



The Concept of Education in the Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda

Dr. Shambhu Sharan Sharma

Associate Professor

Dept. of philosophy, Mahila College, Dalmianagar, Dehri Onson, VKSU, Ara

Abstract: India has produced two eminent personalities whose thought and work has changed the fate of mankind. These two personalities are no other than Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. Swami Vivekanand was the most captivating Indian spiritual leader of 19th century as Mahatma Gandhi was of 20th. Two men were equals but they differed in their family background, the educational and social milieu in which they grew up. Vivekanand was a religious leader and proclaimed heir of great saint of Bengal, Sri Ramkrishna Paramhans, while Gandhiji plunged into the politics, led struggles against racialism. Vivekanand rejected politics while Gandhi believed that religion could not be separated from politics. Despite these differences, the thought patterns and teachings of both Swami and Gandhi share a lot in similarities. Both of them represent a kind of humanism in so far as they nourish firm faith in man, in his destiny, his ability as a „Free“ being or individual. Gandhi said that there is no other God than truth. Truth is what the voice within tells you while Vivekanand opined that always follow truth without caring about the result, find out the truth for yourself, reason it out. That is realization. Vivekanand’s scheme of education is to materialize the moral and spiritual welfare and upliftment of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality or time. Gandhi’s vision on education was truly civilized for betterment of society as well as whole country. Both of them responded to western influences with judicious discrimination accepting what was life giving and rejecting what was deleterious. Gandhi carried forward the work for reform and revitalization of India which Swami left unfinished. Hindu monk Vivekanand made his famous speech on 11th September, 1893 in Chicago introducing the essence of tolerance and universalism. It was Swami who laid the foundation stone of modern India.

I. CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

Teach us to discriminate between good and bad, to assimilate the one and eschew the other, is a misnomer. Education should be so revolutionized as to answer the wants of the poorest villager, instead of answering those of an imperial exploiter. Education in the understanding of citizenship is a short-term affair if we are honest and earnest. basic education links the children, whether of cities or the villages, to all that is best and lasting in India. Is not education the art of drawing out full manhood of the children under training? Literacy in itself is no education. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. Literacy education should follow the education of the hand—the one gift that visibly distinguishes man from beast. Real education has to draw out the best from the boys and girls to be educated. True education must correspond to the surrounding circumstances or it is not a healthy growth (Gandhi Sevagram Ashram, 2015).

Gandhiji’s Aims of Education

He has given two sets of aims viz. immediate and ultimate aims of education (Saxena, 1981 & Knowledge-hub, 2015). Ultimate Aim: Ultimate aim of education is identical with the goal of life, which is ‘Self-realization’. Self-realization is the realization of the self-proper. True education should result not in the material gains but in spiritual uplift. Gandhi laid great stress on religious education which teaches fundamental virtues of truth, love, justice and nonviolence. According to Gandhiji, —Like without religion is life without principles. —Gandhi is also of the opinion that God could be achieved not by returning into jungles but by living in a society and serving it. He preferred to call a student —Brahmacharil, a searcher after God: Selfrealization can take place through self-control, character and abstinence. Immediate Aims: Immediate aims include ‘bread and butter aim’, the cultural aim, the harmonious development of all powers, the moral or character development aim, and sociological aim. Bread and Butter Aims: -This is also called utilitarian aim. It is due to this aim that he gave the principle of self-supporting education’. The student should not only be made capable of earning own livelihood in later life after school but also during the schooling. The child must be an earning unit who must be self-sufficient right from the beginning of the education of the child. This man is

really an important aim of even modern education. Cultural Aim: -Cultural aim refers to the refinement of the Personality. Mere knowledge is not enough. Education should lead that quality of mind which may be reflected in daily conduct. Speech, behaviour and manner must be refined. Culture brings in alit and frankness. Education should not take Indian children that there is a need of synthesizing cultures so one could inherit world cultures. This aim enables the students to ate and appreciate other cultures. Harmonious Development Aim: - Harmonious development or perfection of nature is another aim that Gandhiji advocates. Harmoniously developed person is that who adjusts to his life and environment. He laid greater emphasis on the development i.e., Head, Heart and Hand than on 3 R's i.e., reading, writing and arithmetic. Present system of education leads to unbalanced development. The Moral or Character Building Aim:-It is the chief aim of education. The central purpose of education is to build character. If choice is to be made between character and other things in life, then ever thing else can be subordinated to the former. Man must be a man of word. He must be ready to do something for the humanity at the first call to this conscience. Sociological Aim or Training for Citizenship: - Gandhiji reconciled the individual and social aims of education. In democracy the first slogan is Educate your Masters'. Thus, Gandhiji advocated Universal education'. Every member of this Samaj should be educated so that he could uplift it. He must have qualities of a good citizen. Essential qualities are-spirit of courage, self-sacrifice and industry (Saxena, 1981& Knowledge-hub, 2015).

Gandhiji's Method of Teaching

Gandhiji aimed at the development of the all-round personality of children. That is, he sought to develop physical, mental, social and spiritual powers of the child through education. He also emphasized the education of 3H's - head, heart and hand in addition to 3R's. Thus, he insisted on the development of their mental, emotional and manual powers along with knowledge in arithmetic, writing and reading. Gandhiji believed that the highest development of mind and the soul was possible only through handicraft. He wanted to begin education of the child, by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus, every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufactures of those schools (Taneja, 1997). He never believed that the vocational bias will make education dull or cramp the child's mind. Children are sure to be bright and joyful if they receive vocational instruction under competent teachers. He wanted that stress should be laid on the principals of cooperative activity, planning, accuracy, initiative, and individual responsibility in learning (Taneja, 1997)

Gandhi's Concept of Teacher

There should be teachers with originality and enthusiasm. They must have genius and illustrative talent. They must be in the habit of thinking out from day-to-day what they have to teach. They must keep comprehensive records of their day to day educational procedures so as to utilize these in correlated teaching. The teacher can succeed in establishing correlation only if he has complete grasp of the various processes of craft and provided his mental reservoir is full knowledge about the social and physical development. Rigidity in time-table hinders the process of correlation. Unless teachers get full time, they cannot do justice to bilateral or multilateral correlation of various subjects with the main center or point of correlation. Shortage of time results in handling the knowledge and the activity loosely and not with firmness of mind. The teacher should have the freedom to follow his own plan of dealing with the different items of the curriculum. The items of curriculum have to be planned round the activity and not that the activity to be pegged on to the items of the curriculum. Since the starting point of correlated teaching is the experience of the child, a record of the constructive experiences of children should be kept. It is not essential that immediate experience may be used. The occasion may demand the use of an experience, which the children had long ago. Very frequently all the teachers in a Basic school must meet together to discuss the planning of work on the correlation technique. The exchange of ideas will not only facilitate planning but will also sustain interest in correlated teaching (Taneja,1997)

Swami Vivekananda Concept of Education

The real education according to Swami Vivekananda is that which prepares the individual for struggle for existence. Education prepares a man for social service, to develop his character and finally iambuses him with the spirit and courage of a lion. For getting degree is not an education, the proper education must be viewed on the basis of character, mental powers, intelligence and inculcates self-confidence and self-reliance in the individuals. Swami has emphasized that all the knowledge which we get from worldly or spiritual lies embedded in the human mind. It was covered with a veil of darkness and ignorance. Education is a tool to open from the darkness and ignorance, after getting of education, the knowledge will shine out dazzlingly. The teaching and learning are the one way of process. The teacher only guides, suggests, points out and helps the student. Self learning and self-getting knowledge is the real education. The teacher only motivates and encourages the students to find out the hidden treasure of knowledge that lies dormant within him. He condemned and refused the bookish learning and rote memory education. Condemning the theoretical and academic education, he spoke

emphatically for practical and experimental education. He warned his countrymen saying —you will have to be practical in all spheres of work. The whole country has been ruined by mass theories (Nithiya, 2012)

Swami Vivekananda Methods of Teaching

Having analyzed the goal or objective of education, the next question that naturally arises is about the method of imparting education. According to him, knowledge is inherent in every man's soul. He draws our attention to the fact that the task of the teacher is only to help the child to manifest its knowledge by removing the obstacles in its way. In his words: 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' (Roy, 2001). To drive his point home, he refers to the growth of a plant. Just as in the case of a plant, one cannot do anything more than supplying it with water, air and manure while it grows from within its own nature, so is the case with a human child. Swami Vivekananda method of education resembles the heuristic method of the modern educationists. In this system, the teacher invokes the spirit of inquiry in the pupil who is supposed to find out things for himself under the bias-free guidance of the teacher. Swami Vivekananda lays a lot of emphasis on the environment at home and school for the proper growth of the child. The parents as well as the teachers should inspire the child by the way they live their lives. Swami Vivekananda recommends the old institution of Gurukula (living with the preceptor) and similar systems for the purpose. In such systems, the students can have the ideal character of the teacher constantly before them, which serves as the role model to follow. Although Swami Vivekananda is of the opinion that mother tongue is the right medium for social or mass education, he prescribes the learning of English and Sanskrit also. While English is necessary for mastering Western science and technology, Sanskrit leads one into the depths of our vast store of classics. The implication is that if language does not remain the privilege of a small class of people, social unity will march forward unhampered (Roy, 2001).

Swami Vivekananda Concept of Teacher

Swami believed in self-education. According to him each of us is his own teacher. The external teacher only guides and inspires the inner teacher (soul) to rise up and start working to develop the child. Hence discussing the role of teacher Swami Vivekananda said- —Teacher is a philosopher, friend and guide helping the student to go forward in this own way. A child teaches itself. But teacher can help it to go forward in its own way. What teacher can do is not of the positive nature, but of the negative. Teacher can take away the obstacles, but knowledge comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it; see that it is not killed by anything, and there, teacher's work stops. Teacher cannot do anything else. The rest is manifestation from within its own form. 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. No one was ever really taught by another; each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things. Negative thoughts weaken men. Do you not find that where parents are constantly taxing their sons to read and write, telling them they will never learn anything, and calling them fools and so forth, the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases? If you speak kind words to boys and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time. If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs. In language and literature, in poetry and in arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will gradually be able to do these things better. Pointing out mistakes wounds a man's feelings (Role of the Teacher by Swami Vivekananda, 2018).

II. CONCLUSION

Swamiji was the most charismatic Indian spiritual leader of the nineteenth century as Gandhiji was of the twentieth. They were contemporaries but they never met or interacted. The fact that their public life began at the same time has often been overlooked. Swamiji's triumphant speech at Chicago Parliament of Religion was delivered in 1893 and Gandhiji launched his struggle against discrimination in South Africa in the same year. Both of them came from vastly different backgrounds. Swamiji died in 1902 at age of 39 while Gandhiji plunged into the political arena at the age of 24 and led the struggle against racism and imperialism until his death in 1948. Despite this differences, the thought patterns and teachings of both Swamiji and Gandhiji share a lot in similarities and, if we look the matter in the right perspective, Gandhiji carried forward the work for reform and revitalization of India which Swamiji left unfinished. Now the humanity finds itself at crossroads once more. There is rampant violence, taking the form of terrorism endangering the existence of man compounding food, water and environmental crisis. The greatest challenge India is facing today, is the crisis of confidence and character, mental and moral decay and break down of traditional ethos. The inspiring call to the nation given by both of them falls on deaf ears of our policy makers leading India into deeper existential crisis. The relevance of Swamiji and Gandhiji is more keenly felt today. Swamiji's and Gandhiji's concept of man as a

divine and spiritual being has to be disseminated widely among the masses once again if India and the world are to be saved.

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