

UNESCO Swami Vivekananda with reference to Federico Mayors speech in 1993

The clear objectives of UNESCO This book is named after” Revisiting ‘Learning the Treasure Within’(1996)on The Pathway of Swami Vivekananda”. Why this title set for a book. Firstly, the word revisiting is explained as dictionary meaning visit again. Secondly ‘Learning the Treasure Within’(1996) is the UNESCO education report for the twenty-first century world along, this report was prepared by an UNESCO lead comprising members of the country allied with UNESCO under the chairmanship of Jacq Delors, a prominent personality of France and the report made after more than thirteen meetings and conferences organised nearly world-wide venues from the year 1993 to 1996. The concluding meeting was held in New Delhi and the draft was finalised. Next issue ‘The Pathway of Swami Vivekananda’ explores that UNESCO education report criticizes through the lenses of educational ideas of Swami Vivekananda. Why the Unesco report lay down the lenses of ideas of Swami Vivekananda. Is it taken as hypothetically? Or there is any influence, impact or any other resemblance between them. Now we go through a speech made in 1993 by Federico Mayor, the then Director- General of UNESCO:-“ I am indeed struck by the similarity of the constitution of the Ramakrishna Mission which Vivekananda established as early as 1897 with that of UNESCO drawn up in 1945. Both place the human being at the centre of their efforts aimed at development. Both place tolerance at the top of the agenda for building peace and democracy. Both recognise the variety of human cultures and societies as an essential aspect of the common heritage.”¹ (Speech by Federico Mayor, Director –General of UNESCO, on the occasion of the Exhibition and Seminar in Commemoration of the Centenary of Swami Vivekananda’s appearance at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893, given at UNESCO Headquarters, 8 October, 1993. My Idea of Education-Swami Vivekananda) Once the great disciple of Swami Vivekananda, Sister Nibedita revealed- “But Vivekananda was too great an educator to disregard the freedom of the disciple, in such matters as these. The aim was revealed only little by little, and always on the basis of some attempt already made. It was true that he was perpetually testing purity of motive, always on his guard against the possible intrusion of self-interest, in himself or in others.”² (The Master As I saw Him- Sister Nibedita, page 253-254.) “The four pillars of learning as proposed by the international commission for the Twenty –first Century in its report to UNESCO, namely learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be .echo the ancient Indian spiritual values and aspirations, of which Swami Vivekananda was the living embodiment. If each four pillars of learning is viewed in reverse order , as, know to learn, do to learn, live together to learn and realise to learn, education would become a higher pursuit of life, involving a paradigm shift from the pedagogy of learning to the practice of knowing , doing, living and realising, in fulfilment of life’s objectives. Learning is for knowledge, knowledge for virtue, virtue for wisdom, and wisdom for moral excellence and practical action. The dynamics of knowing and doing determine the quality of human existence.” (The State of education in india in the light of Swami Vivekananda’s Ideas;-Satish .K.Kapoor. page 310-311, Vivekananda as The Turning Point, The Rise of a New Spiritual Wave.)

Now I conclude this foreword. In Sanskrit it may be narrated as:-“Alomiti Bistorenoh”.

The present book starts with the English rendering of a speech (which was published in 'Udbodhon Patrika' in 1963[-a Bengali journal established by Swami Vivekananda himself in his lifetime and published by Ramakrishna Math since then]) The special speech (in Bengali) was given in an annual prize distribution ceremony of the then M.E. school in Belur. In this speech Vivekananda in a very casual manner pointed out the educational causes (their remedies) of the downfall of our nation and his prophetic sayings appear to be more than significant even in the twenty-first century and the backdrop of the discussion of the 'Report of UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the twenty-first century' (which has been commonly used in this study as Delors' Commission Report or as described as 'Learning The Treasure Within'). The English rendering of the said speech was delivered originally in Bengali language prepared by the present researcher (Vivekananda, 1981, p-10). "Firstly our students don't have practical knowledge. They are like as if, helpless fellows. What these students need are iron-like muscles, moreover, they need to have great power of endurance. Basically they are not self-reliant and self-dependent. Neither they see through their own eyes, nor they do any thing with their own hands. They are not made to indulge for learning any type of handicrafts. Today's English education is merely bookish. But our students need to be trained to think freely and expose to hand on experiences. For example-suppose any one place of the locality is set on fire. He / she alone would volunteer himself/herself to put out that fire, who can himself/herself use his/her hands, eyes and legs in a spontaneous way ! There is much truth in European's criticism of the Bengalees' for their sluggishness and lack of tenacity. All these shortcomings will soon be removed at once, if these students are exposed to hand on experiences. This learning to do has its long term economic implications in the vocational fields, no doubt, but furthermore this one is really a holistic type of education."

"Secondly, thousands and thousands of from their early childhood are mostly deprived of nutritious food and hygienic environment which lead them to become dull, stupid and coward- there is no surprise in it. Education they are getting is partial. This education is making them so feeble that lead to slow-poisoning death. A huge dump of worthless matters is being inserted into their brains, in a classroom of sixty-seventy of such students are detained for more than five hours a day. They are not fed well. People forget that neither the nature can be embittered, nor miracle can be triggered in a night. While imparting education to a child, we all are to abide by the rules of growth and development. We are to learn being perseverant. Initially our students need to have sound bodies. This one is of utmost importance and is the first step towards acquiring good moral qualities. Hence, we need to be alert that the health of our children do not elude at an early age."

"Thirdly, the strength of character of our children has been lost. The prevailing English education which has almost ruined whatever moral was there in the previous system and has not paid back anything worthy mentionable. The students have forgotten paying reverence and commitment. In spite of all these adverse conditions and other such hindrances we have been able to do many things, but we need to do much more. I never be a pessimist, I feel proud of my

country, my nation. Every day through my mind I see the unique glorious future of my country. Our future depends upon these tender children. Hence, you please take earnest care of them is my humble submission.”

Education is the key factor to change conditions of individual as well as the society.” The education is of immense significance today in creating a new allegiance which is the prerequisite to global harmony.....The aim of this education is to create a consciousness of world civilisation and to ensure to coming generations a worldwide union of minds and hearts, springing from the integration of all the essential insights now carried within the various cultures of the world.”(Nityaswarupananda,2011,p-11). In the international education scenario UNESCO takes a great role. After World War-II in the year 1945, UNO formed and later UNESCO started its journey in many fields, also thought and planned for world’s education. The organisation set up some commissions and committees to shape up future educational policies and directives to the member countries. The purpose of the organisation was defined as; to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the charter of the United Nations.(UNESCO Constitution, Article 1(1) see UNESCO, 20049(Elfert,p-12). In this process UNESCO constituted a commission under the leadership of Philip.H.Coombs, the Director of UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning, in 1968. This Commission published its report as “The World Educational Crisis”. Coombs.(1968). put forth a “systems analysis” of the “world educational crisis” and ‘proposed a series of strategies to deal with it, such as greater international co-operation in the field of education, a strong focus on non-formal education and a role for higher education in planning and strengthening education systems.’ (Elfert,2016,p-111).

1960’s are the period of world economic recession, slow employment, political uncertainty made world atmosphere in turmoil, then education became the determinant factor of human life and society. Developed and underdeveloped both countries were suffering a lot from different issues. The great changes of our time are imperiling the unity and the future of the species, and man’s own identity as well. What is to be feared is not only the painful prospect of grievous inequalities, privations and suffering, but also that we may be heading for a veritable dichotomy within the human race, which risks being split into superior and inferior groups, into masters and slaves, super men and sub men(UNESCO,1972,p-xxi).

In 1969, Philip.H.Coombs, the then Director of UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning, published the Report “ the World Educational Crisis” in which he proposed education as a continuous process throughout life(Perisco.C.V, 1973,p-30). In the year 1971, UNESCO set up another education commission under the chairmanship of Edgar Faure, a Report named after “Learning To Be”(the world of education Today and Tomorrow. This commission comprised with seven members of seven different countries.(UNESCO Report 1972, p-45). “ If we agree that the time has come to overhaul education, that education today is facing a

critical challenge and we must think it out afresh in its entirety, then international solidarity and world co-operation become more clearly necessary than ever before.” (Learning To Be , The World of education today and tomorrow, UNESCO, 1972, p-xxxvi.

At the beginning of 1993, The then Director-General of UNESCO Federico Mayor Zaragoza felt that it was apposite moment to appraise the contemporary views and thinking in education to receive the views on what sort of vision of education would be needed to help humanity move successfully into the next century. This was the task assigned to the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century, chaired by Jacques Delors (then President of the European Commission) and composed of fifteen eminent persons from array backgrounds and regions of the world. The commission held eight working sessions in all the continents (it is worth mentioning that the final report, i.e. 'Learning: The Treasure Within was adopted in New Delhi) and consulted with wide range of government and private groups, including eminent educators and social scientists. The Commission sought to discuss education in all its diversity and though the title of the report refers to the twenty first century, the content suggests that this report is about education in the next ten to fifteen years and not the twenty first century entirety. Long years back Director –General of UNESCO Federico Mayor signified various similarities of agendas of Ramakrishna Mission and UNESCO like pervading peace and tolerance among nations and building democratic atmosphere. In the year 1893, in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago Vivekananda cried for Harmony and Peace instead of Destruction, Assimilation in the place of Dissent for the nations of the universe.

We need to compare between the objectives of Ramakrishna Mission and the objectives of UNESCO, because there is so many similarities between Swami Vivekananda founded Ramakrishna Mission and the specialised agency for education, science (including the social sciences) and culture (including communications) named as UNESCO.

The following are the aims and objectives of Ramakrishna Mission-

- i) To impart and promote the study of Vedanta and its principles as propounded by Sri Ramakrishna and practically illustrated by his own life and Co-operative Theology in its widest form.
- ii) To impart, promote and undertake the study of and research in the arts, sciences technologies and industries in all their branches both basic and applied.
- iii) To undertake scientific research in the area of medical sciences.
- iv) To train teachers in all branches of knowledge above-mentioned and enable them to reach the masses.
- v) To carry on educational work among the masses.
- vi) To establish, maintain, carry on and assist schools, colleges, universities, research institutions, libraries, auditoriums, orphan-ages, workshops, laboratories, hospitals, dispensaries, houses for the aged, the infirm, the invalid and the afflicted, relief and rehabilitation works, and any other educational, medical,

- cultural, and social welfare services and training institutions and charitable works, and institutions of a like nature.
- vii) To print and publish and to sell or distribute gratuitously or otherwise, journals, periodicals, books or leaflets that the Association may think desirable for the promotion of its objects.
 - viii) To carry on any other work which may seem to the Association capable of being conveniently carried on in connection with and calculated directly or indirectly to promote the before- mentioned objects.

The objectives of UNESCO as seen below-

- i) The purpose of UNESCO is to contribute to spread peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.
 - ii) To realise this purpose the Organisation will be to:
 - a) Collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image;
 - b) Give fresh impulse to popular education and to the spread of culture:
 - By collaborating with Members, as their request, in the development of educational activities; By instituting collaboration among the nations to advance the ideal of equality of educational opportunity without regard to race, sex or any distinctions, economic, social; By suggesting educational methods best suited to prepare the children of the world for the responsibilities of freedom;
 - c) Maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge:
 - By assuring the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science, and recommending to the nations concerned the necessary international conventions; By encouraging co-operation among the nations in all branches of intellectual activity, including the international exchange of persons active in the fields of education, science and culture and the exchange of publications, objects of artistic and scientific interest and other materials of information; By initiating methods of international co-operation calculated to give the people of all countries access to the printed and published materials produced by any of them.
3. With A view to preserving the independence, integrity and fruitful diversity of the cultures and educational systems of the States Members of the Organisation, the Organisation is prohibited from intervening in matters which are essentially within their domestic jurisdiction. (Sanyal.B.C.1993,pp-845-847).

These issues raised some valid as well as significant questions which are to be pondered over in the present study:-