

SPIRITUAL EDUCATION IN VIVEKANANDA PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

The paper deals with the spiritual education with special reference to the Vedanta Philosophy and Yoga in which Vivekananda's life philosophy influence spiritual education. The paper also deals his truth, doctrine of divinity, true religion and four yogas which are the integral part of spiritual education. In this paper an attempt has been made to recognize, analyze, evaluate and critically examine the dominant factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education in Vivekananda's Vedanta philosophy and yoga. The paper concludes 'Spiritual Education' as "the education which helps to fulfill the divine potential of the individuals through Doctrine of Divinity, Universal Brotherhood, Freedom, Fourfold Yoga of work, worship, contemplation and knowledge, Optimism, Strength, Service, Love, Wisdom, Peace and Harmony, Truth, Tolerance, Self-control, Self-Confidence and Self-Realization and to prepare them to solve the everyday problems for life creatively and constructively in the new situation of the socio-psycho-physical environment for attaining the highest values and ideas of education, if the teachers enable to modify such kind of behavior patterns of individuals, - this is spiritual education."

Keywords: Spiritual Education, Vedanta Philosophy, Yoga.

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Introduction

Why does the journey start from Vivekananda's Viewpoints to spiritual ones necessary?

Vivekananda (1863-1902), a unique Teacher, was one of the greatest of the modern exponents of Vedanta Philosophy and Yoga. He was popularly known as Swami Vivekananda. He was a spiritual leader, a religious teacher, a thinker, a great educator, a great educationist, a great philosopher, a teacher of practical Vedanta, a wandering Sanyasi, a saint, a karma yogi, a man of God, a prophet of Modern India, a mastermind of Educational Renaissance, a leader of thought and action, a revivalist of Indian culture, a great patriot, a great nationalist, a great internationalist, initially idealist and then realist and humanitarian and in addition to all this, also a great Spiritualist.

In this connection, the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru (1946) significantly quotes in 'The Discovery of India', "Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's prestige, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach of life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present. His mission was the service of mankind through social service, mass education, religious revival and social awakening through education."

Narendranath, popularly known as Swami Vivekananda, was born on January 12, 1863 in Calcutta. His father's name was Vishwanath Dutta and his mother's name Bhuvanewari Devi. During his college periods, he studied Philosophy, western logic, western philosophy and history of European nations. But he wanted to know the existence of God and to achieve the highest aim of education i.e. the realization of God. Vivekananda was very much influenced by the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Gita, Vedas, and Upanishads. At an early age, he wanted to have spiritual essences and experiences. Having spiritual experiences, Vivekananda came to know Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa of Dakshineswar Temple. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was illiterate but he was a personality of extraordinary spiritual theories /essences, and practices. Vivekananda was influenced by the spiritual magnetism of Sri Ramakrishna and became his disciple. He taught him Advaita Vedanta Philosophy and the spiritual paths of all religions and recognized the spiritual potential of Vivekananda.

After his death, Vivekananda was nominated as his successor and visited many places covering the length and breadth of the country and abroad.

Important publications by and on Swami Vivekananda are The complete work of Swami Vivekananda Volume I-IX, Advaita Vedanta , Bhaktiyoga, Education, Jnana Yoga, Memories

of European Travels, Philosophical and Religious Lectures of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions etc. Vedanta Kesari, Prabudha and Udbodha are the three magazines started by Swami Vivekananda.

Need and Significance of the Study

Very few researches have been developed to study spiritual education with respect to Vivekananda Philosophy in India and its contribution to the field of education, spiritual education is less explored. The study is philosophical in its nature because it indicates normative aspect of education as for examples- what should be the process, aims of education, curriculum, and method of teaching in spiritual education? This study has sociological bases of education because of being related to society. This study covers psychological aspect of education for instance growth and development of the students, learning, motivation, personality development and adjustment, etc. Spiritual education plays a vital role in Indian society. It is well known to all that Indian society is a spiritual based society. Some of the scholars felt that after independence the spirituality gradually disappear and it will have no impact on Indian educational system. India is a neither developed nor undeveloped country but where development is required in each and every sphere of human life. Spiritual education and its implications are increasing day by day. For the appearance of the spirituality in the development of the educational system, in this connection, Kothari Commission (1966) points out, "In the development that we envisage in the future, we hope that the pursuit of men, material affluence and power would be subordinated to that of higher values and the fulfillment of the individual. This concept of the mingling of 'Science and Spirituality' is of special significance for Indian Education."

The article indicates that the cementing relationship between Vedanta philosophy and yoga of Vivekananda with spiritual education, may be accepted by the researchers and practitioners of spiritual studies for carrying out research on what is required is that the people internalize the understanding of the Spiritual Education and bring about a dynamic change in their living patterns. In a nutshell there is need and significance that we subscribe to the emerging spiritual culture. It is clear that Vivekananda's Vedanta philosophy and yoga is playing a significant role in determining the process of spiritual conscious and awareness within the framework of modern spiritual society.

In this paper an attempt has been made to recognize, analyze, evaluate and critically examine the dominant factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education in Vivekananda's Vedanta philosophy and yoga. This study may help the students to understand and to solve the problem of education more efficiently. They may flower into excellent of our nation. Hence the investigator has decided to conduct the present study.

On this background, the problem may be stated as: "*Spiritual Education in Vivekananda's Vedanta Philosophy and Yoga*"

Definitions of the Terms

Spiritual Education

The term 'spiritual education' has different definitions to different thinkers in different context. According to Vivekananda, "Perfection is already inherent in men and education is the manifestation of the same."

Vedanta Philosophy

Vedanta means the conclusion of the Vedas. So the Vedanta philosophy is a philosophical outlook of the Great Soul contributing to the Vedas through time to time. Vivekananda philosophy is Shankaracharya's Advaita itself. Advaita Vedanta Philosophy was taught by his spiritual guide, Sri Ramakrishna. Vivekananda has made the Advaita vision the fundamental basis of his spiritual outlook.

Yoga

Vivekananda has suggested four paths of yogas-. Karma-Yoga deals with work without its result for workers, Bhakti-Yoga deals with love of God, Raja-Yoga deals with practical and scientific method to analyze study, and Jnana-Yoga deals for the philosophy.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To recognize factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education in Vivekananda's Vedanta philosophy and yoga
2. To critically examine factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education in Vivekananda's Vedanta philosophy and yoga

3. To analyze factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education in Vivekananda's Vedanta philosophy and yoga
4. To evaluate factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education in Vivekananda's Vedanta philosophy and yoga

Delimitation of the Study

Keeping in view the limitation of time, resources and energy, the study is limited to one aspect of the subject which is spiritual education in Vivekananda's Vedanta philosophy and yoga. It is entirely based on the secondary data as for examples-books, journals, periodicals, newspapers etc. this constitutes a major constraint of the study.

Review of Related Literature

Spiritual Education Regarding Vivekananda's Vedanta Philosophy and Yoga

Vivekananda observes, "What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education. Now consider, is that education as a result of which the will, being continuously choked by force through generations, is 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? It is more blessed, in my opinion, even to go wrong, impelled by one's free will and intelligence than to be good as automation. Again, can that be called society which is formed by an aggregate of men who are like lumps of clay, like lifeless machines, like heaped up pebbles? How can such society fare well? Were good possible, then instead of being slaves for hundreds of years, we would have been the greatest nation on earth, and this soil of India, instead of being a mine of stupidity, would have been the eternal fountain-head of learning."

Vivekananda points out, "Knowledge is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man 'knows', should, in strict psychological language, be what he discovers or unveils; what a man learns is really what he discovers, by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge. We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite

library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was neither in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth. All knowledge, therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say, we are learning.”

Swami Vivekananda significantly remarks, “We must have a hold on the spiritual and secular education of the nation. Do you understand that? You must dream it, you must talk it, you must think it and you must work it out. Till then there is no salvation for the race. The education that you are getting now has some good points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all weighed down. In the first place it is not a man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education. A negative education or any training that is based on negation is worse than death. The child is taken to school, and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool, the second thing that his grandfather is a lunatic, the third thing that all his teachers are hypocrites, the fourth that all the sacred books are lies! By the time he is sixteen he is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless. And the result is that fifty years of such education has not produced one original man in the three Presidencies. Every man of originality that has been produced has been educated elsewhere, and not in this country or they have gone to the old universities once more to cleanse themselves of superstitions. Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, 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. If education is identical with information; the libraries are the greatest sages in the world, and encyclopedias are the Rishis. The ideal, therefore, is that we must have the whole education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands. And it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as practical.”

On the new concept of man, Vivekananda significantly remarks, “What we want is to see the man is harmoniously developed...great heart, great in mind, (great in deed) .we want the man whose heart feels intensely the miseries and sorrows of the world. And we want the man who not

only can feel but can find the meaning of things, who delves deeply into the heart of nature and understanding. We want the man who will not even stop there, but who wants to work out. Such a combination of head, heart and hand is what we want.”

Vivekananda advises for renunciation of senses and desires which helps to know truth to be spiritual as, “Renunciation of the sense and desires is the only way out of this misery. If you want to be spiritual, you must renounce. This is the real test. Give up the world-this nonsense of the senses. There is only one real desire; to know what is true, to be spiritual. No more materialism, no more of this egoism. I must become spiritual. Strong, intense must be the desire. If a man’s hand and feet were so tied that he could not move and then if a burning piece of charcoal were placed on his body, he would struggle with all his power to throw it off. When I shall have that sort of extreme desire, that restless struggle to throw off this burning world, then the time will have come for me to glimpse the Divine Truth. Our sole concern should be to know the highest truth. Our goal is the loftiest. Let us worship the spirit in spirit, standing on spirit; the culmination, spirit. Stand thou in the spirit. That is the goal. We know we cannot reach it yet. Never mind. Do not despair, but do not drag the ideal down. The important thing is: how much less you think of the body, of yourself as matter, as dead, dull insentiment matter; how much more you think of yourself as shining immortal spirit, the more you will be to be absolutely free of matter, body and senses. This is the intense desire to be free.”

Human being is supreme creature of God and is also considered as the supreme creature in the hierarchy of animal kingdom which is only possible through the power of concentration. Vivekananda says, “The power of concentration is the only key to the treasure- house of knowledge. In the present state of our body we are much distracted, and the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred things. As soon as I try to call on my thoughts and concentrate my mind upon any one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush into the brain; thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check it and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in the Raja yoga”. He further asserts that “The main difference between man and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. An animal has very little power of concentration. Those who have trained animals find much difficulty in the fact that the animal is constantly forgetting what is told him. He cannot concentrate his mind upon anything for a long time. Herein is the difference between man and animals- man has the greater power of concentration. The difference in their power of

concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration. This is the only difference.” For the method of teaching, Vivekananda () observes, “Concentration is the essence of all knowledge; nothing can be done without it. Ninety percent of thought force is wasted by the ordinary human being, and therefore he is constantly committing blunders; the trained man or mind never makes a mistake.”

For the teacher he observes “There are many teachers in this world, but you will find that most of them are one-sided. One sees the glamorous midday sun of intellect and sees nothing else. Another hears the beautiful music of love and can hear nothing else. Another is in activity, and has neither time to feel nor time to think. Why not the giant who is equally loving? Is it impossible? Certainly not. This is the man of the future, of whom there are few at present.”

Methodology

Methodology takes a dominant role in any type of research as the reliability and validity of the findings depend upon the methods adopted and applied in the study. This paper is descriptive in nature. It is mainly based on secondary data and is largely collected from different sources like books, journals, articles, and periodicals. This study is conducted mainly by drawing upon the completed works of Vivekananda by applying analytical cum descriptive method for the research. The investigator has made effort to express spiritual education in the light of Vivekananda philosophy.

Analysis and Interpretation

Before we discuss the factors responsible for strengthening spiritual education in Vivekananda’s Vedanta philosophy and yoga, it is essential for us to know the meaning of spiritual education. It means the significance of the famous words pronounced by Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religion held 1893 at Chicago (USA) –Help, Assimilation, Harmony and Peace.

His philosophy aims at the life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas for the creation of spiritual knowledge, emphasized by scientific demonstration, of upliftment of the society as a whole.

Now a day's Indian educational system becomes examination- oriented, as well as job-oriented prefers to earn more and more money which is fault of the society that allows such kind of the narrowest aims of education. Frankly speaking about spiritual education, it does not mean religious education but helps the individuals for preparing their life and provides in achieving higher ideas and values of education for life.

Modern education, however, lays great emphasis on moral education. Perhaps, this is precisely the cause why the learner seeks only to learn and study about the Great Soul. With this consideration of mind, the Vivekananda's Vedanta Philosophy is purely and surely to please the modern learner. It is, however, a spiritualized education in which there is emphasis on education is the manifestation of the perfection already existing in man. Vivekananda Philosophy helps a lot in curriculum development and transaction in modern education regarding spiritual learning.

Swami Ranganathananda (1958) says for achieving affective objective that "He became a teacher of love: of love of God flowering into service of man to faith flowering into works, and both forging character which is manliness, and manliness which is spirituality."

His philosophy is a looking glass that reflects the ever-changing faces as well as the cerebral aspect of spiritual science and its implication to the society. It not only encompasses all the ideas and values of spiritual essence in the field of cognitive science, but also equally concentrates on affective and conative sciences

Conclusion

After reviewing the related literatures on Vivekananda 's Vedanta Philosophy and yoga, it is felt that there is a great deal has been done by him on lectures at different places to trace the development of yoga and vedantic philosophical and non-material thought and action with special reference to spiritual doctrines and assumptions , much has also been done to spiritualize education at different Vedantic Society in India and abroad to draw in broad an outline of spiritual wealth and much has so far been also done to investigate the spiritual intelligence of individuals' work at door to door ---by the order of his Guru Ramakrishna Paramahansh for recreating and constructing a spiritual society in our country. Vivekananda introduced man-making, as the centre of education, curriculum based on the synthesis of the knowledge and wisdom of the eastern spirituality and the western science- the education related with everyday life, by the method of concentration of mind for the non-cognitive tasks viz- a sense of

responsibility, self-realization, self-confidence, self-control, love and sympathy, co-operation, social –justice and a great importance was given on scientific demonstration and experiment as the means of discovering of soul for the discovering of the truth. Greater emphasis is being paid to spiritual world and a great deal has also been done.

In his writings on Karma-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Raja-Yoga, and Jnana-Yoga, he made a considerable contribution for attaining of the spiritual goal of education. Thus, the Vivekananda's viewpoints based on Vedantic Philosophy and yoga is therefore, a knowledge-hub of spiritual education. All the books and writings- Complete Works of Vivekananda, Volumes 1-9, of course, yield useful information regarding spiritual learning and training, and also give details of spiritual basis of education as well as help in progressive basis of education for the betterment of the pupils of the spiritual society as a whole.

Although, the author has no much intelligence, competence and skill to evaluate the Vivekananda Philosophy with special respect to spiritual wealth and essence and its subsequent doctrines and assumptions as well as its development, yet when he thinks of the Vivekananda's Vedanta philosophy and Yoga, the feeling science arises in his mind that Vivekananda's viewpoints based on virtues of love, Divinity in truth, consciousness and bliss, four yogas, wisdom, optimism and strength as well as patriotism significantly remarks, of course, he was a practical vedantic-spiritualist.

To have an access to the realization of thought and action with respect to Vedantic Philosophy and yoga which serves as a foundation of nurturing spiritual education, Vivekananda strongly teaches us man making education which reflects spiritual education with a synthesis of eastern spirituality and western science. Keeping in view the Vivekananda's Vedanta Philosophy and Yoga, the author concludes the '**Spiritual Education**' as **“ the education which helps to fulfill the divine potential of the individuals through Doctrine of Divinity, Universal Brotherhood, Freedom, Fourfold Yoga of work, worship, contemplation and knowledge, Optimism, Strength, Service, Love, Wisdom, Peace and Harmony, Truth, Tolerance, Self-control, Self-Confidence and Self-Realization and to prepare them to solve the everyday problems for life creatively and constructively in the new situation of the socio-psycho-physical environment for attaining the highest values and ideas of education, if the teachers enable to modify such kind of behavior patterns of individuals, - this is spiritual education.”**

Let us concludes with the words of Romain Rolland,“In the two words ‘equilibrium and synthesis’, Vivekananda’s constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the path of the spirit. The four yogas in their entirely comprehend renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways that he taught had its own limits, but he himself had been through them all, and embraced them all. As in a quadriga, he held the reins of all four ways of truth and he travelled towards Unity among them all simultaneously. He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy.”

There, of course, would be a revolution in the field of the spiritual education in the way of Vivekananda Philosophy. That is why, therefore, it may be said that Vivekananda appears to have made a considerable progress and development with spiritual instruction, spiritual learning, spiritual training and spiritual teaching as well as spiritual education. So, therefore, he was a great spiritually intelligent and competent personality not only in India, but also in the world.

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