami Vivekananda believed that India was a blessed land of virtue, a "land of virtue" where humanity had attained the highest generosity, towards purity, towards peace, above all a land of self-realization and spirituality.

Keywords: Perfection, Man-Kind, Manifestation, Social Service, Spirituality, Character Building.

Introduction

"The ideal of all education, all training, should be man- making. But, instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the outside. What use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside?" ----- Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda's willpower which leads to freedom. He gave the British colonial system as an example, forty million English ruled over three hundred people in India. Forty million put their will together and this created infinite power and that was the reason for their success. Determined by Vivekananda, a great future will be in the whole best organization to build India, power will be accumulated, will be coordinated. The tidal wave of western civilization is now surpassing the length and breadth of the country. At least meditating on the top of the mountain without realizing its effectiveness will not do it.

Background of the Study

He was deeply affected by the Brahmo Samaj and his guru Ramakrishna, who regarded utmost and relative reality as a unique prospect of the same inalienable reality. According to Michael Taft, Ramakrishna combined the form and formless dualism of being both active and inactive, both absolute and personal. Personal and impersonal are the same thing, such as milk and its whiteness, diamond and its lustre, snake and its stingy speed. It is impossible for one to conceive without the other. Swami Vivekananda was leaning towards spirituality, being influenced by his guru Ramakrishna, he learned from him that all living

beings are an image of the divine Shiva soul, therefore, the service of God can be represented by the service of mankind. After the death of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda travelled extensively in the Indian subcontinent and gained early knowledge of the situation prevailing in British India. He later travelled to the United States to represent India in the 1893 Congress of World Religions.

Objectives of the study

This paper is an attempt by the author to present an overview regarding the following objectives:

1. To study the Swami Vivekananda's different aspects of social reforms.
2. To critically analyze the Swami Vivekananda's different social activity and reforms.
2. To explore the relevance of Swami Vivekananda's social reforms in present context

Methodology of the Study:

This study was purely theoretical based. The information for the study has been collected mainly from two major sources i.e., to study the biography of Swami Vivekananda as only the primary source of the data collection and as secondary sources, the investigator was collected data from different types books, journals, articles written by great educators about Swami Vivekananda's social activity.

Analysis and Interpretation

Vivekananda believed that education was already a manifestation of perfection in men. He found it extremely sad that the existing education system did not enable a person to stand on his own two feet, nor did it teach him self-confidence and self-esteem. For Vivekananda, education was not just a collection of information, but something more meaningful; He felt that education should be man-made, life-giving and character building. To him education was the unification of great ideas. Education is not the amount of information that we keep in your brain and there is a lifelong riot, frustrating. We must build life, we must create people, we must have a combination of concepts. If you combine these five concepts to make them your life and character, you have more education than any person who has found the whole library by heart. Swami Vivekananda felt that the education that young boys and girls receive is extremely negative. He thinks that they do not gain confidence or self-respect from these teachings, so according to Swami Vivekananda, only children should be given positive education. He told the youth Engage yourself in promoting education among the people. Tell them and let them understand, "You are our brother - part and parcel of our body and we love you and never hate you". Swami Vivekananda warned that it is completely wrong to discriminate between the sexes, because there is no sexual difference between the soul (soul), there is no gender, caste or imperfection of the soul. He advised not to think that there are men and women, only people. Swami Vivekananda felt that the best thermometer of a nation's progress was that it was impossible to regain the lost pride and honour of India unless it treated its women and tried to improve the condition of women. Vivekananda considered man and woman as two wings of a bird and it is not possible for a bird to fly with just one wing. So, according to her, if the condition of women does not improve, there is no chance of world welfare. Swami Vivekananda noticed that women were playing sports almost everywhere. In a modern country like America, women have more freedom, yet, Vivekananda noticed, men bow their heads, give a woman a chair and in another breath, praise her, "Oh, how beautiful your eyes are." Vivekananda felt that till now no man has the right to do this work or enterprise and no woman should be allowed to do it. According to Swami Vivekananda, such matters develop less aristocracy of humanity. They do not lean towards great ideals. According to Vivekananda, the ideal of femininity in India is motherhood - that great, selfless, all-enjoying, ever-forgiving mother. Vivekananda felt that there were two great evils in India - the oppression of women, and the crushing of the poor through caste-ban.

Reforms:**Hinduism-Universal Religion:**

Vivekananda considered Hinduism as the mother of all religions. He is established through historical chronological order. He showed that Vedic religion influenced Buddhism which in turn played a helpful role in influencing Christianity. He said that all religions of the world have the same value and importance. He said in the Parliament of Religions- A Christian is not supposed to be a Hindu or a Buddhist or a Christian to be a Hindu or a Buddhist. But each must unite the soul of the other and yet preserve its individuality and grow according to its own law of growth Soon the banner of every religion will be written ... 'Fight and do not help', 'Not reconciliation and destruction', 'Harmony, and peace and not division. "Thus, Vivekananda preached the unity of God through his universal religion. He said that although the paths are different for different religions, the goal is the same. He attached great importance to the unity of all religions and their unification into one universal religion.

Advaita Vedantism:

Swami Vivekananda was a great lover of Vedantic philosophy. He believed in monism. He had firm faith on one God. His motto, as reflected earlier, was to establish a link among different religions. He had told that as water of different rivers mingle in the sea, similarly every religion finds itself at the feet of God. He did not see any difference between a Veda or Koran or Bible. Temple, Mosque and Church were equal for him.

He preferred to meditate at any place without any inhibition in his mind. By his personal example he preached monism or Advaita Vedantism. By that he showed his toleration towards every religion. He spoke the message of Vedanta regarding the world unity and to believe shapeless God.

Socialistic thought:

Swami Vivekananda was a socialist par excellence. Once he had told-“I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.” He had realized the plights of millions of hungry Indians. He thus, stated- “It is mockery to offer religion to starving man”. As a ‘iconoclastic crusader’, Vivekananda wanted “elevation of the masses” because he had opined that “the nation lives in the cottage”.

He gave his message of socialism to stop exploitation of the mass. His socialistic idea is best explained in his words—“Material civilization, nay, even luxury, necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven! Pooh! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priest craft is to be removed. No priest craft, no social tyranny! More bread, more opportunity for everybody.” Thus, as a hardcore socialist, Vivekananda wanted the upliftment the hungry mass of India.

Caste System:

A striking contrast was noticed in the idea of Vivekananda regarding the caste system. Strangely enough, he supported the Varna system as described in the Vedas. Unfolding the advantages of the caste system, he told that division of labour is a great blessing of this system. It would lead to excellence in any professionals. This division, of course, will lead to a caste on the path of progress. However, he also exposed the evils of this system. Untouchability was its worst part. So, Vivekananda criticized this type of “Don’t touches”. He wanted to curb out this type of dogmatism from the society.

Yoga and meditation

Swami Vivekananda compared human mind with a monkey who is always restless and incessantly active by his own nature. He noticed, the human mind naturally wants to get outside, to peer out of the body, as it were, through the channels of the organs. So, he stressed on practice of concentration, as he felt there is no limit to the power of the human mind, the more concentrated it is, the more powerful it becomes. Swami Vivekananda suggested not to do anything which disturbs the mind or makes it restless.

On Women:

As a feminist, Vivekananda glorified the role of women. He considered women as Shakti – the creating force. They are to be given proper education because they are mother first and mother last. If they are educated, they would educate the whole nation. They are not to be fretted simply as a wife. Proper steps should be taken for the education and training of women. The future largely rests on women. In praise of women, he had told –“With five hundred motivated men it will take me fifty years to transform India. With fifty motivated women it may take only few years”.He further opined that if the lot of women is not improved, then the country and society at large will suffer in the long run.

Mankind:

Vivekananda opined that one should see God through men. Service to mankind is service to God in true sense of the term. He advised-“He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva”.It is the duty of every human being to work for the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden. He wanted his followers to move from village to village and to render help to the poor and needy. Keeping that in view, he established Ramkrishna Mission. Through it he desired to render habitual service to the poor, destitute and needy persons in the nook and corner of the world. It was his cherished desire to be born again and again and to suffer thousands of miseries because he would be able to serve thousands of souls – the living Gods.

Nationalism and Patriotism:

Swami Vivekananda was a hardcore nationalist. Patriotism was present in his every vein. He emphasized on the virtues like manliness and patriotism. He wanted everybody to be free from the bondage of others. Giving a clarion call to the youth of India he repeated the Upanishad doctrine –“Arise awake and stop not till the goal is reached.” This goal about which Swami Vivekananda spoke was undoubtedly patriotism which was to be imbibed by every young man of India. His ideas gave direction to the future leaders of the country who carried on their protracted struggle against the British hegemony.

Internationalism:

Vivekananda considered the world as his home and people of different parts of the globe as his brothers and sisters. In the ‘Parliament of Religions’ he had projected this idea. He played the role of a world teacher and taught all for unity and integrity. He wanted a perfect amalgamation of Indian spiritualism and Western materialism.

There should not be any distinction between the East and West; rather it should be regarded as one humanity. He also advocated universal brotherhood. He urged for the help of the rich nations to the poor for bringing parity in the world society. Thus, he suggested to overcome racial and religious prejudices. The gospel of universalism and world community was preached by Swami Vivekananda for the creation of a better world.

Ramakrishna Mission:

Through Ramakrishna Mission, Vivekananda tried to serve the mankind. He established it at Belur in 1899. This mission preached Vedantic philosophy and created new spiritual awakening in the heart of the people. Besides, it carried on philanthropic works at the time of flood, famine, earthquake, cyclone, epidemics and other natural calamities. By the effort of Vivekananda, this mission spread its branches not only in India but at America, Germany, England, Switzerland and other countries outside India. Sister Nivedita had taken proper steps to popularize the activities of this mission in the European countries. Now, the Ramakrishna Mission is regulated as a popular philanthropic association in the world.

Social service

Social service was an essential aspect of Vivekananda's ideas, and an innovation which deviated from both Advaita Vedanta and Ramakrishna. He nevertheless attributed these ideas to both, trying to reconcile them with his own ideas.

According to Vivekananda, an important teaching he received from Ramakrishna was that Jiva is Shiva (each individual is divinity itself). So, he stressed on Shiva Jnane Jiva Seva, (to serve common people considering them as manifestation of God). According to Vivekananda, man is potentially Divine, so, service to man is indeed service to God.

Concept of education:

The goal of life is to achieve perfection. There is in every human being. Possibility of full recovery. According to Vivekananda, education is the manifestation of this perfection. Therefore, he said, "Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man." According to Vivekananda, the task of education will be to make suitable arrangements for the spontaneous development of the child according to its own characteristics and individuality without artificial control and outside interference. The aim of education is not to serve a lot of information. According to Vivekananda, the aim of education is to direct one's inherent energy in a social way. The purpose of education is to properly digest different ideas, he added, adding that the purpose of education will be to make the student self-reliant. the purpose of education will be to develop the creativity, individuality and excellence of the student and to awaken self-confidence. Today emphasized on increasing the mental strength of the students. Self-realization is the real goal of education. This self-realization leads to proper development of human characteristics, self-confidence and human rights.

Mass Education: Vivekananda's goal was national revival and for this reason he felt that it was absolutely necessary to spread mass education. According to him, the expected socio-economic change cannot come without the education of the people. He said that the main reasons for the backwardness of the country are poverty, illiteracy and ignorance. So he commented, "Education is the sole remedy for improving the condition of the poor of the country."

Character building

Swami Vivekananda realized three things are necessary to make every man great, every nation great: Conviction of the powers of goodness, Absence of jealousy and suspicion, Helping all who are trying to be and do good. Swami Vivekananda suggested to try to give up jealousy and conceit and learn to work unitedly for others. He told that purity, patience and perseverance overcome all obstacles. He suggested to take courage and work on. Patience and steady work, according to Swami Vivekananda, this is the only way to get success.

Findings and Conclusion:

Swami Vivekananda's pictures were displayed all over the city of Chicago. Shri Arvind mentioned, "The expulsion of Vivekananda to the West was the first view of the world that India woke up ... not just to survive, but to win." When Swamiji went to Chicago, India was colonized and plunged into poverty. Its culture was adopted. Followers of Hinduism were seen as superstitious and incomplete. Yet, Swamiji had the courage and fortitude to tell the world about the greatness of Hindu philosophy and religion. He lived long on the fundamental unity of all religions. He told them about the philosophy of vedanta which taught that every person was a reflection of God. His message to his comrades-in-arms was "Get up! Wake up !! Don't stop until you reach your goal !!!" The message was then electrified the nation. A tangible figure of all time. He has inspired countless generations of Indians. History itself bears witness to the truth. All soul-raising ideas and various branches of world knowledge are properly investigated to establish their roots in India. I've given you enough advice; put at least some in practice now. Let the world see that reading your scriptures and listening to me has been a success. "He had a strong belief in youth. His advice to young people was, As a form of worship, do it as the highest form of worship and dedicate your whole life to it for the time being. "" Wisdom, devotion, yoga and action - There are four ways that lead to salvation. One must follow the path that suits him best; But in this age, there should be a special emphasis on action-yoga. " How will India be built? Indians will sacrifice themselves for the welfare of their countrymen. India was fragmented and divided. It came in the way of its rise. He firmly believed that India should end its refutation, the Indian nation could not be killed. It stands ruthlessly, and that soul remains as a background until his soul leaves spirituality. Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems. No one can or should do this for them. And our Indian women are able to do it as anywhere in the world. Rounding up today is undoubtedly India should have marital wealth and physical strength; No one takes the humble and the weak seriously. But India's confidence must come from its ancient civilization and deep spirituality. Today's unrealistic problems could be better addressed if the principles of spirituality were applied to them.

Undoubtedly, Vivekananda was one of the leading academics in India. Spirituality, character building, humanity and self-reliance. According to him, the key to education is celibacy, respect and self-confidence. The structure of national education that he wrote included public education, women's education, religious education, scholarship education, education through mother tongue, education of values, etc. Priority was given. He believed that the nation could not prosper without proper education. Ordinary people can easily enter the world of knowledge and science if they are taught in conventional language. So he is through the mother tongue. Gran insists on following science. According to him, religion is the main melody of India and the whole of Asia. So the main basis of national education will be religion and spirituality. Although the basis of education is spirituality, Vivekananda welcomed science and mechanics. According to him, girls also contribute to the development of different countries of the world according to men. She believes, "The welfare of India will not be possible without the upliftment of women, so she emphasizes on women's education. He emphasizes mindfulness in teaching methods. Pursuit is not achieved without deep contemplation.

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