



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SIKSHANAMANDIRA

(A NCTE recognized Govt. Aided (WB) Autonomous Post-Graduate College under University of Calcutta)
College with Potential for Excellence (CPE), College of Teacher Education (CTE) &
Swami Vivekananda Centre for Multidisciplinary Research in Educational Studies

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BELUR MATH, HOWRAH - 711 202, WEST BENGAL

Institutional distinctiveness

(Sikshanamandira: a milieu for awakening the 'internal teacher' in a learner.)

Ideology

The very soul of pedagogy remains unmistakably enshrined in the following penetrative observation of Swami Vivekananda: 'No one was ever really taught by another, each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things.' Indeed, the success of any pedagogic process largely depends upon the acknowledgement of the 'internal teacher' that Swami Vivekananda refers to. This 'internal teacher' - the human soul - is verily the repository of all knowledge. The role of the external teacher is to call out this 'internal teacher' lying asleep in every learner and set it off on a journey towards the fullest manifestation of its inherent potentialities.

Ever since it started its journey in 1958, Ramakrishna Mission Shikshanmandira - a teachers' training college - remains exclusively focused upon imparting such training to the teachers-in-the-making as would enable them to actualize this pedagogic principle enunciated by Swamiji. Before we get to see how our institutional environment is geared in bringing this about, it is important to briefly touch upon the avenues through the 'internal teacher' is sought to be brought out. This takes us to appreciating the idea of integral development of human personality.

Methodology

What lends distinctiveness to a well-balanced human personality is a healthy mix of the affective function of the heart, the cognitive function of the intellect, and the conative function of the will. The goal of true education is to enable a learner to effortlessly grow along these avenues of thinking, feeling, and willing. Indeed, when the 'true teacher' starts awakening in the learner, the faculties of intellection, feeling, and willing are spontaneously set on a journey towards their respective consummations.

While intellection finds its fulfilment in an unerring intuition of the unity underlying the diversity of the phenomenal world and feeling has its fulfilment in universal love, the faculty of willing is inescapably led to manifest this unitive vision along with the universal love on the plane of action.



"Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man."

- Swami Vivekananda



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Swami Vivekananda, with his characteristic creative genius, re-engineered precise technologies to bring each of these faculties to their respective fruition. Known by 'yoga' in which microcosmic aspect of each faculty is progressively tuned with the corresponding macrocosmic aspect, these pathways are indeed humanity's best guides to the state of perfection.

- ❖ The pathway of rational enquiry (based on intellection) into the ultimate nature of the universe is called 'Jnana yoga'
- ❖ The pathway in which feeling predominates is given the name 'Bhakti yoga'.
- ❖ The practice in which the 'will' is dominant is recognized either as 'Raja Yoga' or 'Karma yoga'.
 - In Raja yoga, the 'will' is primarily directed inward, studying, analyzing, and controlling the powers of the mind.
 - In Karma yoga, the 'will' is primarily directed outward, studying, analyzing, and controlling our engagement with work.

Swami Vivekananda's scheme of integral education is predicated upon the harmonious blending of these pathways of development. Therefore, Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira has been consistently trying to instill this ideal of integral education in its would-be teachers so that they, having absorbed this ideal, in turn, can set themselves to the task of 'man-making education' (a perceptive phrase used by Swami Vivekananda) in their respective fields of educational work. How is this integral approach of awakening the 'internal teacher' interlaced with the scheme of Shikshanamandira's daily life? Let us turn our attention to this now.

Praxis

"To me" said Swami Vivekananda "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."

Bearing in mind this guiding principle, the day for the Sikshanamandira inmates begins with half an hour of morning meditation in a shrine set apart for this purpose. This early





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morning meditation equips their minds with a focus that is duly leveraged during the class hours.

One of the regular classes that our students have to mandatorily attend is that on Indian culture and spiritual heritage. While conducting this class, the instructor (usually a monastic member of our college) often draws the learners' attention to the rational spirit with which Upanishadic rishis carried out their investigation into the nature of reality. Such exposure to higher reasoning most assuredly develops their holistic view of life.

The atmosphere of our Institute is so maintained as to inspire in its inmates a spontaneous love for the sublime and the transcendent. This emotional enrichment bears its indelible imprint in the respectful and loving attitude that dominates the interpersonal behavior of our students.

'Unselfishness is God.' said Swami Vivekananda. This is one value that Shikshanamandira spares no pains in communicating to its students. Indeed, our students' enthusiastic participation in community services speaks volumes of this important value of unselfishness being successfully internalized by them.

Thus, Shikshanamandira is relentlessly engaged in maintaining a distinctive environment in which our teachers-in-the-making can learn to think like a 'Jnana yogi', feel like a 'Bhakti yogi', and work like a 'Karma yogi'. The 'internal teacher' in them thus awakened, they then go out into their respective places of work to light other lamps by way of rousing the 'internal teacher' in the learners.



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