



Amitrakshar International Journal

of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research (AIJITR)

(A Social Science, Science and Indian Knowledge Systems Perspective)

Open-Access, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Bi-Monthly, International E-Journal

RELEVANCE OF SWAMAI VIVEKANANDA'S SPIRITUAL EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY WEST BENGAL

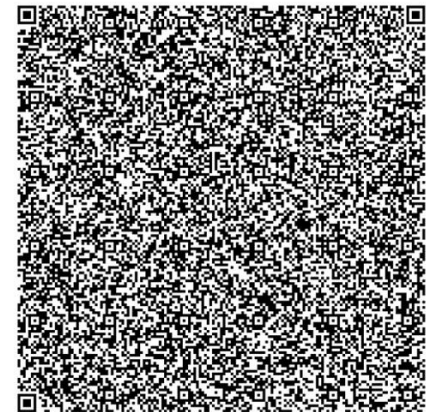
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Abstract

Swami Vivekananda was one of the towering religious and social reformers in colonial Bengal. He was born in the second half of nineteenth century when Bengal witnessed the second phase of renaissance. His vision was to bring back the enlightenment of ancient Indian culture and universal religion of mankind. As a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Dev, Swami Vivekananda visited large part of the country and got firsthand experience of poverty and illiteracy of contemporary India. He envisaged a self-less and devoted youth community for the freedom of mother India. His writing and vision were not only confined to spiritual salvation, he also extensively wrote on education. Born in an English educated middle class Bengali family, swamiji broadly studied both Indian and Western history, religion and philosophy. His arduous journey for the quest of universal truth and God did not prevent him to promote basic and moral education for the successive generation of Bengal. His advocacy of spiritual education was intending to inculcate moral and self less service to the mankind. Though the people of Bengal are basically spiritual, the western education introduce in the first half of nineteenth century by the colonial administration, totally ignored it. The enduring material education introduce by the colonial ruler failed to inject moral and spiritual education to the pupils. Swamiji inclusively opposed material education in his difference books and articles. The key concept of swamiji's education was expression of divinity. His preaching still has clear vision of universal brotherhood and socio-religious harmony. His advocacy of spirituality in day to day learning is even significant in contemporary education system of west Bengal.

The article seeks to analyse the Role of spiritual education of Swami Vivekananda in successive education policy and curriculum of post colonial West Bengal.

Keywords: Spiritual education, colonial and post-colonial, moral and self-less education.



AIJITR - Volume - 3, Issue - I, Jan-Feb 2026



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Introduction:

Swami Vivekananda was one of the renowned philosophers of modern India. His thoughts and writing enlightened us in the field of religion, philosophy and particularly the area of education. His teaching and messages were not only restricted to Indian philosophy he also incorporated

western liberal thoughts and positive approach to western life. Behera 2018 showed Swami Vivekananda strongly believed in spiritual education. He was an ardent advocated of Vedic philosophy. His teaching strongly put forward the Vedic way of life and education. He had full trust in Indian spiritual teaching. He argued in favour of divine education. Swamiji extensively shows that the education might full fill the spiritual and material desires of common people. Nawaz 2019, shows that Swamiji's sole aspiration in education was to manifest the perfection of the divinity among the people. It has been already noted that Swamiji was the strong believer of Vedanta philosophy. Vedanta

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DOI Link (Crossref) Prefix: <https://doi.org/10.63431/AIJTR/3.I.2026.161-165>

AIJITR, Volume 3, Issue –I, January-February, 2026, PP. 161-165

Received on 25th February, 2026 & Accepted on 27th February, 2026, Published: 28th February, 2026



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philosophy was flourished in later Vedic period and advocated the eternal existence of soul. Vedic philosophy also noted that the ultimate truth can be achieved through the worship of internal soul. According to the Vedic philosophy the Salvation or Maksha can be attained through the union of soul of God. In Vedanta it was called Oparavidya. This philosophy advocated little importance of material body of human beings.

As an Arden follower of Vedanta Darshana Swamiji believed in constant change of society, along with desire of the people. Like others thinkers of late nineteen century Swamiji glorified the life and society in ancient India. Chanda,ed. 1989, noted that “the western education introduce in the first half of nineteenth century failed to satisfy the English educated youth of middle class to full fill their material and professional aspiration . the western education also dissatisfy the traditional and the conservative social thinkers of Bengal society. Swamiji in that particular respect brought a new idea in education that emphasised spiritual necessity in teaching. Behara,2018, noted that Swamiji did not want external beauty of education . Swami Vivekananda’s thoughts led in the manifestation of inner perfection of human mind. He strongly filled that the education should bring out inherent quality of human mind. His thought in education arguing spiritual relation between teachers and the pupil. A believer of constant teaching Swamiji preached burden less education.

His central idea in education was to harmonise all types of people irrespective of caste, class, colour and religion. According to him the harmony can be achieved through the proper teaching of the children. He believed that proper education could bring both material and spiritual fulfillness of a child. Nawaj,2019, pointed out that Swamijis educational thought emphasis on material prosperity , character building , life making and as well as nation building which make an ideal man for nation and the society. He was one of the strong believers of promoting women education. In different letters and articles from the Swamiji when he was in Europe and America, he advises his fellow sent to promote women education. He was a great motivator of establishing female child school to educate the girls for their future self-dependence.

Swamijii visualised the bright and the prosperous nation of India. He strongly advocated the proper awaking of Indian youths. In his difference books he strongly projected the glory of the nation solely dependent on the hard work and the spiritual mind of young generation. Swamiji had the full faith in bringing material prosperity of weaker section of the society by providing proper education. His strong desire to uplift the untouchable classes through learning which they were deprived of centuries.

Swami Vivekananda view on women education:

Swami Vivekananda clearly demonstrated that the development of country could not be possible without the upliftment of women in India. Sandhuja and Morugan,2016, noted that Swamiji devoted his life for the development of women education. Swamiji’s message to the nation building fully characterize equal participation of women in aspect of social life. He realised that the oppression of the country could not be removed without the proper upliftment of the women. In his difference books Swamiji clearly argued that the problem of the women particularly their social ignorance could only be solve by the women themselves. Swamiji strongly believed that the social stigma against the women could not be eradicated by the made social reformers. In different address Swamiji express the view that the untold women suffering could be trounced through the proper education of the girls.

Swamiji’s innovative idea of imparting education to the women was applied in different missionary school after his demise. Like Rabindranath Swamiji also believed that the teaching in mother tongue must be the primary basis for women education. Swamiji realise the impotence of women as nation resource much earlier than other thinkers. He argued that the nation could not regain glory and pride without the liberation of women from social subjugations. According to him the material well being of the world could not be possible without the honourable participation and the material welfare of the women. Swamiji in that particular respect prepared special curriculum for the girls keeping in view in their social difference. As a profound believer of inner soul or ‘Atman”Swamiji did not see any difference between men and women for their material and spiritual wellbeing. He visualised equal talent and potentiality among the women. Sandhu and Marugan,2016, noted that Swamiji clearly emphasis on women chastity at the outset of their education. As the believer of ancient glory Swamiji personified the character of the women like Sita and Sabitri . Swamiji believed that women education should follow the ancient Hindu tradition and the heritage. Like the other contemporary thinkers Swamiji argued that the women in Vedic civilization had the equal opportunities to get education. Like other nationalist thinkers Swamiji realised the women of the country were exploited in a middle age following the establishment of Muslim rule in India.

To impart the education among the girls Swamiji specially motivated his disciple sister Nivedita, the first Irish women who was inspired by Swamijis teaching and settled in India for rest of her life, to established new school in Kolkata.



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Sister Nivedita founded Bagbazar girl's school to bring the girls from the all section of the society in the erina of education. Swamiji also established Sarada Math for the nuns for separately taking after the girl's school. The curriculum for the girls arranged by Swamiji basically included moral education, cooking and home science. Swami Vivekananda strongly advocated the separate identity and independent activities of the women. He believed that the women should not be imitation of men. At one Swamiji remarked "Educate your women first and live them themselves. Then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them. Our right up interference is limited entirely to giving education. Women must be put in a passion to solve their own problem in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them and our Indian women are capable doing it as any in the world.

The role of the teacher of Swami Vivekananda philosophy of education:

The central idea of Swamiji's education was Man making education. Swamiji vividly described the importance of teacher in man making education. in his articles and books. Swamiji selected three basic qualities of human beings. 1. The conviction of power goodness, 2. Helping all for their betterment, 3. Absence of suspicion and jealousy. Swamiji highly believed the main objective of teaching must be man making and character building. He propagated the proper combination of moral, physical and religious education. Swamiji's educational thoughts extensively applied to proper instruction of character and nation building teaching to these students. He depicted a teacher as a true character builder of a student. Swamiji's view of a teacher could be subscribed in four words like- Help, assimilation, harmony and peace. Behera, 2018, noted that Swamiji wanted a divine harmony between teacher and students. Swamiji believed that a role of a teacher was to assist the student for the manifestation of this own perfection. Swamiji rightly remarked Man making is my mission of life. "I have not a politician, nor I am social reformer. It is my job to passion men elipeces. I care only for the sprit, when that is right, everything will be right by itself. Swamiji extensively articulated the proper transformation of man to get rid off all type of weakness and evil practices of the society. He wanted such a man who had the perfect character. Behera, 2015 and 2018, observed that Vivekananda's view on teacher is still relevant even in 21st century.

Vivekananda's view on man making education is still a long way to fulfil the present education system and the methodologies are primarily theoretical. The teacher had very limited options to included character building lessons to the students. The motivation and the devotion of the teacher are extensively affected by their hunt of money. Teaching is no longer a by choice to a teacher, it is becoming a profitable profession to any educated persons. More over the present system for the training of a teacher does not provide his satisfaction and assurance for quality teaching. A teacher in present curriculam has very little scope to inject moral education to the students. The more burdensome aspect is that the present examination system inherited from colonial period which is entirely rely on bookies knowledge.

The student cannot be evaluated of his or her innovated ideas and learning. The curriculum and the method of instruction do not incorporate those interaction and dialog between teachers and students. Learning is peace and enjoyment is totally absent in the present system of instruction. Behera, 2018, showed that the large numbers of students after getting complete school education are not able to write and read properly even in 21th century. The desire and the vision of the students are being wrongly directed and control artificially by the medium of instruction. The absence of mother tongue in higher education in the country like India prevents and discourages most of the students of socio economically depressed section of the society.

The advent of new technology particularly the information tools though enlarges the possibility a growing education. It also has shown serious draw backs. The role of the teacher is becoming more restricted by the technologically advanced education system. The teacher is no longer seen as role models an ideal person in general at large. Digital education generally considered the future model of instruction. In that particular aspect the role of the teacher will be limited to more artificial union rather than mental affinity. In Swamiji view of the teaching community is entrusted to build character, body and mind of a new student. According to Swamiji "Education is a personal contact with the teacher".

There would be no education without the personal life of a teacher. Swamiji further attributed that a child could teach himself, but a teacher could help the child to go of his own way. Swamiji further noted that the children could follow such an ideal person who had the character of renunciation, devotion and affection of his own life. Swamiji believed the notion that the man with spirituality could be a perfect teacher. Such spiritual man could be followed by the students to build up their ideal character.

Swamiji believed a teacher could transfer soul to the student soul to inculcate proper education. Swamiji also observed the respect from a teacher must come from his selfless service to this students like the sages of Vedic period.



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According to Swamiji the teacher must be almost sympathetic to these students. A teacher has the character of missionary goal and higher motive for the building of the character of his students. According to Swamiji “the teacher should be friend, philosopher and guide for creating a new man. Behera, 2015,2018, pointed out that Swamiji’s expectation to a teacher was to build favorable environment for the natural growth of a child.

In all education system the teacher always play most important role to provide natural education to the students. Swamiji’s view of a teacher also suggested that the teacher must have positive view and high morality to build up a student to an ideal man, so that the man can stand on his own leg. Swamiji strongly believed that a teacher can show the right way to a student to reach his or her perfection.

In post independent era the education system of West Bengal like others state of India is highly western oriented for the instruction in primary and secondary education is in mother tongue. The higher education is by and large English instructed system even in 21st century. The education system is almost the imitation of British colonial instruction and methodology. Western science and language particularly languages of English is highly recommended to teach for profitable profession and secure future. The social science subjects and the curriculum are being arranged an account of western idea and thought. The curriculum has little options to teach and learn the cultural and religious morality of our ancient past. A student has been taught just for bookish knowledge. They’re not allowed to express their own thoughts and experiences. Behera, 2019, rightly noted that large numbers of students are still unable to write and read the common word even of mother tongue in spite of high growth of literary rate.

In the present curriculum there is little scope of morality and meditation. The value education is almost ignored or set-aside. The present thinkers teaching is becoming a mere profession in present educational life. There is no scope of fusion between Indian spirituality and western science. In present education system of West Bengal the system also discriminate among the students on the ground of rich and poor, caste, class and religion, along with urban and rural landscape. The education system is neither timely oriented nor culturally or morally beneficial to the students. Revival of ancient morality is a dream in present education system of West Bengal.

Conclusion:

Swami Vivekananda was one of the towering personalities in Indian intellectual arena in late 19th century. Though he was alive 39 years only. His messages and vision still have ample relevance particularly in the field of education even in 21st century. Swamiji’s preaching on Karmaya yoga still have endure impact for the spread of education in post independent west Bengal. Swamiji’s view on spiritual education has the ability for the all round development of a student. His clear message of man making education can make a everlasting change for the growth of mind and body of the learners. Swami Vivekananda’s idea about the teachers and their functions can be included in the training courses to make the teaching profession Ideal and service oriented. His vision on future India particularly Bengal can be fulfilled through the proper implementation of his ideas on education. In the teaching learning system of West Bengal the limitations and the enlarging gap in implementation of proper education policy can be overcome and bridge through the incorporation of Swamiji’s idea on education in the curriculum of all educational sectors.

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