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VIVEKANANDA IN PRESENT SCENARIO**

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EDUCATION FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT : VIVEKANANDA IN PRESENT SCENARIO

□ Sourish Dey*

ABSTRACT

Swami Vivekananda a great thinker and reformer Of India represented the country on the global platform as a unique culture with its diversity. He has always dreamt of an education which would serve the function of man-making. Swamiji feels that the sole obstacle behind the nation development is its negligence towards women- in India women are always treated as the 'other' and are subjected to suppression, repression and oppression. Swamiji realizes that if the womankind wants to come out of this situation to exert their 'Self' they need the light of the education. Now a day we clearly feel the usefulness of women education. Various women colleges, universities were opening today for this purpose. In this paper the author tries to show the ideas of Vivekananda's Philosophy on women education and his perspective with the current scenario.

Keywords : Women Education, Empowerment, Equality, Curriculum

Research Methodology :

The methodology followed in this paper is analytical. The paper has analyzed Vivekananda's philosophical thought and mission on women education. Also the paper has discussed the relevance of his ideals in present scenario.

Introduction :

Swami Vivekananda a monk, a teacher, a great leader and above all a great philosopher who had incessantly worked for India and represented the country on the global platform as a unique culture with its diversity. According to him, "education is the manifestation of perfection already in men." To him, education was not only collection of information, but something more meaningful. He has always dreamt of an education which would serve the triple function of man-making, life giving and character building.

Swamiji feels that the sole obstacle behind the nation development is its negligence towards women- in India women are always treated as the 'other' and are subjected to suppression, repression and oppression. Swamiji realizes that if the womankind wants to come out of this situation to exert their 'Self' they need the light of

the education. He also opined that a women needs education because on her rests the fate of the nation. She is the one who moulds the minds of the generation that comes after next. He gave highest priority to the upliftment of women through education.

Vivekananda predicted that if India wants to get back its lost honor and pride, it has to try to better the condition of women. He considered men and women as two wings of a bird, and it is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing. So the progress and welfare of the world depends on the improvement of the condition of women. So the need for women education is two-fold – it is essential for the development of the nation and also for the upliftment of the womenfolk. So, on this point he utmost emphasis on women education. In their way of journey only education can bring the light.

Swamiji's Vision of Education :

Swamiji defines education as, "the manifestation of the perfection already in men". This implies that something already exists and is waiting to be expressed. In his view, it is a fact that knowledge is not coming from any out sources but it's coming from internal sources.

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Actually knowledge is an intrinsic quality of human mind. The stimulus of education causes the friction that ignites the fire of knowledge. It refers to a human being's potential, which is the range of the abilities and talents, known and unknown that is born with.

The concepts of education refer by Swamiji known to us as man-making education. Our practical need and value of education pointed out by this concept. In the case of proving practical value of education his experiences were very helpful. At the time of travelling in European cities he observed that poor persons were educated and also living with comfort. This picture is very rare in India. So education is the most valuable thing throughout the world which easily differentiates the living condition of two countries. So education was perceived to be an agent who elevated the level of individual human existence as well as the social existence level. In Indian society education was granted as the primary need. Only education can develop the position of backward classes in our society.

In Swamiji's view, spirituality can attain through education. Through this way own salvation can be possible. The way to achieve spiritual development and diversity within oneself only can be possible by those ideas which are the gift of education for a person. In the fields of humanities, social sciences and technology he expressed the practical need for the prevailing secular education. For improving the material conditions of man's life this kind of education was considered as necessary. So, in his view education must be considered a continuous and lifelong process.

Swamiji's Views on Women Education :

Since last decades world is busy enough including India to discuss about women empowerment and development. In this context gender discrimination is also an alarming issue which should abolish. Women are struggling for equal rights parallel with men and it is a global problem towards upliftment of women power.

Raja Rammohan, Vidyasagar were also engaged for the service of women before Swami Vivekananda. They eradicated the burning of a chaste wife on the funeral pile of her husband, child marriage and polygamy and so on. But Swamiji was the man different pole. The

main goal of his mission of women education was to make them strong, fearless and conscious of their charity and dignity. If women take a strong position, then they can solve their problems in their own way.

Through Swamiji's view the progress of a society somehow depends on female literacy. He also said, that it is totally unfair to discriminate between sex and gender system. Because there is no sex distinction in 'Atman (soul)'. The soul has neither sex nor caste. It was his suggestion that only human beings are exists. Men and women- the differentiation created by society is not important. Swamiji said that the eastern ideals of women hood are mother, where the western ideals are wife. He explains the matter by looking back into the past where there were many glorious women like Sita, Savtree, Maitrayee who uplifted social status. But when we look on mediaeval age to colonial era where women suppressed by society.

In past there were many examples where monks decided that women are obstacle in the way to attain moksha, where Swamiji's view were extremely opposite. He viewed that, unless the situation of women are improved, there is no possibility of any welfare of the world. He also said that, It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing. Soul has no gender bias. Every soul is potentially divine.

It was his realization that, proper education needed for women's in our country for their right upliftment. To achieve a position and to solve their problems it is important to educate women in a proper way. Training like nursing, sewing, culinary art etc. can enhance their inner quality. Then he suggests for vocational skills and training which can change with time and technology and also enhance way of living.

Vivekananda was against the marginalization of women and try to improving the situation of women. In 1895 when he was in England, he met Margaret Elizabeth Noble who was an Irish lady and was in the midst of learning about the Buddha. She was influenced by Swamiji and known to us as Bhagini Nivedita. She had a vital role in promoting the rights of women in rural India. She started a school for the basic education for girls which was motivated by Swamiji, established in

November 1989. Today the school known as 'Ramkrishna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita Girl's School', situated in Bagbazar in North Kolkata.

Swamiji's Curriculum for the Women Education :

In Swamiji's view, the best medium of women education is mother tongue. After thinking on some social status of women he suggested a different curriculum which includes- moral value, literature and Sanskrit, grammar, craft and cooking, home science along with yapa, worship, meditation. In the present era the necessity of those curriculum suggested by Swamiji is proving its value for women. He also suggests that women should learn the lesson of self-defense with those curriculums.

The main goal of education are man making and character building. Men and women will parallel participate in every custom of society. It was his wish to build schools in rural areas, where some devoted nuns will teach. He suggested religion centric education for women and all the other trainings will be secondary rather than religion. Religious training, the formation of character and observance of the vows of celibacy these should be attend to Brahmacharinis of education and character should take up the task of teaching. The Brahmacharinis should strive for the female education and for this purpose they should open centers in villages and towns. Through such religious preaches of character, there will secular education. It was Swamiji's opinion that women should not imitate men when they acquired proper education. Instead of that through this education they would be modern Sita, Savtree, Maitrayee, and Gargy. 'Sarada Math' was established by Swamiji for the purpose of education for women in a proper way. He wished that, women should follow Ma Sarada as their idol of life. 'Example is more important than advice'- is thought of Ma Sarada, which was experienced by her in her entire life.

Vivekananda's Thought in Today's Relevance :

After 1947 when India got independence women education became an important issue in India which was Vivekananda's mission towards women empowerment. To fulfill the purpose of education for all women government took various steps. As a result, literacy rate in India have risen sharply from 16.7% in 1951 to 74.07% in

2011 in which enrolment of women in education have also risen from 7.3% to 65.46%.

The ongoing situation is very crucial for us. Today we can realize why Swamiji utmost emphasis for the women education as well as overall development and advancement occur on flow. Now we realize the value of women education. In every field of life now a day's women are working parallel with men. Swamiji also says- "500 males can win India in 50 years which can be done with a few weeks by 500 women". According to educational psychology mother is the first teacher of her children and they always learn from their mother and other family member also. It is a fact that education and ideal culture both together may control children future. Swamiji's mission for women education and related issues with women education can be fulfills through inaugurating women colleges and institutions for their higher studies.

In 1999 when the 81 report of the committee on value based education focused on the need to inculcate the principles of truth, rightness conduct, peace, love and non-violence which are the religious values lightened by Swamiji.

The development issue of the twenty first century for the purpose of education as the main objective of women empowerment follows those valuable issues said by Swamiji in 19th century. The millennium development goals envisage that education of women increases their productivity, raising output and reducing poverty. In 19th century Vivekananda wished that, women can be a decision maker in every field of their life, and in present era this lesson promote gender equality.

Conclusion :

To conclude, education serves as the main pillar in the women empowerment which would ultimately lead to the regeneration of the nation both socially and culturally and to a great extent economically. So Swamiji sees women education and women empowerment as the manifesto to the growth and progress of the nation. That is why he calls everybody as, "arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached". For this purpose his objective is to take out the womenfolk from the cocoon and revive their lost confidence so that they may lead a dignified life of

their own. This can be done only through proper education. But one is to bear in mind this is not so easy a task and cannot be done overnight.

Swamiji ardently felt that unless women achieve a respectable place in the society it would be difficult for the nation to march forward. So the government should take care and put emphasis on the proper education on every girl child. Only then the nation would become successful in every sphere. It is the fact that at present time the educated women played a very significant role in overall development and progress of the country. The rise of outstanding women administrators, scientists, writers is gradually proving the truth of these prophetic words. No wonder Vivekananda's words and propagations are relevant even today's context. In fact he has a great contribution in the improvement of the state of women education.

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