

## Research Stream

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### The Concept of value-based Education as propounded by Swami Vivekananda: A study in the context of the development of youth power

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#### Abstract

At a time when the greatness of the West was being glorified in the countries of East. Swami Vivekananda astonished and amazed the world by presenting proof of the greatness of the East to the west. Swami Vivekananda was a great proponent of Indian philosophy, culture, and education. He believed that the purpose of education is not merely intellectual development, but the development of character, inner strength, moral values, and spiritual consciousness. The present research paper examines the concept of value-based education as propounded by Swami Vivekananda in the context of the development of youth power. In the contemporary era, the younger generation is confronting challenges such a situation. Vivekanand 's educational philosophy Can play a significant role in making youth self-reliant, empowered, and nation-building. This study highlights the contemporary relevance of Swami Vivekananda's educational thought.

**Keywords:** Swami Vivekananda, Value-Based Education, Youth Power, Character Building, Nation Building

#### Introduction

Education plays a decisive role in shaping individuals and societies. However, modern education systems, largely examination-oriented and employment-driven, often neglect moral, spiritual, and ethical dimensions of human development. This imbalance has resulted in rising youth alienation, ethical degradation, unemployment anxiety, and lack of social commitment. Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), one of India's greatest spiritual thinkers and social reformers, placed education at the center of national regeneration. He believed that youth are the real strength of a nation and that their power can be awakened only through value-based, man-making education. His educational philosophy provides a powerful framework for developing youth who are intellectually competent, morally upright, spiritually awakened, and socially responsible. The rise of nationalism in colonial India was not merely a political response to imperial domination but also an intellectual and cultural movement seeking to reclaim indigenous identity and self-respect. Within this broader nationalist awakening, Swami Vivekananda occupies a distinctive position. Unlike political leaders who focused primarily on institutional reform or mass mobilization, Vivekananda emphasized inner transformation as the foundation of national strength.

For Vivekananda, the crisis facing India was not only political subjugation but also moral disintegration and loss of cultural confidence. He believed that genuine national revival required a reawakening of spiritual consciousness and ethical responsibility. His conception of nationalism was thus holistic, integrating moral discipline, cultural continuity, and social harmony. This paper examines Vivekananda's philosophy of nationalism and culture, situating it within modern debates on nationhood and identity.

#### 2. Objectives of the Study

- ❖ To examine Swami Vivekananda's concept of value-based education.
- ❖ To Analyze the role of education in character and personality development of youth.

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- ❖ To study the relevance of Vivekananda's educational philosophy in contemporary society.
- ❖ To explore how value-based education contributes to the development of youth power.

### Research Methodology

- ❖ The study is qualitative and analytical in nature.
- ❖ Primary sources include the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda.
- ❖ Secondary sources include books, journals, research articles, and scholarly interpretations.
- ❖ The method involves philosophical analysis, interpretation, and contextual evaluation of Vivekananda's ideas.

According to Swami Vivekananda, education is the manifestation of the perfection already present in the human mind. In his view, education should be such that it assists the student in physical, intellectual, mental, emotional, moral, and spiritual development, and provides a favorable environment for the balanced growth of the individual. Education that does not contribute to look moral and character development of a person is meaningless. One of the most important objectives of education, according to Vivekananda, is character building. He strongly believed that without moral and ethical values, education becomes meaningless. Truthfulness, self-discipline, courage, and purity of thought and action are essential qualities that education must cultivate in students.

Vivekananda also stressed the importance of man-making education. Such education develops physical strength, mental courage, intellectual clarity, and spiritual awareness. He advocated practical and vocational education so that students could become self-reliant and capable of solving real-life problems. Another significant aspect of his educational philosophy was spiritual and moral education. He believed that education should be rooted in Indian culture and spiritual values, as these provide a strong moral foundation. At the same time, he encouraged the study of science and modern subjects to ensure balanced development.

Swami Vivekananda strongly supported women's education, stating that the progress of a nation is impossible without the upliftment of women. He believed that educated women play a vital role in shaping society and future generations. The moral conduct of an individual contributes to social upliftment. Since religion is a fundamental element of our culture, education should be designed in such a way that it develops a proper perspective toward religion among students and enables them to translate Indian cultural values into their conduct, thereby developing such inner strength.

India is a land of diversity—in religion, caste, language, culture, and geography. One of the most important objectives of education is to discover and cultivate a sense of unity within this diversity.

### According to Swami Vivekananda, the objectives of education

- Education should aim at human development, character formation, and life-building.
- Education should promote the physical development of human beings. Swami Vivekananda emphasized that what our country needs today is “muscles of iron”.

Just as steel is hardened through fire and hammering, so too is a person strengthened by facing difficulties. A powerful individual is one who can penetrate the hidden mysteries of creation and who is capable of achieving his objectives by any righteous means. Therefore, even if one has to descend into the depths of the ocean to achieve one's goal, an ordinary person should not hesitate to do so.

**Education for Character Building-** Swami Vivekananda viewed education not merely as the accumulation of information, but as a powerful means for character formation. According to him, the true aim of education is to build strong character, moral integrity, self-confidence, and spiritual awareness in individuals.

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### Value based education

For Swami Vivekananda, value-based education is "man-making, character-molding, life-building" education, focusing on holistic development (body, mind, soul) by assimilating ideas, fostering self-confidence, strength, and moral values like unconditional love, honesty, hard work, and respect, rather than mere memorization, to create self-reliant, patriotic citizens for nation-building and service to humanity

#### 1. Education as Manifestation of Perfection

Swami Vivekananda famously said:

“Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.”

He believed that every individual possesses inherent goodness and strength. Education should help awaken inner potential, not just impose external knowledge.

#### 2.Character over Information

For Vivekananda, character was more important than bookish knowledge. He defined character as the sum total of one’s thoughts, actions, and moral values. Education should cultivate:

Truthfulness Self-discipline Courage Compassion Integrity

He asserted that one man with strong character is more valuable to society than many who are merely educated.

#### 3. Moral and Ethical Education

Swami Vivekananda emphasized moral education as the foundation of character building. He believed that education must instill:

High ideals Ethical conduct Sense of duty Respect for humanity

Without moral values, education becomes incomplete and even dangerous.

### Religious Education and Spiritual Development

Swami Vivekananda emphasized, through education, the advancement of both the material and spiritual aspects of human life. He believed that a person’s material development should take place on the foundation of spirituality, and similarly, spiritual development should be supported by material progress. Such balanced development is possible only when an individual follows dharma (righteous principles).

Swami Vivekananda viewed religion in its broadest sense. According to him, religion is that which teaches love, protects humanity from hatred, inspires dedication to the service of humankind, safeguards human beings from exploitation, and supports both material and spiritual upliftment.

Swami Vivekananda strongly emphasized imparting such religious education from an early stage of life. In his view, all these qualities are inherent in the eternal Vedantic religion, which creates a sense of unity in the universe and teaches universal love. This is a universal religion.

According to him, other religions of the world also impart similar teachings, but among them all, the Indian Vedantic religion is supreme. Therefore, he asserted that education should be imparted on this foundation from the very beginning.

### Youth power

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Today, Vivekananda remains a beloved figure among young people worldwide. Did India declare January 12th, Vivekananda's birthday, as 'Youth Day' simply because he passed away at the young age of 39? If Vivekananda had lived to an age beyond eighty, like Gautama Buddha, whom he greatly admired, would we still celebrate his birthday in the same way? Absolutely, why not? The point is not how long someone lives, but how they live and for what purpose they live. Narendra, who later became known as Vivekananda, lived his entire life, and all his actions and thoughts were such that it seemed as if he never experienced childhood or old age. Youth, however, was a constant presence.

Once gone, youth never returns. He always remained a “young man,” and therefore he continually addressed the youth.

Youth means new ideas, energy, strength, and courage. Young people also have the courage to challenge injustice and the power to bring change in society and the nation. The identity of the youth lies in their restlessness, impatience, anger, passion, and creativity. It is this courageous and fearless nature that always motivates them to challenge the existing system and bring about change. In recent days, the spontaneous movement started by the youth in Delhi against a collective crime committed against a young woman is a direct example of this.

### Swami Vivekananda and Indian National Reconstruction

Swami Vivekananda's message is multidimensional. It contains a synthesis of the eternal Sanatan principles drawn from religions and cultures to satisfy the hunger of the soul. It offers a method of spiritual practice for the fundamental transformation of individual life, and it possesses an extraordinary power to reshape society and the entire human race anew. Swami Vivekananda regarded the building of human character as the principal aim of his life. This is the first step toward nation-building or even world-building. In the formation of personality, the age, life, environment, tradition, and various influences of the era all play a role. At the core of personality there is always some central idea of paramount importance, and the various aspects of personality are like petals around that central idea. The central point of Swami Vivekananda's personality was Vedanta. His Vedanta was not the lifeless symbol of an indifferent ascetic residing in some cave of the Himalayas. Rather, his Vedanta meant realizing God in all living beings on this earth and, by becoming an equal participant in their joys and sorrows, finding one's own liberation in their emancipation.

Swami Vivekananda considered the knowledge of Vedanta important in life for two reasons. Vedanta propounds the principle that the human being is divine; whatever we see around us has manifested from that same divinity. Every human being is a representative of divinity; therefore, the task of a religious teacher is not to condemn humanity, but to help awaken the divinity inherent within human beings.

Vedanta also teaches that the power which manifests in any field of society or action essentially comes from within and flows outward. Another distinctive principle of Vedanta is that we should accept the infinite diversity of religious ideas. We should not attempt to force everyone under a single stream of thought, because the goal is one and the same—just as many rivers flow toward the same ocean.

Just as rivers that originate in different mountains ultimately fall into the ocean—whether flowing straight or winding—the same is true of the various sects and religions that manifest from different viewpoints. Whether they follow straight or indirect paths, they ultimately lead to You (the Truth).

Swami Vivekananda believed that positive ideas should be presented before children, not negative ones, because negative ideas make a person weak. He was of the view that a student's education should be shaped according to his or her inner needs. According to Swamiji, the quality of creativity must necessarily be present in a human being, for it is this quality that enables one to move forward.

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The meaning of creativity is the capacity for subtle and original thinking, intellectual and physical energy, the ability to overcome obstacles, efficiency in action, and a progressive outlook toward life.

### Swami Vivekananda's cultural philosophy-

Swami Vivekananda believed that a nation progresses in proportion to the education of its people. The main reason for India's backwardness, according to him, was that a small handful of people had monopolized the entire system of education and intellectual development of the country. If we wish to progress again, we must first spread education among the common masses, as was done in earlier times. Educating the lower sections of society for the development of their hidden potential was, in his view, the only true service to them. Their thoughts should be placed before them, information about what is happening around the world should be given to them, and then they would themselves work for their own liberation.

Swami Vivekananda supported both individuality and social harmony. He did not tolerate hypocrisy in any part of individual or social life. He wished to bring not only his countrymen but the entire world onto the path of harmony. He believed that the purpose of all forms of education and practice was the creation of a complete human being. That discipline which enables a person's will-power to flow, expand, and become effective is what he called education.

An extremely important aspect of Swami Vivekananda's social philosophy was his views on women's emancipation. In the nineteenth century, the condition of Indian women was in no way better than that of shudras or slaves. This was why Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the social reformers who followed him proposed wide-ranging reforms to improve the condition of women. Swami Vivekananda also worked to uplift the status of women and give them equal standing.

### Character Building

Swami Vivekananda believed that character is the foundation of a strong individual and a great nation. For him, education was not just the collection of information, but the manifestation of perfection already within a person. His ideas on character building are deeply inspiring and practical.

### Principles of Character Building

**Strength of Character** Vivekananda emphasized physical, mental, and moral strength. He said, "Strength is life, weakness is death." A strong character comes from courage, confidence, and fearlessness.

**Self-Confidence and Faith in Oneself** He taught that belief in oneself is essential. According to him, self-doubt is the greatest enemy of character development.

**Purity of Thought, Word, and Deed** Character is built when thoughts are pure, words are truthful, and actions are righteous. Consistency between thinking, speaking, and doing is vital.

**Discipline and Self-Control** Vivekananda believed that control over senses and desires leads to inner strength and moral excellence.

**Service to Humanity** He considered service to mankind as service to God. Helping others selflessly builds compassion, humility, and strong character.

**Truthfulness and Integrity** Truth was central to his philosophy. A person of character always stands by truth, even in difficult situations.

**Hard Work and Perseverance** He encouraged continuous effort and determination, saying that great character is shaped through struggle and persistence.

### Vivekananda's Interpretation of Religion

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Central to Vivekananda's thought is his distinctive understanding of religion. He did not regard religion as a system of rituals or rigid doctrines, nor did he associate it with institutional authority. Instead, he defined religion as the realization of truth through ethical living, self-knowledge, and service to humanity.

Vivekananda consistently warned against the dangers of religious intolerance and dogmatism. In his view, when religion becomes an instrument of exclusion, it loses its spiritual essence and degenerates into social conflict. His advocacy of religious pluralism, most notably articulated at the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1893, reflected his belief that all religions are diverse paths leading toward the same ultimate reality.

Thus, Vivekananda's invocation of religion as the basis of nationalism must be understood in a universalistic sense. He envisioned religion as a moral force capable of fostering unity, compassion, and collective responsibility rather than division or hostility.

### **Nationalism Rooted in Spiritual Consciousness**

Vivekananda argued that India's national identity could not be modeled entirely on Western political frameworks. While European nationalism evolved through industrialization and political revolutions, India's historical unity, he observed, was sustained by shared spiritual ideals. Consequently, he believed that India's future as a nation depended on revitalizing these ethical and cultural foundations.

According to Vivekananda, nationalism in India should emerge organically from spiritual awareness rather than external political mechanisms. Such nationalism would transcend divisions of caste, language, and region by cultivating a common moral vision. He emphasized that only a spiritually integrated society could achieve lasting national cohesion.

### **Contemporary Significance of Vivekananda's Thought**

In present-day India, characterized by ideological polarization, identity conflicts, and moral uncertainty, Vivekananda's ideas retain profound relevance. His insistence on ethical unity over sectarian allegiance offers valuable insights for addressing communal tensions. Similarly, his critique of shallow nationalism provides a cautionary framework against exclusionary political ideologies.

Moreover, Vivekananda's emphasis on moral education and self-discipline challenges the dominance of materialistic values in contemporary society. His vision of ethical nationalism offers an alternative paradigm for sustainable and inclusive national development.

### **Vivekananda and the Reinterpretation of Indian Culture**

Swami Vivekananda played a decisive role in redefining Indian culture during a period marked by colonial domination and cultural inferiority. He challenged prevailing narratives that portrayed Indian civilization as stagnant or regressive. By reinterpreting ancient philosophical traditions in a rational and universal language, he restored dignity and self-respect to Indian cultural identity.

Vivekananda identified spirituality, tolerance, universality, and service as the defining features of Indian culture. He rejected both uncritical traditionalism and blind Westernization, advocating instead a synthesis that combined spiritual wisdom with scientific rationality. This balanced cultural vision enabled India to engage with modernity without abandoning its ethical foundations. Vivekananda's influence extended across education, social reform, and national consciousness, shaping the intellectual climate of modern India.

### **Conclusion**

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Swami Vivekananda's concept of value-based education emerges as a powerful and holistic framework for the development of youth power. His educational philosophy was not confined to the acquisition of information or vocational skills; rather, it aimed at the integrated development of body, mind, intellect, and soul. Vivekananda firmly believed that education is **“the manifestation of the perfection already in man,” and this idea places character-building, self-confidence, and moral strength at the center of the educational process.**

Swami Vivekananda believed that in India, the creation of a strong and lasting nationalism is possible only on the foundation of religion. However, he did not support sectarian narrow-mindedness or communalism. In his view, moral and spiritual progress constitutes the eternal law of religion. Through his discerning vision, he had clearly understood from the very beginning that mechanical nationalism, which is engaged in dividing and fragmenting society, can never be permanent.

For the integral development of a nation, it is essential that people possess qualities such as generosity, self-discipline (brahmacharya), love, sacrifice, and self-restraint.

If Swami Vivekananda is called the architect of modern Indian culture, there is nothing incorrect in that. Swamiji identified the fundamental elements of Indian culture, and it is because of these very elements that Indian culture is recognized and respected throughout the world today. The teachings of Swami Vivekananda can still be clearly seen in every aspect of our culture. Modern India can never forget Swami Vivekananda's contribution to the shaping of Indian culture. We offer our millions of salutations to Swami Vivekananda's profound cultural understanding.

**“We want that education is formed, strength of mind is increased, and the intellect is expanded.”**

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