



MODERN IMPLICATIONS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Dr. Priyanka Mishra, Assistant Professor

Sant Malik Memorial Institute Gaya

Contact No. 7011369889

Email Id: Priyanka3706@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Swami Vivekananda was a highly knowledgeable and spiritually enlightened monk. As a prominent Vedanta's, he advocated the principles of the Vedas. Despite his brief life, he made a significant impact on the world, striving to modernize India while preserving its cultural heritage. His teachings promote the essence of humanity and remain relevant across all eras.

Vivekananda vision of education encompasses holistic development, emphasizing the importance of physical, intellectual, social, moral, and spiritual growth. He asserted that education should foster reasoning abilities alongside character development and the cultivation of individuals. His philosophies transcend time and cultural boundaries, providing a solid foundation for the reformation of contemporary education in India. Throughout his life, he embodied the teachings of the Vedas, which include self-knowledge, self-reliance, fearlessness, and concentration. He consistently emphasized the Vedic principle of universal oneness. He was indeed correct in asserting that the world should embrace Indian philosophical insights alongside Western scientific advancements.

KEYWORDS: Knowledgeable, Emphasized, Vision, Growth, Principles, Cultural Boundaries.

INTRODUCTION: Swami Vivekananda represents more than just a name; he embodies a philosophy that has significantly impacted the world. He engaged deeply with various challenges faced by humanity, focusing on areas such as religion, philosophy, social and political structures, education, the status of women, national honor, and numerous other domains. His insights on these issues provided a new direction for the nation.

He stated, "Education is the discovery of the inner self," emphasizing the importance of holistic personal development through education. Swami Vivekananda asserted that "education is the manifestation of perfection already in man," suggesting that perfection is inherently present within individuals, and education serves to reveal this potential. He believed that "all knowledge is inherent in man; no knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside."

He pinpointed the fundamental issues that underpinned many societal problems, including the oppression by foreign rulers, class divisions, and an education system that favored the privileged while leaving the masses uninformed, superstitious, and resistant to change. These challenges stifled initiative, self-reliance, and self-confidence among the people. Swami Vivekananda philosophy aims to transform individuals on spiritual, moral, social, and physical levels.

EARLY LIFE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Swami Vivekananda was born on January 12, 1863, to Vishwanath Dutta and Bhubaneswari Devi during the auspicious festival of Makar Sankranti at their ancestral residence in Calcutta. His family belonged to a traditional Bengali background. His father, a lawyer, held progressive and rational views, while his mother was deeply religious. The influence of his parents is evident in the character of the young Narendra, who was known for his fiery temperament, disobedience, and energetic nature.

Narendra exhibited a wide range of interests, including philosophy, religion, history, social sciences, arts, and literature. He approached various Hindu scriptures, such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, and Mahabharata, with curiosity and a desire for knowledge. Additionally, he had a strong passion for music, art, physical fitness, sports, and organizational activities. From an early age, he demonstrated a rational mindset, often questioning superstitious practices.

His educational journey began with home schooling, and in 1871, he enrolled in the Metropolitan Institution founded by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. The family relocated to Raipur in 1877 for two years, during which he engaged in spiritual discussions with his father, as there were no suitable schools available. In Raipur, he learned Hindi and, for the first time, began to question the existence of God. This period from 1877 to 1879 is considered a pivotal moment in his life, often referred to as the "Spiritual Birthplace" of Swami Vivekananda.

Narendra's initial encounter with Ramakrishna was inspired by William Wordsworth's poem, "The Excursion," particularly its themes of nature mysticism. His professor suggested that to grasp the meaning of the term

"trance" in the poem, students should visit Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. Following this advice, Narendra and a few classmates went to meet Ramakrishna.

INFLUENCE OF RAMAKRISHNA PARAMHANSA: The notion of God captivated Narendra's thoughts, prompting him to pose the question to various religious leaders: "Have you seen God?" However, he was never satisfied with their responses. His search for an answer concluded with Ramakrishna Paramhansa's reply, who stated, "Yes, I have seen God as clearly as I see you, but in a much deeper sense."

Narendra found himself uncertain about whether to accept or reject Ramakrishna. This state of confusion led him to continue visiting Ramakrishna, where he engaged in reasoning that aligned with his nature. Ramakrishna, in turn, never urged him to abandon his reasoning; instead, he responded to Narendra's inquiries with patience and enthusiasm.

After accepting Ramakrishna as his guru, it took five years of rigorous training, practice, and meditation for the once impatient and restless youth to transform into a mature individual. He gained a profound understanding of the purpose and significance of human life and became ready to renounce the material world in pursuit of God realization. He fully surrendered himself to Ramakrishna, along with his fellow disciples.

WORLD PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS: During his travels across India, he learned about the World Parliament of Religions taking place in Chicago, America, in 1893. He was determined to represent India, Hinduism, and the philosophies of his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna, at this significant event. Although it was challenging for him to make arrangements to attend, his aspiration was fulfilled during a moment of meditation.

On September 11, 1893, as he commenced his lecture with the heartfelt greeting, "My brothers and sisters of America," the audience responded with a standing ovation. These words were not merely a greeting; they conveyed his genuine emotions. He continued to elaborate on the principles and philosophy of Vedanta, captivating the audience throughout his presentation. He successfully placed Hinduism on the global stage. His initial journey to America extended for two additional years, during which he also delivered lectures in the United Kingdom. The entire Western world showed a keen interest in learning about the Vedas. He was the first Indian monk to introduce the concept of spiritualism to the West, a journey that ultimately led to widespread recognition and acceptance of his ideas.

CONCEPT OF EDUCATION: Vivekananda asserts that education should not be evaluated solely by the volume of information conveyed to students; rather, it should facilitate the development of life skills, character, and the integration of ideas. He expressed profound dissatisfaction with the educational system established

during British rule. Vivekananda emphasized the necessity for the entirety of education in India both spiritual and secular to be under national control, implemented through methods that align with national interests whenever feasible.

He posits that all forms of knowledge, whether worldly or eternal, reside within individuals. The essence of power and knowledge exists within the soul, and what individuals achieve is the discovery and expression of this inherent potential.

Swami Vivekananda advocates for an educational framework that enables individuals to recognize the infinite knowledge and power within themselves, with education serving as the pathway to this realization. He notes that while external teachers may provide suggestions, it is the internal teacher that must be awakened to foster understanding.

OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION: Swami Vivekananda asserts that education should foster character, intellectual prowess, courage, unity, and the capacity to achieve material goals. The primary objective of all educational endeavors is to understand human nature and to express it fully. The foremost goal of education is the cultivation of character. He seeks to modernize the educational framework by incorporating Western scientific knowledge while ensuring that its essence remains rooted in Vedantic principles. Vivekananda promotes the Indian approach to teaching, highlighting the importance of personal interaction between students and teachers. He believes that educators should exemplify the highest standards of character, morality, and ethics. According to him, knowledge can only be attained through focused concentration, and those who learn with such dedication will excel in various aspects of life. He identifies the following as the key aims of education:

1. Education for Physical Development
2. Education for Intellectual Development
3. Education for Religious Development
4. Education for Character Formation, Morality, and Spirituality
5. Education for Brotherhood
6. Education for Vocational Efficiency
7. Education for Self-Confidence and Self-Reliance

CURRICULUM AS PROPOSED BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Swami Vivekananda emphasizes that the curriculum should be structured to promote the comprehensive development of a child. He advocates for the inclusion of Vedic studies, religious education, and philosophy, alongside Western science, engineering, and other contemporary subjects. His educational philosophy allows for the formulation of a diverse curriculum, with several key components outlined below.

1. Integration of Science and Vedanta
2. Arts Education
3. Emphasis on Regional Languages
4. Comprehensive Academic Curriculum
5. Vocational Training

TEACHING METHODOLOGY: Swami Vivekananda asserts that traditional teaching methods are the most effective means of education. He suggests that educators should employ a variety of teaching techniques. The following principles of teaching are recommended by Vivekananda:

1. Concentration and Meditation
2. Brahmacharya (Celibacy)
3. Faith (Shraddha and Reverence)
4. Engaging Discussions
5. Study of Sacred Texts
6. Service to Others
7. A Supportive Environment that Balances Freedom and Discipline.

TEACHER ACCORDING TO SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Swami Vivekananda placed significant importance on the direct relationship between the student and the teacher, encapsulated in the concept of "Guru grihvasa." He believed that a child should reside with their teacher from an early age, viewing them as a living embodiment of character and intellect. A fundamental requirement for a teacher is to be free from sin. This raises the question: why is it important to consider the character and personality of the teacher? It is essential that one who advocates for truth and purity of heart and soul embodies these qualities themselves; only then can their teachings hold true value.

Another critical aspect for a teacher is a deep understanding and belief in the essence of the scriptures. While many individuals read various religious texts, they often focus solely on the words, grammar, and etymology, which merely represent the surface of religion. A teacher who speaks continuously must grasp the spirit of these scriptures, as they are the conduit through which the true meaning of diverse religious teachings can be comprehended.

The third essential quality pertains to the teacher's motivation. A teacher must possess boundless patience and love, as these two spiritual forces are vital for effectively imparting knowledge.

Lastly, a teacher should refrain from claiming that they can solely make a child succeed. As Vivekananda stated, "You cannot teach a child to grow; you can only guide." The true teacher serves as an external guide, creating an environment that fosters the awakening of the child's inner spirit.

Vivekananda perspective on the teacher's role is notably progressive. He believed that rather than resorting to reprimands, teachers should focus on awakening the inner potential of their students. The goal is to help pupils realize that their ultimate aim is to achieve the perfection that lies within them.

The teacher and student should engage in a friendly exchange of ideas. It is essential for the teacher to recognize the confusion and difficulties faced by the student. The teacher's role includes assisting the student in self-reflection and personal growth. Furthermore, the teacher should foster creativity, critical thinking, and resilience in the child. One of the most significant contributions a teacher can make is to cultivate 'Atamshradha,' or self-belief, in the child.

Regarding the education of women, Swami Vivekananda expressed deep concern over the dire circumstances faced by women in India. He believed that the advancement of a nation is intrinsically linked to the empowerment of women. He referenced the Manusamriti, stating, "Where women are honored, there the gods are pleased; and where they are not, all endeavors are futile." He asserted that a family or nation cannot prosper if its women are unhappy. Vivekananda advocated for the nurturing of daughters with the same care as sons, emphasizing that women should be afforded the opportunity to embrace the concept of chastity, as this would empower them to achieve their fullest potential. He regarded Sita as a paragon for Indian women and cautioned that any efforts to modernize women that deviate from the ideals represented by Sita are detrimental and should be halted immediately.

Swami Vivekananda opposed child marriage, viewing it as an obstacle to the full development of girls. He argued that girls who marry at a young age are unable to cultivate their identities, resulting in a loss that affects

both individuals and the nation as a whole. He maintained that a nation cannot advance without integrating women into its core activities. Vivekananda held women in high esteem and believed that unlocking their potential is essential for achieving national goals. He emphasized that the education of women is a fundamental prerequisite for a nation's progress.

Regarding the education of the masses, Swami Vivekananda was deeply moved by the dire circumstances faced by the people of India, having traveled extensively throughout the country. He observed that the poor and marginalized often lack a voice and continue to suffer daily, sinking further into despair. He condemned those who have benefited from education while neglecting the plight of millions who endure hunger and ignorance, labeling them as traitors.

Vivekananda identified the miserable conditions of the masses as the root cause of societal suffering. He believed that education is the sole remedy for improving their situation, as it can restore their self-esteem. He lamented the lack of significant efforts to educate the impoverished and advocated for their liberation. In his view, it is the responsibility of every educated individual to assist the poor and uneducated by providing them with new ideas, enabling them to learn and improve their circumstances through their own efforts.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT:

The following implications can be drawn from Vivekananda educational philosophy:

1. Education should foster self-confidence and independence.
2. Education must encourage a sense of universal brotherhood.
3. Education ought to cultivate enthusiasm, curiosity, courage, and critical thinking.
4. Education should guarantee employability and be accessible to the broader population.
5. Education should be grounded in Indian philosophical traditions while also advancing science and technology.
6. The educational process should be engaging and psychologically attuned to learners.
7. Education should facilitate self-realization, enabling individuals to comprehend the fundamental truths of human existence.

CONCLUSION: Swami Vivekananda, who lived over 150 years ago and passed away at a young age, has had a profound influence on the world. He illuminated the path to progress for humanity. His areas of focus

included religion, philosophy, social and political systems, education, the status of women, national honor, and various other domains. He proposed that the resolution of humanity's challenges lies in a comprehensive educational framework. Swami Vivekananda advocated for an education system grounded in character development, morality, spirituality, universal unity, and freedom from fear, while also addressing material needs. He articulated that education serves as a means to understand the fundamental truth of human existence: that we are all manifestations of the same divine essence.

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