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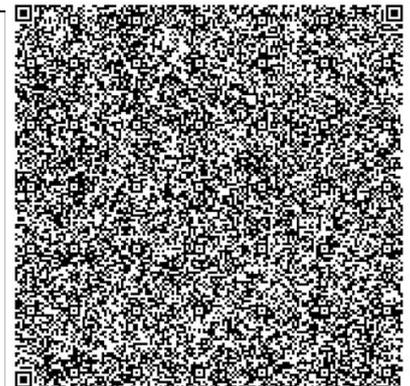
Values of Swami Vivekananda Educational Thoughts: Excellence vs Reality in Indian knowledge System

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Abstract

Swami Vivekananda's educational thoughts are deeply rooted in the Indian tradition of knowledge, with an emphasis on the integration of spiritual, intellectual, and physical development. His vision of education goes beyond the mere acquisition of facts, focusing instead on the holistic growth of the individual. Vivekananda advocated for a blend of ancient Indian wisdom with modern scientific learning, promoting self-reliance, self-awareness, and a sense of duty toward society. When we examine his ideals of excellence in education versus the realities of the Indian knowledge system, a stark contrast emerges. While his teachings highlight the importance of character-building and empowerment, the current educational landscape often prioritizes rote learning and examination results over comprehensive development. This discrepancy raises questions about the effectiveness of the present educational system in fulfilling Vivekananda's ideals of spiritual and moral excellence. The tension between excellence (as envisioned by Vivekananda) and the reality (marked by a narrow, exam-driven approach) is central to understanding the ongoing challenges in reforming Indian education.

Keywords: Swami Vivekananda, Educational Thoughts, Indian Knowledge System, Excellence, Reality.



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1. Introduction:

Swami Vivekananda, one of the foremost reformers and thinkers of modern India, is considered the architect of modern Indian education. Born in 1863 into the distinguished Dutta family of Kolkata, his spiritual journey began when he came into contact with the enlightened monk Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Through this connection, Swami Vivekananda realized the true significance of education, particularly in the context of Vedanta and Yoga philosophy, which he believed were essential for human development. He believed that education's ultimate goal was the formation of a well-rounded human being—what he referred to as "man-making." Vivekananda famously stated, "Man-making is my mission," signifying that education should not merely be the acquisition of knowledge but a holistic development of human potential. According to him, education is the manifestation of perfection already in man. He emphasized the cultivation and manifestation of three fundamental qualities—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas—as crucial for human excellence. Sattva is associated with goodness, honesty, harmony, and balance. It manifests as clarity and consciousness in individuals. Rajas represents activity, energy, and movement, leading individuals to

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engage in productive work and striving toward goals. Tamas, in contrast, represents inertia, darkness, and ignorance, and is considered the negative aspect of human nature that must be controlled for a person to become their best version. Swami Vivekananda, the development and control of these three gunas (qualities) were essential to becoming a complete human being. This process, he argued, was possible only through the development of knowledge, which, in turn, depends on controlling one's senses. The focus of education, therefore, was not simply intellectual but also emotional, spiritual, and psychological, with self-confidence and concentration as key outcomes. To gain mastery over these gunas, Vivekananda believed that the control of senses and concentration of mind were necessary. He emphasized the importance of mental focus, which would in turn help improve students' self-confidence, mental clarity, and overall character. Such a transformative educational approach, rooted in holistic development, continues to enhance the excellence of the Indian knowledge system. Thus, value-based education in Vivekananda's framework is seen as a potent tool for changing human behavior, fostering a sense of responsibility, and creating a society grounded in ethics and spiritual values. In this sense, value education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals and society.

2. The objectives of this study are:

- i) To explore and understand the value of Swami Vivekananda's educational thoughts.
- ii) To describe and discuss the core values embedded in Vivekananda's educational philosophy.
- iii) To analyze various aspects of the values within Vivekananda's educational thoughts.
- iv) To critically examine the relationship between the excellence and reality of these values in the contemporary educational system.
- v) To explore and detail the various components of value education as advocated by Vivekananda.
- vi) To gain an integrated perspective on human development, man-making, and experience-based value knowledge.

3. Methodology of the Study:

This study utilizes qualitative research methods, including data interpretation and analysis, to explore the values embedded in Swami Vivekananda's educational thoughts. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Vivekananda's ideas can contribute to the holistic development of individuals in modern education systems.

4. Discussion of Values in Swami Vivekananda's Educational Thoughts:

Swami Vivekananda's educational thoughts are deeply rooted in the Indian spiritual and philosophical tradition, particularly in Vedanta and Yoga. His vision for education was not just intellectual but also aimed at character-building. The following are key values in his educational thoughts:

Holistic Development: Education, according to Vivekananda, should focus on the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of a person. This means education should go beyond intellectual achievements and include physical health, emotional balance, and moral integrity.

Self-Confidence: One of the core outcomes of education for Vivekananda is the development of self-confidence. He believed that confidence is the foundation for success in all areas of life, and education should cultivate this through the development of inner strength and discipline.



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Control of Senses: Vivekananda emphasized that true knowledge comes from controlling the senses. Only when the senses are controlled can one attain higher spiritual knowledge and wisdom. This is a critical part of his approach to education.

Focus and Concentration: According to Vivekananda, focus and concentration are vital for achieving success. He argued that developing the ability to concentrate leads to the full utilization of one's potential, both in academic pursuits and in life's broader challenges.

Ethics and Values: Vivekananda believed that education should cultivate a sense of ethics, morality, and values. In this sense, value-based education was not an additional component but an essential part of the learning process.

5. Excellence vs. Reality in Indian Knowledge System:

Swami Vivekananda's thoughts on education bridge the gap between idealism and realism. On the one hand, he promoted the ideal of a society where education leads to the complete transformation of individuals. However, he was also acutely aware of the challenges posed by the current educational system and society's inability to realize these ideals fully. This dichotomy—excellence versus reality—continues to be a key debate in Indian educational philosophy. Vivekananda's call for self-reliance, moral integrity, and spiritual development remains relevant in addressing the gaps between the current reality and the ideal state of education in India.

Swami Vivekananda's educational thoughts continue to be a source of inspiration in India and beyond. His vision for an education system that emphasizes the development of the individual's character, mind, and soul, alongside intellectual achievements, is increasingly seen as a solution to the challenges faced by contemporary education systems. Value education, as per Vivekananda, is not merely an academic tool but a transformative force that shapes both the individual and society.

6. Importance of This Study:

Specialized knowledge, skills, value education, human capital, and the human component are crucial for educational development. This research paper aims to explore the reality of the excellence of the values in Swami Vivekananda's educational thoughts within the Indian knowledge system.

7. Background of the Research:

Values in Swami Vivekananda's Educational Thoughts:

Swami Vivekananda was a modern educationist who brought Indian philosophy and educational thoughts to foreign lands, and his teachings continue to create value in the Indian knowledge system today. He emphasized that the ancient Indian sources of knowledge are valuable and have modern relevance. It was through his efforts that the concept of value education was introduced in India. Swami Vivekananda believed that value education is key to shaping students into real human beings, fostering self-confidence, and instilling energy in the mind.

Concept of Value Education in India:

The concept of Indian value education is derived from the axiology of Indian philosophy. Axiology consists of two Greek words: "Axio" meaning "value" and "Logos" meaning "science." Therefore, axiology refers to the science or study of values. Indian axiology is divided into two branches: Ethics and Aesthetics.



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Ethics refers to the values that guide principles of right or wrong, true or false, such as the four-fold values of life: Dharma (duty), Artha (prosperity), Kama (pleasure), and Moksha (liberation). It also includes self-confidence as a fundamental ethical value.

Aesthetics involves the value of beauty, represented by Aparavidya (practical life knowledge), physical and mental health, and the quality of Rajas, which refers to activity and work.

Value Education:

Value education refers to the application of values in education to improve the educational system and foster better behavioral patterns in students.

8. Importance of Value Education:

- i. Value education plays a crucial role in the development of students' lives within the Indian knowledge system.
- ii. It helps to develop self-awareness among students and improves their moral standards.
- iii. It fosters moral development in students.
- iv. Value education is essential for shaping a person into a real human being and building meaningful relationships.
- v. It helps students make ethical decisions and take responsibility in their lives.
- vi. Value education motivates students to learn and keeps them engaged in their educational journey.

9. Swami Vivekananda's Educational Thoughts:

Swami Vivekananda's educational thoughts revolve around the concept of Man-making education. The key aspects that he emphasized for creating a true human being are:

Character Building: Vivekananda believed that character development can be achieved through proper training and discipline.

Self-Realization: He emphasized that students should not merely acquire information but should aim to realize the meaning behind that information.

Sacrifice: The realization of sacrifice helps build self-confidence and character.

Brotherhood and Human Service: Vivekananda's value education aims to develop students into human beings through a sense of brotherhood and human service.

Good Health: He spoke about the importance of both physical and mental health in education.

Focus and Concentration: Vivekananda emphasized that concentration is key to success, with three steps to enhance it:

Laser-like focus

Holding focus

Cutting out distractions



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Self-Confidence: Vivekananda believed that building self-confidence was crucial for students. He outlined six levels of self-confidence.

Spiritual Development: Spirituality is key to mental peace and development.

Practices of Learning: Learning is most effective when it involves active participation.

Control of Senses: Proper control over the senses is vital for developing discipline and focus in education.

Self-Driven Learning: Self-effort is an essential aspect of education, as it helps students grow and develop independence.

10. Conclusion:

Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy has had a profound impact on the Indian knowledge system, particularly by introducing a framework that blends traditional Indian wisdom with modern educational practices. His ideas have not only inspired educational reforms but have also created a paradigm for the development of holistic individuals capable of contributing to society in meaningful ways. One of the core elements of Swami Vivekananda's thoughts on education is the emphasis on value-based education. He believed that true education goes beyond mere intellectual development; it must shape the character of the individual, preparing them to face the challenges of life with resilience and morality. This concept challenges the prevalent materialistic and mechanistic views of education, which often prioritize academic success and technical proficiency over ethical and emotional growth. Vivekananda's educational vision stresses the importance of moral and spiritual education alongside intellectual pursuits. Excellence, in this context, is not merely a matter of academic or professional achievement but is linked with the development of virtuous qualities such as self-discipline, integrity, compassion, and a sense of social responsibility. He felt that excellence in education should lead to the development of a well-rounded individual who possesses not only academic knowledge but also inner strength and ethical grounding. The ultimate goal of education, according to Vivekananda, is to foster the growth of ideal human beings—individuals who can contribute positively to society and live fulfilling, purpose-driven lives. This ideal of excellence, however, is in stark contrast with the reality of the contemporary Indian educational system. While Vivekananda's thoughts provide a timeless framework for what education could and should be, the reality in India today often falls short of these lofty ideals. The Indian education system has become heavily examination-oriented, emphasizing rote learning and the accumulation of factual knowledge, rather than fostering critical thinking, creativity, and the overall development of students' characters. The focus on examinations has often resulted in a lack of attention to moral and spiritual education. Students, especially in urban centers, are under immense pressure to excel academically, which sometimes leads to a superficial understanding of knowledge. This focus on grades and marks often discourages exploration, questioning, and the development of personal values, which were central to Vivekananda's educational vision. The materialistic nature of modern education, coupled with a system that values competition over collaboration, has created a learning environment that is at odds with the ideals of unity and collective progress that Vivekananda promoted. Vivekananda's emphasis on self-reliance and practical knowledge is yet to be fully realized in the Indian educational system. While there have been some strides towards vocational training and skill development, much of the system still leans heavily on theoretical knowledge, which may not always align with the real-world needs of students. Swami Vivekananda had a deep belief in practical, life-affirming education—an education that equips individuals with the ability to adapt and contribute meaningfully to society. The current system, however, often fails to bridge the gap between academic learning and practical, employable skills. One of Vivekananda's most important educational tenets is his focus on empowering the underprivileged sections of society. He believed that education should be accessible to all, regardless of caste, creed, or economic status. In contrast, the reality in India today is that access to quality education remains a major challenge



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for many, particularly in rural and underserved areas. While efforts have been made to improve literacy rates and promote education for all, significant barriers still exist in terms of infrastructure, teacher quality, and the availability of resources, which hinder the realization of Vivekananda's vision of an inclusive and equitable education system. Vivekananda's call for an education system rooted in Indian values and culture presents another challenge in the current educational landscape. Despite the rich intellectual and cultural heritage that India possesses, the education system often places more emphasis on Westernized models of knowledge, with little focus on integrating traditional Indian knowledge systems, such as Vedanta, Yoga, and the Upanishads, into the curriculum. Vivekananda emphasized that students should be taught to appreciate their cultural roots and understand the deep philosophical traditions of their country. However, the current curriculum often neglects these aspects, contributing to a disconnection between students and their cultural heritage.

Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy provides an inspiring and holistic vision for education; the reality of the Indian educational system presents numerous challenges in fully implementing his ideas. The system's emphasis on academic excellence and examination-focused learning often stands in contrast to the ideal of value-based, holistic education that Vivekananda proposed. Moreover, the lack of practical education, unequal access, and disconnection from cultural roots further complicate the realization of his vision. For his educational thoughts to truly shape the Indian knowledge system, a deep transformation is required—one that integrates moral and spiritual learning with intellectual development, fosters inclusivity, and bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The journey towards this ideal is ongoing, but Swami Vivekananda's insights continue to serve as a guiding light for those seeking to reshape education in India.

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