

**EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: A PATHWAY TOWARDS
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda's name as given by his parents was Narendranath. He took the name Vivekananda just before leaving for USA to participate in the Parliament of Religions. After passing BA in 1883 from Calcutta University, he completed law, but did not appear at the examination. On 11 September 1893, he addressed the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago. On 7 May 1897, he founded the Ramakrishna Mission. As spiritual ambassador of India he travelled throughout the world, giving lectures on various aspects of Hindu philosophy of life that is based on universal brotherhood. Sri Aurobindo (2003, p. 662) highlighting the work of Swami Vivekananda said that "Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy." Radhakrishnan (1995, p. 37) said that "Swami Vivekananda tried to lead humanity to a nobler and better path than that which it found itself in." Isherwood (1962, p. xxi) said that "Vivekananda was not only a great teacher with an international message, he was also a very great Indian, a patriot and an inspirer of his countrymen down to the present generations." Swami Vivekananda, during his short lifespan of around four decades, has dealt with various aspects of human life and society, which are not limited by time and space and are also valid after nearly a century.

Internationalism and Appreciation of Culture of Other Nations

Swami Vivekananda urged individuals to appreciate cultural differences among nations. He said that "The object of my speaking of these things is to impress upon you the fact that the life of each nation has a moral purpose of its own, and the manners and customs of a nation must be judged from the standpoint of that purpose. The Westerners should be seen through their eyes; to see them through our eyes, and for them to see us with theirs - both these are mistakes." (Advaita Ashrama 1985a, p. 514),

Respect for Manual Labour

Swami Vivekananda urged the individuals to be sincere in their duty. According to him each work has its merit; there is no low or high level of individuals on the basis of nature of work. He said that "A shoemaker who can turn out a strong, nice pair of shoes in the shortest possible time is a better man, according to his profession and his work, than a professor who talks nonsense every day of his life." (Advaita Ashrama 1985a, pp. 239-240).

Stress on Social Reform

Swami Vivekananda was not only a religious leader but was also a social reformer. He did not consider the necessity of continuance of casteism. He said: "The caste system is opposed to the religion of the Vedanta. Caste is a social custom, and all our great preachers have tried to break it down." (Advaita Ashrama 1985a, p. 311). Tagore (1925, p. 96) said that "It is evident that caste idea is not creative; it is merely institutional. It adjusts human beings according to some mechanical arrangements. It emphasises the negative side of the individual-his separateness. It hurts the complete truth in man"

Stress on Brahmacharya

Swami Vivekananda was himself a Brahmachari. He knew the powers of Brahmacharya. "Chastity in thought, word, and deed, always, and in all conditions, is what is called Brahmacharya." (Advaita Ashrama (1972, p.190). According to Swamiji, a person practicing Brahmacharya for at least 12 years gets power—intellectual and spiritual. Swami Sivananda (1984, p. 13) said that "Brahmacharya is purity in thought, word and deed". Mahatma Gandhi said that "Brahmacharya, like all other observances, must be observed in thought, word and deed." (Navajivan Publishing House 1968b, p. 184).

Meaning of Education

According to Swamiji, all knowledge is inside the human mind. Education discovers it. "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man." (Advaita Ashrama 1985b, p. 358). Learning is discovering what is already in mind. He said: "Real education is that which enables one to stand on one's own legs." (Advaita Ashrama 1986, pp. 147-148). He also said: "By education I do not mean the present system, but something in the line of positive teaching. Mere book learning won't do. We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's feet." (Advaita Ashrama 1985a, p. 342). He said: "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas." (Advaita Ashrama 1964, p. 302). According to him, learning is in fact discovering. Swami Vivekananda said, "What we say a man "knows", should, in strict psychological language, be what he "discovers" or "unveils"; what a man "learns": is really what he "discovers", by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge." (Advaita Ashrama 1972, p. 28).

Refining Indian Education with Suitable Inputs from Western Scientific Knowledge

Swami Vivekananda criticised the colonial education system of his time for its failure to become a man-making education. He said that:

"The education that you are getting now has some good points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all weighed down. In the first place it is not a man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education. A negative education or any training that is based on negation, is worse than death. The child is taken to school, and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool, the second thing that his grandfather is a lunatic, the third thing that all his teachers are hypocrites, the fourth that all the sacred books are lies! By the time he is sixteen, he is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless." (Advaita Ashrama 1964, p p. 301-302).

Swami Vivekananda was not totally against western education. He found some aspects of this system that could be useful. He said that "What we want are Western science coupled with Vedanta, Brahmacharya as the guiding motto, and also Shraddha and faith in one's self." (Advaita Ashrama 1985a, p. 366). During Swamiji's days, the nation was under foreign rule. Swamiji said that "Stand on your own feet, and assimilate what you can; learn from every nation, take what is of use to you. But remember that as Hindus everything else must be subordinated to our own national ideas." (Advaita Ashrama 1964, p. 152). He argued for having the whole educational system of the country, spiritual or secular, in the hands of the Indians. Such an education was to be on national lines, through national methods as far as possible.

Mass Education

Swamiji argued for mass education. According to him, the then pitiable condition of the country was due to the uneducated masses. Development of a nation is dependent on the level of education of its masses. It is the moral responsibility of the society and the government to provide education to everybody. If the poor cannot come to school, the schools must go to the doors of the poor. He said "If the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor cannot come to education, education must reach them at the plough, in the factory, everywhere." (Advaita Ashrama 1985c, p. 308).

Social Service as Education

Swamiji laid *stress* on the role of education for service to mankind. He said that a person who feels for the poor is a *mahatma*. If the said person really feels for the poor and prays to God for their welfare, God will

indicate the path. He urged educated persons to go to the underprivileged and help them develop. That every Indian irrespective of caste, creed, and occupation is his/her own brother or sister must be realised in every individual. He must help them to develop and prosper. "So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them!" (Advaita Ashrama 1985a, p. 58). Thus, according to him, every educated person is morally bound to do social work.

Women's Education

Swamiji gave importance to the education of women. He quoted Manu's statement that daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as sons. According to him, women's education will lead to a prosperous nation. He suggested that women's education should include religious training consisting of *japa*, worship, meditation, character formation and celibacy, study of history and *puranas*, housekeeping, education of children, stitching, etc. He said that "Along with other things, they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. (Advaita Ashrama 1985a, p. 342). Giving stress on role of the mother, he said, "It is only in the homes of educated and pious mothers that great men are born." (Advaita Ashrama 1985d, p. 489).

Education for Physical Development

Swamiji stressed education for physical development. He said that the young people can be nearer to heaven through football than through the Gita. This does not mean that he ruled out the role of the Gita, Rather it means that he found the role important. Unless the physical body is in proper condition, one cannot understand the Gita. He said that strength is goodness and weakness is sin. Brahmacharya is a useful tool for physical development. He said that body and mind must run together: "Walk in the mornings and evenings and do physical labour. Body and mind must run parallel"(Advaita Ashrama 1986, pp. 171-172). Sri Aurobindo (1998, p. 518) said that "One development of the utmost value is the awakening of the essential instinctive body consciousness which can see and do what is necessary without any indication from mental thought and which is equivalent in the body to swift insight in the mind and spontaneous and rapid decision in the will." The Mother (2002, p. 12) said that "All education of the body should begin at birth and continue throughout life. It is never too soon to begin nor too late to continue".

Yoga as Education

Swamiji gave emphasis on the role of concentration, meditation and yoga in education. He said: "The science of Yoga claims that it has discovered the laws which develop this personality, and by proper attention to those laws and methods, each one can grow and strengthen his personality." (Advaita Ashrama 1963, p. 16). Swamiji gave following meaning of Yoga. "To the worker, it is union between men and the whole of humanity; to the mystic, between his lower and higher self; to the lover, the union between himself and the God of love and to the philosopher, it is the union of all existence. This is what is meant by yoga" (Advaita Ashrama 1963, p. 388). Das (2010, p. 9) stated that "According to Sri Aurobindo, Yoga is practical psychology". According to Joshi (2010, p. 61) "Yoga is primarily and distinctly concerned with spiritual experience, and although in its integrality, it embraces all domains of knowledge, physical and supra-physical, its means are distinctively spiritual." There are many types of yoga such as Bhakti Yoga, Hatha yoga, Japa yoga, Gnyana Yoga, Kriya yoga, Laya yoga, Pasupata yoga, Purnanga Yoga, Raja yoga, Sakti yoga, etc. However, according to Swamiji "Our various yogas do not conflict with each other; each of them takes us to the same goal and makes us perfect." (Advaita Ashrama 1972, p. 92). The term 'Yoga,' to some religious leaders, appears as part of Hindu religion. However, the fact remains that majority of schools, throughout the world, have prayer classes at the starting of the day's work. These prayer classes are in fact part of 'Japa yoga'. "At the basis of the science of japa is the ancient perception of sages all over the world that creation proceeds from sound." (Pandit 1959, pp.3-4). Getting by heart and reciting verses and even organising recitation competitions among students are generally the practice found in all high quality schools. Recitations are part of Japa yoga, which develop the power of concentration in students. The founder of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Pondicherry, The Mother said that

“I would like them (the Government) to recognise Yoga as education, not so much for ourselves, but it will be good for the country.

Matter will be transformed, that will be a solid base. Life will be divinised. Let India take the lead.”
(The Mother 2002, p.252)

The Mother gave stress on education through yoga. She very much desired that yogic method of learning to be instilled in the students of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Pondicherry, which grew up under her direct guidance and where she also took classes. She said that “In all the sections, Primary, Secondary and Higher Course, the children will follow yogic methods in their education and prepare and try to bring down new knowledge. So, all the students can be said to be doing yoga.” (The Mother 2002, p.179) Texts pertaining to education system in ancient India tell about such practices in the institutions which used to be in forests and used to be managed directly by the seers. National Policy on Education 1986 (With Modifications Undertaken in 1992) stated that “As a system, which promotes an integrated development of body and mind, Yoga will receive special attention. Efforts will be made to introduce Yoga in all schools. To this end, it will be introduced in teacher training courses.” (MHRD 1992, p. 41). Of course, it has to be noted that the yoga meant for school children may need to be limited to yogic exercises for training of body, mind and emotions.

Broader Concept of Religion, Spirituality and Education

At the Parliament of Religions convened in September 1893 at Chicago, United States, Swamiji created a sensation. While other delegates spoke of their own faiths and creeds, Vivekananda spoke of the God of all, the source and essence of every faith. His call for religious harmony and acceptance of all religions brought him great acclaim. Religion should not bother about erecting temples or arranging lectures or organisations. It should stress realisation. Giving stress on the importance of spiritualism, Swami Vivekananda said that “Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas.” (Advaita Ashrama 1964, p. 221). Swami Vivekananda said that “Religion is realisation; not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes. That is religion.” (Advaita Ashrama 1963, p. 396). A true religion tolerates and embraces all persons, irrespective of their religion. “The religion which Swami Vivekananda preached was one which he claimed to be compatible with modern science.” (Conrad 1964, p.22). Writing on Swami Vivekananda’s life, Rolland (1992, p. 257) stated that “To him religion was the fellow citizen of every thinking man, and its only enemy was intolerance.” Swami Vivekananda believed that every religion is inspired by certain true eternal principles. (Swami Prabhananda 2003, p. 241). Swamiji saw the same God in every religion. According to him, the essence of all religion is same. There should not be any religious hatred. In similar vein of thought, Sivananda (1962a, p. 9) said that “The essence of all religions is the same. Only non-essentials differ. Real religion is above mind and sense. Real religion is above ceremonies and rituals. Real religion begins when one has gone beyond the petty customs, manners, and conventions. Mahatma Gandhi said that “I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are all God given, and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed.” (Navajivan Publishing House 1968a, p. 226)

The meaning and scope ‘Spirituality’ vary from one culture to another. For some, it is another name of religion. For a few others, it is above religion. The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) of United Kingdom (2015, p. 36) stated that

“The spiritual development of pupils is shown by their:

**ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people’s feelings and values;*

**sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible;*

**use of imagination and creativity in their learning; *willingness to reflect on their experiences.”*

In the above statement, religion is accepted as part of spirituality. According to Sri Aurobindo, spirituality is a state of mind above limits of religion. Every individual should not limit oneself to religious experiences. One needs to be broader than the widest horizons, loftier than the highest Kanchenjunga and profounder than the deepest oceans. Highest spirituality is far above that lower stage of seeking which is governed by religious form and dogma. It lives in an experience that is unintelligible to the formal religious mind (Sri Aurobindo 1919, p. 15). According to Swamiji, a student needs to study religious scriptures so as to develop the knowledge-base of one's own religion. He said that "I look upon religion as the inner most core of education". (Advaita Ashrama 1985a, p. 231). He gave stress on religious education. Swami Yatiswaranada (1995, p. 385) said that "When the Swami perceived that religion should be the firm foundation on which the great edifice of education was to be built, he had in mind no particular religion, but a universal religion." The University Education Commission (1948-49) pointed out importance of spiritual training and silent meditation. The Commission stated that "If we exclude spiritual training in our institutions, we would be untrue to our historical development." (Radhakrishnan 1949, p. 203). The Education Commission (1964-66) stated that "We believe that India should strive to bring science and the values of the spirit together and in harmony, and thereby pave the way for the eventual emergence of a society which would cater to the needs of the whole man and not only to a particular fragment of his personality." (Kothari 1966, p. 37).

Stress on Meditation, Silence and Pranayama

Swami Vivekananda suggested exercises for developing power of concentration and meditation for perfecting the mind. He gave importance to meditation. "There is no knowledge without the power of meditation." (Advaita Ashrama 1985b, p. 230). On April 3 1900, in his talk delivered at the Washington Hall, San Francisco, United States, Swami Vivekananda stated that

"There are three stages in meditation. The first is what is called [Dhâranâ], concentrating the mind upon an object. I try to concentrate my mind upon this glass, excluding every other object from my mind except this glass. But the mind is wavering . . . When it has become strong and does not waver so much, it is called [Dhyâna], meditation. And then there is a still higher state when the differentiation between the glass and myself is lost - [Samâdhi or absorption]." (Advaita Ashrama 1985b, p. 228).

According to Swamiji, the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. Sri Aurobindo (1998, p. 445) stated that "By meditation we correct the restless wandering of the mind and train it like an athlete to economise all its energies and fix them on the attainment of some desirable knowledge or self-discipline." According to Swami Sivananda (1962b, p. 125), "Meditation is prolonged concentration. It helps the aspirant to face life with strength, joy and liveliness. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore pointed out that spiritual life is the emancipation of consciousness. Spirituality can make human being come close to its eternal being, which is the ineffable beauty. An individual needs the pure and perfect note of a spiritual ideal in order to fit him/ her for the complications of later years. Tagore said that "I believe in the hour of meditation, and I set aside fifteen minutes in the morning and fifteen minutes in the evening for that purpose." (Tagore 1917, p. 145). According to him, when students cannot meditate, they can remain quiet or in his Santiniketan campus, during meditation time watch observe squirrels running up the trees. In his write-up on the spiritual experience of Muslim saints, Hussien (2010, pp. 273-274), stated that "Meditation in the Sufi course means undisturbed concentration and full attention to God". According to Krishnamurti (1994, p. 139), meditation is the endless space where thought cannot enter and provides ecstasy to the eye, to the brain and to the heart. According to Mahatma Gandhi,

"Silence is looked upon as a very important thing among our people. Samadhi means silence. *Muni* (sage) and *mauna* (sage-hood, silence) are both derived from the same root. It is true that when we practices silence at first, many thoughts enter our minds and we even begin to doze. Silence is intended to remedy these defects." (Navajivan Publishing House 1968c, p. 302).

Half a century ago, the author worked in a Christian missionary managed school. Students had a lunch hour break for one hour and the teachers had the break for one hour. Students of upper classes were assigned duty of making the class students observe silence during the half an hour of lunch break of teachers. In

certain classes, the students had to put their head on the desk and sleep. This is in fact an exercise for developing concentration, that can be extended to development of mental silence. India, being a secular country may need to consider introducing concentration (observing silence) for five minutes every day in the first period of every teacher. This strategy may not have any objection from any religious group.

Swami Vivekananda gave stress on practicing pranayama. He stated that

“Prana means the vital force in one’s own body, Ayama means controlling them. There are three sorts of Pranayama, the very simple, the middle, and the very high. Pranayama is divided into three parts: filling, restraining, and emptying. When you begin with twelve seconds it is the lowest Pranayama; when you begin with twenty four seconds it is the middle Pranayama; that Pranayama is the best which begins with thirty-six seconds. In the lowest kind of Pranayama there is perspiration, in the medium kind, quivering of the body, and in the highest Pranayama levitation of the body and influx of great bliss.” (Advaita Ashrama 1972, p. 191).

Emphasis on the Learning of Sanskrit

Swamiji gave stress on the learning of Sanskrit. He said: "Sanskrit and prestige go together in India. As soon as you have that, none dare say anything against you." (Advaita Ashrama 1964, p. 299). Sri Aurobindo (1997, p. 126) discussing about Indian culture stated that "The great mass of Sanskrit literature is a literature of human life; certain philosophic and religious writings are devoted to the withdrawal from it, but even these are not as a rule contemptuous of its value." Pandit (1964, p. 60) referring to neglect of Sanskrit language during the period of rise of Buddhism, stated that “Even the Great Buddha made one false step when stopped the Sanskrit language being studied by the masses. He wanted rapid and immediate results and translated and preached in the language of the day, Pali”. According to Mahatma Gandhi, “Every cultured Indian will know in addition to his own provincial language, if a Hindu, Sanskrit; if a Mahomedan, Arabic; if a Parsee, Persian; and all, Hindi.” (Navajivan Publishing House 1968b, p. 155) The Mother suggested that Sanskrit should be the national language of India. In answer to a question related to Sanskrit she said that

“Yes. Not Sanskrit from the point of view of scholarship, but Sanskrit, a Sanskrit - how to put it? - that opens the door to all the languages of India. I think that is indispensable. The ideal would be, in a few years, to have a rejuvenated Sanskrit as the representative language of India, that is, a Sanskrit spoken in such a way that - Sanskrit is behind all the languages of India and it should be that. This was Sri Aurobindo’s idea, when we spoke about it.” (The Mother 2002, p. 414).

Learning of Sanskrit at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Pondicherry, founded by The Mother, starts from Kindergarten.

Methods of Teaching

Swamiji pointed out effectiveness of the ancient system of education, in which a student could learn a great deal by having *close contact* with the teacher. The character and *personality* of the teacher influence the student a lot. Swamiji said that a teacher cannot teach *a child to grow* but can help him / her grow. The teacher’s help can be in the form of suggestions.

“A child teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way. What you can do is not of the positive *nature*, but of the negative. You 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 around it, see that it is not killed by anything, and there your work *stops*. You *cannot do anything else*. The rest is a manifestation from within its own nature. So with the education of a child; *a child educates itself*.” (Advaita Ashrama 1985b, p. 55).

He also said: "You see, 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." (Advaita Ashrama 1985a, p. 366). Sri Aurobindo (2003, p. 384) said that

“The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or taskmaster; he is a helper and guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually train the pupil’s mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowledge to him, he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface.”

Sukumaran Nair (1987, p. 43) stated that Swamiji was of the opinion that “The modern teacher should take the ancient guru as a model and follow his examples.” Swamiji suggested that the method should first make the child concentrate on learning from concrete situations and objects and gradually proceed to abstract situations and objects. The teacher should *give more* weight to sharpening of the human mind than on acquisition of information. In order to develop powers of the mind, the learner must develop the power of concentration. The learner has to be initiated in the learning process through discussion. The teacher should not impose his ideas, but should try to offer them. The teacher must stress positive suggestions.

Teacher (Spiritual Teacher)

According to Swamiji, the guru may be even an animal, a tree or a non-living object. He did not restrict education to formal institutions. He described the story of Satyakama who got lessons from a big bull, fire, a swan and a bird called Madgu, *in addition to his human teacher*. Swamiji said: "The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow." (Advaita Ashrama 1963, p. 15). Life can become a perpetual field of learning. The teacher, according to Swamiji, must be of sound character and personality. There must be purity of heart. The teacher has to be pure to make his/her words valuable. The teacher must be well versed in the scriptures. Love must be the medium through which the teacher can transmit knowledge. The teacher must be aware of the divine presence in a student. Majumdar (1963, p. 473) stated that “The personal influence of the teacher in imparting education is very great indeed. And that is why the Swami advocates residential educational institutions where students and teachers can live together and have an exchange of ideas.” Swamiji was of the opinion that the external, human teacher offers only the suggestions which raise the internal teacher inside the learner to take up its activities.

Suggestions for Improving Process of Education

Swamiji was against rote learning. He said that if education is restricted to information gathering, the libraries could be the greatest sages. He criticised the on-going system of education. He said: “The present system of education is all wrong. The mind is crammed with facts before it knows how to think. Control of the mind should be taught first.” (Advaita Ashrama 1985c, p. 280). This observation of Swamiji is valid today, even after a century. Swamiji pointing out the importance of developing power of concentration and detaching the mind at will, stated that:

“To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. If I had to do my education over again and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument, I could collect facts at will.” (Advaita Ashrama 1985d, pp. 38-39).

According to Swamiji, the ideal education is not concerned with the filling of mind with a lot of facts. It is involved with the process of perfection of instruments and getting complete mastery over one's mind.

CONCLUSION

Swami Vivekananda’s ideas on education, although surfaced two centuries ago, when the nation was under foreign rule, are still valid. Swamiji had given stress on the mass education. Although, since 2002 due to 86th amendment of the constitution (Ministry of Law & Justice 2002), education has become a fundamental right, the nation has not been able to ensure that all poor children attend schools. The government is yet to take care of the children who do not go to school as they are busy in taking care of their younger brothers and sisters or helping parents in supplementing family income. Due to above mentioned amendment of the constitution, article 45 of the Directive Principles, now states that “The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.” Hence, the

government may need to ensure that one year old poor children go to balwadis / day care centres and at age 3, go to preschool classes, not Anganwadis. In spite of SSA, it is a fact that in many primary schools, there is not a teacher for each class. Central government may give assistance to the States for the purpose of opening two pre-school classes in each government primary school or other schools having primary classes and merge anganwadis with preschool classes. Swamiji had also given stress on Sanskrit education. The central government may consider having a spoken Sanskrit test for all pre-school and primary school teachers so that they can teach Sanskrit. Government may give a monetary incentive for the purpose. There may be Sanskrit classes for the purpose through Doordarshan. The government may also consider modifying three language formula to make Sanskrit learning a part of school curriculum. The nation may give stress on physical education by providing physical education in schools throughout the year. Introduction of concentration for a few minutes / silent prayers with or without accompanied instrumental music may be valuable for strengthening mind of the students and teachers. Possibility of exposure of universally accepted principles found in scriptures of various religions may make the social fabric covered by religious tolerance. Possibility of prayers from various religions sung in school assemblies may be explored. Teaching yoga assans may be introduced in schools if approved by the parents of the children. Suitably screened community members may be involved in such training programmes. Preliminary ideas about various types of yoga may be part of moral and spiritual education for school students and also of teacher trainees. Course content of orientation / induction programmes for higher education teachers organised at various levels need to include preliminary ideas about varieties of yoga, and essence of all religions that have universal acceptance. May be the new national policy on education being formulated by the central government will take above suggestions into consideration.

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