

International Multidisciplinary
Research Journal

*Indian Streams
Research Journal*

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

Indian Streams Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial board. Readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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REFLECTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF
SWAMI ABHEDANANDA



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ABSTRACT

Swami Abhedananda's views of education are deeply interlinked with the conventional thoughts on education. His philosophy of education is moulded mainly with the borrowings on Vedanta. He emphasized that mind should be trained through the meditation. He gave equal emphasis on the lessons of Sanskrit along with that of mother-tongue. His philosophy of education is at present relevant and befitting for the age.

KEYWORDS : *Vedanta, meditation, relevant, befitting.*

PREFACE:

We begin our preamble with a classic utterance of swami Abhedananda, to whose constructive genius and untiring labour the Vedanta Movements owed its success. "Truth is like a torch", said he in course of one of his public lectures in America in 1897, "the more we shake it, the more it shines. The sublime rationality of Vedanta can allow the roughest handling of it, without the slightest injury to itself. The fiercest light of day may be made to beat upon the Vedanta, and there will not be found a single ugly feature or dark spot exposed to view."

STATE OF AFFAIRS:

According to the erudite Swami, the standard of education must go parallel with the culture and civilization of a nation. The main object of education during the Vedic period was "the moral and spiritual culture of the soul, the attainment of God-consciousness and the knowledge of the various sacrifices that are described in the Vedanta.

At the period of transition from the Vedic to the Brahmanic stage of religious development (about 1200 B.C) the courts of the kings were the centres of culture. During 1000 B.C there arose PARISHADS which might be called collegiate institution of learning. In these colleges were taught the Vedas, philosophy and Hindu Law; the students got lessons in various branches of Mathematics as also Decimal notation and Astronomy. There were special schools for imparting lessons in Ayurveda – the science of life, as also higher lesson in Hindu Chemistry.

METHODOLOGY-

This present paper is primarily based on primary and secondary sources like books, journals and articles etc. The method used is historic analytic method.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PAPER-

Swami Abhedananda's thinking and concepts about education are very fruitful for the allround development of educational system of our country. Like Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, the thinking and ideas of Swami Abhedananda about education are very much scientific and modernised. In his thinking- there is a combination of Froebel, Dewey, Rabindranath and Vivekananda. And his teaching method has close resemblance with Western ideas. As a whole it is ultramodern and scientific. So this problem is very relevant.

Swami Abhedananda's life and work:

Influential factors-

Heridity-

Father- Rasiklal Chandra the father of Swami Abhedananda was a resident of 22 nimu goswami lane. He was a great scholar in English. Rasiklal was truthful virtuous, benevolent, just and a monotheist. He got his education from the them high standard oriental long 25 years. He had such proficiency in English that the neighbours.

Mother- Nayantara Devi was Rasik master's second wife and Abhedananda was his son by this second marriage. She was a devout and pious lady. She was just an ideal of hindu motherhood. She did not even touch water before finishing her religious rituals after bath.

Environmental influence-It was the beginning of western dominance. English Education was slowly spreading. Godliness was rampant and sanatana Dharma was in utter men. Young Kali was totally confused.

Societal influence- Young Bengal assimilated English Education from Derozio. But they behaved very arrogantly and took to wine- as signs of liberty. Young kali was far away from them. He was disgusted with their manners.

Influence of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda- Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda has spiritual elder brother. Thakur taught him the spirit of Advaitavedanta and Vivekananda taught him service to humanity.

Literature-

Influence of Swami Vivekananda- Vivekananda was young kali's mentor and guide in meditation. He taught him service to mankind and called him to America to preach Vedanta.

Movement for India's Independence- Young Kali was independent in spiritual but submissive to Thakur. He obeyed Thakur's religious lessons and sermons. He took guidance from Vivekananda .

Swami Abhedananda's principals of Education-

1. Education in not only for getting information; rather it should develop character, mental power,

intelligence and inculcate self-confidence together with self-reliance.

2. Education should develop the child physically, mentally and spiritually.

3. While giving education qualification the technical education was necessary for the industrial growth which would lead to the economic prosperity of the nation.

4. Religious education should be imparted through sweet impressions and find conduct in preference to books.

5. All the subject must be included in the curriculum which promotes the material and spiritual advancement of a child.

Educational thoughts of Swami Abhedananda-

1) Philosophy

i) Metaphysics

a) **God**-Swami Abhedananda maharaj has said that we all have originated from the sea of Bramha with an exterior of honesty and the last destination is there. There is nothing to be ruing of anything. We will leave for ever in the eternal flow of creation – this is what is called God. God is omniscient. He is free and distinct. It is God who is the maker of everything.

b) **World**- Swami Abhedananda declared on 6th September, 1901 at University of California that “some people think that the Vedanta Philosophy teaches that this world is an illusion but Vedanta philosophy does not teach that the phenomenal world is such. What is regarded as illusion in Vedanta Philosophy is the attribution of substantial and sentience to the phenomena.”

c) **Man**- He said man is the epitome of the universe; whatever exists in the world is to be found in the body of man. As, on the one hand, we find in man all those tendencies and propensities which characterize the lower animals, so on the other, we see him manifesting through the actions of his life all those noble qualities that adorn the character of one, whom we honour, respect and worship as the divine being.

ii) Epistemology-

a) **Knowledge**-Child's brain cannot be filled will knowledge from outside. Any book only helps us in grasping the hints of knowledge. Any book begets a reaction in the children's mind while giving this hint of knowledge. And whatever the child acquires as a result of this reaction is knowledge. Knowledge grows in soul.

b) **Psyche**- According to Swami Abhedananda there prevails an entity different from mind and body and that is the background of mind. The soul having its existence in thought and knowledge is the main leading force of mind and without the help of this self illumined soul, minds becomes lifeless and motionless. According to him the real message is that soul is the navigator of mind and also its path-finder. And mind is like a soul dragged machine. According to the vedic and yoga theory soul consists in modification. When these workings of mind because and restrained mind manifests itself as an entity of pure consciousness. Then becomes an emerimmaculate mind of soul.

iii) **Ethics**- Abhedanandaji had high ethical ideals and he preached them in Europe and America. All these ideals were derived from Vedanta and Upanishad. Abhedananda maharaj also learnt western ethics and preached synthesis of all religions.

2) Educational philosophy

i) **Objectives of Education**- The objectives of Education should be the attainment of perfection. That is

the highest aim of Education.

ii) **Curriculum**- In every school the ideals of great men should be presented to the view as pictures. Religious teachings should be introduced in school.

iii) **Method of teaching**- He used simple sentences and avoided elaborate diction. He answered questions of his disciples with perfect understanding.

iv) **Discipline**- He was ardent and used to give emphasis on regular practice and self-less service. He loved his speakers and spoke to them affectionately but was a strict task master.

v) **Students duties and responsibility** - Swami Abhedananda is of the view that simplicity should be the real mark of everyman's life. He thinks that any one should behave well towards that man who behaved with him unfairly. The student should act in the manner that can save him from disgrace. He preached the message of truthfulness, honest nature and pride lessens in any matter. He advised to serve at all time and be free in mind.

vi) **Teacher** - An ideal teacher with a really flawless reverential character will take the role of custodian in their life. He will lead a life of discipline, restraint and true ethics unlike a high salaried and privileged one. In imparting lesson only such a man can be a model.

vii) **Medium of language**- Swami Abhedananda emphasised basically three languages. First to him Sanskrit is the mine of wisdom, storehouse of Indian culture and heritage and overwhelmed by moral/ethical values. Like Swami Vivekananda, he wanted in India every Indian should learn Sanskrit because in India Sanskrit and prestige go hand in hand.

Secondly he wanted to introduce English language in Education because it is the mediator of international relation. He had deep knowledge in this language and he wanted if we want to preach India's enriched culture and heritage towards west and other part of the globe we must learn English language.

Thirdly he did never ignore mother tongue Bengali also. He declared as language bears culture so if we come to know our mother tongue fairly, only then we will be able to foster and preserve our regional culture and glorious past of Bengal indeed.

viii) **Place of woman and woman's education**- The Swamiji put great emphasis on Women's education and borning of religious Text Books. He said that without proper education to mother, the child cannot learn properly.

FINDINGS:

1. Swami Abhedananda held that mental conceptions could not be the end of all things. He perfected the technique of yoga by which it was possible for men to climb the highest of consciousness for about the mind.
2. Strongly moral character is along with affection towards pupils were essential for teachers. The teacher behaved as students' father stressing on cultivating self-independence and self-learning.
3. Abhedanandaji advocates the mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the lower level, but at the higher level other languages could be used. He strongly favoured the study of Sanskrit.
4. Education was open for all casts, creeds and women.
5. Suitable changes should be made in our school curriculum.

CONCLUSION-

Abhedananda believed that all faculties of human beings, intellectual, physical, moral, aesthetic should be nurtured, cultivation in a good educational system. The Western world is following

Swamiji's teachings and gradually moving away from materialistic view of life. They are engaged in prayer, meditation. This is a great success of Swami Abhedananda.

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