



Education in the Eyes of Vivekananda: A Study

Prabha Henry

Research Scholar, Department of Education, RKDF University, Ranchi, Prabhahenry60@gmail.com

Abstract:

Swami Vivekananda, a prominent figure in the Indian renaissance, significantly shaped modern educational thought with his unique vision. His approach to education, deeply rooted in Indian philosophical traditions and influenced by Western ideas, emphasizes holistic development, self-realization, and the role of education in societal transformation. This article explores Vivekananda's educational philosophy, examining his views on the purpose of education, the ideal educational system, and the integration of spirituality with learning. By analyzing Vivekananda's educational ideals, this study aims to highlight their relevance in contemporary educational discourse. Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy provides a profound and comprehensive perspective on the purpose and practice of education. His emphasis on self-realization, character building, and the integration of spiritual values with practical learning offers a timeless framework for educational development.

Keywords: *Vivekananda Thought, Human Capital And Education, Freedom, Godly, Righteous, And Altruistic.*

Introduction:

Vivekananda thought that the future of a country relies on its human capital and education should focus on nurturing this human capital. He claims that every soul has the potential to be divine. Controlling both external and internal nature to manifest Divinity within oneself is the objective. Achieve freedom through work, worship, mental discipline, or philosophy - using one, multiple, or all of these methods. Vivekananda connected ethics with mental control, identifying traits like truth, purity, and unselfishness as factors that enhanced it. He encouraged his followers to be godly, righteous, and altruistic. He stressed that achievement came from concentrated thinking and doing; in his teachings on Raja Yoga he mentioned, "Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life- think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success, that is way great spiritual giants are produced"(Banerjee,& Meeta, 2015).

His educational ideas hold considerable importance in current times as contemporary education has become increasingly disconnected from the principles of human existence. He attempted to convey to the people of India the idea that political and social power should be based on cultural power. His understanding of the philosophy of education in India is genuine within its cultural context. Although he is gone, his memory will live on forever in the hearts of those on earth. His tasks and his sermons will keep motivating the future generations. Vivekananda said: "The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle of life, which does not bring out strength of character a spirit of philanthropy,

and the courage of a lion – is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on one's own legs. Education must provide 'life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas' (Vivekananda'S, 2007). The ideal of this type of education would be to produce an integrated person.

Significance of the Study:

The study provides a comprehensive understanding of Swami Vivekananda's educational vision, which integrates Eastern spiritual values with Western educational practices. This holistic perspective enriches our knowledge of how Vivekananda envisioned education as a means for personal and societal transformation. The study of Vivekananda's educational philosophy is significant for its contributions to understanding holistic education, informing modern reforms, inspiring educators, and providing a global perspective on educational practices. It offers valuable insights into how education can be a transformative force for both individuals and society, drawing on the rich heritage of Vivekananda's thought.

Objectives of the study: This article explores Vivekananda's educational philosophy, examining his views on the purpose of education, the ideal educational system, and the integration of spirituality with learning.

Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy of Education: Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy combines ancient Vedantic ideas with Western material sciences. He developed a unified progressive educational philosophy that incorporates elements from both eastern and western philosophies to enhance self-development, character growth, and life fulfillment. His philosophy encompasses elements of western idealism, naturalism, and pragmatism, as well as Indian Vedantic philosophy. He focused on achieving the ultimate goals of education: truth, beauty, and goodness, as an idealistic thinker. More attention is placed on achieving self-realization, self-actualization, building character, education for the mind and self, and connecting with nature and God. (Bharathi, & Rao 2010). As a proponent of naturalistic thinking, he advocated for education that is in harmony with nature. Children should be allowed full autonomy in their self-discovery and development of personality, and should be given unrestricted access to the natural world. A child should not be forced to learn something from external sources, but instead should be supported through guidance to show what they already possess internally. As a strong supporter of practical philosophy, he focused on things that produce immediate results. He highly prioritized the instruction of science, technology, commerce, and other subjects for the purpose of achieving material success and wealth. (Ruhela, & Nayak, 2011). Finally, as an Indian who is dedicated to Vedanta, he organized the traditional Indian schools of philosophy and promoted Vedantic philosophy and Yoga in both India and the Western world. He focused on developing character, enhancing life and providing spiritual education to all segments of society. His plan was to bring back the Vedic education system in order to rejuvenate the current system of education.

Vivekananda's Thoughts and Ideas on Education:

True Education: Swami Vivekananda opposed the current education system, deeming it mechanical and lacking in compassion. He believed it was ineffective to simply cram information into students' minds through memorization and rote learning, as it did not foster the well-rounded development of each child's personality. Instead, it causes negative changes in behavior that result in the decline of the innate divinity in humans. According to Swami Vivekananda, education is not simply filling your brain with information that remains undigested for the rest of your life. As a strong follower of Vedas, he thinks that every child is a divine presence with boundless cognitive awareness hidden beneath layers of ignorance. Instead of bombarding them with information, we should aim to unveil this innate wisdom within them. He described education as the display of the perfection that man has already achieved. He believed that genuine education eases the journey of creating a life, shaping a person, forming character, and absorbing knowledge.

Self-Efficacy and Self-Reliance: Swami Vivekananda emphasized the vocational aspect of education in addition to spiritual teaching. In addition to instructing in philosophy, literature, and ethics, there is a focus on teaching subjects that develop skills, allowing students to become self-sufficient and independent. Education should equip students for both the present world and the afterlife by focusing on material success and spiritual growth, which is why he advocated for incorporating both Para-Vidhya and Aparavidhya disciplines. Education should enable students to contribute economically and be valuable members of society. Afterwards, in 1977, the Iswarbhaipatel Committee in India also suggested incorporating Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW) into education and began teaching students vocational skills.

Education for Man-making: He desired for education to shape individuals, cultivating a profound awareness of their own significance, value, integrity, capabilities, limitations, and ethical responsibilities towards others and the community in which they reside. It helps individuals achieve overall growth by realizing their untapped potential, and also contributes to society's prosperity in the dynamic world.

Development of Universal Brotherhood and Tolerance: Swami Vivekananda has understood the importance of unity amidst diversity for humanity. He encouraged individuals to engage with, comprehend, value, and integrate the ideas, thoughts, anecdotes, and experiences of individuals from various socio-cultural and ethical backgrounds around the world. Education should cultivate a strong sense of universal brotherhood and acceptance of diversity in terms of religion, region, culture, ethics, and morality among students.

Nature of Curriculum: Swami Vivekananda stressed the importance of both Para-Vidhya and Aparavidhya education for spiritual and material goals. He stressed the importance of self-awareness, developing one's character, and shaping one's life through moral education and studying subjects related to science and industry. Para-Vidhya pertains to spiritual education which aids in the development of one's character, shaping one's life, and leading to spiritual growth, whereas Aparavidhya is focused on material education for worldly endeavors. As an international icon, he understood the importance of both material and spiritual education. Furthermore, he advocated for a curriculum that is appropriate for an inclusive education system. He aims to educate by developing the child's overall progressive personality through displaying their natural abilities and qualities in various fields like vedangas, Upanishads, Puranas, logic and ethics. Additionally, subjects like astrology, physics, mathematics, zoology, history, economics, and ayurveda should be organized effectively to enhance spiritual growth and material success.

Methods of Teaching: Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy reflects his analytical and interpretive examination of the ancient Indian Vedantic School of philosophy and his critical assessment of modern education. He refused to accept the current education system forced on students from external sources, which forces them to memorize facts, causing mental strain. The Vedic education system has a thorough process of providing quality education. In Vedic philosophy, listening is the key step in education. After listening to instructions, students should reflect, meditate, and apply the knowledge to develop cognitive abilities and shape their character and life. Nevertheless, teachers should adopt a loving approach when instructing students. Advocating an integrated approach to education, he encouraged teaching methods that allow teachers to connect with students on a personal level to support their self-actualization and character development. The method of teaching should focus on the student. Some of the important instructional methods to educate students include yoga, meditation, lectures, discussions, constructive debate, heuristic or inquiry-based learning, self-study, question-answer technique, and illustrations.

Medium of Education: Vivekananda believes that the method of teaching is crucial in achieving established goals. Swami Vivekananda, similar to R.N. Tagore, strongly supported nationalism and believed in the importance of teaching children in schools using their mother tongue. Additionally, he also emphasized the importance of a shared language to maintain national unity. He suggested using Sanskrit as a shared language for all Indians. He respected the moral values and cultural background of the Sanskrit language,

viewing it as the origin of many Indian languages and a significant storehouse of India's historical and philosophical knowledge reflecting various aspects of Indian culture. The Sanskrit language is the most accurate portrayal of India's historical legacy encompassing religious, spiritual, cultural, and social aspects. Nevertheless, he also motivated the idea of acquiring knowledge in other world languages to enhance personal growth and life experiences. He stressed the importance of English in mastering Western science and technology.

Types of Education:

Physical education: Another intriguing aspect of Vivekananda's educational philosophy is his focus on the proper growth and development of both the mind and body. In order to achieve character development, life enrichment, and self realization, students must possess an understanding of physical education and engage in physical training to strengthen both body and mind. Without achieving physical health and a strong mind, the goal of education cannot be achieved in reality. Vivekananda stressed the importance of physical education, “you will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of Gita. You will understand Gita better by your biceps, your muscles a little stronger. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman, when your body stands firm on your feet and you feel yourself as a man”.

Moral and Religious Education: Vivekananda said, “religion is the innermost core of education. Religion is like the rice and everything else, is like the curries. Taking only curries causes indigestion and so is the case with taking rice alone”. He called for the spread of universalism by breaking down barriers between religions and promoted the understanding and acceptance of various world religions through a story about a frog at the Parliament of Religions in 1893. The frog, who grew up in a small well, believed it was the largest in the world. He finished the narration by stating, "I follow Hinduism." I sit in my own small well, believing the entire world is also my little well. The Christian believes his small well is the entire world. The Muslim sits in his small well and believes it is the entire world. He gave the teaching that no single religion surpasses any other. Rather than being ignorant and dismissive of other religions, one should cultivate a mindset of religious tolerance and an attitude of recognizing and embracing the core principles of all faiths. According to him, "religion is the expression of the divinity that already exists within humans". The Hindu religion is famous for its diversity and wide acceptance of various religions, known for its flexibility and tolerance towards diverse beliefs around the world. It is also noteworthy for creating individuals who viewed humanity as part of the ultimate soul, Brahma, and stressed spiritual growth. They viewed religion as the study of awareness. About India, Swami Vivekananda asserted “(India) where stood the earliest cradle of ethics, arts, sciences, and literature, and the integrity of whose sons and the virtue of whose daughters have been sung by all travelers”.

Self-Education: Another crucial goal of Vivekananda's education philosophy is emphasized. Swami Vivekananda believed that every person held the entire universe's knowledge within them. Every individual already possesses all knowledge but it is hidden. There should be an effort to assist a person in discovering their untapped natural abilities and express them intellectually by combining spirituality and material pursuits through self-education. Understanding the inner soul of an individual fully is necessary to bring forth what already exists within oneself. Self education is the term used for learning that focuses on self awareness, self-realization, and self-actualization. It aids students in realizing their potential to achieve their ideal selves. Additionally, it aids students in understanding the environment in which they reside and taking action in a productive manner. Developing self identity is facilitated by connecting with one's inner self in the embrace of nature.

Women's Education: Swami Vivekananda noticed that Indian women, in their role as mothers, selflessly devote their lives to their families, yet they are frequently deprived of their fundamental rights. Swami Vivekananda stressed the importance of educating women because he believed it was necessary for the advancement of both men and women. According to him, "Men and women are like the two wheels of

society." Should either of the pair be faulty, the company will not advance. Therefore, education is just as essential for women as it is for men. He viewed women as the cornerstone of the family and the primary motivation for maintaining a successful and joyful life. However, it is unfortunate to note that women's education is not given the necessary importance. He argued that the stagnation of societal progress is caused by the presence of female illiteracy. He saw men and women as the two wings of a bird, both needing to be healthy and strong for the bird to fly. The goal of advancing society cannot be achieved without ensuring women have sufficient opportunities to grow through education. He motivated women to be fearless, strong, and confident in their self identity and social status through education. The education of women needs to be improved in order to revive the ancient Indian prestige and cultural legacy. Currently, there is a gap in the literacy rates between males and females, with 82.14% for males and 65.46% for females, indicating unequal social status for women in society' (Census, 2011).

Vivekananda's Concept of Technical Education and Woman Education:

Equal opportunities for everyone are essential for achieving national integration. It is important to also guarantee sources of income. Swamiji must have believed in the importance of being self-sufficient for living, which is why he emphasized the importance of education that ensured a stable income. He also recognized the importance of enhancing the situation of a significant portion of society, specifically women, as a crucial measure towards national unity. His emphasis on women's education and education geared towards livelihood demonstrates the scientific foundation of his beliefs on education. He said: *"It would be better if the people got a little technical education, so that they might find work and earn their bread, instead of dawdling about and crying for service"* (Swami Vivekananda. 2005).

Swamiji's emphasis on women's education was forward-thinking, considering the lack of awareness for it at that time.

Vivekananda's Concept of National Integration through Education:

Swami Vivekananda believes that India is a sacred land, also known as *Punya Bhumi*. India, to Swamiji, was more than just a physical place with rocks and soil. It is a living being. This is the approach that serves as the foundation of the Swami's nationalism. As per his opinion, India is our native land. This land is the birthplace of Philosophy, spirituality, ethics, sweetness, gentleness, and love. (The year 2005). The ancient idea is that souls are born in India to break the eternal cycle of birth and death. The eternal belief is that the gods have taken on human form and established this land. Swamiji asserts that these beliefs are what create the emotional bond between the people and this land. *"If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed *Punya Bhumi*, to be the land to which all souls on this earth must come to account for Karma, the land to which every soul that is wending its ways Godward must come to attain its last home, the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality - it is India"* (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.3, p. 105).

Swami Vivekananda's Ideas of Mass Education:

Up to now, our focus has been on education within the society that is already reaping the rewards of education. Vivekananda was a true advocate for the impoverished and vulnerable, specifically the struggling population of India, and he was the pioneer among Indian leaders in addressing their issues through education. He stated that the level of advancement of a nation is determined by how widespread education and culture are among the population. If there wasn't even distribution of the country's resources, the nation would not succeed. He maintained that the upper classes, who had been educated at the cost of the poor, had a responsibility to step up and improve the lives of the poor through education and other methods. Indeed, the Swami's objective was to help the less fortunate. He previously stated that there should be a fair

opportunity for everyone - if not greater for some and lesser for others - the less powerful individuals deserve more chances than the strong ones, (Letters, 255).

Conclusion:

Seen from the perspective of modern ideas, Vivekananda was a time capsule within his brief life of less than forty years, bringing his homeland up to date in the battle against various societal ills. Vivekananda emphasized 'balance' and 'integration'. His personality combined contemplation and devotion to duty. He delved deeply into India's social and political deterioration and tried to suggest a practical solution to eliminate any social disparities. He saw the awakening and liberation of modern India as a platform for achieving universal love and brotherhood. He presented his fellow brothers with a powerful gospel of courage and resilience. He ruthlessly condemned the pride and refinement of the elite of Indian society. He was among the top thinkers in India to provide a sociological analysis of Indian history. Swami Vivekananda was truly the greatest synthesizer of all time. He aimed to eliminate the societal wrongs through reorienting politics, sociology, economics, and education. Swami Vivekananda emphasized the importance of education as a powerful tool for bringing about change. As an educator, he supports the idea of fundamental values that can be achieved through an effective educational system. Education ought to serve as the groundwork for life. It should cultivate a sense of patriotism and global empathy, while also fostering personal growth and independence. Currently, cultural morals and standards are declining. It is crucial at this moment to respond to this emotional, moral, and cultural breakdown. Only through a well-established education system can a positive political and social environment be achieved. Swami Vivekananda embodies this principle and his teachings are timeless.

References:

- Bharathi, Vijaya D & Rao Bhaskara Digumarti (2010). Educational Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. *New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House*.
- Biswan A. & Aggraval J.C; (1977) Seven Indian Educators New Delhi; *National Solidarity (publication) Press*.
- Pandy R.S.; (2005) Philosophizing, Education New Delhi; *Kanishka Publishers; Distributors*.
- Banerjee, K.A., Meeta, M. (2015). Educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. *International Journal of Educational Research and Development*, Vol. 4(3), pp. 030-035.
- Ruhela, S.P. & Nayak, R.K. (2011). Philosophical & Sociological Foundations of Education, *Agrawal publication, Agra*.
- Sharma, Ram Nath (2010). Textbook of educational philosophy, *kanishka publishers, Distribution, New Delhi* 110002, PP-277-284.
- Srivastava Kamal S. (2011) Srivastava Sangeeta; Great Philosophers & Thinkers on Education *New Delhi; A.P.H. Publishing Corporation*.
- Ram Nath Sharma, (New Delhi: 2002), Textbook of Educational Philosophy. p. 248.
- Ram Nath Sharma, (2002) Textbook of Educational Philosophy, *New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers*, p. 320.
- Vivakananda'S (2007). Shiksha Prasanga. *Udbodhan Karjalaya. Kolkata*.
- Vivekananda, S (2009). (KiranWalia, Comd.). My Ideal of Education. *Kolkata, Advaita Ashram*.

Website Address:

Educational ideas of Swami Vivekananda, www.edusparx.com
http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/73933/12/12_chapter%205.pdf
http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teachings_and_philosophy_of_Swami_Vivekanand

Citation: Henry. P., (2024) “Education in the Eyes of Vivekananda: A Study”, *Bharati International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development (BIJMRD)*, Vol-2, Issue-10, November-2024.