UNIT 13: SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND HIS EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS

UNIT STRUCTURE

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13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- State the life of Swami Vivekananda;
- Explain the concept of Karma Yoga;
- explain Swami Vivekananda's philosophical thought; and
- discuss Swami Vivekananda's educational thought.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to a brief life history of Swami Vivekananda and reflects on his philosophical thoughts and educational views. Also, the unit will provide you with some views on the well-known Swami Vivekananda's concept of 'Karma Yoga'. The last part of the unit is a reflection on the contribution of Swami Vivekananda to the field of modern education.

This great religious saint and social reformer breathed his last in the year 1902 at the age of 39. His towering personality, his philosophy and social contributions will always be treasured for time to come and his missions will always continue to inspire the future generations.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What was the real name of Swami Vivekananda?

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Q2: Fill in the blanks:

(a) Swami Vivekananda was born at…….…… in ……..……..

(b) Swami Vivekananda died in the year…….....……

(c) Swami Vivekananda was a great advocate of ……..……

13.4 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CONCEPT OF KARMA YOGA

Swami Vivekananda's famous concept of 'Karma Yoga' was very clearly mentioned in his essay "The Secret of Work". According to him, every person should take work as worship. He firmly believed that we should do the work selflessly and without any attachment. He says miseries of the world cannot be cured by physical help. They will continue until there is change in man's character. Swami Vivekananda believed that ignorance causes evil and misery in life. It can be only removed if mankind attains spiritual light, true education and pure character. He emphasized on the value of good thoughts, good impressions and good actions.

These are the basis of good character. Good tendencies should replace bad tendencies. Good thoughts should rise again and again, until the evil ones disappear. One should practice mercy in life and regard work as worship. Above all, Swami Vivekananda also mentioned that the desire for liberation is the high stage. It means freedom from the bondage of good, as well as, evil. To explain this, Swami Vivekananda cited a beautiful example, a person, has a thorn in his finger. He uses another thorn to take

Doctrine of Divinity

Swami Vivekananda believed in the divinity and the immortality of the soul. There is no difference between the Absolute Soul (the Almighty Brahman) and the individual soul. Swamiji believed that Divinity is truth (*Sat*), Pure Consciousness (*Chit*) and Pure Bliss (*Ananda*). Hence, he said that divinity resides in one's own self.

True Religion

Swami Vivekananda adopted universal religion and preached universal brotherhood. To him, all religions, castes, creeds, viewpoints and philosophies mingle and merge into the universal religion, the essence of which is proclaimed in Vedanta. He was of the view that religious education should be imparted through sweet impressions and fine conduct of the teacher not through books.

Goal of life

Swamiji was of the view that real happiness lay neither in the body, nor in the mind but in the life without dependence, in life absolutely free from any bondage. He mentioned that the goal of life is freedom and freedom is the motive of universe. He said that one can attain freedom in life through work, worship and knowledge.

Fourfold Path

For the attainment of freedom and liberation, the Swamiji, in the simplest terms, presented the fourfold path of ***work, worship, contemplation and knowledge.*** He advocated these to be followed by any human being selecting one or more paths in accordance with his background and temperament.

Spiritual Guide

Swami Vivekananda propagated Indian nationalism by glorifying ancient Indian culture and preached spiritualism. His spiritualism was not based on the renunciation of worldly life. Everybody can nourish this spiritualism by living in the society and serving the humanity. For spirituality, Swamiji emphasized the adoption of any one of the four types of Yoga, i.e, ***Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga*** and also affirmed that there is the need for a spiritual preceptor or guru.

the progress of a nation is the treatment of its women." Thus, Swamiji instructed every daughter to follow the ideals of Sita, Maitreyi, Lila, Ahalyabai and Mira.



LET US KNOW

Some of the principal features of Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy are-

- God resides in every human heart.
- The best worship of God is service to mankind.
- Ethics and morality should be the real basis of life.
- Love and renunciation should permeate the universe.
- Religion means self-realization through self control.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5: What should be the goal of life according to Swami Vivekananda?

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Q6: What are the four fold paths mentioned by Swami Vivekananda?

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13.6 EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of education is a reflection of his general philosophy of life. He defined education as ***"the manifestation of divine perfection already in man"***. Swamiji was of the view that no knowledge comes from outside; it resides in the human mind. It is the individual who simply needs to discover it. In Vivekananda's own words, ***"Perfection is already inherent in men and education is the manifestation of the same."*** To him, man manifests knowledge and

- **Character formation:** To Swami Vivekananda, *Brahmacharya* should be practiced to build a strong character. He maintained that the role of education should be to prepare such men who have no contradiction between their words and deeds.
- **Development of faith in God and oneself:** To Swamiji, education should be able to develop faith in God and oneself. Education should prepare those who are always prepared for self surrender, sacrifice and renunciation of material comforts for the benefit of others.
- **Education for self-reliance:** Self reliance is the most important thing for everybody on this earth. Self dependence finds happiness everywhere and in every way within his or her own self. Education should make a person self reliant.
- **Education for promoting universal brotherhood:** Universal brotherhood is very essential for peace, prosperity and progress of an individual. Education should help in promoting universal brotherhood. Swami Vivekananda maintained the view that through education, we should gradually reach the idea of universal brotherhood by breaking down the walls of separation and inequality.
- **Education for religious development:** Swamiji believed that humanity and service to humanity should be the religion of all individuals on this earth. Education is worthwhile, only if it is able to develop such feelings in the learners.

Curriculum

In order to achieve the above mentioned aims, those subjects and activities should be included in the curriculum which can bring about material progress along with spiritual development. For material progress, he advocated the study of languages, geography, science, political science, economics, psychology, arts, agriculture, industrial and technical subjects along with the subject of physical education. This education must neither be theoretical nor bookish. It should rather be practical. For spiritual development, he prescribed the study of religion, philosophy, Puranas and Upanishads and the company of saints

words are worth quoting as he says, ***"As is the plant, so is the child. The growth and development of plant and child takes place according to their nature. The role of external teacher lies in helping the pupils so that they may learn to apply their own intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears and eyes."***

Discipline

Swamiji emphasized child-centred education in which child is given full freedom for activity and self-learning. He should be given full opportunity to develop in a natural environment. According to Swamiji, each child is his own teacher. He has knowledge latent in his mind. The task of external teacher is only to guide and inspire the child so that his inner knowledge is brought out.

Women education

Swami Vivekananda laid emphasis on the education of the women. Prosperity of a nation depends on women's education. He preached for equal rights between men and women. Swamiji was disappointed to see the poor plight of women in India. He asked women to draw inspirations and learn lessons from the great women of ancient India. His strong belief was that the upliftment of women could alone raise the status of the family. Therefore, he suggested that more and more schools were to be set up for educating the women.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q7: Define the concept of Education as viewed by Vivekananda.

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- Swamiji mentioned that the goal of life is freedom and freedom is the motive of universe. He said that one can attain freedom in life through work, worship and knowledge.
- For the attainment of freedom and liberation, the Swamiji, in the simplest terms, presented the fourfold path of ***work, worship, contemplation and knowledge.***
- For spirituality, Swamiji emphasized the adoption of any one of the four types of Yoga, i.e, ***Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga*** and also affirmed that there is the need for a spiritual preceptor or guru.
- Swami Vivekananda was of the view that service of humanity is the prime object of life. He said that one can serve humanity by becoming fearless and by making oneself fit for struggles of life. Swamiji also emphasized on discarding selfish motives jealousy and imbibing the spirit of tolerance in oneself.
- Swamiji also mentioned that education is that process which prepares a man for struggle of existence by making him self-reliant and by developing his character and intelligence. It is in fact, a lifelong process.
- The aims of education emphasized by Swami Vivekananda are- making a man perfect, developing a child physically, mentally, morally and spiritually, formation of character, education for self reliance, education for universal brotherhood and to foster religious education.
- Swamiji was of the view that educational curriculum should be prepared in considering two points- materialistic and spiritual. For material progress, he emphasized on subjects like languages, geography, science, political science, economics, psychology, arts, agriculture, industrial and technical subjects along with the subject of physical education. For spiritual development, he prescribed the study of religion, philosophy, Puranas and Upanishads and the company of saints and seers.
- Swami Vivekananda believed in the inner knowledge of the student. He forwarded two methods of teaching- self-study and discussion.

Ans to Q No 5: According to Swami Vivekananda, the goal of life is freedom and freedom is the motive of universe. He said that one can attain freedom in life through work, worship and knowledge.

Ans to Q No 6: The fourfold paths as mentioned by Swami Vivekananda are ***work, worship, contemplation and knowledge.***

Ans to Q No 7: He defined education as "the manifestation of divine perfection already in man". Swamiji was of the view that no knowledge comes from outside; it resides in the human mind. It is the individual who simply needs to discover it. In Vivekananda's own words, "Perfection is already inherent in men and education is the manifestation of the same." To him, man manifests knowledge and discovers it within himself which already exists there through eternity.



13.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions: (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q1: Mention the important aims of education, as stated by Swami Vivekananda.

Q2: Write a brief note on Swami Vivekananda's early life.

Q3: What was Swami Vivekananda's view on true religion?

B) Long Questions: (Answer each question in about 300 words)

Q1: Discuss the philosophical thoughts of Swami Vivekananda.

Q2: Describe the educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda.

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