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## Swami Vivekananda's Educational Philosophy: An Analytical Review

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**Abstract:** This study examines Vivekananda's education philosophy. Swami Vivekananda, a powerful Vedantic philosopher, introduced India's cultural and historical significance to the world. He promoted global fraternity, religious tolerance, and variety as an Indian Vedantist. It includes philosophical goals, epistemological, ontological, and axiological perspectives, teaching philosophy, educational goals, curricula, pedagogical methods or materials, academic disciplines, teacher-student relationships, Eastern and Western thought integration, and a harmonious synthesis of religion and science. This retrospective study uses analytical approaches for descriptive purposes. Swami Vivekananda believes God and every God-belonging soul are ultimate truth and reality. Though the body degrades, the soul is immortal and eternal. His body decomposes after death, but his spirit reunites with Brahma after atonement. Education is essential to society's growth, according to Swami Vivekananda. He strives for human perfection and reveals people's hidden qualities. He was a fierce opponent of the education system, which prioritised information over talent development. He believed that education built character, mental strength, intelligence, and self-sufficiency. He highlighted the children's spiritual and material growth through synchronised vedantic-material education. He highlighted the children's spiritual and material growth through synchronised vedantic-material education. Self-education, spiritual rejuvenation with monetary affluence, character training, life creation, and nation-building are his goals. He promoted caste abolition and women's and socially disadvantaged education. Swami demanded a spiritual guru for self-realization.

**Keywords-** Philosophy, Religion & Science, Vedanta, Epistemology, Moral Values, Women's Education, Salvation, Spiritual Education

**INTRODUCTION:** An education is not merely the accumulation of information that resides in your mind, unprocessed and chaotic throughout your existence. We must cultivate life-enhancing, character-forming, and idea-integrating principles. We desire an education that cultivates character, enhances mental fortitude, broadens intelligence, and enables self-sufficiency. Vivekananda, grounded in India's historical legacy and imbued with national pride, adopted a modern perspective on life's challenges, serving as a conduit between India's past and its present. His aim was to serve humanity through social service, widespread education, religious rejuvenation, and societal enlightenment via education. Jawaharlal Nehru (November 14, 1889 - May 27, 1964).

It is universally acknowledged that a quality education from a reputable institution is crucial for establishing a successful profession. The prevailing guidance for pupils is to meticulously examine the components of the mandated syllabus and achieve commendable marks in the examination. There is, however, an acknowledgement that a 'real' education must encompass more than merely the examination of a limited number of disciplines. Over one hundred and fifty years have elapsed since the birth of Swami ji. However, his insights remain equally pertinent today. He placed significant emphasis on education in the innovative ideas and vision he provided. Upon observing the plight of the impoverished and marginalised throughout his travels in India, Swami ji sought to understand their circumstances. In this investigation, he discovered a significant disparity in the education systems of India and Europe. To bridge this divide, he constructed an immediate connection founded on the core principles of Vedantic philosophy, serving as the architect of the spiritual

link between East and West. Swami ji observed that the neglect and exploitation of the populace are the primary causes of a nation's backwardness. To enhance their economic situation, it was essential to instruct them in superior agricultural techniques, village industries, and hygienic living practices. That is why he prioritised the education of humanity. A comprehensive education system can elevate India and the global community. He asserts that the sole assistance that can be rendered to our lower classes is to educate them and restore their diminished identities. In contemporary times, we must reflect profoundly on Swami ji to restore our diminished pride and elevate India to a position of global leadership.

As a philosopher, he illustrated that the old philosophy of Vedanta can proficiently tackle contemporary challenges and remedy modern issues. He amalgamated Western Idealistic theory with the progressive Vedantic philosophy of Hinduism. Championed universal brotherhood and comprehended Humanism from an idealistic perspective. He contends that human existence is a perpetual struggle between the powerful and the defenceless. Education should prepare individuals to confront this struggle and address all challenges with courage and confidence. It should foster a fearless populace. Education should promote the balanced growth of an individual's life, mirroring the advancement of nature in the evolution of human intellect. Swamiji states, 'We aim to develop harmonious individuals, with equal cultivation of our psychological, spiritual, intellectual, and practical dimensions.' Individuals within the nation represent a unique type and are unable to understand beyond that particular perspective. The philosophy fundamentally asserts that we should cultivate multiple traits. The core characteristics of Swami Vivekananda's

educational philosophy are Idealism, Naturalism, and Pragmatism. From a naturalistic viewpoint, he contended that genuine education can solely be attained through nature and intrinsic inclinations. From an idealistic perspective, he asserted that the purpose of education is to develop the child's moral and spiritual qualities. The Pragmatists underscored the significance of Western education in technology, commerce, manufacturing, and science for achieving material prosperity.

**Critical Review of the Current Educational System:** While the education supplied to kids today has commendable aspects, it is significantly overshadowed by substantial and serious issues, resulting in a deficit of positive elements. Contemporary education, focused on vocational preparation, neglects the development of virtue, the training of the intellect, the fortification of moral resolve, and the nurturing of good character. It fails to impart self-discipline or foster harmonious relationships with friends, neighbours, or colleagues. It fails to instill the virtues of truth, honesty, love, and compassion that define a genuine human person. It fails to elucidate methods for managing stress and maintaining composure in challenging circumstances. Fails are to equip, oneself for life's adversities, and to introspect. It does not instruct on maintaining a good mindset following failure. Currently, young pupils are experiencing significant issues such as anxiety and sadness. The surge in student suicides following academic failure or poor performance, as well as instances of violence, plainly indicates their inability to manage unpleasant emotions. Furthermore, contemporary education, characterised by its negative aspects, fails to prioritise respect for teachers, women, and seniors, as well as compassion, conviction in the power of truth and goodness, and empathy for the

impoverished, marginalised, oppressed, uninformed, and vulnerable segments of society. The old system does not facilitate the development of graciousness, intellect, fearlessness, self-confidence, self-reliance, and adherence to values, morality, honesty, and empathy through self-effort, self-realization, and appropriate training. What is the value of a prestigious position if a doctor, teacher, engineer, scientist, technocrat, or others exhibit disrespect towards their parents, abandon them to spend their twilight years in an old-age home, perpetrate violence against vulnerable women, and lack empathy for marginalised segments of society? The prevalence of societal ills such as poverty, ignorance, fear, and physical frailty is steadily rising throughout India. The presence of caste and untouchability, greed, exploitation, lack of confidence, female illiteracy, violence, mass oppression, religious perversion, corruption, and dishonesty exemplifies the failure of modernity. Vivekananda asserted the urgent necessity of establishing an ideal education system capable of eliminating social problems and fostering sustainable national growth by transforming individuals, the fundamental elements of society. This study provided Swami Vivekananda's Educational Philosophy an Analytical Review.

**Objectives of the Study:** The present research aims to elucidate Vivekananda's philosophical doctrines and his perspectives on education. It encompasses his fundamental philosophical tenets, insights into epistemology, ontology, and axiology, as well as his educational philosophy, curricula, pedagogical methods, medium of instruction, academic disciplines, teacher-student dynamics, East-West integration, and the harmonious synthesis of religion and science. Consequently, this study seeks to fulfil its

objectives through a systematic analysis of the following components:

- a) To investigate Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of education.
- b) To analyse Swami Vivekananda's philosophical teachings concerning epistemology, ontology, and axiology.
- c) To assess the relevance of Vivekananda's educational philosophy in contemporary India.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:** The present study is qualitative and examined pertinent materials, including articles, research papers, and books, employing descriptive and analytical approaches.

**Educational Philosophy:** Swami Vivekananda was a notable and influential disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a proponent of national revival, an ambivalent patriot, a master of Vedanta philosophy, a comprehensive scholar of the Upanishads, a mentor for youth, an advocate of universal religion and brotherhood, a spiritualist, a Brahmajñani, and a dedicated teacher. Swamiji criticised the previous educational system as malevolent, ineffective, and unnatural, as it promoted solely theoretical knowledge and rote memorisation without practical application. Swamiji advocated for education, asserting that proper education fosters self-reliance and enables individuals to accurately assess themselves, so facilitating the attainment of their goals with ease. Education eradicates negative thinking, empowering individuals to become self-sufficient. Swami Vivekananda thinks that education plays a pivotal part in character formation and personality development. He stated, 'We desire an education that cultivates character, enhances mental

fortitude, broadens intellect, and enables self-sufficiency.'

According to him, the primary objective of education or training is to cultivate individuals. Swamiji's thoughts would grow troubled by the hypocrisy masquerading as devotion among the countrymen. He aimed to convey that service to God is attainable solely via service to humanity. Consequently, he stated, 'To discover God, one must serve humanity.' He maintained that the comprehensive advancement of India necessitated mental generosity, attainable just via education. Swamiji believed in both nationalism and internationalism, asserting that education was the sole means to foster the notion of international brotherhood. He emphasised the significance of education. Swamiji stated, 'Through education, the concept of universal brotherhood should be gradually attained beyond the confines of isolation and inequality.' The identical, all-encompassing spirit resides within every human and every animal, regardless of their frailty or misery, size or stature. The distinction is not within the soul, but in its presentation. Swami Vivekananda emphasises the ethical and spiritual significance of the individual in preserving unity among the populace in India. Simultaneously, he asserted that it could only be achieved through the advancement of genuine education.

Swami Vivekananda's Vedantic philosophy, which he established, categorises knowledge into two types: 'Para Vidya and Apra Vidya'. Vidhya denotes the individual self, soul, spirit, and divinity, together with the spiritual knowledge acquired via the study of Vedanta, Upanishads, Puranas, logic, and ethics, among other disciplines. Apra Vidhya pertains to the physical or material realm of external nature, acquired through the disciplines of astrology, physics,

mathematics, zoology, history, economics, and Ayurveda. Swami Vivekananda's epistemic framework was based on transcendentalism. He emphasised the importance of empiricism, rationalism, logic, and sensationalism in the quest for knowledge. Swami Vivekananda stated, 'All knowledge, whether secular or spiritual, resides in the human mind—an infinite library of the universe.'

The purpose of education is to reveal the concealed knowledge within the mind. An individual's educational attainment is assessed not by the quantity of books read but by the extent of ignorance that envelops their intellect. As the illumination of knowledge expands, the veil of ignorance progressively diminishes. Ontology concerns the analytical characterisation of the reality of both extant and non-existent objects in our surroundings. God is the ultimate reality and truth, and every human soul is a manifestation of Him, Brahman, who fashioned the planet in a pristine and exquisite life form for humanity, as articulated by Swami Vivekananda. Everything around us is ever experiencing transformation and deterioration. In this world, nothing is enduring. Human beings, in their diverse corporeal forms susceptible to decay, represent a divine manifestation of God. The human soul is nevertheless immortal, eternal and everlasting. After the death of the human body, the soul is departing the body and reunites with it only in virtuous activities and meditation, following the attainment of Moksha or salvation. From an axiological standpoint, Swami Vivekananda was an enlightened ethical individual. He is tasked with redefining ethics in both form and significance. He established novel moral and ethical principles. His notion and ethical framework are predicated on the essential purity

and unity of God. The predominant conceptions of morality and ethics are founded on ideas of fear, such as Kohlberg's concepts of the 'good boy' and 'lovely girl,' the apprehension of divine retribution, and the anxiety surrounding social acceptance or rejection. He, nonetheless, presented substantial justifications for exemplary behaviour for the first time. Inherently virtuous individuals should strive for spiritual purity and ethical conduct in their natural environment. Moreover, he advocated for an impeccable ethical stance in both personal and community life. He instituted complete autonomy for individuals to acknowledge and enhance themselves, fostering the development of their individuality in all aspects. He emphasised the advancement and prosperity of society, of which individuals are essential components, and highlighted the need of individual growth and development. He believed that individuals have a vital role in the ongoing development of a just society. Individuals receive direction and assistance in examining their personality and creativity. As a result, it is his or her responsibility to serve the society to which he or she belongs.

Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy synthesises Western educational practices with traditional Vedantic Indian philosophies, including idealism, naturalism, and pragmatism. As an idealist, he emphasised the attainment of truth, beauty, and kindness, which are the fundamental educational objectives. Emphasis and immediacy are placed on self-realization, self-actualization, character development, mental education, self-education, nature, and divinity. He recommended him to study beside nature as a naturalistic thinker. Swamiji stated that, regarding child education, parents should focus on the child's enthusiasm and interests rather than putting their own dreams and aspirations upon the child. Children should be



afforded unrestricted autonomy in their self-actualization and character development, together with ample exposure to outdoors. As a fervent advocate of pragmatic philosophy, he emphasised what produced immediate effects. He underscored the vital elements for material research and advancement in the instruction of science, technology, commerce, and related fields. As a passionate advocate of Indian culture and Vedantic philosophy, he established schools of ancient Indian philosophy and advanced Vedantic teachings and yoga in both India and the West. He emphasised the cultivation of character, life skills, and spiritual education throughout all societal sectors. The objective was to rejuvenate the Vedic education system to enhance the current educational framework.

**The Goals of Education:** Vivekananda asserts that the principal objective of education is to cultivate perfection in a child. Each youth have latent abilities that can be unveiled through education. Vivekananda emphasised the necessity of eliminating the ego of superiority, misguided perceptions, self-centred thoughts, ignorance, and various deceptive identities through the practices of yoga and meditation, in order to cultivate the perfection of inherent, divine latent consciousness and potential. He asserts that a developed character enhances mental power, expands intellect, and that intellectual fulfilment is expected to be self-sustained. The comprehensive balanced development of intellect (cognition), ethics (affectivity), and practical skills (psychomotor abilities) aligns with Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives in terms of dimensions. He aimed to cultivate the full potential of each individual child. The primary objective of education should be to facilitate a learner's self-awareness, enabling the discovery of

latent talents and potential, ultimately leading to the realisation of excellence. Swamiji emphasised the importance of physical education, asserting that character development and mental well-being are unattainable without physical health. Consequently, he prioritised playing football above reading the Gita. He advised, 'Be strong, my young friends.' You will approach heaven more through football than through the 'Gita'. These words are audacious, yet I must convey them to you. I realise the connection between the shoe princes and your comprehension of the Gita, as well as the enhancement of your biceps and muscle strength. He additionally stated, 'strength is virtue. Weakness is vice.' Swamiji emphasised public education for the overall growth of India. He believed that true societal autonomy could only be achieved if education permeated all strata of society. Furthermore, he underscores the importance of women's education. He believed that societal advancement was hindered if any segment remained stagnant. Similar to how birds cannot soar with a single wing, the advancement of a national civilisation stagnates if women remain in the shadows of illiteracy. Consequently, he aspired 'to empower women and eliminate their fears.' He believed that men and women were equally qualified in all disciplines. He stated, 'The archetypal woman in India is the mother, the mother foremost, and the mother ultimately.'

**The Educational Materials:** Swami Vivekananda opposed the prevailing educational system. He aims to achieve a balance between Western and Indian scientific disciplines in his curriculum. He proposed the exploration of several domains of knowledge. He has mandated the study of Vedanta, Upanishads, Puranas, religion, philosophy, art, and the Sanskrit language, alongside history, geography, economics,

psychology, home science, mathematics, agriculture, industry, and technology. He additionally advocated for the incorporation of games, sports, and other physical activities alongside physical development. He also suggested that girls participate in cooking, needlework, childcare, economics, and psychology. He championed the incorporation of Western technology and engineering into educational curricula to attain the nation's material prosperity. Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy acknowledges the importance of religious instruction. He believes that authentic religious education is not restrictive; instead, it enhances persons' intellectual generosity. He asserts that individuals gain self-awareness through religious education and develop an appreciation for each other's beliefs.

**Pedagogical Approaches:** Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy results from his analytical and interpretative examination of the ancient Indian Vedantic School of thought and a critical evaluation of modern education. He dismissed the externally imposed educational system that coerces children to memorise prescribed facts, resulting in mental anguish. The Vedic method of education encompasses a comprehensive process of quality education. In Vedic philosophy, auditory reception is the paramount phase of education. Following the acquisition of knowledge, students are expected to engage in contemplation, meditation, and subsequent realisation for cognitive advancement, as well as to ascertain its significance for character development and life enhancement. However, educators should use a compassionate attitude when instructing children. As a proponent of integrated philosophy, he advocated for teaching approaches that enable educators to engage with

pupils at their level, facilitating self-actualization and character development. The pedagogical approach must prioritise the learner. Among his proposed approaches, yoga, meditation, lecture method, discussion method, constructive debate, heuristic or inquiry-based learning, self-study, question-answer technique, and illustration are significant instructional strategies for educating students. Vivekananda asserted that the mother tongue is the sole medium for articulating concepts elegantly, so he depended on it for instruction. He also emphasised studying the Sanskrit language. He stated, 'Sanskrit is the origin of all Indian languages and a repository of all acquired knowledge.' He believed that a comprehensive understanding of Sanskrit was essential for grasping the ancient traditions and culture of India. By employing this pedagogical approach, he aimed to forge a connection between the students and Indian culture and tradition, while also instilling nationalism and patriotism in the minds and hearts of India's youth. R.N. Tagore emphasised the importance of the mother tongue in the education of children in schools. Swamiji advocated Sanskrit as a universal language for all Indians. He saw Sanskrit as the source of most Indian languages and a significant reservoir of Indian pride, culture, historical legacy, and philosophical comprehension of various aspects of Indian ethos. Sanskrit epitomises the religious, spiritual, cultural, and social traditions of India's historical legacy. Nonetheless, he also encouraged others worldwide to acquire skills to improve their life. He emphasised the necessity of English, especially in Western science and technology.

**Growing Character:** The development of character is crucial for all individuals and should be prioritised among educational objectives. The primary characteristic observable in an individual

of genuine integrity is the harmonious coexistence of power and kindness. Swami Vivekananda stated, 'The character of any individual is merely the culmination of his tendencies, the totality of the inclinations of his mind.' As pleasure and agony traverse his/her soul, they imprint distinct images upon it, and the amalgamation of these impressions constitutes what is referred to as a man's character. Brahmacharya should be observed to cultivate robust character development. The most effective method for character development is the personal example of ideals demonstrated by teachers or elders. Education ought to cultivate an individual in whom there exists no discord between verbal expressions and actions. Swami Ji asserts that if strength results in tyranny, restriction, and subjection of others, it indicates a flawed and insufficient development of character. A fully formed character will also exhibit much kindness.

**Development of Personalities:** Swami Vivekananda advocated for the holistic development of a child's personality through physical, mental, moral, and spiritual growth. Studying the Geeta enables a child to comprehend the theory of karma. He becomes a fearless and physically robust citizen of the future. The study of Vedanta and modern science is essential for the mental and logical growth of the kid. The spiritual and moral development of children can be facilitated by education; therefore, it is essential to incorporate spiritual literature into the curriculum.

**The Practice of Discipline:** Vivekananda posits that discipline is a crucial component of an individual's character. He contended that external methods of teaching or disciplining a child are illusory. Our perception is limited to what we consciously observe; our existence is a consequence of the discipline we impose on our

mind and body. He desires that each of us pursue self-education. The external instructor provides recommendations, and the internal teacher implements them. Excessive dominance and authority will impede a child's natural development. 'If a child is not permitted to develop into a lion, he will inevitably become a fox,' he stated. The number of dos and don'ts should be minimised, and a suitable environment must be established. It is a crucial foundation for success in life. Swami Vivekananda adopted a novel perspective and promoted a liberating form of self-discipline that provides total freedom via self-regulation. He championed discipline for both educators and learners, asserting that teachers must fulfil their duties with integrity, compassion, and fervour, while students should be nurtured emotionally, cognitively, intellectually, behaviourally, spiritually, and physically for their well-being. Swami Vivekananda advocated for disciplines of the mind, body, and soul to cultivate positive concepts, ethics, and virtuous actions. He advocated for student-centered discipline, wherein students are afforded complete freedom to actualise their potential in a natural environment, enabling them to focus their minds through self-regulation and detachment from materialism.

**Position of the Instructor:** Swamiji stated, 'A teacher serves as a philosopher, friend, and guide, assisting the learner in progressing along their own path.' He is the learning facilitator. He should empower the students to learn and develop independently, free from intervention. He is aptly designated as the purveyor of a harmonious environment. The significance of an experienced and skilled instructor in understanding the nature, necessity, and pace of students, as well as aiding them in achieving their potential, cannot be overstated. Educators must understand and extend



their support to pupils from many backgrounds. Educators should neither perceive themselves as authoritarian figures in the classroom, nor should they endeavour to exert dominance over students. He asserts that 'A true teacher is one who can descend to the student's level, transform his soul to align with that of the student, perceive through the student's eyes, listen through his ears, and comprehend through his mind.' Only such a teacher is capable of effective instruction.

**Instructor-Pupil Relationship:** Swamiji's educational perspective accurately illustrates the relationship between students and educators. He asserted that the educator ought to be motivating to the children. He asserted that the teacher ought to exhibit affection for the children, demonstrate empathy towards them, and cultivate within them a sense of ethics. He asserts that it is the teacher's responsibility to encourage students to engage in virtuous actions. He also contended that an instructor would offer significantly greater value to a student than a book. Consequently, the instructor must undertake significantly increased responsibility. An educator, akin to a paternal figure, must direct his students appropriately. Swamiji has often underscored the necessity for a teacher to comprehend a student's interests and tailor their teaching accordingly. He asserted, 'A true teacher is one who can promptly descend to the students' level and impart his essence to the students' essence.' He asserted that students ought to possess a fervour for learning and a desire to acquire new knowledge. Primarily, students and educators must cultivate a more profound, respectful, and amicable relationship.

**Vivekananda's Educational Philosophy and Its Relevance in Contemporary India:** The preamble of our constitution embodies the educational requirements of contemporary India.

The foundations of secularism, socialism, and democracy must be grounded in educational objectives, curriculum, pedagogical methods, and the entire educational process. Vivekananda envisioned the educational needs of an independent India and articulated his philosophical ideas accordingly. His opinions today are highly pertinent. He advocated for a liberal perspective on religion and hence endorsed secular ideas. He believed that ignorance was the main vice of civilisation. He advocated for universal education, specifically free, obligatory, and adult education. His advocacy for women's education aligns with contemporary requirements. A significant aspect of his educational thought is his focus on child-centered education. He advocated for a just educational system. Swami Vivekananda's view on education might be encapsulated as: 'We desire an education that cultivates character, enhances mental fortitude, broadens intellect, and enables self-reliance.'

## CONCLUSION

As a remarkable educator, Swami Vivekananda changed practically everything about education. The eternal Vedanta ideas shaped his pedagogical ideals. His innovative teaching concepts influenced millions of Indian kids. He shouted, 'Arise, awake, and do not stop until the goal is attained.' He breathed new life into the people. He strongly supported national education based on national culture. Self-knowledge, self-reliance, concentration, universal mass education, women's education, physical education, man-making education, character-building education, mother-tongue education, religious and moral education, value education, selfless dedicated teachers, and others are his contributions to education. Teachings from Swamiji are crucial to reorganising our educational system. He preached

universal fraternity and national pride. His construction of a national education system based on the nation's legacy, ancient tradition and culture, arts, poetry, religion, history, language, and science is another notable contribution to Indian education. He saved the poor and disadvantaged and championed women's education to enhance women's status in the primitive, rock-bound, and tradition-oriented society. Man-making education is his contribution to education. His selflessness and humanitarianism earned him a considerable following. His life aim was to encourage others to have Shradha (Faith), Virya (Courage), and Atma (Soul) and give their lives for others. He is the 'father' of a developed nation and a 'architect for mankind'. Swamiji harmonised east and west, religion and science, past and present, wrote Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. His lessons have given our countrymen unprecedented self-respect, self-reliance, and self-assertion.'

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