

15.0 Educational Foundations of Indian knowledge tradition: A Study of Swami Vivekananda's vision

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Abstract

The Indian knowledge tradition is the beacon of light of Sanatan culture and the bearer of Rishi tradition, which contains the spirit of holistic development, spiritual upliftment and moral values along with human welfare. It is that sacred river of values, cultures, rituals and vibrant emotions in which there is a divine confluence of knowledge, action, devotion and yoga. The Indian knowledge tradition is a vast consciousness within which India's infinite wealth of knowledge like Astronomy, Astrology, Nature, Environment, Ved, Vedang, Upnishadas, Chikitsa, Music, Literature, yoga and grammar etc. exists in its conscious form. An attempt to harness this same conscious power has also been made in the National Education Policy 2020. The first National Education Policy of the 21st century emphasizes the widespread dissemination and promotion of the Indian knowledge tradition. The chain of great bearers of the Indian knowledge tradition exists unbroken from Adi Shankaracharya to Swami Vivekananda. This is the same tradition that Swami Vivekananda revived in the 20th century, almost 130 years ago, at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. Even in contemporary education, education integrated with the Indian knowledge tradition provides foundation for values, ethics, spirituality, logical thinking, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, holistic education, and education for human development, along with the real purpose of life. The National Education Policy 2020's tenets of equity, quality, affordability, accountability, and accessibility are also a result of this vision. This research paper examines the educational foundations of the Indian knowledge tradition, with special reference to Swami Vivekananda's educational vision.

Key Words-: Indian Knowledge Tradition, N.E.P.2020, Equity, Contemporary Education, Swami Vivekananda

Introduction

A vast and diverse repository of information Based on India's unique cultural, philosophical, and intellectual heritage, the Indian Knowledge Tradition also called Bhartiya Gyan Parampara, includes a wide range of customs that have evolved over millennia. Traditional Indian intellectuals and saints have been passing down education from generation to generation since ancient times. One of the greatest carriers of Indian wisdom and traditional values was Swami Vivekananda. He was a well-known twentieth-century scholar and educator. Swami Vivekananda was a renowned thinker who aspired to restore India's illustrious legacy by reviving the old Vedic wisdom. He preached and exemplified

the gospels of truth and human brotherhood righteousness, renunciation, brotherhood of man and the realization of god throughout his life. because Swami ji had a deep belief in the worth and welfare of humankind. He brought religion and science, the past and the present, the east and the west into harmony. He wished for our nation's citizens to get involved and start working(Radhakrishnan, 1953). His Advaitism was not a passive one, and he recognized that if India's people were unwilling to work hard and make sacrifices, the country would seldom become rich and prosperous. He exhorted everyone to make sacrifices in order to accomplish a noble goal. He advised waking up, getting up, and continuing until the goal was achieved. He was the apex of the Indian knowledge system and a divinely sent seer. Indian society continues to remember his teachings even in the twenty-first century (Vivekanand, 2012). Science and technology, literature, philosophy, culture, medicine, and yoga are just a few of the many subjects that IKS provides. It also incorporates the vast and traditional wisdom of India. By encouraging self-assurance, character, and spiritual development in addition to information gain, Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy in the Indian educational system strives for holistic development and service to humanity (Jain,2025).

Research Question

- A. What are the educational foundations of the Indian Knowledge Tradition ?
- B. What is the Educational vision of Vivekananda?
- C. What is the relevance of Vivekananda's educational vision in contemporary education?

Research objective

- A. To study the concept and educational foundations of the Indian Knowledge Tradition.
- B. To study the educational philosophy of swami Vivekananda.
- C. To analyse the relevance of swami Vivekananda's educational vision in contemporary education.

Research Methodology:-

This study has followed a Qualitative research approach focused on philosophical and conceptual analysis.

Foundational Principles Of Education In Indian Knowledge System:-

From an Indian perspective, learning encompasses the entirety of life. Education influences every aspect of life, regardless of its complexity. In truth, all education represents life, and all life signifies education. Education is an ongoing journey. The aim of education is to assist individuals in enhancing their artistic, cultural, ethical, intellectual, physical, religious, social, spiritual, and vocational skills. Instead of equipping students to conform to a specific culture, contemporary education aims to foster a connection to the worldwide community. Swami Vivekananda asserts that IKS education is a comprehensive approach that emphasizes "man making," character growth, and the full utilization of knowledge for societal service and national progress (Kapoor, 2021).

Fundamental tenets of education in the Indian Knowledge System are outlined below.

Comprehensive Growth:- Education must promote an individual's mental, physical, and spiritual health.

Self-Reliance and Confidence*: Education should empower individuals to be self-sufficient and self-assured.

Character Development: The aim of education ought to be to assist students in cultivating ethical values and robust character.

Spiritual Growth: Education ought to assist individuals in recognizing their complete potential and acquiring spiritual wisdom.

Spirit of Sacrifice and Responsibility: Education should promote a culture of selflessness and dedication to societal progress.

Practical Application:- Education must be relevant to daily situations and useful.

Universal Brotherhood-: Education should foster a sense of global unity and promote understanding and respect for diversity.

Education Based on Values: Education rooted in the Indian Knowledge System strongly prioritizes values such as compassion, respect for nature, and the pursuit of justice and truth.

Combining Ancient Knowledge:- The IKS aims to tackle current societal challenges and promote sustainable development by merging traditional knowledge from the past with contemporary knowledge systems.

Focus on Knowledge Transfer: The Indian Knowledge System highlights the systematic transfer of knowledge across generations via written and oral traditions. It is rooted in the Vedas and Upanishads, which were obtained by ancient seers.

Gurukul System:- An essential aspect of the traditional Indian Educational System, the Gurukul system required students to reside with and learn from a Guru.

Indian Languages: The understanding and articulation of the IKS concept should rely on Indian languages.

Swadharma-: Religion is one of the most prominent aspects of Indian Philosophy. The concept of accountability and ethics that highlight the importance of fulfilling one's societal obligations.

Karma-: The principle of cause and effect, stating that actions have consequences and shape future experiences.

Moksha-: The primary aim of education is liberation or freedom from the ties of existence, also referred to as mukti. As stated in the Upanishads, "Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye." In other terms, self-awareness and spiritual techniques are often employed to attain this condition of liberation from the cycle of rebirth and mortality.

Gyan Vigyan, Jivan Darshan -: the three foundational elements of IKS, Gyan, Vigyan, and Jivan Darshan, representing knowledge, science, and lifestyle respectively.

Ethical Leadership: IKS aims to promote ethical leadership, empathy, and social responsibility through the integration of human values.

Interdisciplinary approach -: By integrating diverse fields such as Mathematics, Astronomy, Philosophy, Yoga, Ayurveda, and Literature, IKS fosters interdisciplinary exploration.

Man creating education: The importance of man creating education was highlighted by Swami Vivekananda. A child's comprehensive development in aspects like morality,

humanity, honesty, character, and health is known as man-making. Hence, our school must create a supportive atmosphere to attain these educational objectives.

Unity in diversity:

He promoted the concept of unity in diversity by encouraging individuals to appreciate and honor various cultures and religions.

Thus, it becomes clear that the IKS is an extensive treasure of knowledge that encompasses invaluable elements such as education, grammar, yoga, astrology, astronomy, Vedas, literature, Upanishads, religion, justice, medicine, and philosophy upon thorough reflection of all these specific fields. Indian thinkers and wise individuals have periodically rejuvenated and refreshed this vast repository of knowledge. In this highly scientific and materialistic era, the continuous stream of Indian knowledge remains intact and retains its unique identity due to the divine insight and relentless endeavors of those illustrious sages. Since olden days, wisdom and learning have been esteemed in Indian tradition. It is also referenced in the Gita that

‘Nahi Gyanen Sadrasham Pavitra Mih Vidyate’ (Bhagavadgeeta). अध्याय 4, श्लोक 38,

It is important to recognize that in the IKS, information is not seen as an academic indulgence; instead, it is employed to address moral and spiritual challenges and assist individuals in achieving self-realization (Kumar, 2024). Our ancient Gurukul system, rooted in Mansa, Vacha, and Karmana, centered on the comprehensive development of the child—moral, social, intellectual, economic, political, and spiritual—and highlighted the importance of enduring values such as self-reliance, respect, truthfulness, and humility. This illustrates how Indian education has contributed to the seamless functioning of daily life across history.

Swami vivekananda’s vision on education:

Swami Vivekananda stated, “Education is the unveiling of the excellence that is inherently found in man.” Swami ji was a remarkable trailblazer of Sanatan dharma and the knowledge tradition. He viewed the accumulation of information in the human brain as not being education; instead, he thought that education refines primal instincts and transforms a person into a rational individual. Therefore, Swami ji viewed education as the source of thought and wisdom. As Swami Ji stated, "We require education that fosters character, enhances mental fortitude, cultivates intellect, and promotes self-reliance.",

Swami ji stated that focus is the sole method of learning. He placed great importance on concentration within his educational framework. Focusing is the sole method to acquire knowledge, and Brahmcharya serves as the base for memory and concentration. Only individuals who master their desires can attain the essence of Brahmcharya, and solely a Brahmchari holds spiritual strength. Swami ji believes that the Ashtang Yoga technique outlined in yoga darshan is crucial for maintaining celibacy (Brahmcharya) and achieving focus. He thinks that a person can attain intellectual and spiritual advancement solely by practicing sensory control and meditation. He would say that we must never release our hold on spirituality, the priceless legacy handed down from our forebears. Therefore, you must adhere to spirituality to safeguard national life. He often claimed that simply memorizing

concepts and obtaining a degree does not constitute true education. If education solely involved gaining knowledge, then libraries would be the highest saints, and encyclopedias would be the greatest wise people.

Knowledge is innate within an individual. Knowledge is apparent and originates from within, not from external sources. A Guru can solely provide motivation (Jha, 2015). Swami ji remarked that the disciple reflects the Guru; hence, the teacher's character must shine as brightly as fire. Swami ji outlined three characteristics of an instructor. The primary attribute is his understanding of sacred texts. The second quality is impartiality, which must come from a pure heart and mind, and the third is that the teacher should not provide religious education for selfish reasons tied to money, fame, or recognition. Conversely, the student should possess strong character and self-discipline, as well as respect for the teacher and the ability to think independently. Swami ji told the young people, 'Rise, Wake up, and continue until you achieve your goal'. He observed optimism and anticipation in the young. To him, the younger generation symbolizes transformation. He remarked, 'the youth possess iron-like strength and resolute composure, with hearts as determined as a thunderstorm'. Swami ji highlighted the importance of techniques such as imitation, lectures, arguments, discussions, self-study, and yoga, among others (Pandey, 2020).

Swami ji stated concerning unemployment that if higher education is offered alongside technical education, individuals will be able to sustain themselves through it. Vivekananda thought that to restore India, a combination of Western science and technical knowledge with Indian moral values and spirituality is essential to meet our daily material needs. However, in addition to this and beyond it, he sensed the necessity to cultivate a scientific approach within the minds of the Indians. Swami ji was a passionate advocate for women's education and widespread learning. He was convinced that all living beings share the same soul and opposed all forms of social, gender, and economic discrimination (Baruah, 2017).

Swami ji states that a nation can only be unified and developed by two forces: the strength of farmers and the intellect of scholars. Thus, mass education is crucial for both of these. The light of education must reach every home; only then will society gain illumination. The doors to education ought to be accessible to all, ensuring that no one is left uneducated.

Swami vivekananda's perspective on the indian culture:

Swami ji believes that India's ancient history is a unique record of extraordinary events and their diverse expressions, the undeniably synchronized actions and reactions of endlessly different forces, and most importantly, the deep contemplation of a divine presence. He asserts that India was the origin of spirituality and that knowledge initially took root there before disseminating to other areas. The origins of the enigmas of human nature first emerged here. Here, the highest aspirations of Philosophy and religion attained their zenith, encompassing the notion of the soul's immortality, the belief in a singular, supreme God, and God's manifestation in both nature and humankind. Anyone born in this country, if he is not morally corrupt, will invariably be enveloped by enlightening divine thoughts, as this land is a sacred home of philosophy, spirituality, and ethics that provides solace to individuals in their battle against their baser instincts. This is the land where humanity attains the realization of the divine by freeing itself from the constraints of karma

and ignorance (e.g., Swami Ram Krishna Paramhans). Referring to Bharat as eternal, swami ji asserts that even now our Purans and the teachings of saints flow in our veins as our vital essence (Santh, 2019).

Vivekananda's philosophy on life –

Vivekananda's philosophy on life is inspiring and impressive. He believed that timid, downcast, and apathetic individuals were incapable of achieving anything in life. Only the brave, bold, and hard-working can carry out their tasks. Therefore, “Be courageous in life's battle” was Swami Ji's counsel to all. “Proclaim your bravery to all. Abandon fear, as it has no role in life and is linked to death, sin, the abyss, irreligion, and other adverse results.” Swami ji held the belief that Brahma is the creator of the universe and that both Maya and the world are real. Swami ji states that there are two types of knowledge – the knowledge of the physical world and the knowledge of the soul. Self-discovery, attaining divinity, or salvation represent the pinnacle objectives of human existence. Gyan yoga, Bhakti yoga, and Karma yoga are vital for self-discovery, while Yoga serves as the most powerful means of acquiring knowledge (Hiriyanna, 2018).

Relevance to contemporary education

Modern educational reforms like NEP 2020, which emphasizes experiential learning, holistic development, value-based education, and the incorporation of Indian Knowledge Systems into curricula, clearly align with Swami Vivekananda's vision. His theories promote the necessity of striking a balance between technological proficiency with intellectual, ethical, and cultural knowledge.

Conclusion:

The IKS consists of Gyan, Vigyan, and Jivan Darshan, which have developed through experience, observation, experimentation, and thorough analysis. This custom of verifying and implementing influenced our education, arts, governance, legal system, justice, healthcare, production, and trade. Swami Vivekanand made transformative impacts on Indian knowledge via his educational and philosophical ideas. Besides highlighting the importance of India's traditional wisdom, he also redefined it to suit the modern context. His focus on the youth as the guardians of India's future, his promotion of cultural pride, and his stress on merging spiritual and scientific perspectives all aided in cultivating a movement that renewed and modernized IKS. He ensured that people worldwide would remain affected by India's knowledge traditions through his efforts (Sharma, 2020). In summary, Swami ji has rejuvenated the core principles of IKS through his educational ideas and has liberated society from the shadows of corruption, slavery, selfishness, negligence, cowardice, and ignorance. Swami ji familiarized people with the pride of Indian knowledge and conveyed that education and the pursuit of knowledge are the sole means through which an individual can advance in both spiritual and material growth, benefiting himself and society. Today, we must once more transform the existing education system into one that emphasizes values and character by integrating the Indian Sanatan tradition along with the ideas of Vivekananda into our lives.

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