

Comparative Study of Education: Swami Vivekananda and Plato

Nilava Patra

Abstract: Starting from the late nineteenth century up to the beginning of the twentieth century, Swami Vivekananda was one of the greatest men born in colonial India as well as Bengal. Swamiji was not interested to keep education in any institution. That is why Swamiji spoke of an education system that was setting in India before independence, which would help India to revive ancient tradition and move towards newer, improved life. Inspiration of patriotism and nationalism was seen in the thought of Swamiji's education. His definition of education is: education is the manifestation of perfection already in man. Swamiji criticized the education policy of British India and he points out that this policy leads to deterioration of the purpose of education. He states that it is possible to stand on the feet of moral teaching in life through real education. Thinking about the effectiveness of education, Swamiji made this important statement. Therefore, his message to the scholars is that, only after obtaining a big degree through pedagogy, real education cannot be attained, unless the education has no societal role. So, in course of explaining the real nature of education, Swamiji states that the name of the all-round development of the people is education. Education which is meant by him is to acquire the right knowledge and this education will ensure the character-building, the broadness of mind, the development of intellect and self-reliance of a learner or an individual. So he attempted to harmonize Vedanta with science. According to him, the basis of education lies in brahmacharya, reverence and self-confidence. According to Swamiji, learning would be self-motivated. According to Vedanta of Vivekananda knowledge is within the human being. Real education wants to awaken him properly. Our main task is to facilitate the awakening of the minds of children so that they can early learn different subjects. There is a place of science in the thought of Swamiji and he introduced education on religion because he knew very well that there is no religion in empty stomach. If there is liberal consciousness, then it is possible to change people's attitudes and thinking. For the improvement of the body, mind and spirit, the essential things which should be included in the education system are to have provisions of physical exercises, religious science, technological science, ancient literature and language. Encouraged by the principles of ancient Greek education, he emphasized the importance of body building and sound mind or strength of mind. According to Swamiji, religion, science and technology are the foundation of the curriculum for its application in the practical field. The use of science and technology in the field of education in a large country like India will make the field of education more relevant. Through this education many people can be saved from unemployment. Swamiji gave special emphasis on social education. He believed that social education will bring the student's inner strength and help to strengthen the economic bases. Besides, he gave special emphasis on the development of society through education. According to Vivekananda present education system should not be confined to formal learning only; it should be a way of life. Vivekananda emphasises man-making education which is relevant in the present society as well. We find another great philosopher. He got acquainted with his philosophical thinking in Greece. Plato was a great philosopher. Plato talked about education in its ideal state

system for the overall development of the state. Like Swami Vivekananda, Plato discusses all the issues of education. Plato had planned an education system in Greece and it was welfare of the nation with the state of equality. Plato's planned education system, deals with the purpose of education, improvement of education, and female education.

Key words: Real education, Greece, Improvement, Female education, Ideal state

Swami Vivekananda was one of few men who were born in colonial India and Bengal, from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. Swami Vivekananda took the responsibility of liberating the people of the country from education, knowledge, science, social reform and spirituality. In view of the overall development of education, he talked about various reforms in system, and education of women, there is no issue left. Another great western philosopher is Plato. Who is still memorable in the history of western philosophy through the thought of his education. In ancient Greece, Plato was a philosopher who gave a consolidated shape to philosophy. So in reality, it was said that Plato was a masterpiece of basic thinking. Like Swami Vivekananda in the educational philosophy of Plato, we also see how much relevance of education is to form an ideal state. And along with this how the quality of the student can be improved.

Dependence in the state and maximum welfare depends on the characteristic of the regulator, which include the helpers of the administrator. Plato especially applied the proper education system to form the character of these two classes. In his book *Republic*, Plato has given a detailed discussion of the education system for these two classes. The same plan we can see also in Swami Vivekananda also. He had chalked out a suitable and well-planned education system for the common people living in the village. It is no mistake to say that Plato's theory of education is much more important nowadays. Plato showed a valuable opinion than his education thought "the conversion of a soul from study of the sensible world to contemplation of real existence."¹ Education according to Swami Vivekananda "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man."² Therefore educations are to develop all the latent capabilities of a person.

Swami Vivekananda realized the need for education in India. That is why, he wanted to judge education from a social perspective. The purpose of every society is to achieve the welfare of all people. But in reality, people are confined to such social issues which have hindered their development of education and development of independence. So Swami

Vivekananda said that the duty of an ideal society is to arrange all facilities for the best possible development of the underlying possibilities of each member living in society. Education needs all the societies especially for those people who are always active to take advantage of the opportunities and to enjoy their fruits. On the other hand, Plato employed the welfare of the state in his thinking of education. Plato has mentioned several proposals about the keeper and the administrator regarding the nature of education in the standard state system in his *Republic*. What will be the education of every person living in the state?

Plato discussed his education system from the primary level of education. As a matter of primary education, he discussed music and body practice. According to Plato "Each has a wider than at present 'music' means everything that is in the province of the muses, and 'gymnastics' means everything concerned with physical training and fitness."³ According to him Swami Vivekananda loved music very much. Not only did he love music, he could sing himself. And besides, he was the creator of music. He was a great musician at the very young age. In addition to all kinds of Bengali songs, he used to gather Hindustani classical songs in the saloon of the rich and zamindar house. As a child, he received music lessons from his father and later on from Brahma Samaj and he established himself as a great musician. Like Plato Vivekananda gave high status to music as a relevant part of education. He always spoke of the people to keep body well organized all the time, because a sound body can live in a sound mind. Therefore it is necessary to keep body healthy in education.

Plato has given more importance to ethics in education cannot unite our mind, but make our mind even more aggravating. And the issues that make people apostate without morally elevating them. Plato was not allowed to do such things in her primary education. Therefore, among the stories and poems, he has approved those who establish morals. Only those poems will be readable, which motivate them to be as heroes. In case of primary education, these teachings should be given to the child. In this way, they can become good citizens and efficient administrators in future life. The baby's mind is very sensitive. Therefore, their sensitive minds are to be suitable for education, so in the field of education "Plato's interest is primarily ethical."⁴ Swami Vivekananda spoke about morality in this his education. Vivekananda always wanted to increase the standard of moral education among the students. For this, he chose Brahmacharya and prepare to form character. Through the Brahmacharya, increased concentration and desire energy among the students increased in greater quantity. As a result, the underlying knowledge

of the students was for reaching. Through the form of character, Swami Vivekananda spoke about the education of people. The combination of moral qualities is seen as the proper character of the students. So it plays an important role in the formation of education for every human being.

Plato emphasized the importance of women education in her model state. Although the body structure is somewhat weak compared to men they can be well-established in life. Plato did not make any difference between man and women in an ideal state system. Such education system was applicable to men and women. Women will have the freedom to do any work. Even the freedom to join the army will be recognized. Plato acknowledged the identity of the nation of women, and propounded a revolutionary opinion on the value of their own will. In ancient Greece there was no communication with women outside the world. The women were the underworld and their only work was to entertain men and conceive their new born baby. Plato contradicts this traditional practice and connects women with externalism. According to Plato "you must not suppose that what I have been saying applies to men only and not to women as far as their nature can go."⁵ Plato's contribution to the fully established women regarding human rights is immense. For Swami Vivekananda, the first target that has been identified for the restoration of India is the education of women. Swami Vivekananda imposed the importance of education and freedom of women like Plato. In the practical world or the spiritual world, he did not accept the difference between men and women. He tried to solve all kinds of problems through proper education. As he said, "Religion, arts, science, housekeeping, cooking, sewing, hygiene, the simple essential points of these subjects ought to be taught to our women. It is not good to let them touch novels and fictions....But only teaching rites of worship won't do: their education must be an eye – opener in all matters. Ideal characters must always be presented before the view of the girls to imbue them with devotion for lofty ideals of selflessness. The noble examples of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Lilabati, Khana and Mira should be brought home to their minds and they should be inspired to mould their lives after them."⁶ He further said, "History and the puranas, house- keeping and the arts, the duties of home life, and the principles that make for the development of an ideal character; have to be taught with the help of modern science and lady students must be trained up in ethical and spiritual life. We must see to their growing up as ideal matrons of home in time."⁷ Swami Vivekananda compared society with a bird. A bird has two wings. So she could fly with two wings. But if one of the two wings is not nutritious, then the bird cannot fly better. So Swami Vivekananda

compared society with birds. On one side, there will be women and on the other hand there will be men. Therefore, women's participation in men's equality is very important for the development of society and overall the country. So Swami Vivekananda arranged for women's education to open women's school. In schools, women will look after education. As he said, "The duty of teaching in the school for girls ought to devolve absolutely on education widows and Brahmacharins. It is good to avoid in this country any association of man with women's schools."⁸

So at the end it can be said that Swami Vivekananda and Plato were modernized in the system of education. Plato was referring to the formation of character in the student's education system from its very beginning. After completing primary education, he selected some students who were 18 to 20 years old. He told them to be educated in advanced education like mathematics and science. Then he told the students to discuss philosophy at the age of 30. On the other hand, Swami Vivekananda spoke about the arts and creativity. Spiritual development is not possible without the arts and creativity. Therefore, considering the teaching of Plato and Swami Vivekananda, the quality of education of the students develops perfectly as well as the quality of all the development becomes fully mature. So Plato said about such education in the ideology of his ideal state system. Such an educated man will be elected as the philosopher king later. Progress of the state and above all morality will depend on them. So if we can make sure that Swami Vivekananda and Plato told us about the education system, then we would certainly be able to fulfil the vicissitudes of our lives.

But the current system of education is very faulty. This education system is not directed towards any particular ideals or goals. It can be understood by example that a sculptor made a statue with stones if he has a clear plan on that matter how to cut a piece of wood properly etc. But he has no specific goals or ideals on his own. We now see many criticisms about our current education system in newspapers. It is true that, various committees were formed for the need to restructure our education system. The discussion of teaching by forming these new committees and adopting new methods is the main goal of all these efforts which is to reform the outer curriculum only. But no one discusses the context of the main ideology of the education system. One more error on the current education system is not to be careful about mental excellence. No education is given to develop mental faculty and the concentration of mind. So we have to look at this and we will have to look at this. So we have to go back to the education

system created by Swami Vivekananda and Plato. Through which students will be improved from moral, social and political level. Above all, they will become human beings. At the same time, he will be able to take responsibility for family, society and nation with his own right. Such will be the ideal of our education. Here we can find out the foundation of education. Every person will be educated in the education. And with the welfare of the society, the state's overall development will be improved.

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Contributors

1. Dr. Nirmalya Narayan Chakraborty, Professor of Philosophy, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Rabindra Bharati University
2. Dr. Bhupendra Chandra Das, Professor, Department of Philosophy, Vidyasagar University
3. Sri Anjan Kumar Mandal, Ph.D. Scholer, Department of Philosophy, Vidyasagar University
4. Dr. Papia Gupta, Professor, Department of Philosophy, Vidyasagar University
5. Smt. Sumana Bera, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Vidyasagar University
6. Sri Uttam Dolai, Ph.D. Scholer, Department of Philosophy, Vidyasagar University and Assistant Teacher, Talbandi Lalbahadur Sastri Siksha Niketan (H.S.), Jagardanga, Garhbeta-II, Paschim Medinipur
7. Dr. Tapan Kumar De, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Vidyasagar University
8. Sri Balaram Karan, Ph.D. Scholar, University of Calcutta and Guest Lecturer, Diamond Harbour Women's University
9. Dr. Shampa Bhattacharyya Bagchi, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Mrinalini Datta Mahavidyapith, Birati, Kolkata
10. Dr. Mrinal Kanti Dey, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Yogoda Satsanga Palpara Mahavidyalaya, Purba Medinipur
11. Sri Nilava Patra, Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Vidyasagar University