

## Philosophical and Educational Thought of Vivekananda

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### Philosophical Thought of Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda was born in a Bengali Kayastha family of Calcutta (Kolkata) on 12 January, 1863. His real name was Narendranath Dutta. His father, Sri Vishvanath Dutta was an attorney in the High Court of Calcutta. He was very intelligent, learned, liberal, merciful and protector of the poor. Vivekananda's mother, Smt. Bhuvaneshvar Devi, too was very intelligent, meritorious, religious and merciful. Vivekananda was influenced by his mother immensely. He took interest in worship from the very childhood and took to meditation. This inclination of his later transformed him from Narendranath to Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda was the disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhans. Paramhans had experienced the truth that God resides in the soul and the soul in God, and he had made his disciple, Vivekananda experienced this. Besides, Swami Vivekananda had studied the Vedas and Upanishads minutely and had experienced the truths propounded in them in his life. The thoughts of Vivekananda are logical and are proved by experience.

The Vedic religion and philosophy is the sum total of differences. Swami Vivekananda followed Vedanta philosophy. Vedanta has three forms — **Dvaita** (Dualism), **Vishishtadvaita** (Specific Dualism) and **Advaita** (Monism). Vivekananda supported Advaita. According to him, there is no difference among Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita and Advaita. They are three steps of Vedanta philosophy, the ultimate aim of which is the experience of Advaita. Not only this, he described all religions and philosophies of the world as inclined towards Advaita.

Vivekananda's attitude towards religion and philosophy was quite scientific. He clarified that art, science and religion, are three different means to express one supreme truth. At one place he said that when a science teacher says that all objects symbolize one power, do you not remember God about whom you have read in the Upanishads! And Advaita Vedanta says just this. He called Advaita Vedanta a universal science religion. He has made commendable efforts to look at Vedanta in modern context and providing its scientific analysis. This is the novelty in his

Advaita Vedanta, and on this basis, his philosophical thought is called **Navya-Vedanta** (Neo Monism). Here we shall present the metaphysics, epistemology, logic, axiology and ethics of Swami Vivekananda's Navya Vedanta.

### **Metaphysics of Vivekananda's Navya-Vedanta**

According to Advaita philosophy, Brahma is the basic element of this universe and He is the creator and cause of this universe. The followers of Vedanta argue that as a spider creates its cobweb from the material produced in it; in the same way Brahma creates this universe and is the cause of this universe. Swami Vivekananda accepted this truth. According to this principle, all concrete substances and abstract souls are the part of Brahma or God. In other words, this whole universe is pervaded with Brahma. Now the question arises, what is the form of this Brahma? According to the followers of Advaita, Brahma is such a power which is formless; it is nirakara (shapeless), omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. It takes the concrete form of Brahma (God) due to its synthesis with Maya (illusion). This concrete world and all its substances are the finite forms of His.

As far as the soul is concerned, Vivekananda's views are similar to the followers of Advaita. According to him, all souls are the part of God and they are, like God, without a beginning or an end, therefore there is no question of their birth or death. According to Advaita, other substances of the world too are the parts of Brahma or God; the only difference between the soul and other substances is that the soul is omnipresent and omniscient and it has the attribute of understanding the real form and attainment of God, while other substances lack this attribute. According to this theory, so long the soul does not recognize and attain God in His real form, it has to transit from one body to another, and when it recognizes its real form, it attains it and is freed from this worldly life; Vivekananda called this as emancipation.

Vivekananda considered man as the sum total of body, mind and soul and said that there are two aspects of human life — physical and spiritual. He emphasized on the development of both aspects — physical and spiritual. He said that until a man is freed from physical weakness, ignorance and political slavery, he cannot proceed towards spiritual emancipation.

Vivekananda possessed an extensive viewpoint about man's development. He considered Indian spiritual knowledge and activities as necessary for man's spiritual development, and for his physical and economic development considered western knowledge, science and technology essential. Today knowledge is not limited to any one country, it has become globalised.

### **Epistemology and logic of Vivekananda's Navya-Vedanta**

Vivekananda has divided knowledge into two parts — physical knowledge

and spiritual knowledge. In physical knowledge he has included the knowledge of material world (all objects and activities), and in spiritual knowledge he has placed the knowledge of abstract world (God, soul and living beings) and the means of attainment of knowledge of the abstract world (jnana yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga and raja yoga). According to the proponent of Vedanta, Shankara, the knowledge of the material world is untrue and the knowledge of the abstract world is true knowledge. Contradictory to it Vivekanand argued that this material world is made by Brahma and from Brahma, and Brahma is true, so this world should also be true. How can the untruth be born from the truth! So, its knowledge should also be included in the category of true knowledge. As far as the means of attainment of knowledge are concerned, the views of Vivekananda are very clear. According to him, knowledge of the material world is attained by direct method and experimental method, and the knowledge of the abstract world is attained by 'satsang', 'self-study' and 'yoga'. He considered yoga as the best means of attaining any type of knowledge (material or spiritual).

### **Axiology and Ethics of Vivekananda's Navya-Vedanta**

Vivekananda considered man as possessing the soul. He was in agreement with Shankara that the ultimate aim of human life is attainment of emancipation, freedom from transition to the world and to blend the soul into God. But he considered this material world and human life in it as true, so he emphasized on eradicating physical weakness, mental slavery, economic deficiency and feeling of inferiority in this material world. He has advised the whole mankind to become self-studious, rational and active in order to attain these two types of freedom, and has advised to adopt satsang, bhakti and yoga (jnana yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga and raj yoga) for it.

Vivekananda hold clear views about man's conduct that man should follow the truth and serve the poor and the deprived. He considered the truth and service as the basic values of life. In his view, the truth is that which causes well-being (material welfare and spiritual welfare) of the individual and the world, both. Vivekananda compared man with God's temple and considered human service as the greatest religion. In his view, man should be pure by mind, speech and deed, and should earn his livelihood honestly, should serve the poor and the deprived, and thus should make himself pure and defectless to become eligible for yoga, and should attain self-realization by any of the yoga margas (jnana, karma, bhakti or raj). For yoga sadhana, he has supported the seven steps of tranquility, endurance, detachment, devotion, resolution, desire for salvation and logic.

### **Educational Thought of Vivekananda**

Swami Vivekananda was a scholar of Indian philosophy and supporter of Vedanta. He is famous for giving Vedanta a practical form. His philosophical

thought can be read in the books written by him and their practical form can be seen in the people welfare-oriented tasks of Ramakrishna Mission. Vivekananda was much worried of ignorance and poverty of his countrymen. He has emphasized on the need of education for eradicating them. He did not engage himself and his companions only in the propagation of Vedanta; he contributed immensely in the expansion and popularization of mass education. He will always be remembered for providing Indian form to Indian education. Here is presented a systematic discussion of his educational thought.

### **Concept of Education**

Vivekananda wanted to use education to prepare man for both of worldly and spiritual lives. He believed that until we become prosperous and happy materially, jnana, karma, bhakti and yoga are all things of fancy. From worldly view point, he said, **“We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one’s own feet.”** He called this type of education as **man-making education**. But he considered that the ultimate aim of human life is the experience of the soul (completeness) inherent within. He declared from spiritual viewpoint, **“Education is manifestation of perfection already present in man.”** In his view, the education which performs these two functions is true education.

### **Aims of Education**

Swami Vivekananda considered both of physical and spiritual forms of man as true. He emphasized on the development of both aspects of man. In his view, education should effect development of both types — physical and spiritual. For this, the aims of education on which he emphasized the most, can be discussed as follows :

**1. Physical Development :** For the protection of physical life and fulfilment of its need and self-realization, Vivekananda considered the need of healthy body. From material viewpoint he said that we need such strong people at this time whose muscles are as strong as iron and tissues as hard as steel. For self-realization, he said that jnana yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga and raj yoga are essential. He said that healthy body is the need for any of these yogas. In his view, education should first effect physical development of man.

**2. Mental and Intellectual Development :** According to Swami Vivekananda the main cause of backwardness of India, is lack of intellectual development, so he emphasized on the need of mental and intellectual development of the children. In his views, for it, they should be acquainted with the knowledge of science and technology of the modern world and should be given good knowledge from any source from where it may be available and they should be made capable to stand in the world confidently.

**3. Development of the Spirit of Social Service :** Swami Vivekananda said in very clear words that education does not mean to do one's own welfare; it should be used to look after the well-being of all. He had seen the poverty of Indian people by his own eyes. He wanted that educated and prosperous people should serve the poor and the deprived and should make effort to raise them, and for that should do social service. By social service he did not mean mercy or donation; by social service he meant cooperation in the progress of the poor and the deprived, they will have to rise themselves. By education he wanted to prepare a team of social workers. He attached much significance to social service from spiritual viewpoint too. He considered man as the temple of God and his service as service to the Divine.

**4. Moral and Character Development :** Vivekananda felt that man should hold high moral character while being healthy by body, developed by intellect and prosperous economically. Character makes a man a follower of the truth and duty-bound person. Therefore, he emphasized on moral and character development by education. By morality he meant both of social morality and religious morality, and by character development he meant the development of such self-power which is helpful in taking the man on the path of truth and preventing him from treading the path of untruth. He believed that a society or nation can progress only with such people of high moral character.

**5. Vocational Development :** Vivekananda had seen the poor people of India in his backyard; he had seen the bones protruding out of their body while they begged for food, clothes and shelter. He had also seen the prosperous life of people in western countries, and had reached the conclusion that those countries obtained it by the development and use of science and technology. Therefore, he declared that mere spiritual theories can not run our life, we should come forward in each field. For it, he emphasized on training men in production, industries and other vocations.

**6. Development of National Unity and Universal Brotherhood :** During the times of Swami Vivekananda, our country was under the rule of the English. Vivekananda experienced that lack of freedom produces inferiority, and inferiority is the chief cause of our sufferings. Therefore, when he returned from America, he exhorted the youth and said that the foremost task of theirs should be to free the country and they should be ready to sacrifice anything that might be needed for it. He emphasized on the need of such education which may arouse national consciousness in the countrymen and make them struggle for country's freedom. But he did not favour narrow nationalism, he saw God in all persons and from this view, believed in universal brotherhood.

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**7. Religious Education and Spiritual Development :** Vivekananda laid equal importance on the development of both of physical and spiritual aspects of

man. He clearly opined that man's physical development should be in the background of spirituality and his spiritual development should be on the basis of physical development. And it is possible only when man follows the religion. Vivekananda took religion in its wider sense. In his view, the religion is that which teaches us to love and saves us from enmity; it inclines us towards the service of the mankind and protects us from the exploitation of man, and is helpful in our physical and spiritual development. Vivekananda emphasized on giving education of the religion from the very beginning. In his view, all these attributes are found in our Advaita Vedanta, it makes us experience the unity in the world and teaches us to love everybody. It is a universal religion. In his view, other religions of the world also teach such things, but our Indian Vedanta religion is the greatest of all. Therefore, it should be taught from the very beginning. Besides, the children should be inclined towards 'jnana yoga', 'bhakti yoga', 'karma yoga' and 'raj yoga' from the very childhood for the attainment of the ultimate aim of life. In his view, the true education is the one that prepares man to live his physical life and attain spiritual emancipation.

### **Curriculum of Education**

Curriculum is the means of attaining aims. Vivekananda has presented a detailed curriculum for the attainment of aims as determined by him. He emphasized on the inclusion of games, exercise and yogic activities for physical development of man; and language, art, music, history, geography, political science, economics, mathematics and science subjects for his mental and intellectual development. Vivekananda possessed a very broad attitude regarding language. In his view, it is necessary to know the mother tongue for normal life, Sanskrit for understanding our religion and philosophy, regional languages for understanding our country, and English for understanding science and technology, so these languages should be given a place in the curriculum. He considered art as inseparable part of human life and favoured the inclusion of drawing, architecture, music, dance and acting in the curriculum. In history, he was in the favour of teaching the histories of both India and Europe. He reasoned that history of India would develop love for India and the history of Europe would make children active for prosperity. He also emphasized on including political science and economics in the curriculum. He believed that the study of these two subjects would awaken political consciousness in the children and they would succeed in the economic field. In order to develop the spirit of social service and to incline them towards social service, Vivekananda emphasized on making social work as compulsory at all levels of education. He laid emphasis on the inclusion of religion and ethics for moral and character development. He recommended the inclusion of mother tongue, English language, physical science, agriculture, technology and industrial education for vocational development; and for spiritual development he emphasized

on inclusion of literature, religion, philosophy and ethics as subjects and devotional songs, satsang and meditation as activities.

Vivekananda also emphasized on providing higher education and on creating engineers, doctors, advocates and administrators in the country. He knew that until we become self-dependent in every field of life, we can neither achieve material prosperity nor spiritual progress. He attracted the attention of the educationists that all that is good, beneficial and necessary for the progress of the society and country, should be included in the curriculum. Thus, his views are very broad as far as curriculum is concerned. And it had to be, because he had studied highest religious philosophy and understood it and had seen the prosperity of the western countries. He knew that we can achieve our physical development by the physical knowledge of the western world, and can effect our spiritual development by the spiritual knowledge of our country. Thus, Vivekananda's attitude towards curriculum was very modern and broad.

### **Methods of Teaching**

Vivekananda believed in the completeness of the soul and considered that the soul is omniscient. But for man to realize it himself is possible only when he is self-watcher. In Vivekananda's views, man realizes the self only when he possesses both types of physical and spiritual knowledge. For the attainment of physical knowledge, Vivekananda has supported the direct method, imitation method, lecture method, guidance method, discussion method and experimental method. And for the attainment of spiritual knowledge he has favoured the self-study, meditation, attention and yoga methods. On the basis of his experience, he vigorously stated that the best method for the attainment of both types of knowledge is yoga method (concentration). Vivekananda was a teacher himself. He had educated people in Vedanta in the country and abroad and had trained them in meditation activity. But he had used all of the above methods in his own specific way, therefore, it is essential to understand that specific forms.

**1. Imitation Method :** Vivekananda knew that man learns language and behaviour in the beginning by imitation, so he described it as the best method for learning correct language and socially-approved conduct. He emphasized on this fact that the parents and teachers should use correct language and should present high ideals of good conduct before the children, the children should follow them and should learn good conduct. He also thought this method as suitable for games, exercise, yoga and some other activities. He trained people in yoga by this method.

**2. Lecture Method :** The method of giving the knowledge of facts orally is called the lecture method. Vivekananda considered that the knowledge discovered by our ancestors can be communicated easily and soon by the use of lecture method. But he emphasized on accepting any fact after testing it on reason. It was



the feature of his lecture method. He taught Vedanta principles by lecture method but by reasoning and scientifically.

**3. Reasoning and Discussion Method :** The discussion method is that in which the facts are not taught directly but in the reply of questions 'what, why and how', to get logical answers, and resolutions of doubts. Vivekananda's reasoning method is different from that of Indian Nyaya philosophy. In this method, the teachers resolve the doubts of the students. On this basis, some scholars also call it as doubt-resolving method. In this method, the teacher explains the facts for the resolution of students' doubts. On this basis some scholars call it as the explanation method. In the explanation of facts, the teacher has to analyze the facts, on its basis some scholars call it as the analysis method. In order to clarify any fact, Vivekananda discussed logically, therefore he called it reasoning and discussion method.

**4. Guidance and Counselling Method :** By guidance and counselling method is meant guiding the students in self-learning and resolution of their doubts in the course. In this method, the teacher assists the students in determining what should they study and how should they study, what should they do and how should they do it. In this method, the students learn by self-study and self-activity, the teacher only guides them. Vivekananda considered this method as most suitable for the education of adolescents and youth.

**5. Demonstration and Experiment Method :** Vivekananda supported this method for the teaching and training of practical subjects and activities. In this method, the teacher presents the object or activity, the students observe, the teacher clarifies all aspects, the students determine it by using. Today, active participation of the students is sought in this method. The education of practical subjects, such as science, can be imparted by using this method in its true sense.

**6. Self-Study Method :** By self-study is meant to study by oneself. In this method, the students study books for the knowledge of related facts. Vivekananda emphasized on the study of ancient scriptures for the knowledge of religion and philosophy. He used to say that all this cannot be told in precepts and lectures; it is necessary to study the authentic scriptures related to it for complete knowledge of the subject. Reading these authentic scriptures and treatises by himself by the students and to understand them is the self-study method. Vivekananda considered self-study as incomplete until it is contemplated, meditated and used upon. He declared that any fact should be accepted after testing it on reason. Thus, the self-study method as recommended by Vivekananda is somewhat different from the modern book method or library method; it is more than it and is more useful than it.

**7. Yoga Method :** Vivekananda considered it the best method of getting or discovering any type of knowledge whether physical or spiritual. In his view, only alpa yoga (brief concentration) is enough for getting physical knowledge, but purna

yoga (prolonged concentration) is needed for spiritual knowledge. The modern psychologists are also of the view that it is necessary to fix attention for knowledge on the object or activity to be learnt. Our own experience goes that the more attention the learner gives to a subject, the sooner he learns. Vivekananda used this method from his very childhood.

### **Discipline**

There are three chief aspects of human life — natural, social and spiritual. Vivekananda attached significance to all these three aspects, but he attached foremost significance to the spiritual aspect. According to Swami Vivekananda, by discipline is meant to be governed by the soul in one's behaviour. According to him, when a man is governed by his natural 'self', we cannot call him disciplined, when he is able to control his natural 'self' and is governed by social 'self', we can call him disciplined, but in fact a disciplined man is the one who is governed by the soul.

Vivekananda taught self-discipline to both teachers and students. Now the question arises — How can the children attain the state of self-discipline? In this regard, Vivekananda opines that when the teachers present high ideals of self-discipline before the students, the students imitate them and they start to think in like terms and by and by reach the state of self-discipline.

### **Teacher**

Vivekananda supported the ancient ashrama system. In his view, the teachers should possess both types of physical and spiritual knowledge by which they can prepare the students for both physical and spiritual lives. He preached the teachers to be patient and men of spiritual knowledge, only then their students can become patient and men of spiritual knowledge. Vivekananda expected from the teachers to understand the individual differences of the students with the help of psychology and to arrange education for them accordingly, and be helpful in making them experience self-realization having understood their spiritual unity. Thus, Vivekananda was the supporter of both forms of ancient and modern teacher.

### **Student**

According to Vivekananda, it is necessary for the students to follow celibacy in order to get any type of physical or spiritual knowledge. He believed that until the students control their senses and have strong desire to learn, and attempt to know the truth with devotion in the teacher, they can neither get physical knowledge nor spiritual knowledge. According to Vivekananda, the relationship between student and teacher should not be only worldly, they should see the divine form of each other.

**School**

Vivekananda was in the favour of ashrama system, but in the modern context he knew that the ashramas cannot be located in the lap of nature away from habitation. He emphasized on only this fact that the environment in the schools should be pure, and the activities of exercise, games, teaching-learning and social service, devotional songs and meditation be conducted there.

**Other Aspects of Education**

**Mass Education :** The condition of our country was very pitiable during Vivekananda's times. On the contrary, the condition of the western countries was very fine; the people lived a prosperous life there. Vivekananda had seen all this with his own eyes. He experienced that illiteracy was the root cause behind our political slavery, economic poverty, social backwardness and religious superstitions. He declared that we cannot progress in any field of life until all men and women of India are educated. He expected of the society and state to arrange mass education. By mass education, Vivekananda meant education of all, children, youth and adults. He exhorted the educated people to teach the illiterate adults and make them literate.

**Women Education :** Vivekananda was aware of pitiable condition of women in our country. He declared that respect the women, educate them and give them opportunities to march forward. He clarified that until we educate the women, we cannot educate the society; and until we educate the society, we cannot effect social and national development. But his attitude about women education was fully Indian. He wanted to make them ideal homemakers, ideal mothers, ideal teachers and ideal social reformers. He wanted such education for women by which they become pure, fearless, skilled in domestic duties and who can give birth to courageous sons. In his opinion the women should become ideal mothers and should give proper direction to the society.

**Co-Education :** Vivekananda opposed co-education. He reasoned that the curriculum for men and women is not similar or equal, then how can they be taught together. Secondly, he reasoned that co-education is a hindrance in self-restraint. He was in the favour of establishing separate girls schools and of appointing only women teachers in them.

**Vocational Education :** Vivekananda had seen the bare picture of our country and had also seen the prosperity of the western countries. He experienced that the two chief causes of poverty in our country were — absence of general education and absence of vocational education. So he raised the first slogan of mass education and the second that of specific and vocational education. By vocational education he did not mean the education of only cottage industries and common handicrafts; rather he meant the education of science and technology like

western countries; he meant to produce engineers, doctors, advocates, administrators and organisers by vocational education. Thus, his views were very broad and practical regarding vocational education.

**Religious Education :** Vivekananda staunchly supported religious education. But he was very liberal about religious education. He did not favour binding religion in the limits of any community, he accepted religion as the declarer of eternal values of human life. He himself propagated the views of Ramakrishna Paramhansa that all religions of the world are one, but they adopt different paths in the attainment of their respective aims. Two more things about religion are worth mentioning that Vivekananda declared, in the Chicago World Religion Conference. First, 'I am proud that I am a Hindu who teaches forbearance and world brotherhood'. And second, 'it is futile to think of people that there would ever be one religion in the world'. It is clear from his declarations that he supported such religious education which may teach forbearance and universal brotherhood.

**National Education :** Though Vivekananda has not presented any national education plan, yet he emphasized on its need much. He clarified that education is the basic need for the progress of all — individual, society and nation, therefore, any nation should make arrangement of proper education for its citizens. His views about national education in India were very clear. He declared that accept all what is good and effective. He experienced that the western countries led in the field of science and technology while there is no match for India in the spiritual field; therefore, he emphasized on the education of science and technology of the western countries for physical development, and Indian religion and philosophy for spiritual development. He considered Vedanta as the universal religion and emphasized on its compulsory education.

### **Evaluation of Educational Thought of Vivekanand**

The evaluation of an object, activity or thought is done on the basis of certain predetermined norms. Education is a man-making process, it is the process of enhancing his knowledge and skills and is a process of providing proper direction to his conduct, thought and behaviour. Therefore, the evaluation of any educational thought or system should be done on this basis that how far it has been or can be helpful in creating such education.

Swami Vivekananda was a foreseer and creator of his times. He was a foreseer of his times because he had understood the condition of the country, and the creator because he had laid the foundation for the creation of new India. Though he is more famous as the one who explained Indian religion and philosophy in modern context, who gave practical form to Vedanta and who did social service and social reform; but his contribution to indian education is also worth praising. This is the reason that he is identified as an educationist in the educational world. We present a critical analysis of his educational thought and practice.

### **Concept of Education**

Vivekananda accepted education as such knowledge and skill that is needed for the development of both aspects of man — physical and spiritual. From physical development viewpoint, he declared that 'We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet'. And from spiritual development viewpoint, he declared that 'Education is manifestation of perfection already present in man'.

If these two views of Vivekananda regarding education are analyzed, it becomes evident that he considered education as the means of development of both aspects of man — physical and spiritual. But these views do not make out the form of education as a process. It is necessary to clarify the concept of educational process with a view to its form and functions.

### **Aims of Education**

Vivekananda laid equal emphasis on the development of both aspects of man — physical and spiritual. In his view, education should perform both these functions. On this basis, he has determined seven aims of education — physical development, mental and intellectual development, development of the spirit of social service, moral and character development, vocational development, development of national unity and universal brotherhood and spiritual development.

If we look at the aims of education as determined by Vivekananda, we find that they are very extensive. They include almost all aims of modern Indian education — physical, mental, social, moral and character, vocational and spiritual development. But it is beyond comprehension why he did not emphasize on cultural development despite being a nourisher of Indian culture. Possibly, he considered religion and culture as inseparable. At that time our country was under foreign rule so he could not have conceived of the education for political system and citizenship. Internationalism is also the slogan of the modern times, it was known as universal brotherhood in his times.

### **Curriculum of Education**

Vivekananda's viewpoint regarding curriculum is very broad. In this context, he said that first all those subjects and activities be included in the curriculum which are necessary for the physical and spiritual development of man and, whatever is good in the country or abroad, should be included in it. He said that for the physical development of individual, society and nation, western science and technology should be given a prominent place and English language should be included to understand it. And for spiritual development of man, he suggested to make Indian religion and philosophy as compulsory. From the physical

development viewpoint, he included subjects as mother tongue, regional languages, Sanskrit, English language, art, music, history, geography, political science, economics, science, home science, agriculture, mathematics, technology and industrial education and the activities as games, exercise, yoga and social work; and for spiritual development he emphasized on the inclusion of literature, religion, philosophy and ethics as subjects and devotional songs, satsang and meditation. as activities. He also emphasized on providing higher education in India at that time.

If the thoughts of Vivekananda regarding curriculum are analyzed, it would become clear that he has emphasized on making curriculum very broad. There are no two opinions that all types of knowledge which have utility in life should be included in the curriculum but every person cannot learn them all, nor there is need to learn everything. Had Vivekananda lived a few years more, he would have determined the form of curriculum of general education. Moreover, it is not acceptable to make Vedanta education compulsory, but we agree with him that the children should be given religious and moral education from the very beginning if the country is to be freed from corruption, scams, unruliness and terrorism.

### **Methods of Teaching**

Vivekananda has not contributed anything new in the field of teaching methods. He has supported some traditional teaching methods (imitation, preaching, lecture, self-study, reasoning and yoga) and some modern methods (guidance, counselling and experimental). Of these all, he has described the yoga method as the most effective.

There is no doubt that Vivekananda has displayed his foresight by accepting the utility of ancient and modern teaching methods, but the yoga method as supported by him, cannot be used in its original form. Had he analyzed Shankara's psychology in modern context in modern terminology, he would have given something new to India.

### **Discipline**

According to Vivekananda, discipline means to be guided by the soul. He has clarified that man is like an animal at birth, therefore, his inherent or natural behaviour cannot be called discipline; he learns social conduct living in the society and when this social conduct is governed by the self (soul) we call it discipline.

In this context we would like to submit that until a man experience the inner-self, he cannot be guided by it, and the experience of inner-self can take the whole life. It is clear that Vivekananda could not talk of school discipline. In our view, school discipline occurs when the teacher and student are able to control their natural-self and they are guided from within to conduct according to social laws and ideals. It is called self-discipline today.

**Teacher**

Vivekananda had traditional views about the teacher. He expected of all teachers to be learned, well-behaved and also able to identify the divine form of pupils. He expected of them to understand the individual differences of the students with the help of psychology and to arrange education for them accordingly, and to understand their spiritual unity with the help of true knowledge and to make them experience self (soul).

The teachers cannot be expected to have self-realization in this modern age, but they ought to be scholars of their subjects, it is expected of them. All hold uniform views about their being man of good conduct. If the teachers become honest and duty-bound, all problems of the educational world can be solved easily.

**Student**

Vivekananda had traditional as well as modern views about the students. He expected of the students to abide by celibacy. He possessed clear opinion that without sensual control, the student can not have the desire to learn and can not be devoted to the teachers and until then they cannot be imparted either physical knowledge or spiritual knowledge.

The modern educationists may not agree with the condition of celibacy as made out by Vivekananda, but they all accept that the students should have self-control, curious for knowledge and should have interest in study and should be hard working. And these are the attributes of a celibate. In our view, Indians should respect the celibacy.

**School**

Vivekananda has supported the gurukul (ashrama) system on the one hand, and has emphasized on the establishment of general and specific educational institutes for general education and specific education respectively on the other. He himself had established schools in the localities of tribes. Wherever the schools may be, they should possess pure atmosphere and their social environment should be ideal and they should hold yoga meditation for spiritual development.

Everybody agrees with Vivekananda in his first two views, but the scholars do not hold uniform views on holding devotional songs and yoga meditation in schools for spiritual development. They argue that it is the function of the family and religious institutions.

**Other Aspects of Education**

**Mass Education :** As far as mass education, women education, vocational education, religious education and national education are concerned, Vivekananda has guided us in all these fields. He had a broad viewpoint about mass education;

he wanted to see all children, youths and adults literate; he wanted to enable them to lead a normal life and wanted to train them to earn their livelihood. His these views have inspired us to arrange general, compulsory and free education and adult education.

**Women Education :** There are no two opinions that Vivekananda assigned women the power of motherhood to protect Indian culture and her prestige. He has done a great deed by emphasizing on women education, but his views about women education that the women should be made ideal houseworkers, ideal mothers and ideal teachers can only be called narrow. His rejection of co-education is also a subject of criticism today.

**Vocational Education :** In order to eradicate poverty in the country, he stressed on the provision of vocational education and the education of western science and technology. It is due to it that we are marching on the path of progress.

**Religious Education :** Vivekananda considered Vedanta as a universal religion and considered its education as compulsory part of education. The people in present times are not in the favour of the education of any specific religion or philosophy, but generally favour religious moral education.

**National Education :** As far as national education is concerned, Vivekananda has not presented any draft for it, but he has emphasized on this point that it should be such by which the nation may progress from physical and spiritual viewpoints both.

### **Influence of Vivekananda**

Vivekananda has given equal importance to physical and spiritual aspects and has illuminated the path of living Vedanta in life. He has emphasized on taking benefit of the knowledge and skill of the country and abroad for man's physical development and the use of Indian religion, for his spiritual development. It enhanced the significance of the truths related to physical life in Indian culture.

On the one hand, Vivekananda inclined his countrymen towards taking the advantage of western knowledge and science; and on the other, he acquainted the western people with the Indian spiritual knowledge, especially with Vedanta philosophy and Raj yoga. Today, Indian spiritual knowledge and western science and technology are being used the world over. Today, knowledge is not considered to be the private property of any one country; it is meant for the whole world.

During the times of Vivekananda, there were two opposite ideologies in the educational field in India — oriental and western. Vivekananda synthesized these two. Due to his influence, along side the development of Indian languages, literature, religion, philosophy and knowledge; western languages, literatures, religions, philosophies, sciences and technology came to be included in the



curriculum of education. The country started to progress in physical field. Whatever we are today, is due to this synthesized and broad attitude of persons like Vivekanand.

### Conclusion

Swami Vivekananda is the first Indian thinker of the modern age who introduced us with the spiritual greatness of our country and physical greatness of the western countries and cautioned us about our physical and spiritual development. He declared that every Indian should be educated and education should be used to make him capable and self-dependent in every field of life; to make him, fearless, self-confident and above all to make him a true man who may be able to realize God by human service. In order to give concrete form to his philosophical and educational thought, he established the 'Ramakrishna Mission', and established its branches in the country and abroad and arranged for people's service and general education through them. He paid particular attention to the weak and neglected people of the country. But the institutions established by Ramakrishna Mission are negligible in number, and whatever there are, have no novelty now. The aims for which they were established need self-restraint and renouncer teacher. May Vivekananda had lived a few years more! In brief, educational thought of Vivekananda are based on Indian religion and philosophy and are according to Indian way of life. **Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru's** views about Vivekananda are worth mentioning. He has written at one place, "Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present."

### Test Questions

#### Essay Type Questions

1. Discuss the educational thought of Swami Vivekananda.
2. Elaborate the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda in the context of aims of education, curriculum and teaching methods.
3. 'Vivekananda was the protector of ancient ideals and constructor of modern India.' Discuss this statement in the context of education.
4. Evaluate the contribution of Vivekananda to Indian education.

#### Short Answer Type Questions

5. What did Vivekananda mean by inherent perfection?
6. On which aims of education has Swami Vivekananda emphasized?
7. Which method was considered to be the best teaching method by Vivekanand and why?
8. Write the views of Vivekananda about women education.

9. How have the following been conceived by Swami Vivekanand?

- (i) Brahm.
- (ii) Emancipation.
- (iii) Material world.
- (iv) Complete man.

**Objective Questions**

10. Select the right alternative :

- (i) How many are the basic elements of this universe according to Vivekanand?
  - (a) One
  - (b) Two
  - (c) Five
  - (d) Several
- (ii) What should be the ultimate aim of education, according to Vivekananda?
  - (a) Physical development
  - (b) Moral development
  - (c) Spiritual development
  - (d) Vocational development
- (iii) Which is the best method of study, according to Vivekananda?
  - (a) Direct
  - (b) Discussion
  - (c) Experiment
  - (d) Yoga
- (iv) Who should be teachers in girls schools, according to Vivekananda?
  - (a) Only men
  - (b) Only women
  - (c) Any of men or women
  - (d) Married preson

**Answers**

- 10. (i) One
- 10. (iii) Yoga

- 10. (ii) Spiritual development
- 10. (iv) Only women

