



Received: 19-05-2024
Accepted: 29-06-2024

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Swami Vivekananda Inspiration of Modern Youth in Social Development

Lalthlamuana Darlong

Assistant Professor, Ambekar College, Fatikroy, Tripura, India

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2024.4.4.3014>

Corresponding Author: **Lalthlamuana Darlong**

Abstract

The world is passing through rapid changes as never before in modern days. This transformation has immensely influence on the overall personality of people in general and youth in particular. Young people become vulnerable and problems of economy like corruption, political scams, poverty, unemployment, changing climate, inflation, lack of contribution in society, frustration, insecurity and inability to cope with the change. In spite of youth being potential source of energy, society is not benefitting enough from its

youthfulness because youth as a whole no not find any constructive role in the social development process. Therefore, it is importance as well as necessary to harness their energies towards social development for positive transformation of the society. Understanding Swami Vivekananda and his message and putting it across to youth could play an important role for social development. It is an attempt to study the role of youth in social development and its inspiration by Swami Vivekananda on youth.

Keywords: Inspiration, Participation, Social Development, Swami Vivekananda, Youth etc.

Introduction

The development and growth of a nation greatly depends upon proper utilization of its human resources. To utilize these resources, there is a need to convert human beings into human resources. Since the basic objective of development of a nation is to improve the welfare of the people, every nation strives hard not only to increase her wealth and productive resources but also to ensure better standard of living of her citizens by providing them with adequate food, clothing, house, medical facilities, education, etc. The main actors of social development are the people particularly the youth.

Youths are mighty force to reckon with. They can move mountains and transform nations. They have physical power, courage, sense of adventure and enthusiasm to explore the unknown. They are not bogged down with the chains of traditions and preconceptions. They can explore the untrodden path and create new society. Swami Vivekananda had aptly commented, give me a thousand youth with body of steel and courage of a lion and I shall transform the nation. The central idea is that we have to channelize this vast energy for constructive purposes so that they do not waste it in unproductive entertainment and wasteful activities or even worse anti social activities. There is urgent present need to put programmes and projects in place to cultivate constructive habits among youth and lead them to the best of their potentials. History is replete with examples of heroic deed of the youth and their contribution to national building. In the freedom struggle of our own country youths have contributed significantly. Now that we are a developed nation and want to forge ahead at global level, predominance of youth population is an opportunity and challenge. If we want our nation to become strong and grow then we must use our youth effectively. With seemingly increase in prosperity and expansion of commercial media, there are many temptations to get entrapped in deviant activities which will be harmful not only for them but also for nation. Therefore, Youth leadership is needed for bringing revolution in nations. We owe our leadership in information technology to his leadership. Are we ready for the change and handing over the leadership to youth? Have we created ground for them to emerge? Do we have enough organizations to nurture the youth for the challenging role they have to play in the nation and the world? (Mandal: 2012)^[10]. We are having a dangerous environment today where in our youth are increasingly being carried away by the attractions of crass consumerism and commercialization of human existence and they consider their life a success only if they 'belong' to this tribe of human achievers who are measuring their lives by how many millions they have made in the shortest possible time. The 'how' of making it has slipped the attention of many of them. Motivating them against this backdrop to consider the prospect of becoming a 'Social Entrepreneur' working for the thousands of deprived and disadvantaged fellow Indians is indeed more than a challenge. The key to the problem in my opinion lies in making our young understand that the real benefits of today's material advances lies not just in 'creating wealth' but ensuring that we use it to make our society more egalitarian, more

equitable and more socially and economically just. The more I think of this, the more I am convinced that the answer lies in the clarion call that Swami Vivekananda gave the young of this country more than a hundred years ago. The objectives of social development in which youth can be active part of it is summarized as ensuring poverty eradication, full employment, and social integration.

Swami Vivekananda even instructed to the missionaries and of Ram Krishna Mission, train the youth in the villages for leadership in rural areas. In a country of many contradictions and challenges where there are shining metros and darker hinterlands, leadership in information technology and lack of basic amenities for a majority of inhabitants, should this powerful youth force sit idle and isolated at the mercy of powers that be or should we infuse the power in them to come out and play the role they should. The need is to plan strategies for youth development so as to enable the youth to participate in social development. Ending with the words of Swami Vivekananda, "My whole ambition in life is to set in motion, machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see especially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together; the crystallisation will be done by nature according to her laws. Work hard, be steady, and have faith in the Lord. Set to work, Keep the motto before you" (Mandal: 2012) ^[10]. In spite of youth being the potential source of energy, society is not benefitting enough from its youthfulness because youth as a whole do not find any constructive role in the social development process (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports: 2012). Therefore, understanding Swami Vivekananda and his message and putting it across to youth could play an important role for social development.

The Diversity of Youth

There was no concept of youth in traditional societies; rather it was considered a transformation of childhood to adulthood. The concept of youth is learnt through everyday experience. However, it has been felt that this is no longer possible, in today's fabrication. There have been high degrees of difficulty in comparing countries vis-a-vis their youth profiles - due to the differences in the definitions of youth. No uniformity in definition of youth has been found across countries of the world because this is not a harmonized group. A few researchers have defined the youth according to the purpose and need of the research. The UN's World Program of Action for Youth defines "youth" as people ages 15–24, while the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF use the terms "adolescent" for those 10–19, "youth" for those 15–24, and "young people" for those 10–24 (World Development Report 2007). (Husain: 1996) ^[5] Youth are defined as persons in the age group 15-24. However, the above definition of "Youth" differs from that of the National Youth Policy of India that directed towards all Indian people in the age group of 13 to 35 years (National Youth Policy: 2003) ^[14].

Swami Vivekananda Inspiration

The life and message of Swami Vivekananda is highly inspired for the youth. He is a great sage, visionary, thinker

and leader; is one such hypnotic personality that continues to live with us through his ripple creating, man making, revivalist thoughts, affecting the generation of today, previous generations and many more generations to come. Driven by a missionary zeal, and a deep faith and conviction in his ideas, Swamiji devoted his entire life in the pursuit of creating a revived and evolved nation with its strong, fearless and spiritually enlightened citizens. In the present era of chaos and disorder, it becomes more and more a necessity, to understand the life and ideals of Swami Vivekananda and find the applicability of his thoughts and philosophy in the present context to live a more purposeful and healthier life. He strongly felt that inactivity is the cause of all our miseries. "We are responsible for what we are, and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in future can be produced by our present actions; so, we have to know how to act" (Kashyap and Lohani: 2012) ^[7]. Today's generation of young people is the largest in history. Almost 90 per cent of all young people live in developing countries. Young people are a major human resource for development, key agents for social change and driving force for economic development and technological innovation. But harnessing these resources is a major challenge (Dev and Venkatanara: 2011) ^[1]. They form an integral part of any society and are an essential part of the development process.

Many politicians, community leaders and others are far from convinced that harnessing the active involvement of youth represents an effective strategy for achieving better outcomes. However, the relationships between the youth and the old, especially within men, were almost alarming. Older men were attached to their traditional power and young men criticized the traditional "culture" as backward. Pathak (1995:1) ^[14] outlined that "our age is marked by dissent and the tragedy of our times is that the youth don't listen and the old don't change. It is not a generational problem either; the transitional friction produces sparks which need to be handled with care, relating the age and its compulsions to the needs and aspirations of the youth which, through ages, have been a change agent". Therefore, the benefit of youth participation can be discussed below:

- Youth participation in social development leads to better decisions and outcomes:- Many of the profound difficulties faced by the people around the globe— illiteracy, poverty, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, discrimination and forced engagement in armed conflict— are subjects of widespread concern at the national and international levels. In all regions of the world, young people have to deal with increased unemployment and insecurity at work, greater family instability, and reductions in social welfare programmes (United Nations: 2003) ^[21]; and.
- Youth engagement promotes the well-being and social development: - It is by questioning; expressing their views and having their opinions taken seriously that young people develop skills, build competencies, acquire confidence and form aspirations. It is a virtuous circle. The more opportunities a young person has for meaningful participation, the more experienced and competent he or she becomes. This allows more effective participation, which in turn enhances development. There is a considerable body of evidence

demonstrating that young people who are afforded opportunities for meaningful participation within their families and communities are more likely to achieve healthy development (Rajani: 2000)^[15]. Participation is also a means to achieve development in its broader sense. Amartya Sen has argued that development is “a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy” (Sen: 2009).

To achieve this goal, practical and achievable measures need to be put in place by both centre and state governments and including NGO's in following ways:

- Strengthening the capacity of youth clubs, associations and organizations at community and national levels;
- Promoting interaction between economic policy makers and youth to learn about their problems and experiences;
- Instituting regular consultations with youth organizations to get their inputs into the development process; and
- Promoting youth leadership at local, national, sub-regional and global levels through regular interface with community and national authorities.

With his revolutionary ideas and endless faith in youth power, Swami Vivekananda emerged as an unparalleled youth icon in the history of the world. He believed that the unlimited potential inside the youth must be channelised and directed towards positive, nation building work. “I have done nothing as yet; you have to do the task. If I die tomorrow the work will not die. I sincerely believe that there will be thousands coming up from the ranks to take up the work and carry it further and further, beyond all my most hopeful imagination ever painted. I have faith in my country, and especially in the youth of my country.” He implored the young masses to come out of their self-imposed boundaries and realize the powers that they possess, powers that can change the fate of the nation when put into use: ‘Come out into the broad light of day, come out from the little narrow paths, for how can the infinite soul rest content to live and die in small ruts? (Kashyap and Lohani: 2012)^[7]. The young today are extremely result oriented and need to understand the reasons for what they need to do as well as the benefits of what they do. To them Swami Vivekananda had a simple formula. He was a great observer of the human mind and the human society at large. He understood that undertaking any social change needed enormous energy and will. Hence, he called upon the youth to not only build up their mental energies, but their physical ones as well. What he wanted was to prepare the youth both physically and mentally to face the challenges that would lie ahead of social workers. He was also practical enough in warning the young of the pitfalls ahead and the way Society reacts to such endeavours. To quote him: All good work has to go through three stages. First comes ridicule, then the stage of opposition and finally comes acceptance.

Understanding Swami Vivekananda and his message and putting it across to our youth would be the simplest way in which we could address many of the problems that India is facing today. The young need direction and what greater focus than that of serving others! One also needs to understand that social service does not automatically translate as giving up all the worldly responsibilities and sitting half-clad and starving in a remote village. It begins

with arousing one's social conscience and translating this in practical terms into social action. One needs to be pragmatic and keep one's needs and limitations in mind before embarking on any such activity. One needs to begin with oneself first and then gradually expand this reach concentrically to include more and more deserving persons. This is one of the ways that the success and practicality of our social actions can be demonstrated to the youth of today.

Conclusion

From Socrates to modern psychologists many of them have analysed the youth problem in various ways. Few have suggested or expected a solution and have gone beyond condemning or half-heartedly defending the youth or at best holding either youth problem. Here is an analysis and a suggested solution of the youth problem in the light of the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. One of the most commonly made distinctions is participation as a means¹ and as an end.² Youniss and Yates (1997:36)^[24] point out that when young people are able to participate in and reflect on voluntary activities within their communities they develop a sense of responsibility for the well-being of that community. “When participation is encouraged by respected adults, youth begin to reflect on political and moral ideologies. It is this process of reflection, which takes place publicly with peers and adults as well as privately, that allows youth to construct identities that are integrated with ideological stances and political-moral outlooks”.

It is crucial that we engage the young social development of tomorrow in the development decisions of today. We hope that the Youth Participation in this sector will contribute to desired goal. There is growing momentum on youth participation within the development community. Governments around the world are increasingly supporting youth ministries, youth policies and youth programmes, and

¹ Participation as a means - used to achieve effective project implementation, the idea being that participation is a good way to get things done. For example a youth participation project might be set up to involve young people in designing the local youth centre because they are more likely to know what the target population would find attractive, and hence ensure a popular and success full youth centre- see DFID- Youth Participation in Development- A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers, 2010, pp. 17-18, <http://www.youthindevelopment.org.uk> accessed on 27 July 2012.

² Participation as a means - used to achieve effective project implementation, the idea being that participation is a good way to get things done. For example, a youth participation project might be set up to involve young people in designing the local youth centre because they are more likely to know what the target population would find attractive, and hence ensure a popular and success full youth centre and Participation as an end sees involving young people in decision making as a goal in itself, regardless of whether it actually results in better decisions. Apart from this distinction between participation as an end (moral approach) versus participation as a means (pragmatic approach) there are other issues to consider- DFID- Youth Participation in Development- A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers, 2010, pp. 17-18, <http://www.youthindevelopment.org.uk> accessed on 27 July 2012.

there is now greater recognition that **young people are the future of their countries' development**. But there is still a long way to go to realise this potential. Therefore, it can be put in the following ways:

1. Ensure that where national volunteering strategies and structures are in place they are youth-friendly i.e. they are easily accessible, of interest to young people and respond to their needs. In this regard partnerships with civil society organisations and the private sector are considered essential;
2. Put in place a national programme to develop awareness of youth volunteering for peace and development and to raise the profile of youth leadership in this regard; and
3. Ensure appropriate mechanisms for the accreditation of youth volunteering. Encourage institutions to recognise accredited volunteering experience as a basis for young people to gain access to opportunities for further learning, career development, employment, micro-finance and other mechanisms for fostering their development, leadership and self-reliance and more importantly the social development as a whole.

References

1. Dev S Mahendra, Venkatanara M. Youth Employment and Unemployment in India. Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, April, 2011, 2. <http://www.igidr.ac.in/pdf/publication/WP-2011-009.pdf> accessed on 11 October 2011.
2. DFID/Maguire S. Youth Mapping Study – DFID's Approach to Young People, 2007. <http://www.ygproject.org/guide/part-one> accessed on 27 July 2012
3. DFID-Youth Participation in Development- A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers, 2010, 6. <http://www.youthindevelopment.org.uk> accessed on 27 July 2012
4. Government of India, National Youth Policy, 2003, 2. www.Youths-Policy.com/Policies/India-National>Youth-Policy.com accessed on 13 February 2011
5. Husain S. Gowda comes up with plan to woo country's youth. Asian Age. (a daily), November 3, 1996.
6. Indian Youth Development Index 2010. Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Sriperumbudur, 2011. http://www.rgniyd.gov.in/proxy/rgniyd_ydi_web.pdf accessed on 31 March 2012.
7. Kashyap Shivendra K, Lohani Richa. Swami Vivekananda: The Legendary Role Model of Present-Day Youth. In Vivekanand Swadhyay Mandal (eds.), Saving Humanity: Swami Vivekananda Perspective, G.B.Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand, 2012, 10-11. <http://vsmpantnagar.org/files/Saving%20Humanity%20Swami%20Vivekanand%20Perspective.pdf>, accessed on 19/11/2012.
8. Ibid pp.11-12.
9. Lakhotia RN. Swami Vivekananda Inspires the Youth. <http://yabaluri.org/TRIVENI/CDWEB/swamivivekanandainspirestheyouthoct93.htm>, accessed on 19/11/2012.
10. Mandal VS. Saving Humanity: Swami Vivekananda Perspective. G.B.Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand, 2012, iv. <http://vsmpantnagar.org/files/Saving%20Humanity%20Swami%20Vivekanand%20Perspective.pdf>, accessed on 19/11/2012.
11. Ibid, pp. V.
12. Midgley J. Social Development: The Developmental Perspective in Social Welfare. London, Sage Publications, 1995.
13. Mukhopadhyay N. The Problem of the Youth: Its Solution. <http://abvym.org/PDF/Other/The%20Problem%20of%20The%20Youth%20-%20Its%20Solution.pdf>, accessed on 19/11/2012.
14. Pathak Bindeshwar. The Need for a Youth Policy”, in Noor Muhammad and Abdul Matin (eds.), Indian Youth: Problems and Prospects, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995.
15. Rajani R. Discussion paper for partners on promoting strategic adolescent participation. New York, UNICEF, 2000.
16. Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development - “Youth Club Manual”, Government of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, Tamil Nadu, 2012, 1-2. [http://www.rgniyd.gov.in/sites/default/files/YCM%20Innerpages%20\(Final\)\(1\).pdf](http://www.rgniyd.gov.in/sites/default/files/YCM%20Innerpages%20(Final)(1).pdf), accessed on 19/11/2012
17. Roy SD. Education: In the Vision of Swami Vivekananda, July 2001. www.esamskriti.com/essays/docfile/6_302.doc, accessed on 19/11/2012.
18. See in Sahni A. Stresses and distresses in the youth. Health Administrator Volume XVII, Number 1:75-77, 2003. Some research suggests that one year of unemployment among youth reduces life expectancy by about five years.
19. Sen A, Development as Freedom. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.
20. United Nations. Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. Report of the World Summit for Social Development, 6-12 March 1995, Copenhagen, April 1995, 8-21.
21. United Nations. World Youth Report 2003, New York, pp. 274.
22. Vivekananda Swami. To the Youth of India. Advaita Ashrama (Publication Department), Kolkata, Thirty-three Reprint, January, 2012.
23. World Development Report 2007. Development and the Next Generation, pp. 27.
24. Yates Miranda, Youniss James. Community Service and Social Responsibilities in Youth. University of Chicago Press, 1977.