

# Educational Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and Socio-Cultural Awakening of the Bengalis

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**Abstract:** The British government introduced Western education first in Bengal during the nineteenth century to produce clerks to run the administration cheaply and create a group of loyal servants. However, the educated Bengali bhadrakok or the elites of Bengali society, who emerged as a renter class during the British period, soon became the object of racist ridicule by the British. As a result, a critique against blind imitation of western civilization was developed among a section of the Hindu Bengali bhadrakok. In the light of these developments, this article tries to evaluate the educational ideas of Swami Vivekananda (original name Narendranath Datta, 1863-1902), a great Hindu monk of India, and attempts to find out how his educational philosophy contributed to the socio-cultural rejuvenation of the Bengalis. This article found that his critique of the colonial educational policy and his ideas on Man-making education enlightened the Bengalis and contributed significantly to the national awakening of the Indians. Moreover, his educational philosophy does not lose its validity even today.

**Abstrak:** Pemerintah Inggris memperkenalkan pendidikan Barat pertama kali di Bengal selama abad kesembilan belas untuk menghasilkan juru tulis untuk menjalankan administrasi dengan murah dan menciptakan sekelompok pelayan yang setia. Namun, bhadrakok Bengali terpelajar atau elit masyarakat Bengali, yang muncul sebagai kelas penyewa selama periode Inggris, segera menjadi objek ejekan rasis oleh Inggris. Akibatnya, kritik terhadap tiruan buta peradaban barat dikembangkan di antara bagian bhadrakok Hindu Bengali. Berdasarkan perkembangan tersebut, artikel ini mencoba mengevaluasi gagasan pendidikan Swami Vivekananda (nama asli Narendranath Datta, 1863-1902), seorang biksu Hindu besar India, dan mencoba untuk mengetahui bagaimana filsafat pendidikannya berkontribusi pada sosial- peremajaan budaya Bengali. Artikel ini menemukan bahwa kritiknya terhadap kebijakan pendidikan kolonial dan ide-idenya tentang pendidikan penciptaan manusia mencerahkan orang Bengali dan berkontribusi secara signifikan pada kebangkitan nasional orang India. Selain itu, filosofi pendidikannya tidak kehilangan validitasnya bahkan hingga hari ini.

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## INTRODUCTION

This article attempts to highlight and to analyse the educational ideas of Swami Vivekananda (original name Narendranath Datta, 1863-1902), a great Hindu monk of India, philosopher and a chief disciple of the nineteenth century Indian mystic Ramkrishna Paramhansa, in a particular juncture of the second half of the nineteenth century when the Western education challenged to obscure Bengal's as well as India's traditional culture. During this period, the Western educated Indian started look down upon their own culture without having proper knowledge of their great Indian heritage and without knowing the real intention of the British to introduce Western education. Swami Vivekananda's ideas on education gave a new direction of socio-cultural awakening of not only the Bengalis but also the Indians.



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Education is a man-making and nation making process. Education has a vital role in the development of a nation. British dominion was first established in Bengal. Calcutta was the heartland of British commercial activities and the first capital of British India. Naturally Western education first introduced in Bengal. However, the influence of the West of the nineteenth century cannot be equated with 'rationalism' or 'post-Enlightenment modernity' in any senses as the main objective of the Western education was to produce clerks to run the administration cheaply and to create 'an alienated loyalist group'. (Sarkar, 1997, p. 171). However, the Bengali *bhadralok* became profitable by accepting this western education in the first half of the nineteenth century. The *bhadralok* or the elites of Bengali Society emerged as a renter class who enjoyed intermediary tenurial rights which excluded the vast majority of Bengali Muslims and lower caste Hindus from the benefits of land ownership and the particular privileges it provided. They acquired western education. This 'modern' intelligentsia was drawn mainly from the middle and lower strata of 'rent receiving hierarchy'. They considered Western education as an avenue for advancement under the British government. Some were recruited into the Bureaucracy through whom the British ruled Bengal. It is true, however, that only the lower levels of administrative posts were assigned to the Indians. Although they established themselves in Calcutta and district towns, the Western educated *bhadralok* retained strong ties with the countryside. (Chatterji, 1995, pp. 4-8). Nevertheless, the educated Bengali *bhadralok* soon became the object of racist ridicule by the British. Even from the second half of the nineteenth century, a section of the *bhadralok* began to be disillusioned with the Western culture and also frightened that this culture made the young-educated Hindus contemptuous of their own culture. As a result, a critique against blind imitation of western civilization was developed among them. In this backdrop Swami Vivekananda came up with his educational philosophy. His philosophies not only showed the weakness of the contemporary education system prevailing in India, but also restore the faith of the youths in their indigenous culture.

Various research works have been published recently on Swami Vivekananda's ideas on education. For example, Sarkar (2015, pp. 45-58) has tried to show the moral and spiritual significance of Vivekananda's educational philosophy and its necessity in the twenty-first century India when the nation is facing crises of moral and religious values.

Sanyal's work (2016, pp. 453-486) has shown how Vivekananda's ideas on education were so precious and relevant to be practiced in modern age and realized they were at his time having important implications for UNESCO. Dr. Behera (2018, pp. 786-795) on the other hand has analyzed Swami Vivekananda's concept of Man, characteristics of Man, concept and elements of Man-Making Education and Role of Teacher in Man-Making Education. Sarkar (2020, pp. 1-10) in his research article has attempted to show the implication of Swami Vivekananda's educational thoughts in today's materialistic educational system which gives no importance to human values and increases the difference between rich and poor.

Most of these works have highlighted the importance of Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy in twenty-first century's India. Sanyal's work, however, is different from the rest and it has added a new dimension to this study by bringing UNESCO. But these works have neglected the implication of Vivekananda's philosophy in the time in which he belonged. The present study tries to fill up that lacuna.

The aim of this study is to highlight the various socio-cultural problems that sections of the Bengali *bhadralok* were facing. It will be seen in this article that British arrogance, racial discrimination, social humiliation and divide and rule policy made the Hindu *bhadralok* despondent. This study also aims to show how blind imitation of the west by the educated youths and ignoring India's traditional culture as inferior created crises in socio-cultural identity of the Bengali Hindus during the second half of the nineteenth century and how a section of Bengali Hindu nationalist thinkers responded to this challenge. Finally, the study aims to show Vivekananda's educational philosophy rejuvenates the faith of the youth in India's traditional culture. His educational thought brought about a national awakening.

## METHOD

This work aims at an enquiry into a social and cultural history of some ideas which emerged at a particular historical juncture and moulded the subsequent course of history of Bengal. The paper will be organized in the following structure. The author will initially deal with the problems that section of the Bengali Hindu *bhadralok* was facing because of the discriminatory and exploitative nature of the British rule in the second half of the nineteenth centuries. Then he will trace the development of a new trend in Bengal's socio-cultural ambience whereby

the sections of the Hindu nationalist thinkers responded the challenges of western civilization. In doing this, they took recourse to Hindu religion, but they brought some reform in it to make it suitable for modern age. Thereafter, the author will highlight how Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy revealed the hollowness of contemporary education system and teach the nation what should be the real meaning of education. His educational ideas created a stir among the Indians in general and Bengalis in particular. Finally, the author will conclude the essay with a recapitulation of issues raised. For this study the author has consulted various kinds of publications and personal writings of Swami Vivekananda to develop insights into the context and purpose of his ideas.

#### **DISCRIMINATORY AND EXPLOITATIVE NATURE OF COLONIAL RULE**

Western education created a section of anglicized Indians during the first half of the nineteenth century. Western education first introduced in Bengal. Naturally, the educated Bengalis started imitating the West first. They began to consider Western culture as a sign of 'modernity, progressiveness and greatness' to them and Indian culture as inferior or backward as comparing to that of the West. But during the second half of the nineteenth century situation began to change. The experience of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 prevented the British government from taking any initiatives for the social and educational reform. However, their outlook towards Indian did not change much. They considered the Indian as an inferior to the British in the fields of education, politics, and economy everywhere. In the political field Hindu *Bhadralok* of Bengal was grown increasingly disillusioned with the parliamentary system of government from the last half of the nineteenth century. The "Divide and Rule" policy of the British government, racial discrimination and arrogance of the colonial masters, unfair treatment in matters of pay and promotion, made the Hindu *bhadralok* angry. (Sarkar, 1973, pp. 23-24).

The Hindu *bhadralok* also dissatisfied with the British government's policy of partiality towards the Muslim community in the field of education and job sectors. As a result of this policy, they were facing problem of gradual decreasing rate of job opportunities. The British government adopted this policy to cripple and to divide the Hindus and thereby to weaken India's national strength considerably. With this aim in view the government tried to gradually win over the next largest community

namely the Muslims, who had earlier failed to take the fullest advantage of western education, to their side. The policy of 'divide and rule' provoked the dormant national spirit among a section of the Hindu *bhadralok* and gave birth to a new phase of national struggle for freedom. (Basu, 2013, p. 2).

There was a tendency among the British to socially humiliate the Bengalis. For example, James Mill's projection of the Hindus as 'ignorant', 'superstitious' and devoid of a sense of History (Mill, 1817, pp. 115-117) or W. W Hunter's reluctance to recognize the Bengalis as a nation as they had no history of their own (Hunter, 1868, p. 87) only worsened race relation between the rulers and the ruled. Further, there was also a tendency among the British to underestimate the Hindu *bhadralok* character as effete and weak. This was particularly visible in case of recruitment to army after the Mutiny of 1857. The British government developed a new theory for the recruitment in the Indian army. This theory, classified Marathas, Rajputs and Sikh as manly and the effete Bengali as unmanly and cowardly, consequently excluded the Bengalis from the Indian Army. Lord Roberts, who was the Commander-in Chief of the Indian Army between 1885 to 1893 and who had a general disregard for the Bengalis, was the inventor of this theory (Chowdhury, p. 2001, pp. 4-5). Even this characterization was limited to only Bengali Hindus. Muslims to some extent were remained outside the limit of this characterization. (Chowdhury, 2001, pp. 4-5). In the context of limited employment opportunities, the need to transform the effeminate self-image became an absolute necessity.

#### **EMERGENCE OF NEW TRENDS IN BENGAL'S SOCIO-CULTURAL AMBIANCE**

The changes, which were taking place in the social, political and economic arenas of Bengal, developed a new tendency among the Hindu community of Bengal. The educated Hindu Bengalis did not give up their Western education and rationalism. But they realized that this rationalism did not make any appeal to ordinary masses. Therefore, they felt the need to explain Hindu religion with rationality and to make it suitable for the new age through reform. They also conceived that in this way, the new Hindu religion could compete with the western rational consciousness. As a result, humanism and social reform merged with the traditional Hinduism. These different social and cultural ideas made the basis for opening of a new chapter in the history of the social and political transformation in Bengal in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In these changing circumstances, Rajnarain Basu (1826-99), one of the best-known prose writers in Bengali in the nineteenth century and a prominent Brahmo leader, and Nabagopal Mitra (1840-94), a Bengali playwright, poet, essayist and patriot, were instrumental in promoting in Bengal some of the earliest ideas of nationalism based on Hindu superiority and exclusivity. Rajnarain promoted an exclusive Hindu nationalism based on what he perceived to be the superiority of Hindu religion and culture in comparison to Christianity and 'European civilization'. He claimed that the Hindus had forgotten their glorious past under the British rule and this nation had to be rejuvenated with divine providence. (Basu, 1879, pp. 90-96). He deplored the fact that his countrymen felt proud of the English education, and found nothing good in their own culture, literature, music, manners, customs and dress etc. Rajnarayan felt the necessity of stemming the 'tide of denationalisation'. With this aim in viewing, he started a society in 1861 called "Society for the Promotion of National feeling among the educated Natives of Bengal" at Midnapore. He issued a prospectus in the form of the aforesaid pamphlet. Here he strongly attacked the Young Bengal and the anglicized Bengali *babus* who in every sphere of their life imitated the English. (Bagal, 1944, pp. 444-445). The Young Bengal's affiliation to 'bourgeois liberalism' (Sarkar, 1985, pp. 34) and the disciples of Naoroji who had deep admiration for the English rule and their sense of justice also came to be serious attack. They spoke of representing the whole nation, but in reality, their activity was limited to a miniscule section of English educated people. They were detached from the common masses as they used English as their medium of instruction. However, his society would use vernacular for its daily activity, so it would reach the commoner more than the organizations of the liberal politicians. He also gave nationalism a spiritual base and made Aryanism the basis of Hindu nationality. (Sen, 1993, p. 57). Nabagopal Mitra in a similar fashion made Hinduism the basis of national unity in India. An element of geographical nationalism also inhered in his thought as he stated that 'Hindu nationality' embraced all Hindus in India regardless of region or linguistic difference. The fact is that both Rajnarain Bose and Nabagopal Mitra and other leaders of the Hindu Mela talked of patriotism, freedom and Hinduism in the same breath. In fact, they found no contradiction in this. (Ghatak, 1991, p. 38).

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MAN-MAKING EDUCATION AND NATIONAL AWAKENING

Swami Vivekananda in his educational philosophy had provided new rays of hope. His educational philosophy was not confined to mere bookish education. It had a broader aspect of man-making. He had a greater ideal of well-being of the entire human civilization. But at the same time, he took a vow to re-establish the self-esteem of his countrymen. He had also taken Western education before taking to ascetic life. He accepted an illiterate saintly person Sri Ramakrishna as his master. In his estimation, Ramakrishna 'fully harmonized the intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual elements of a human being and was the role model for the future'. (Vivekananda, 2013, p. 12). Ramakrishna made deep impact on his mind and acted as a catalyst for the transformation in Vivekananda's life from householder to a monk. However, the middle-class patriotism of his young age which had concealed due to his deep attraction towards mysticism, revived again under the urge to make Indians self-conscious of their self-respect. He went to western countries to collect source materials to accomplish this new goal. He did not go to the United States of America to take lessons from the West. In this regard, Swami Nikhilananda of *Advaita Ashrama* wrote:

He wanted to tell the West that the health of India and the sickness of India were the concern of the whole world. If India sank, the whole world would sink with her. For the outside world, in turn, needed India, her knowledge of the soul and of God, her spiritual heritage, her ideal of genuine freedom through detachment and renunciation; if needed these in order to extricate itself from the sharp claws of the monster of materialism. (Nikhilananda, 2012, p. 113)

Swami Vivekananda observed that the West gave priority to self-interests of individual, money-making and material pleasure. The derivative Western culture, according to him, led the young Indians to express contempt for their indigenous culture. However, he never said that India did not require Western technology or any other help. (Vivekananda, 1977, pp. 105-106; Vivekananda, 2016-b, pp. 472-474). On the contrary, he expressed his admiration of the developments of Europe and America. Meanwhile, he never felt apologies for the state of his motherland. He always spoke about his motherland with pride and respect. At the World's Parliament of Religions, which was held on 11 September 1893 in Chicago, he declared avowedly:

I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosoms the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. (Vivekananda, 2016-a, p. 3).

His preaching in the West instilled self-respect and self-confidence in the Bengali as well as in the Indian psyche and helped them in their search for cultural identity.

Swami Vivekananda was also critical of the education system prevailing in India. This education only created clerks, lawyers or at most the Deputy Magistrates, but did not built character, increase the power of mind or expand the intellect. Without these features, according to him, one could not stand on his feet. (Vivekananda, 1957, p. 7). He did not totally discard the western education. But he wanted an assimilation of the two. In his own words:

What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men instead of seeking for service may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day. (Vivekananda, 1957, pp. 7-8)

The end and aim of all education and training, according to him, should be man making. Education, he continued, should not be the amount of information that was put into one's brain and ran riot there and undigested throughout the life. Rather, education should produce ideas like character-building, man-making, life-building and assimilation of ideas. If one had these ideas, he or she should be more educated than the others. What India wanted at that moment were muscles of irons and nerves of still, gigantic will power which nothing could resist, and which could unveil the mysteries and secret of the universe and would 'accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean, meeting death face to face'. In short, according to him, the man-making religion or the man-making

education India wanted at that moment all round. (Vivekananda, 1957, pp. 6-8).

Therefore, the man-making education he talked off would help the Indians to build a healthy and dynamic frame of mind and this in turn would enable them to overcome the obstacles of various kinds. These obstacles could be classified in two parts- internal and external. The internal obstacles would come in cases with the teacher-student relationship, the student's capacity to make personal judgements or to adapt to changes, and the student's mental or physical capacities building. The external obstacles might be seen in the form of unfair distribution of educational resources and opportunities, inequalities in economic development and socio-political instabilities. He suggested various remedies to overcome these obstacles. In order to remove the barriers that prevailed between the teachers and students in contemporary institutionalized education system, he suggested, that a teacher should not only be a knowledgeable person, at the same time he should also possessed the ability to infuse in the students a conviction that they were both truly one Spirit, cultivating in the student a feeling of dignity and self-respect. The students, on the other hand, should cultivate the spirit of *śraddhā*- that was, faith in himself, humility, submission and veneration for the teacher. A staunch believer in the philosophical tradition of *Vedānta*, Vivekananda wanted that the relationship of teacher and students should be based on the higher principles of *Upanishad* where the students should venerate their teacher as *deva* (i.e. a person fit to be worshipped or highly honoured) and the teacher-students relationship should be based on respect and mutual trust. Another problem of the contemporary education system was that it did not encourage all round development of a student. It neglected training of the mind, spiritual development, character-building, etc. But Vivekananda stated on the basis of *Vedānta* philosophy that only when wisdom, peace, strength, unselfishness, loving concern for others and other virtues became evident in a person, then the person transformed from a sensuous being to a true human being. (Vivekananda, 2013, pp. 21-26). In order to rectify this shortcoming, he recommended the adoption of spiritual and ethical culture. He believed religion should be the 'innermost core of education'. (Vivekananda, 1959, p. 231). But by religion he did not mean any particular religion. Swami Prabhānanda, former General Secretary of Belur Math and a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, commented in this regard, 'Religion to him meant the true eternal principles

that inspire every religion. This is what touches the heart and has the potential to effect desirable changes in one's motivation. It also gives mental strength and broadness of outlook.' (Vivekananda, 2013, p. 26). Character building was another element of his educational scheme. Character-building education, according to him, should focus on teaching what is right and wrong. (Vivekananda, 2013, p. 27). Thus, he pointed out the shortcomings and imbalances of contemporary education system introduced by the British. The remedies he suggested to overcome these shortcomings were based on traditional Hindu ideal, which the colonial masters looked down upon. Thereby, his suggestions served as an eye-opener to the youth of India. His remedies helped in restoring their belief in India's pristine glorious traditions.

However, his suggestions to overcome the external obstacles also played a crucial role in regenerating the minds of the youth of India. He felt pain to see unequal distribution of education in India. The downward filtration theory of education introduced by the colonial masters with the hope that education would go down from the rich to the poor did not yield expected results. The class and caste barriers in Indian society deprived the poorer section of the benefit of education. Vivekananda was of the view that this situation put impediments in the path of national development. Unless and until education and culture reached to the masses the nation could not rise. In his letter to Swami Brahmananda (original name Rakhil Chandra Ghosh), the 1<sup>st</sup> President of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, in 1895 (date not mentioned) he stated:

If there is inequality in nature, still there must be equal chance for all—or if greater for some and for some less- the weaker should be given more chance than the strong. In other words, a Brahmin is not so much in need of education as a Chandāla. If the son of a Brahmin needs one teacher, that of a Chandāla needs ten. For, greater help must be given to him whom nature has not endowed with acute intellect from birth. It is a mad man who carries coals to Newcastle. The poor, the downtrodden, the ignorant, let these be your God. (Vivekananda, 1944, p. 253).

He insisted that it was the duty of the upper classes, who had received their education at the expense of the poor, to come forward and uplift the poor through education and other means. (Vivekananda, 2013, pp. 28-29).

He also advocated for the education of women. He felt great pain by observing the miserable

condition of women in India. It was his firm conviction that a nation could only rise by paying respect to women. He considered education for women was more important than abolition of early marriage and widow remarriage. He proposed equal education for men and women. As an outcome of that education, they would themselves be able to know what God for them was and what was bad and would eschew the latter. (Vivekananda, 1956, p. 493).

His man-making religion also included the removal of socio-economic inequalities in Indian society. He observed painfully that how caste distinction segregated the Hindus in many water-tight compartments and created animosity among them. But unlike the Europeans and many Western educated Indians who blamed Hinduism for these imbalances in Indian society, he considered fundamental tenets of Hinduism never encouraged distinctions between men. The degeneration of India, according to him, came not because the laws and customs of the past were bad but because they were not allowed to be carried to their legitimate conclusions. (Vivekananda, 2019, p. 96). Further, caste, he continued, was not a religious institution, but a social one. Without knowing these facts, many social reformers considered caste as a religious institution and tried in vain to pull down caste and religion together. Hence, he argued, 'The Hindus must not give up his religion, but must keep religion within its proper limits and give freedom to society to grow.' (Vivekananda, 2016-c, p. 47). The solution to caste problem, according to him, was not complete abolition of caste system, but by giving back to the people their lost social individuality. He substantiated his point by suggesting that only through competition caste barriers were sure to remove. As a result, he commented, 'No man is prohibited from doing anything he pleases for his livelihood under the present Government'. (Vivekananda, 2016-c, p. 48). He also advised his fellow countrymen:

...forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian, and proudly proclaim, "I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother." Say, "The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahmin Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother." Thou, too, clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice: "The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, India's gods and goddesses are my God. India's society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my

old age." Say, brother: "The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good,". (Vivekananda, 2016-b, p. 477).

He believed that only education could improve the condition of downtrodden and thereby heal the miseries of India. In his letter to Srimati Sarala Ghoshal, editor of *Bhārati* dated 24 April 1897, he stated that the main reason for huge difference between the common people of East and West was lack of education. Through the spread of education, faith in one's own self would create among the ordinary poor people and this faith in one's own self would in turn wake up the inherent *Brahman* (the Supreme Being) in them. (Vivekananda, 1944, p. 368). The significance of education was great to him. By education, he meant, "The manifestation of perfection already in man" and "What a man 'learns' is really what he 'discovers' by taking the cover off his own soul which is a mine of infinite knowledge". (Vivekananda, 1957, p. 1). According to Swami Prabhananda, "manifestation indicates spontaneous growth, provided that the impediments, if any, are removed". He explains the term 'perfection' as 'the goal of actualising the highest human potential'. (Sanyal, 2016, p. 459).

Hence, in the case of socio-economic inequalities, Vivekananda sought the remedies in traditional Hindu culture. He also refuted the blames of the western educated Indians on the one hand and Europeans on the other that Hinduism was to be blame for the social discriminations in India. On the contrary, he differentiated between social and religious problems and tried to counterbalance the socio-economic imbalances by seeking their solutions in competition and proper education. He believed that it was fruitless to remodeled Indian society on European lines. But one had to embrace India as it was. In his words:

I see that India is a young and living organism. Europe also is young and living. Neither has arrived at such a stage of development that we can safely criticize its institutions. They are two great experiments, neither of which is yet complete. In India we have social communism, with the light of *Advaita* –that is spiritual communism. Thus, one consists of social institutions hedged in by individualistic thought, while the other is made up of individualist institutions within the hedge of communistic thought. Now we must help the Indian experiment as it is. Movement, which do not attempt to help things as they are, are from that point of view, no good...Never forget that a man is made great and perfect as much by his faults as by his virtues. Therefore, we must not seek to rob a nation of its character, even if it

could be proved that the character was all faults. (The Life of Swami Vivekananda, 2012, p. 135)

It does not mean that he recommended to accept the evil practices that entered into Hindu society. He wanted to say that transformation should come from within, not from outside. The reformers of the earlier period tried to impose the reform from above which did not produce any change in Hindu society: "They (the reformers) had not learnt the lesson that all is a growth from inside out, that all evolution is only a manifestation of a preceding involution. They did not know that the seed can only assimilate the surrounding elements but grows a tree in its own nature. Until all the Hindu race becomes extinct, and a new race takes possession of the land such a thing can never be –try East or West, India can never be Europe until she dies. (Vivekananda, 2016-b, p. 339). His teachings restored faith of the youth in Hindu religion and society. The youth of Bengal began to realize that Hinduism was not a moribund religion but still a young force which had stored rich treasure of spiritualism within its bosom. This spiritualism had a power to show path to nation building in India and could show ways of mental peace and salvation to the Western world.

Vivekananda's educational philosophy had also shown new direction in nationalist movement. It has been already mentioned that his educational philosophy was based on man-making religion. In the light of *Advaita Vedanta*, he gave emphasis on spiritual individualism. Unlike Europe, individualism in India, according to him, stood for worship of man, 'We Indians are MAN- worshippers, after all! Our God is man!' Here he meant the great individual man, 'the man of self-realisation, - Buddha, Krishna, the Guru, the Maha-Purusha'. But on another occasion, using the same word in an entirely different sense, he said, "This idea of man-worship exists in nucleus in India, but it has never been expanded. You must develop it. Make poetry, make art, of it. Establish the worship of the feet of beggars, as you had it in Mediaeval Europe. Make man-worshippers." (Nivedita, 1910, p. 99). Here by 'man-worship, he meant the worship of the manhood that existed in every man irrespective of their individual achievement of thought or character. (Nivedita, 1910, p. 99). He believed that freedom could not be attain unless the establishment of equality among all human being. Lord exists in all human being, so every man should follow the doctrine of sameness in 'all things, through all beings, seeing the same God in all'. He also commented:

"This is the way to freedom; inequality, the way to bondage. No man and no nation can attempt to gain physical freedom without physical freedom without physical equality, nor mental freedom without mental equality. Ignorance, inequality, and desire are the causes of human misery, and each follows the other inevitable union..." (Vivekananda, 2016-b, p. 320). His ideas had made immense impact on the Hindu nationalists of India. Bipin Chandra Pal wrote in this regard, "Under the Influence of Neo-Vedantism, associated to a large extent with the name of Late Swami Vivekananda, there has been at work a slow and silent process of liberalisation of old social ideas." (Pal, 1910, p. 40). Professor Hiren Mukherjee has written, "His (Vivekananda's) words of fire had reached everywhere in India and the revolutionaries owed much to him as they moved into action that in the late nineties of the last century put fear in the alien rulers. Even more direct was his impact on Bengal revolutionaries...of Chittagong Armoury Raid (1930). They all have avowed their debt to the cyclonic monk." (Mukherjee, 2010, p. 21).

## CONCLUSION

In the light of the above discussion, it can be said that Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy had given new directions to the Bengalis as well as Indians. His critiques against the contemporary education system introduced by the British colonial masters to produce obedient servants and his defense of Hindu tradition and culture served as an eye-opener to the Hindus. His teachings gave new impetus in the days of searching for cultural identity by the Hindus particularly in Bengal. His educational philosophy was based on the greater ideals of man-making religion and this religion would enable a person to overcome every obstacle of his life whether it would be internal obstacles in cases of teacher-student relationship, mental and physical developments of the students or external obstacles in the field of socio-economic imbalances and political subjugation. In the days of dominance of Western education and culture, when the youths of Bengal looked down upon their culture and tradition as moribund, Vivekananda advised to take recourse to traditional Hindu ideals to overcome the shortcomings of contemporary education system and to achieve the goal of actualising the highest human potential that already existed in man. Therefore, his suggestion that the more the Hindus would study the past, the more glorious would be their future and whoever would try to bring the past to the door of everyone, would be a great benefactor to his na-

tion (Vivekananda, 2019, p. 96) –does not lost its implications even today.

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