

Swami Vivekananda and His Educational Philosophy: A Perspective

Dr. Mohd. Aziz

Assistant Professor

Department of Philosophy

B.B. Kishan College, Jalah

Mofidul Islam

Assistant Professor

Department of Political Science

M.C.Das College, Sonai

Abstract:

The great Indian legend Swami Vivekananda is regarded as a mystic, philosopher, educationist, and saint of yoga. He is acknowledged for his role in introducing yoga and Vedanta philosophy to the West. When he delivered his address before the "Parliament of Religion" in Chicago, USA, in 1893, he made India proud. He firmly believes that education should closely follow the path of human growth to the fullest extent possible and that the development of any nation is reliant upon the development of its people. He promoted a number of educational goals that range from the individual to the social to the universal. His worldview, which has a direct connection to capacity building, universal growth, and self-development, is also reflected in the curriculum he supported. His teaching strategies are entirely grounded on Western and Indian philosophy. Additionally, he has set aside a specific area for the teacher and another one for the pupil. He has placed a strong emphasis on women's education, peace, education, and moral and value education in his educational philosophy.

Keywords

Development, education, nation, people, philosophy

Reference to this paper
should be made as
follows:

**Dr. Md. Aziz,
Mofidul Islam**

Swami Vivekananda
and His Educational
Philosophy: A
Perspective

Vol. XV, Sp. Issue
Article No. 6,
pp. 039-49

Online available at
[https://anubooks.com/
journal/journal-global-
values](https://anubooks.com/journal/journal-global-values)

DOI: [https://doi.org/
10.31995/
jgv.2024.v15iS1.006](https://doi.org/10.31995/jgv.2024.v15iS1.006)

Introduction

On January 12, 1863, Swami Vivekananda was born in Calcutta at Gourmohan Mukherjee Street, which is currently a museum. Bhubaneswari Devi, his mother, was an extremely devout, spiritual, and religious woman. Vishwanath Dutta, his father, practiced law at the Calcutta High Court. Though he left his family to become a monk, his grandfather—a distinguished scholar of Persian and Sanskrit—created an intellectual atmosphere in which he was raised. Vivekananda was given the name Narendranath Dutta by his parents. He is descended from the Kshtriya caste. Narendra's early childhood was greatly influenced by the contemplative, supportive demeanor of his father and the spiritual nature of his mother. Even though he was a mischievous boy, he was devoted to monks and frequently meditated. His mother was forced to declare, "I prayed to Shiva for a son but he provided me a ghost," because of how mischievous he was. Datta was admitted to Calcutta's Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar Institution when he was eight years old. Following his education, he enrolled at Presidency College, where he pursued studies in literature, art, social science, philosophy, and religion. He also had an interest in physical education, music, and classical dance. Subsequently, he became very interested in the Hindu scriptures, such as the Puranas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Vedas. He also attended the General Assembly's Institution to study European philosophy. He reads works by a variety of philosophers, including Darwin, David Hume, August Comte, Kant, Gottlieb, Spinoza, and Hegel. He became enthralled with Herbert Spencer's theory of evolution and corresponded with him while translating *Education* (1861) into Bengali. He studied Bengali literature and Sanskrit scriptures with Western philosophers. In 1880, Narendra became a member of Free Masonry and joined Keshab Chandra Sen's Nava Vidhan. Though he was influenced by Tagore, it was his relationship with Ramakrishna Permahansa and his subsequent discipleship that truly transformed his life. Following his untimely death in 1884, Narendra's father left the family bankrupt. Creditors demanded debt repayments, family members threatened to have them removed from their ancestral house, and he asked Ramakrishna to pray to goddess Kali on their behalf. Ramakrishna advised him to visit the shrine and offer prayers on his own. He visited the temple three times as suggested by Ramakrishna, but he did not ask the goddess for anything materialistic; instead, he begged for genuine wisdom and devotion. With time, Narendra became prepared to give up everything in order to realize

God, and he acknowledged Ramakrishna as his Guru. After leaving the monastery in 1888 to become a monk, Narendra wandered around looking for comfort and the truth.

On May 31, 1893, Vivekananda set out on his tour to the West, stopping in China, Japan, Canada, and the United States. With the assistance of Harvard University's John Henry Wright, he visited the "Parliament of Religions" in September 1893 at the Art Institute of Chicago and delivered a brief statement on behalf of India and Hinduism. "Sisters and brothers of America, today the entire world is happy because this Parliament has given proper foundation of the world religions because its foundation lies on Bhagavad Gita," he said at the beginning of his speech, expressing his first nervousness. Seven thousand people gave Vivekananda a two-minute standing ovation. On July 4, 1902, Vivekananda rose early, went to his room, asked not to be disturbed, and passed away in his meditation.

Educational Philosophy

His ideas on education are extremely important today because they have lost much of their connection to the values of human existence in modern schooling. He attempted to convey to the Indian populace the idea that cultural strength had to be the cornerstone of political and social power. He has a genuine understanding of the Indian educational concept within its cultural setting. Even though he is no longer with us, his memory will live on forever. Future generations will continue to be inspired by his missions and sermons. "Is education worth its name if it does not equip the common mass of people for life's struggles, if it does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion?" Vivekananda once stated. A true education is one that lets a person stand on their own two feet. "Life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas" is what education is supposed to deliver. The goal of this kind of education is to create an integrated individual. His pedagogical philosophies center on the following ideas:

Knowledge within

Understanding is innate in the person themselves. The person discovers this information by internal experience. Everyone is inherently perfect. Education's purpose is to guide people toward perfection. For this reason, everyone should have access to education.

Child Promotes his Own Development

According to Swami Vivekananda, it is incorrect to believe that we

can foster a child's development. In actuality, he advances his own growth. "Everyone develops according to his own nature," he explains. Everyone will discover this reality when the time comes. Do you believe you could teach a child? The child will educate himself; your responsibility is to remove barriers from his path and give him the opportunities he needs. He'll learn things on his own. Does the gardener cultivate the plant, or does it grow itself? He only gives it the conditions it needs to grow; the plant takes care of its own needs. Consequently, Swami Vivekananda promotes the idea of self-education.

Education based on needs and nature

Education must be tailored to each child's needs and nature in order to be beneficial. His needs and nature will not be determined by his parents or school. These traits should be the basis for his educational program. Each child's soul contains God, and the teacher must see this. Every child ought to be viewed as an expression of God. Actually, serving God is our duty. We must thus assist every child.

Concentration as Essence

The ability to focus or pay attention is essential for learning. This power also helps a lot with success in life. Not everyone can focus with the same intensity. One can gather practical knowledge and store it in their memory for use at any time with this power.

Aims of Education

According to Swami Vivekananda, the ultimate goal of all training and education is the creation of humans. He also praises the following primary goals of education:

Self Realization

Man possesses an everlasting soul, which is a storehouse of limitless power. As a result, man should have complete faith in himself and work toward achieving his greatest aspirations since self-confidence breeds self-realization. "Faith in God and faith in us—this is the secret of greatness," he said. The goal of the correct kind of education should be to uncover our ignorance and help us realize who we really are.

Character Formation

A man's character is the culmination of all of his inclinations and mental dispositions. Our thoughts have shaped who we are. Therefore, the goal of education should be to subdue our minds' bad tendencies. "We want education, which forms

character, increases mental strength, expands intellect, and enables one to stand on their own two feet,” stated Vivekananda. Education needs to develop character and make our true selves visible.

Personality Development

A person’s personality is the impact and perception they leave on other people. What matters is a man’s personality. “In Vivekananda’s view, a man’s personality makes up two thirds of his total being, while his intellect and words make up only one third.” This man-making should be the standard for all training and education.

Service of Mind

Serving the God within each person is another crucial goal of education. We should worship the God who is present in the ill, the impoverished, the sad, the ignorant, and the downtrodden. As Swami ji himself put it, “serve man if you wish to find god.” Observing his countrymen’s abject poverty hurt him. Therefore, he believed that everyone should be able to stand on their own two feet and meet their own basic requirements through education.

Universal Brotherhood

The love that Swami Vivekananda had for all people knew no geographical bounds. He consistently called for international peace and goodwill. He stated that we should tear down the barriers of inequity and division through education in order to progressively arrive at the concept of universal brotherhood. Every man and every animal, no matter how helpless or unhappy, big or small, has the same all-pervasive and all-knowing soul. The manifestation, not the soul, is what makes a difference. He emphasized that education needs to awaken this potential in each individual and expand it to the point where it may encompass the entire planet.

Self Sufficiency

According to Swami Vivekananda, no educational plan should overlook life’s practical dimensions. It won’t be feasible to achieve individual independence and national prosperity until then. It won’t be enough to just listen to lofty ideals, he declared. You have to put them to use in the real world and make it a regular practice. That’s why he has underlined the value of education in practical arts such as agriculture.

Physical and Mental Development

The child’s ability to support national progress and advancement as a brave and physically fit citizen of the future is the second goal of education. Emphasizing

the child's mental growth, Swami ji wanted education to help the child become self-sufficient economically rather than a burden to others.

Moral and Spiritual Development

Swami Vivekananda believed that the greatness of a country was determined by the greatness of its people as well as by the parliamentary institutions and activities of that country. But citizens can only become great via their moral and spiritual growth, which is something that education should promote.

Unity in Diversity

Developing insight into people is the real goal of education, enabling them to recognize and find unity in variety. Further, Swami Vivekananda has declared that the distinction between the material and spiritual realms is an illusion (Maya) and that they are one and the same. This idea that diversity can bring people together should be fostered in education.

Religious Development

According to Vivekananda, every person should be able to discover the ultimate truth or reality by exploring and nurturing the religious germ that is already ingrained in them. Therefore, in order to purify and elevate one's entire life, he promoted the training of sentiments and emotions. Only then will the person's capacity for obedience, volunteerism, and submission to the precepts and teachings of great saints and saviors grow. Education ought to support his growth.

Curriculum

Spiritual development and growth are the main goals of education, according to Swami Vivekananda. However, this does not imply that he did not support material success and physical health. He passionately argued for the inclusion of all those courses and extracurricular in the curriculum that promote both spiritual and material well-being. Swami Vivekananda advised studying religion, philosophy, the Upanishads, the company of saints and their teachings, and other spiritual disciplines. He also advised studying languages, geography, science, politics, economics, psychology, art, agriculture, industrial, and technical subjects, as well as games, sports, and other physical activities, in order to achieve material advancement and prosperity.

Methods of Teaching

The same traditional spiritual teaching techniques, in which the Guru and his followers coexisted closely as a family, were advocated by Swami Vivekananda. The following were the key elements of those spiritual and religious practices:

- I. To use yoga to manage transient mental faculties.
- II. To develop the mind via focused attention and extended meditation.
- III. To acquire knowledge via lectures, seminars, conversations, personal experience, and artistic endeavors
- IV. To emulate the traits and disposition of an educated, perceptive instructor/teacher.
- V. To direct the student in the proper direction through one-on-one instruction from the instructor.

Major Consequences of Vivekananda's Educational Ideas

Three main reasons have shaped Vivekananda's educational ideas: 1) love for his teacher; 2) love for the country; and 3) personal convictions.

The Foundation of Contemporary Education

According to Vivekananda, the focus of contemporary education worldwide has thus far been on "the learning to do" rather than the "learning to be" aspects of education. According to him, the needs of the human intellect should be the main emphasis of education. His educational philosophies are grounded in universal moral and ethical precepts. His goal was to instill in the common Indian masses the values of peace, tolerance, and synthesis. In his philosophy, the claims of matter and soul are given equal weight. He views unity and diversity as equally real. Everything is merely "veiled spirit." As a result, he developed the same metaphysical synthesis, which serves as one of the main tenets of its educational philosophy and reconciles the claims of spirit and matter.

The Value of "Yoga"

Vivekananda wishes to emphasize meditation and focus as much as possible during the teaching-learning process. Five components are always present in yoga practice, just as they are in general education: the teacher, the student, the goal, the subject, and the technique. He was persuaded that all information resides in the human mind and that meditation and focus exercises can help one experience this.

Transmission of Knowledge

According to Vivekananda, teaching is always a giving and receiving relationship between the instructor and the pupil. In this instance, he emphasizes the significance of actively engaging in the teaching-learning process. Teachers should inspire their pupils to learn and cultivate in them a secular worldview, scientific temperament, and sense of civic duty.

Activity Method

When Vivekananda proposed that the cornerstone of any educational program should be experiential learning, he was ahead of many contemporary philosophers. He wanted all extracurricular activities, including as dance and drama, to be taught in Indian schools and colleges. He also insisted on intercollegiate and interschool competitions to teach students how to put aside their own interests in favor of the greater good of society.

Women Education

Vivekananda advocated for a strong educational system to instill ambition in women. He made a compelling case for elevating women's standing in tandem with men's. He believed that women's lack of possibilities for personal growth went directly against the old Indian ideal.

Value Education

Everything in the society serves as a teaching tool in this context, where education is understood broadly. The formal education system is only a component of the culture, and the culture inexorably shapes the system's values. Education is viewed as a tool for taming human urges, and as a result, it takes on some characteristics of a behavior modification strategy. Education upholds social ideals rather than modifies them. Education is perceived as adhering to societal norms and culture.

Peace Education

As Swami Vivekananda so clearly stated, constructive education for peace must seek to reform humanity in order to allow the inner growth of the human psyche and generate a more conscious understanding of the mission of mankind and the current conditions of social life. Education that can rescue humanity from its current plight is what we need today. This type of education focuses on a person's spiritual growth, enhancing their value as unique individuals, and educating the youth about the times they live in.

Environmental Education

It is believed that environmental education is essential to the educational process. It is assumed to be interdisciplinary in nature and focused on real-world issues. It should prioritize fostering a sense of morality, promote public welfare, and be concerned with the survival of the human race. Therefore, its force should be directed by current and future subjects of concern, putting the learners' initiative and participation in action aside. By using resources wisely, students can control the environment in which they live thanks to environmental education.

Education for Citizenship

The goal of citizenship education should be to shape the next generation of people into members of a civic society who understand their rights, uphold democratic principles, and contribute to a shared responsibility welfare state. A program known as “education for democratic citizenship” consists of a number of methods and exercises designed to give adults and children the tools they need to assume and carry out their rights and obligations in society and to actively engage in democracy.

Conclusion

When considered in the context of modern philosophy, Vivekananda was essentially a man living in a time capsule, evolving his home country to combat many social ills in less than forty years. “Equilibrium” and “synthesis” were Vivekananda’s catchphrases. His disposition was one of reflection and loyalty to duty. He had thoroughly examined India’s social and political downfall and made an effort to offer a practical solution for ending all social injustices. In his perspective, the realization of universal love and fraternity was made possible by the awakening and liberation of modern India. He imparted to his fellow fellows a powerful message of extreme bravery and fortitude. He was scathing in his criticism of the intellect and conceit of the higher castes in Indian culture. He was among the first prominent Indian intellectuals to provide a sociological analysis of Indian history.

References

1. Swami, A. (2006). *Vivekananda, world teacher: his teachings on the spiritual unity of humankind*, Woodstock, Vermont: Sky Light Paths Pub.
2. Agarwal, S. P. (1998). *The social role of the Gita: how and why*, Motilal Banarsi Dass.
3. Banhatti, G.S. (1963). *The Quint essence of Vivekananda*, Pune, India: Suvichar Prakashan Mandal.
4. Clarke & Bernard, P. (2006). *New Religions in Global Perspective*, Rutledge
5. Cooper, C. (1984). *Swami Vivekananda: Literary Biography*. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
6. Das., S.K. (1991). *A History of Indian Literature: 1800/1910, Western impact: Indian response*, Sahitya Akademi.
7. De Michelis, E. (2005). *A History of Modern Yoga*, Continuum.

8. Dhar, S.N. (1976). *A Comprehensive Biography of Swami Vivekananda* (2 ed.), Madras, India: Vivekananda Prakashan Kendra.
9. Dutt, H. (2005). *Immortal Speeches*, New Delhi: Unicorn Books, p. 121.
10. Dutta, K. (2003). *Calcutta: a cultural and literary history*, Oxford: Signal Books.
11. Farquhar, J. N. (1915). *Modern Religious Movements in India*, London: Macmillan.
12. Ganguly, A.P. (2001). *Life and Times of Netaji Subhas: From Cuttack to Cambridge, 1897–1921*, VRC Publications.
13. Feuerstein, G. (2002). *The Yoga Tradition*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
14. Ghosh, G. (2003). *The Prophet of Modern India: A Biography of Swami Vivekananda*, Rupa & Company.
15. Gokhale, B.G. (1964). “Swami Vivekananda and Indian Nationalism”, *Journal of Bible and Religion* (Oxford University Press) 32(1):35–42.
16. King, R. (2002), *Oriental is man and Religion: Post-Colonial Theory, India and “The Mystic East”*, Routledge.
17. Mukherji, M. S. (2011). *The Monk As Man: The Unknown Life of Swami Vivekananda*.
18. Paranjape, M. R. (2012). *making India: Colonialism, National Culture, and the Afterlife of Indian English Authority*. Springer.
19. Paul, S. (2003). *Great Men of India: Swami Vivekananda*. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
20. Swami, P. (2003). “Profiles of famous educators: Swami Vivekananda” *Prospects* (Netherlands: Springer), XXXIII(2): 231–245.
21. Anantnand, R. (1994). *The limits of scripture: Vivekananda’s reinterpretation of the Vedas*, Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.
22. Glyn, R. (1996). “Vivekananda”, *A Source-Book of Modern Hinduism*, Rutledge.

23. Robin, R. (1 January 2004). *Contemporary Hinduism: Ritual, Culture, and Practice*. ABC-CLIO.
24. Swami, R. (2013). "Swami Vivekananda: The personification of Spirituality". *Swami Vivekananda: New Perspectives An Anthology on Swami Vivekananda*. Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture.
25. Romain, R. (1929). "The River Re-Enters the Sea", *The Life of Ramakrishna, Hollywood, California*: Vedanta Press.