



## Significance and Relevance of Swami Vivekananda's Educational Thinking in the Current Perspective

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### ARTICLE DETAILS

#### Research Paper

**Accepted:** 28-04-2025

**Published:** 10-05-2025

#### Keywords:

*Inspiration, knowledge, scriptures, humanity, sermons, society, imitation, encouragement, guidance*

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### ABSTRACT

The basic mantra of Swami Vivekananda was – “Help, not opposition”.....‘Assimilate the feelings of others, not destruction’.....‘Coordination and peace not discord.’ Swami Vivekananda's name is specially taken among those who put their strong shoulder in the development of the country's political consciousness as well as cultural and religious sentiments. Swami Vivekananda set various objectives for the development of the society and achieved them. He established Ramakrishna Mission for the welfare of the people. Swami Vivekananda is considered a true Vedanti. He gave the brief characteristics of Vedanta philosophy as Ekai Sadvipa Bahudhaavadanti 'UĀiṣṭhāt, Jagrat Praapya Vashnibodhate, Brahma Satya Jaganmīṭhā' etc. Swami was a supporter of Advaita Vedanta. Swami Vivekananda coordinated the individual and the collective and presented a holistic viewpoint to the people. Swami Vivekananda Said-"Education is a light that shows mankind the right direction to surge". While giving practical form to Vedanta, Swami Vivekananda gave importance to the welfare of entire humanity. He considered serving the poor, uneducated, helpless, crippled, and neglected and orphans as true devotion to God. Swami Vivekananda believed that the true development of a nation is dependent on its youth, because only a youth can change the face of the

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nation. Achieving divinity was the main aim of his life. India was rightly called 'Amar Bharat' by Swamiji. In his educational thoughts, Swami Vivekananda praised the real knowledge which is already present in the child - "Education is the expression of that inherent perfection which is already present in man." Swami Vivekananda kept in mind all aspects of personality development under the objectives of education and gave glory to the sentence 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' by giving it meaning and lit a new light of life knowledge. Swami Vivekananda, like Gautam Buddha, taught the society the lesson of conduct. Swami Ji never gave priority to class struggle in his entire life. He considered humanity as synonym of socialism and defined it as social philosophy. Like Tagore, Swami Vivekananda believed in the universal human. Swami Vivekananda studied both the aspects of education and philosophy in depth under his philosophy of life and his philosophy of education and hence he is given the title of a philosopher like the spiritual Napoleon of India.

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**DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15390839>**

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

“Arise, awake and do not wait till you reach your destination.”

- Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda, as a visionary and creator of the era, had seen and understood the situation of his country at his time, and from that perspective, he laid the foundation of New India. He is very famous for arranging Indian religious philosophy in a modern perspective, giving practical form to Vedanta and propagating it, and for social service and social reforms, but he laid great emphasis on the need of education and gave many suggestions for improving the education of that time for the creation of New India. Swami Vivekananda refuted theoretical education and stressed on practical education.

**BIOGRAPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA:**

Swami Vivekananda was born on 12 February 1863, Paush Sankranti, at 6:50 am in a Bengali Kayastha family. His father Shri Vishwanath Dutta was an attorney (lawyer) in the High Court of Calcutta. Vivekananda's real name was Narendra Nath Dutta. The atmosphere of his house was religious, so Swami had a special interest in religion, worship and rituals. Narendra's mother Mrs. Bhuvaneshwari Devi was also a very intelligent, virtuous, religious and charitable woman. She used to narrate Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas to him. These religious discussions had a great impact on him and he became a great Mahatma.

He had a desire to know the divine truth. One day, while taking a class on poet Wordsworth, Narendra's college teachers discussed the siddhi and supernatural of Ramakrishna Paramhansa of Dakshineswar. Soon he met Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Here he repeated his old question, "Have you seen God?" Paramhansa said, "Yes, I have seen him." Yes son, I will certainly make you see him." Shri Paramhansa had realized the truth that the Supreme Soul is in the soul and the soul is in the Supreme Soul. He also made Vivekananda realize this truth.

After this Narendra devoted himself to spiritual practices and impressed by Narendra's high level devotion and penance, Ramakrishna made him his chief disciple. In fact Paramhansa chose Narendra as the medium to spread his message. After Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa passed away in August 1886, Narendra adopted the religion of sanyaas and became famous as Swami. And on 31 May 1893, he went to America to participate in the World Religion Conference of his Guru and before going there he changed his name to Vivekananda. He said that education was the reason for poverty, misery and misery of his country and expressed his views on how the education of the citizens of India should be. He earned fame for his country and the country by travelling abroad and preaching Hindu religion. On 4 July 1902, this Mahatma passed away after re-establishing Hindu religion in the world.

**EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA:**

According to Swami Vivekananda, no one teaches another person, every person learns on his own. Education only gives suggestions. Swamiji termed the education of that time as useless and said: - "You consider only that person educated who has passed some examinations and can give good speeches. But the reality is that what is the benefit of education which cannot prepare the common man for the struggle



of life, which cannot build character, which cannot create the feeling of social service and which cannot create courage like a lion?"

It is clear from his statement that he was unhappy with the education system of that time. He was of the view that the education of that time did not inculcate any virtue in man. It was not the education that makes a man. Swami ji has called that education negative education. In the education system of the British period, emphasis was laid on prohibitions. There was emphasis on not working with hands and feet, not using mother tongue and not showing originality. He believed that education without feelings cripples a person, frustrates his originality and does not develop human qualities in him. It is clear from his statement that he has a broad outlook towards education. He has also said that after freeing India from the shackles of slavery, the citizens here should study western scholars and make arrangements for technical education. So that industries can develop and our country becomes full of wealth and grains again. In short, Vivekananda refuted theoretical education and emphasized on practical education.

In this regard, he warned Indians in a timely manner and said: - "You will have to make every field of work practical. The entire country has been ruined by the piles of scholars."

### **CONCEPT AND NATURE OF EDUCATION:**

The thoughts of great men are based on the eternal and truth. They express in their thoughts the truth which they see with their Ritambhara wisdom. Defining education, Swami Vivekananda says that education is the expression of the perfection inherent in man. Education means expressing that perfection which is already present in every man. That is, knowledge is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside, it is inside. The infinite library of the world is present in our mind only. Whatever knowledge the world has acquired, it has been derived from the mind only. The entire storehouse of knowledge is also present in an innocent child.

Swami Vivekananda has understood education in a broad sense. He does not consider education to be synonymous with knowledge, rather he understands education to mean that knowledge acquisition which helps in the all-round development of a person, that is, which contributes to the physical, mental, emotional and economic development of a person. As a Vedantic thinker, he believes in the divine perfection found in man. According to him, through education, one develops faith in one's own self. And faith in the self leads to the awakening of the hidden Brahma.

Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of life is indicative of his syncretic approach. Hence, this approach is reflected in his educational thinking as well. He says that at present education does not prepare man for the struggle of life, but rather makes him powerless. Regarding what kind of education



should be there for India, he says, "We need that disciple through whom character is formed, brain power increases, intellect develops and man can stand on his own feet."

### THOUGHTS ON EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES:

**1. Objective of Self-realization:** According to Indian tradition, Vivekananda also considered self-realization as the main goal of life. In other words, we can call it 'salvation' or liberation. Swami Ji said in Karmayog that "All the things that we see around us are struggling for liberation. Under the influence of this tendency, a sanyasi prays to God, a robber robs. When the method of doing work is not right, then we call it sin and when it is right and good, then we call it virtue. Just as a sanyasi wants to be free from bondage by knowing the reasons of bondage, then he worships God. Therefore, the aim of the disciple is to make a person capable of choosing the right kind of liberation."

**2. Developing a man as a human being:** The great aim of life is that everyone should develop his personality to attain liberation. According to Vedanta philosophy, individual means that man is a part of the supreme power, his nature is spiritual. Therefore, the responsibility of education is to build a human being, i.e., to develop the natural qualities of a human being. Swami Ji believes that to become a human being, his inherent powers should be developed to the maximum. He believes that the ultimate aim of all types of education and training should be to build a human being. The responsibility of education is to control the will power and its expression in the child and make it fruitful.

**3. Objective of physical and mental development:** Vivekananda also emphasized on physical development as the objective of education. He believed that when the child is physically healthy, then the mental development of the child can be done in the right way. Emphasizing on the objective of mental development through the disciple, he said that we need such a disciple after attaining whom a man can stand on his own feet.

**4. Individuality and social objective:** Struggle for liberation indicates the real nature of man and the proper relationship between the person and the society. According to Indian Advaita philosophy, there is no need to establish harmony in the society today because if the person recognizes his real form, the reason for the conflict between him and the society is that the person is related to the gross body. Vivekananda says that if the personality is in the body then it will be destroyed. Swami ji believes that we are not yet a person, we are struggling for individuality. The real nature of man is the infinite soul. The soul is the only unit because it is infinite and cannot be divided. The means of its attainment is renunciation. Renunciation means the contradiction of separate existence and the experience of real individuality. When man completely renounces selfishness, he becomes infinite, which is the nature of



real man. From this point of view, there is no opposition between the individual and society. Therefore, by developing the real individuality or personality of man, both the individual and social objectives of the disciple are fulfilled.

**5. Objective of character building:** Character is the sum total of all the suggestions and natures of the mind. Swami ji says that for the formation of good character in a person, good thoughts should be formed in him and this is possible only by the disciple. When we think, every thought affects our body and leaves a sanskar on the mind. Character is formed by these sanskars. By doing bad deeds, a person becomes ill-mannered. Similarly, a person who listens to good words and thinks good thoughts gets imbued with good values and only then his character is formed. Therefore, character formation will be said to be good when a person always keeps doing great work in all circumstances. Swami Ji emphasized on celibacy for the formation of good character and said that intellectual and spiritual powers will develop in a person through celibacy and the mind will become pure through words and deeds.

#### **TEACHING METHOD:**

Swami Ji tried to make the education of children completely based on spiritual principles. Hence, he considered concentration of mind as an important teaching method through which knowledge can be acquired. This is the best means to succeed in any field of life. Apart from this, man makes terrible mistakes. And the one whose mind is concentrated does not make mistakes. Swami Ji used to say that "knowledge and treasure can be opened only through the key of concentration of mind." We get the education of concentrating mind from Raja Yoga. The education of Raja Yoga means to experience divinity by controlling the mind. Mental concentration can be achieved through practice and worship. Vivekananda believes that compilation of facts is not the essence of education, but concentration of mind is the main element of education. "With this view, he has given priority to methods like centralisation, lectures, logic, discussion, sermons, society, imitation, encouragement, guidance, counselling, summarisation, induction-deduction etc. for education.

#### **CURRICULUM:**

Swamiji believed that both internal and external goals in life can be fulfilled through this world and this body. Hence, Swamiji said that knowledge of all those subjects related to this world is mandatory under the curriculum. For spiritual perfection, he included religion, philosophy, Puranas, Upanishads and for worldly prosperity, he included subjects like language, geography, economics, politics, psychology, arts, business subjects, agriculture, sports and exercise etc. in the curriculum.



Apart from this, Swamiji also supported the study of English language and science. He believed that we should acquire technical education and knowledge of all those subjects which lead to the progress of industries. The reason for this was that in today's era, progress of any country is not possible without the progress of science.

### **TEACHER AND STUDENT:**

According to Swami Ji, education is 'Guru Ghar Vaas'. Education cannot take place without the personal life of the teacher. He should always be ready to impart knowledge and knowledge cannot be imparted without sacrifice. The teacher should have sympathy towards the student. Describing the qualities of a teacher, he said that he should be knowledgeable. Swami Ji has described three special qualities of a teacher - first his knowledge of scriptures. A good teacher knows the essence of the scriptures. He knows the meaning beyond the words. The second quality is innocence. He should be pure in heart and mind. Without purity of knowledge, he cannot infuse spiritual power in the students. The third quality of a teacher is related to his inner inspiration. He should not educate his students for any selfish reason, for money or for fame. He should be inspired by the feeling of love for humanity.

Swami Ji's ideology regarding the student is similar to that of Probel. He considered the child to be the center of education and said that the child is a storehouse of all kinds of worldly and spiritual knowledge. According to Swami Ji, the disciple should have purity in his thoughts and speech and purity in his actions. He should have a thirst for knowledge. According to him, curiosity is the basic desire of a student, through which he acquires knowledge. The disciple should have restlessness for high ideals in his heart. There should be faith, humility and devotion towards qualities.

### **THOUGHTS ON WOMEN EDUCATION:**

Swami Ji considered women education necessary for the upliftment of the country. According to him, "Progress of that family or country cannot be expected where women are not educated, where they lead a miserable life. That is why their upliftment is extremely necessary." Swami Ji discussed the nature of soul as propounded by Vedanta and said that it is difficult to understand why so much difference is made between women and men in our country, whereas Vedanta declares that only one soul resides in every living being. According to Swami Ji, such ideal feelings should be developed in the hearts of women through education so that they can build their character. He advocated teaching the ideals of Indian women like Maitreyi, Gargi, Sita, Savitri. According to Swami Ji, they should be taught celibacy.

Through which they will get Brahma Gyan. If even one woman gets Brahma Gyan, then thousands of women will be inspired by the brilliance of her personality. Puranas, history, home science,





art and family education should be given to women and they should also be taught sewing, cooking and child rearing. Japa, tapasya and upasana should be an essential part of their education. A sense of bravery should also be developed in them. Swamiji presents the example of Jhansi ki Rani, Sanghamitra, Leela, Ahilyabai, Meerabai etc. before them. Swamiji says that if women are pure, wise and brave, then great men will be born to such mothers. Swami Vivekananda - A Public Education.

### **SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MASS EDUCATION:**

Just as Swami Vivekananda was in favour of women education, similarly his aim was to spread education to the masses. Swami ji was very sensitive towards the poor and illiterate people of the nation. He was of the opinion that as long as countless people are living in hunger and ignorance, no person should sit in peace. Ignoring the masses is a great national sin. Swami believed that "No politics can be successful until the masses of India are well educated, their stomachs are not filled properly and they do not get good protection." Swami Vivekananda was in favour of imparting education to the people in their own spoken language. He has also said that spiritual education should also be imparted in their common spoken language. Along with mother tongue, he gave preference to Pali language instead of Sanskrit language which was not that prestigious. Swami believed that education in Sanskrit language should also be adopted along with it. Swami Vivekananda wanted to give practical education to the common man. An education that enables a man to survive. One of the biggest problems in the meaningfulness of education of the masses is poverty and destitution.

For this, even if a free school is opened for everyone, who will go to it because every child goes to the field with his father. Then Swami Ji says that if a poor child cannot come to the school, then the school can come to him. If the mountain does not come to Muhammad, then why should Muhammad not go to the mountain? Swami Ji has given priority to practical knowledge over bookish knowledge. Swami Ji has ended the difference between the upper class and the lower class and said that the heart is such a medium through which education can be provided to everyone. Swami Ji emphasizes on being kind-hearted. - "Come, each one of us, pray day and night for those crores of downtrodden Indians who are trapped by the deceit of the priests of poverty and various atrocities. Pray for them day and night. I am more concerned about preaching to them than to the rich and the high. I am not a philosopher, nor a theologian, nor a saint. But I am poor and I love the poor.

### **SIGNIFICANCE AND RELEVANCE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S EDUCATIONAL THINKING IN THE PRESENT TIMES:**





Swamiji was a modern thinker endowed with unparalleled scholarship. There was eternal brilliance of truth in his speech and thoughts. His educational philosophy is completely original and full of novelty. Swamiji's education, which transforms an imperfect human into a perfect human, builds life (life building), brings out the divinity present in man and builds character (character making), remains an ideal for us even after six decades of independence. Swamiji's concept of education, which transforms a man into a divine man by developing moral, spiritual and human values, and creates a youth endowed with amazing enthusiasm, is still very meaningful and relevant for us today.

Swamiji's concept of holistic education is a new concept. On one hand, he has emphasized on the spiritual development of the child, on the other hand, he emphasizes on his worldly prosperity. He does not want development of mind or intellect only but wants development of all aspects of the child's personality through education, physical, mental, emotional or economic. In fact, Swami Ji's education gives physical perfection, mental concentration, , and enthusiasm, practical and spiritual conduct to the child and also gives emphasis on character development while explaining in detail the education of women and the public. It makes the child a civilized citizen by endowing him with good values. Today, both the teacher and the student lack character and sense of duty. Swami Vivekananda Kalayji is a great man. The thoughts of great men are timeless and always relevant.

There is a wonderful amalgamation of the overall development, prosperity and welfare of man in his educational thoughts. Education actually creates the best human values along with physical prosperity. Education is not only for life but for good life, spiritual and character development. Today our educational institutions are producing insensitive and cultureless educated youth. Character development and spirituality have been our specialties since time immemorial. Even today in the present era of global material competition, the whole world is looking at the spiritual values of India.

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