

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S RELEVANCE TOWARDS INDIAN SOCIAL PROBLEMS

**Dr. Lata Kumar,**

Reader-Sociology

S. M. P. Govt. Girls P.G. College, Meerut

“Where can we find god if we cannot see him in our own hearts and the people?”

This big question arose from the soul of the Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda. In today's society, problems are increasing at a prompt pace. Whether it's about nationalism or religion, we are finding it challenging to ponder of a society that is full of peace, adoration, honesty, kindness and all the aspects of humanity. But have you ever imagined it that why do it happens? Is there any thought, is there any quotation, is there any verdict, that can make others to think about humanity, faith, peace, intellectual contributions, religious beliefs, morality or ethics. Why is crime increasing? Why is corruption becoming a habit? Why are we forgetting our moral values? Why god is living in the temples instead of our hearts? Why is this all happening? Is there any solution? All the heads bow down in a deep ocean of thinking for the answer that why do it happens?

Every tree has its root. If it do not gets proper water and sunshine to germinate, so it will stay just as a seedling. But if it is provided with the proper field, water, sunlight and care, it can become the lankiest tree with number of luscious fruits and fragrant flowers. The social problems in today's society are not just about corruption, poverty, less education, crime, violence, terrorism or harassments. It's about the truce between the relationships over trust, love and humanity between the societies. They are the roots for empowerment of perspectives towards crimes and offences. If these roots are eaten up by the weeds of evilness, so how can we imagine of a tree that is perfect in all aspects? These small steps by guardians and mentors in the childhood of a kid to make him respectful towards morality, peace and kindness can lead to make him an obedient civil citizen. Every conclusion is the hard work done in the observation. If we expect our children to become a good human, so it all begins with our own persistence in making them moral by controlling our own negatives and giving them the best examples to become positive. This is the first and foremost consequence in making our future generations a soul filled with all the aspects of humanity.

Swami Vivekananda, a key figure in the introduction of the Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world and is credited with raising interfaith awareness, bringing Hinduism to the status of a major world religion during the late 19th century. His teachings and

philosophies towards the social problems in today's society can be very fruitful in bringing a change in today's perspectives towards various topics.

Swami Vivekananda focused on the emphasis of nationalism, religion, morality, medium of education, religious and physical education, women education and education for weaker societies of nations. There are many problems which are arising at a rapid speed and needs a quick clarification. For the following problems, we can have a strong look on the teachings of Swami Vivekananda.

### **Communalism -**

Communalism refers to fight or regression between two or more religious communities. In India, it has been developing since a long time. Due to this, the nation has been suffered from various problems. It is like a choking part in the unity of nation. There are various reasons that have been a problem in unity of nation like partisan, unfaith, loss of life and property, political dysfunctions, tensions, conflicts, increase in anti-social elements, socio-cultural disorganization and hindrance in economic developments.

Swami Vivekananda was religious, but never a superstitious person. According to Vivekananda, religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man. He also told that religion is the awareness which nurtures the brute unto man, and man unto God. According to Swami Vivekananda, experience is the best foundation of knowledge. He suggested the way to learn about religion by reading his or her mind and heart.

Religion deals with the realities of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the reserve of nature. The book from which to learn faith is your own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science, because he reads the mistaken book—the book within; and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion, because he too recites the wrong book—the book without. His belief can be a great lesson to all hominids in understanding a proper difference between being religious and superstitious. This can be cleared by one of his quote, "All religion is to be based upon morality, and personal purity is to be counted superior to Dharma."

### **Patriotism versus Anti-Patriotism-**

"The present enthusiasm is only a little patriotism, it means nothing. If it is true and genuine, you will find in a short time hundreds of heroes coming frontward and carrying on the

effort. Therefore know that you have really done all, and go on.” said Swami Vivekananda. Love opens almost all the impossible gates; love is the gate to all the secrets of universe. Patriotism is all about our love towards our motherland.

Patriotism refers to ones love toward their motherhood. We all know that youth is the main aspect of society for the success of future generations. Only youth can go ahead and succeed our motherland. All of us have many expectations from them. But if the feeling of patriotism will die from the heart of them, we cannot expect anything from them toward the fame or respect of our country around the world. So, it is necessary for all of us to retain a beautiful feeling of patriotism in our hearts.

We live in times where patriotism has been reduced to celebrating by bursting firecrackers after India wins a cricket match, especially against Pakistan. Waving the tricolour and shouting slogans like ‘Bharat Mata Ki Jai’ and ‘Jai Hind’ have now become symbols of street-corner Nationalism. In this kind of setting, how does one view the life and times of patriots like Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Mahatma Gandhi and Subhash Chandra Bose? Can our expression of patriotism go beyond this mere sloganeering into approximately more constructive and useful? Many of our own national heroes who believed in living every minute of their lives for the progress of our Nation have claimed to have drawn their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. Many of us today continue to see Swami Vivekananda as one of India’s greatest Nationalists.

### **Women Subordination and Oppression in Society -**

Female foeticide and female infanticide in India are expressions of gender inequality and bias, both of which have caused a decline in the sex ratio. Since women were considered emotionally and intellectually inferior to men, it is believed that their emotions influence their decisions and behaviour. Thus, women are still bounded to conform to the stereotypes laid down by the society. Women have been perceived as ideal housewives, daughters, or mothers- always dependent on the male members of the family. In our society, women are not portrayed as thinking individuals. They have been the subject of domestic violence, dowry abuse, eve teasing, molestation and harassment.

According to various studies, in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, girls have less opportunities of education than boys. In India, in villages, girls still spend a large part of their day in household chores, looking after their siblings, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, wiping and bathing cows or other farm animals, etc. They are not encouraged to join schools due to distant

locations, fear of security or the perspective that exposure of education can spoil a girl and make her rebel. Even if they are sent to school, early marriage stands in way of their education. Subjects offered to girls in schools reinforced their traditional roles. Girls were enforced to take up vocational courses rather than subjects like science, mathematics, information technology, etc.

A woman's home is considered as her primary space and her primary role is perceived to be as a homemaker. Her work or contribution is not valued and is seen as her natural instinct. Not just at home, a female labour is also paid less than her male counterpart.

Women had no major role in the family. All her decisions throughout her life are taken by her father or her husband or later by his son. Women do not have the right to inherit their father's property. These major problems can be seen in the lower society but this is all what makes our country 'gender discriminated.'

Swami Vivekananda opposed retrograde social practices toward women. He also campaigned for the emancipation of women through spiritual practices. He considered women to be the incarnation of power. He rightly pointed out that unless Indian women secure a respectable place in this country, the nation can never move forward. . He insists that men and women are equally competent not only in the academic matters, but also in other spheres of life. Vivekananda being a keen observer could distinguish the difference in perception about the status of women in the West and in India. "The ideal women in India is the mother, the mother first, and the mother last. The important features of his scheme of female education are "Make women strong, fear-less, and conscious of their chastity and dignity".

Swami Vivekananda considered Sita as the ideal Indian woman. He also told, "The ideal womanhood of India is motherhood— that marvellous, unselfish, all suffering, ever-forgiving mother." He understood the day India started neglecting their women, the downfall of the nation started. He also believed that our right of interference is limited entirely to giving education. Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them. And our Indian women are capable of doing it as any in the world.

### **Corruption in Public Life -**

Corruption, in our country, has increased alarmingly during the last thirty years. It has become such a serious problem that seems no remedy for it. There is hardly any department where corruption does not prevail. The public, in general, is so used to it that they have accepted it as a norm.

The speed of corruption has eroded the moral values of the people. As a result of it, there is degradation of social values. The honest people, who want to fight this menace, have become helpless. It has shaken the belief of the people in democracy.

Corruption is not confined to the departments of the government only. It prevails in different forms of the society. Adulteration, black marketing and tax evasion are also the forms of corruption. In fact, all those who do not do their professional duty sincerely are corrupt. The industrialists and businessmen who bribe the government officials and get their work done are corrupt. The candidates who buy votes of the illiterate people are corrupt. Thus, there is a chain of corruption. It is on the increase.

According to Swami Vivekananda, one should follow truth wherever it may lead you; carry ideas to their utmost logical conclusions. Do not be cowardly and hypocritical. You must have a great devotion to your ideal, devotion not of the moment, but calm, persevering, and steady devotion. Thus, corruption is a problem that has no remedy for outer effects. It can be removed from the heart of corrupted people only through internal awareness.

If a person enforces you to do his work and you go ahead to help him, so the fault is not of the person who enacted the task; but of the person who continued the work. This is how Swami Vivekananda encouraged people to be corruption free.

### **Lack of Peace in Society -**

In today's society, we can see lack of religious beliefs, differences due to region, language, gender, lack of the feeling of nationalism, fear of terrorism, and many consequences can be continued to be seen in today's society. It's not just in a specific country; it's all across the world.

The reasons for these issues are some major feelings like ego problem, personal attitude, violent nature, greediness, selfishness, conspiracies and many other exclamations. All of these are just leading to a single problem; which is the lack of peace in society.

People are living in fear. Nobody knows when and where one will suffer from violence on the name of revenge, terrorism or wars. Everyone is getting affected and the fear is growing. Even the victims are taking revenge through violence. If such consequences will occur, so how can we expect of a peaceful society?

In such conditions, we need to have a look on the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda said- Give up all desire and be at peace. Have neither friends nor foes, and live alone. Thus shall we travel having neither friends nor foes, neither pleasure nor pain, neither desire nor

jealousy, injuring no creatures, being the cause of injury to no creatures — from mountain to mountain, from village to village, preaching the name of the Lord.

This is how we can be peaceful and preach others also to be the same.

### **Immorality and Crisis of Values -**

Immorality is all about the lack of values in the people. In today's time, many people are becoming disobedient, selfish, unmannered and disrespectful.

It's not just about friends and foes, these feelings are increasing between blood relations too. Siblings are becoming aggressive towards each other, they have competition in getting love from parents, and they want to see each other upset. Do you think is it all right? Mother-in-law wants to kill her son's bride, and then the bride's family wants to take revenge. Can we expect values in their future generations? No, we cannot!

Hence it becomes necessary to have a look on Swami Vivekananda's preaching towards retaining values and ethics in our souls. He also mentioned several quotations-

Be moral. Be brave. Be a heart whole man. Strictly moral, brave unto desperation.

Don't bother your head with religious theories. Only cowards sin, brave men never; no, not even in mind. Try to love anybody and everybody. You must have strict morality. Deviate an inch from this and you are gone for ever.

Be a man and try to make those immediately under your care, brave, moral, sympathising. No religion for you, my children, but morality and bravery. No cowardice, no sin, no crime, and no weakness --- the rest will come of itself.

### **Improper Education System -**

As a guardian, we all want that our children may succeed. Every parent wants their child to study and score good marks. They have a wish to see their child at the topmost peak of success. But in today's society, when this wish becomes a competition, it may lead to many problems.

Every student has a personal aptitude in learning and understanding things. If we pressurize the child to go above this aptitude, so it can break the self-confidence of the child and can make him more insecure towards his or her own capabilities. And as parent, it's their responsibility to understand what is good for the child and what is not.

We should appreciate what our child is capable of. We should comprehend that every child cannot be a topper, but can be the best of oneself. Parents are eager to know the marks instead of what he or she has learnt. We should understand that is our child becoming a good

human or not instead of a national level topper. We should give proper time to our children to know what they think and what they expect from you.

Swami Vivekananda puts a lot of emphasis on education. Vivekananda said, “Religion is the innermost core of education. Religion is like the rice and everything else, is like the curries. Taking only curries causes indigestion and so is the case with taking rice alone. “Therefore, religious education is a vital part of a sound curriculum. Vivekananda considered Gita, Upanishads and the Vedas as the most important curriculum for religious education. For him, religion is attainment of self-realization and divinity. It helps not only in individual’s development but also in the transformation of total man. The true religion cannot be limited to a particular place of time. He pleaded for unity of world religion. He realized truth while practising of religion. The truth is the power, untruth is the weakness. Knowledge is truth, ignorance is untruth. Thus truth increases power, courage and energy. It is the source of light and therefore, necessary for the individual as well as collective welfare. In Swami Vivekananda’s point of view, ethics and religion are one and the same. God is always on the side of goodness. To fight for goodness is the service to God. The moral and religion education develop the self confidence among the young men and women.

The individual development is not a full development of our nation, so it is necessary to give education to the society or common people. The education is not only confined to the well-to-do persons only but also to the poor people. Vivekananda emphasized on the improvement of the conditions of the masses and for this, he advocated mass education. He looks upon mass education as an instrument to improve the individual as well as society. By this way, he exhorted to his countrymen to know-“I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses of India are once more well-educated, well-fed and well-cared for.

The educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda is a harmonious synthesis between the ancient Indian ideals and modern Western beliefs. He not only stressed upon the physical, mental, moral, spiritual and vocational development of the child but also he advocated women education as well as education of the masses. The essential characteristics of educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda are idealism, naturalism and pragmatism. In a naturalistic view points, he emphasized that real education is possible only through nature and natural propensities.

From the analysis of Swami Vivekananda’s scheme of education, it is clear that the upliftment of masses is possible only through education. His view on education brings to light a

constructive, practical and comprehensive approach to education. By giving education, he tries to materialize the moral and spiritual welfare and upliftment of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality or time. By the way of his scheme of education, we can get to build the strong nation with peace and harmony and without caste and creed. But contrary to following his ideas, we are giving bookish knowledge to our kids without giving exposure to other areas of education with the result that when they complete the education, they get degrees but they fail to develop strong moral and spiritual character.

### CONCLUSION-

This is not all; individuality, poverty; materialistic race, youth aggression, lethargy, youth dissatisfaction and laziness are also some of the major problems in the society. For these consequences, the teachings and views of Swami Vivekananda can be relevant.

Swami Vivekananda is not only a person and the personality but his thoughts are the soul of the Indian Society. Till we all will follow the preaching of Swami Vivekananda, our society will have growth in the level of uplifting the perspectives and will forever succeed.

A small poem written by Swami Vivekananda can conclude his complete teachings-

*Again and again you hear this objection advanced:*

*"What good can religion do?*

*Can it take away the poverty of the poor?"*

*Supposing it cannot, would that prove the untruth of religion?*

*Suppose a baby stands up among you*

*when you are trying to demonstrate an astronomical theorem,*

*and says, "Does it bring gingerbread?"*

*"No, it does not", you answer.*

*"Then," says the baby, "it is useless."*

*Babies judge the whole universe from their own standpoint,*

*that of producing gingerbread,*

*and so do the babies of the world.*

—Swami Vivekananda

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