## Chapter VI

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Chapter VI

Reflective analysis of perceptions on Education of Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda, a great thinker and a reformer of India, embraced education, which for him signified ‘Man-making’, as the very mission of his life. Vivekananda realises that mankind is passing through a crisis. The tremendous emphasis on the scientific and mechanical ways of life is fast reducing man to the status of a machine. Moral and religious values are being undermined. The fundamental principles of civilisation are being ignored. Conflicts of ideals, manners and habits are pervading the atmosphere. Disregard for everything old is the fashion of the day. Vivekananda seeks the solutions of all these social and global evils through education.

Swamiji attempts to establish, through his words and deeds that the aim of education is man-making. He develops the scheme of this man-making education in the light of his overall philosophy of Vedanta. According to Vedanta, the essence of man lies in his soul, which he possesses in addition to his body.
and mind. True to this philosophy, Swamiji defines education as ‘the manifestation of the perfection already in man’. The aim of education is to manifest in our lives the perfection which is the very nature of our inner self. This perfection is the realisation of the infinite power which resides in everything and everywhere-existence, consciousness and bliss (Sachidananda). His idea is that, after understanding the essential nature of this perfection, we should identify it with our inner self.

At this stage, man becomes aware of his Self as identical with all other Self’s of the universe, i.e. different self’s as the manifestations of the same Self. Hence education in Vivekananda’s perception enables one to comprehend oneself within as the Self everywhere. The essential unity of the entire universe is realised through education. Accordingly man making for Swamiji stands for rousing man to the awareness of his true Self. However, education thus signified, does not point to the development of the soul in isolation from body and mind. We have to remember that the basis of Swamiji’s philosophy is advaita which preaches unity in diversity.
Swami Vivekananda’s perspective on education is based on Indian philosophy. Indian philosophy has its roots in the Vedic - Upanishad philosophy which has in turn evolved into the vision of *advaita*. The primary content of the Vedic – Upanishad chant is the method by which the ultimate truth can be realised. Indian philosophy emphasises the fact that the quest for the ultimate truth can be made possible only through acquiring knowledge about it. So it is not surprising that Indian religions and philosophies give maximum importance to education.

### 6.1 Indian Philosophy and Indian Education

Indian philosophy has evolved from the Vedas. Vedas can be divided into *Karma Kanda* and *jnana Kanda*. It is the *jnana Kanda* that contains the core spiritual ideas of the Vedas. Swami Vivekananda was of the opinion that the core objective of a person was to acquire knowledge. He said, “*The goal of mankind is Knowledge. That is the one ideal placed before us by Eastern philosophy. Pleasure is not the goal of man – but knowledge. Pleasure and happiness come to an end*” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 1, p .27). The Vedanta and the
Puranas say that the source of all sadness in this world is the lack of knowledge. If the correct knowledge is imparted through appropriate education the sadness can be mitigated. In *Mahabharatha* it is said:

"Ekah satrur na dvityoṣṭi satrurajñanatulyah
puruṣasya rājan
Yēnāvṛtthah kurutē samprauktō khorāṇi karmāṇi
sudāruṇāṇī"

(Mahabharatha. Santhiparva. 297. 9).

‘O king, there is but one enemy of man and that is ignorance. It is while in the clutches of ignorance that man commits atrocities.’

According to the Vedanta, the right knowledge is the realisation of the almighty. Other than this ultimate knowledge, all other forms of knowledge are of no importance. Not only this, once the right knowledge about the almighty is acquired, other materialistic knowledge will be automatically understood. Ancient Vedandists termed the Ultimate knowledge as ‘Brahma vidya’. According to exponents of *Brahma viadya*, there were two kinds of Knowledge – one is termed ‘Para’ and the other ‘Apara’. Of this Apara knowledge consists of Rig, Yejur, Sama and Atharva Vedas and Shiksha, Kalpa, Vyaakarana, Niruktha,
Chandas and Jyothisha. All these are essential temporal knowledge. But the ‘para vidya’ refers to the Brahma Jnana. Brhma Jnana is referred to as truthful, eternal and a source of bliss according to the ‘Thaithiriopanishad’.

“Satyam jnānamanantam brahma, ānandam brahma...”

(Thaithiriopanishad. 2.1, 3.6).

The Bhagavat Gita, which is the core content of the Upanishads, says that it is the Brahma Jnana which saves one from all sins.

“Api cēdasi pāpebhayaḥ sarvebhayaḥ pāpakṛttamah
dvam jñānaplavēnaīva vṛjinam santariṣyasi”

(Bhagavat Gita. 4.36).

The Bhagavat Gita says ‘Even if you are the worst of sinners, the boat of knowledge will carry you through all your sins.’ This concept shows the importance the ancients gave to knowledge in our country.

In the ‘Kenopanishad’, it is said that by acquiring the knowledge of the ‘Brahmānt’, one conquers death.

“Ātmanā vindatē vīryam vīdyayā vindatē mṛtam”.

(Kenopanishad.2.4).
This means that through the soul, one acquires energy and through knowledge, one acquires ‘*amruth*’ or the nectar of life.

The beings in the lower level of evolution find pleasure through their sense organs. Humans, who are at a lower level of consciousness, also derive pleasure through their sense organs. Those who have reached a higher level through education and culture find pleasure in intellectual pursuits and the pursuit of arts and literature. The knowledge about the spiritual is a still higher form of awareness.

The Vedanta says that no knowledge comes from outside. All knowledge is contained within the soul. In other words, each soul is self-contained source of knowledge. It is the acquisition of this awareness of that knowledge within oneself that is termed as education in our ancient land. Expressed as a metaphor of ancient psychology, when a person says that he understands, it means that something is revealed to him as if by the removal of the veil. The human soul is an infinite source of knowledge. The removal of the veil covering this infinite realm is the real education. The Bhagavat Gita very clearly makes this claim:
“Ajñānēnāvṛtam Jñānam Thēna muhyantī Jantavah...”

(Bhagavat Gita. 5.15).

Knowledge is covered by ignorance. Because of this cover, all beings are misled. Swami Vivekananda clarifies this idea in this manner: “All knowledge, therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say ‘We are learning’, and the advance of knowledge is made by the advance of this process of this uncovering”


According to Vedanta, the knowledge we acquire is the knowledge of ‘Brahma’ in the form of ‘Sachidaananda’. This is the highest form of the concept of God. Swamiji says, “In the Vedanta, Sat- Chit- Ananda (existence, knowledge, bliss) is the highest concept of God possible to the mind. It is the essence of knowledge and is by its nature the essence of bliss”


For acquiring this knowledge about the Brahman, the presence and blessing of a Guru (teacher) is most important. The grace of the divine being is given equal importance by our
ancients. In the Upanishads, there are a number of prayers addressed to the lord imploring Him to reveal the eternal truth, that is, God himself.

“Hīranyāmayēna pātṛēṇa satasyāpihitam mukham Tattvam pūṣannapāvṛṇu satyadhaṅmāya dṛṣṭayē.”

(Unni.2009, P. 38).

This mantra of the Eeshavasya Upanishad can be interpreted in this fashion. ‘O lord, you are the keeper of the ultimate Brahman. From you everything emanates and flourishes. Truth and Dharma are devotions to you. I am immersed in this. O Sachidaananda, your face is covered by the curtain of solar luminance. I wish to see you sans the curtain. Kindly reveal your Sachidaananda Self to me’.

The truth that knowledge resides inside the mind and not outside it was revealed to the ancient Rishis when they reached the pinnacle of their quest. Indian philosophers have always believed and stressed on the state where the enquirer and his target of enquiry becomes one. “Tattvamasi Śvētakētō...” (Chandogya Upanishad. 6.8.7). Which means ‘O Shwethaketho – thou art That.’ The ultimate truth resides in you. All the philosophies that emanated in Bharat have upheld the vision
that the purpose of human life is the acquisition of knowledge. There may be certain small variation in the path to acquire this knowledge.

India is called *Arsha Bharatha*. That is, the land of Rishis. The term ‘Rishi’ indicates a person who has obtained divine vision, ie, divine vision of the ultimate truth. *Rishi* is one who has devoted his entire life to the pursuit of this ultimate truth.

It is obvious that the term ultimate truth does not imply materialistic knowledge. According to Indian Philosophy, the ultimate knowledge is, ‘*Atmajnana*’ (Self-realisation). The ultimate knowledge can be acquired only when one realises ‘*Brahma Jnana*’. *Brahma Jnana* is nothing but the realisation of God. The Upanishads have expressed the fact as, ‘*Tatwamasi*’ or thou art That. The identification of the Self with the *Brahman* is true knowledge.

One who experiences this truth about *Brahmam* will see the manifestation of God in all elements. ‘*Abheda Darshanam Jnanam*’ is what the Rishis had to say about true knowledge. The purpose of education is reaching the level at which one views all elements with the same attitude. ‘*Sarvam Khalvidam*
Brahama’ is the term used in the Chandokyopanishad. This implies that everything is Brahmam.

The above facts can be expressed by the brief statement that self-realisation is the ultimate knowledge. This is the core belief of Indian philosophy. This realisation of the Brahmam was never against the acceptance of the reality of the material world. Yet, Indian Philosophy was never based on materialism.

There was a long line of ‘Rishis’ to guide the seeker of truth in this country at all times. Swami Vivekananda was a prominent link in this long line of Rishis. His philosophy of education is based on the model of education explained in the Vedas and Upanishads

Vivekananda’s contribution to educational thought is remarkable for its quality and variety as much as for its quantity. Intellectual excellence and depth of vision of the highest order is a hallmark of all his compositions which are found in the nine volumes of his complete works as well as in other works on Vivekananda.

An objective analysis of these works reveals that Vivekananda did not construct any systematic theory of
education as such. But it is possible to piece together some of his striking ideas on education and make them useful in the present context of education in India.

Vivekananda’s primary mission in life was the social and cultural emancipation of India by spreading the gospel of self-realisation through selfless service and hence there is an element of spiritualism or idealism in all his ideas on education. For him “(The law of gravitation) was in his own (Newton’s) mind. The time came and he found it out” (Swami Vivekananda.1972.Vol.1, p.20). Though he was not a realist in the Hockessin or Machiavellian sense of the term, he was never in his life a pragmatist. His ideas on education represent a synthesis of some of the dominant conceptions of Indian thought and the democratic ideas of the modern West.

6.2 The Different Streams of Indian Philosophical Thoughts

Philosophy has its origins in the thought process of humans, and so, its origins are as old as the human race itself. We can see that Indian Philosophy has different branches. The concept of duality (Dvaitham) of Sri Madhwa, the
Vishishtadvaita of Ramanujacharya, the Shudhadvaita of Sri Vallabhacharya, the Dvaithadvaitham of Nimbarkacharya and the Advaita of Sankaracharya are the most important theories of Indian philosophy. The philosophical branches of India can be depicted in Fig. 6.1

![The Main Philosophical School of thoughts of India](image)

6.3 Philosophy of Duality (*Dvaitha matham*)

This philosophy belongs to Sri Madhwascharya. As per this, the only complete and consistent truth is ‘Paramathma’. The path to *mukti* (liberation) is *bhakthi* (devotion)
6.4 Devotion to God (Vishishtadvaitam)

Chit, Achit and God are the three elements accepted as reality by Sri Ramanujacharya, the father of this branch of philosophy. ‘Chit’ indicates the person who interacts with the material world. ‘Achit’ is the materialistic world. ‘God’ is the divine spirit residing within everything. As per this philosophy, the individual and the material world are stable and independent. The acquisition of 'Vaikunda' state is the aim of this class of people.

6.5 Shudhadvaita

This is only a variation of Advaita Philosophy. This idea was established by Sri Vallabhacharya. He believed that individual and the Brahman are united. He believed that the only way salvation could be achieved was with the blessing of Lord Krishna who was considered as ‘Paramatma’. He believed that the whole universe is just the divine illusion created by Lord Krishna.

6.6 Dvaithadvaitam

This Philosophy belongs to Nimbarkacharya. According to this theory, Brahmam and life can be one, or else, exist as distinct entities.
6.7 Advaitha

The Advaitha Philosophy elucidated by Sri Shankara is today considered the most acceptable of Philosophy. Advaita can be considered as the fundamental theory on which all other ideas of Indian philosophy are based. Yet Advaitha cannot be considered as a new Philosophy. It is only a rational and scientific interpretation of the philosophy of the Vedas.

6.8 The Philosophy of Advaitha Vedanta - the foundation of Vivekananda’s thought

Advaita vedantists view the universe as ‘Maya’ (illusion). This universe is but a divine illusion created by the almighty as part of his ‘leela’ (play). Ordinary life forms do not realise this truth. When the life form realises that he is but an instrument in this divine 'leela', the life form turns inside towards the reality of the soul within itself. The quest for realising this divine knowledge is what Advaitis consider as real education. When the veil of the maya (divine illusion) gets removed, the person becomes a jnani (one who has acquired the ultimate knowledge). Maya is called ‘Avidya’. The person who is surrounded by this illusion (Maya) gets embroiled in the temporal world and its issues. Then his sense of awareness takes
him to a lower level and in consequence he experiences sorrow. If one has to experience real happiness, he should liberate himself from the clutches of Maya and should immerse himself in the Brahman. The educational endeavour of the advaitis is the quest for this unification with the Brahman. The concept of maya highlights the following:

1) “Diversities of various things seen through the eyes of the world are not true. In fact, all these are just manifestations of the supreme Brahman.

2) Since eternity there is a special power with Paramatma (God Almighty), which is called Maya or Avidya. This Maya is neither true nor false. It is indescribable (Anirvachaniya). Brahman (Parmatma or God) creates the various worldly creatures (prapancha) through this Maya (Avidya)

3) Therefore Brahman is the eminent cause (Upadana Karana) of this world (Jagat). Because of its relation with Maya, Brahman is called Iswara and all those things that are related with Maya are ‘Jeeva’
4) The Jeeva (the animate being) forgets its relationship with God due to Maya (Ignorance) and comes under the influence of self-conceit. Mind and senses consider the body itself as the real entity. Because of this ignorance and short-sightedness, the Jeeva considers himself as the agent or doer or master (Karta). Then he does various things with the desire of the outcome (Sakarma) and accumulates merits (Punya) and sins (Papa), gets involved in the bondage of birth and death, and reaps the consequences of the same.

5) When one (Atma) realises the true relationship between himself and Paramatma (God) (after the removal of maya – ignorance) his Self is mitigated and gets merged into God, i.e. he becomes one with Him (God); in other words, he realises Him within himself” (Chaube. 1994, p. 218).

When Sri Sankara said ‘Brahma sathyam jagan mithya’, he was referring to this Maya (Divine illusion). The foundation of Advaita is the postulate that the material world is but a Divine illusion and that the only real thing is Brahman. The
knowledge of this *Brahman* is a comprehensive knowledge which is beyond all other forms of knowledge. Here the seeker and the object that he seeks becomes one. This condition is called *Advaitam*.

### 6.9 The Concept of *Brahma*

According to Shankara, ‘*Brahman’ is the greatest of all. *Brahman* alone is the cause of this world (*jagat*). He is attribute-less (*Nirguna*), formless (*Nirakara*) and without anybody (*Niravayava*). Therefore he is called unique. Due to *Maya*, *Brahma*, who is unique, appears to be various creatures (beings - *Jeeva*). Shankaracharya says that *Brahman* cannot be described by any name or form. Mind cannot think about His composition (Structure, *Rachana*). *Brahman* is the name of Creation, Sustenance, Distruction (*Utpathi, Sthiti and Vinash*) of this world (*jagat*). Such is the nature of Almighty *Brahman*.

### 6.10 Two Forms of *Brahman*.

According to Upanishads there are two forms of *Brahman*. One is formless without any attributes (*Nirakara* and *Nirguna*) and the other is with a form (*Sakara*) and with attributes (*Saguna*). *Nirguna Brahman* is called ‘*Para Brahma*’ and the
Saguna Brahma as Apara Brahma or Ishwar. Like the Upanishads, Sri Shankara accepts the difference between Nirguna and saguna Brahman. Shankara regards Nirguna Brahman as the true, stable, eternal, and the only one without any attributes or adjectives. To Shankara, Saguna Brahman is Ishwara, the cause of the entire creation. But Ishwara has no purpose or desire. He does not create nor is he involved in allowing either sustenance or its destruction. These three processes go on automatically.

6.11 The Concept of Moksha.

In the theistic tradition of Indian Philosophy, Moksha is considered as an ultimate objective of human existence. There are many other names for the term Moksha – they are Apavarga, Kaivalya, Mukti, etc. All these terms mean the same thing. The freedom from the bondage of the cycle of birth and death is moksha or mukti. When atma realises the real form of its nature, then the world and the body come to an end forever. This condition is Moksha. Thus in Advaita Vedanta, knowledge of the Self is Moksha.
6.12 Methods of Realisation (Moksha)

According to Vivekananda, realisation is the chief aim and meaning of Indian philosophy and there are various ways of attaining this realisation. These ways or methods have the generic name of Yoga (to merge with the reality). This yoga can be classified into four and are suited to different temperaments of the people. Therefore the whole scope of yoga is to remove ignorance and allow the Atman to restore its original nature.

6.13 Karma Yoga

Yoga means the merging of ‘Jeevatma’ in ‘Paramatma’. For this Karma Yoga prescribes unselfish action. All actions are rewarded by results. Yet, an action becomes ‘Niswartha Karma’ only when it is done without desire for the fruits of action. All actions when carried out as on offering to God and with the adequate attention, become paths to Moksha. In the Bhagavat Geeta it is thus mentioned about Karma Yoga – or the Yoga of action.

"Tasmadasktah satatam kāryam karma samācara
Asaktō hyācarankarma paramāpnoti pūruṣah"
(Bhagavat Geeta- 3.19).
‘Therefore, constantly perform your obligatory duty without attachment. By performing unattached action, man verily attains the supreme’.

The results of the action are to be an offering to God. Here, it is required that a person sacrifices his personal ego. He should see God in the society around him. The concept of action, without any desire for its fruits, is the core of Karma Yoga. “The manner in which a man realises his own divinity through works and duty” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 5, p. 292).

6.14 Jnana – Yoga

The Jnana Yoga is divided into three stages. First, hearing the truth that Atman is the only reality and that everything else is Maya. Second, reasoning upon this philosophy from all points of view. Third, giving up all further argumentation and realising the truth.

This realisation comes from certain basic concepts...

- The Brahman is real and everything else is unreal.

- Giving up all desire for enjoyment

- Controlling the senses and the mind

- Intense desire to be free.
Meditating on this reality always and reminding the soul about its real nature are the ways in this yoga. It is the highest and the most difficult step. Many persons get an intellectual grasp of it but very few attain realisation.

In *Jnana Yoga*, the first phase is *Shravana* (hearing). After the lecture hearing you must start cognising about it, and then logically try to understand it, recapitulate that again and again, questioning it to the maximum possible extent, which is *Manana*. If necessary, discuss with the teacher and get logically convinced to start the experiment. Experiment is *Nididhyasana*. Start dwelling on those truths which have been enunciated and logically accepted. This is *sadhana* or deep meditation. This is also the deep contemplation of *Jnana Yoga*. As we go deeper and deeper into the meditation, we start unravelling higher and higher dimensions and we come to that conclusion that ‘I am that *anandamayakosa*’ or bliss sheath. This is the core of *jnana Yoga*. In Gita it is told that from intensive meditation one acquires knowledge. The one who acquires knowledge also receives ultimate ‘*shanthi*’.
“Śradhāvān labhatējṇānam tatparah samyatendriyah
Jnānam labdhvāparāmsānthimacirēṇādhigachati.”

(Bhagavat Geeta- 4.39).

Which means: The man of Shradha, the devoted, who is the master of his senses, attains knowledge. Having attained this knowledge he goes promptly to the supreme peaceful state.

According to Swami Vivekananda, jnana yoga means “The realisation of a man’s own divinity through knowledge” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 5, p.292) .The Vedas teach that the soul is infinite and is in no way affected by death. The Jnani has to come out of all forms, to get beyond all rules and books and be his own book.

“Nahi jñānēna sadrśam pavitramiha vidyate”

(Bhagavat Geeta. 4. 38).

‘Nothing is in this world which is as sacred and valuable as Jnana’. This sloka reveals the importance given to Jnana Yoga in the Bhagavat Geeta. Even while it comments on the other three Yogas i.e. the Bhakthi Yoga, Karma Yoga and the Raja Yoga, the Bhagavat Geeta is fundamentally a work about Jnana Yoga. This reveals the importance given to Jnana Yoga in the Indian philosophy.
6.15 Bhakti Yoga

_Bhakthi Yoga_ is the science of emotion. Indian culture gives several techniques to refine the emotions and this is contained in what is called _Bhakthi Yoga_. _Bhakthi Yoga_, the science of emotions, helps to train our emotional faculty, makes us mature, to have love for our nation and the society in tune with universal brotherhood. This path of emotions broadens our vision to overcome our pettiness, gross selfishness, hatred, greed, jealousy and raises us to the highest levels of universal brotherhood and oneness. Surrender is the core emotion of _Bhakthi Yoga_. This has been indicated clearly in the Bhagvat Gita.

> “_Tēśāmaham samudharttā mṛutyusamsāra sāgarāt Bhavāmi na cirāt pārthah mayāvēśītacētasāṁ..._”

(Bhagavat Geeta-12.7)

It means: ‘Fix your mind on ‘ME’ alone, let your thought dwell on ‘ME’. You will hereafter live in ‘ME’ alone. Of this there is no doubt’.

> “_Bhakti is the science of higher love. Bhakti Yoga does not say, give up, it only says Love; Love the Highest_” (Swami Vivekananda. 1972, Vol 3, p. 74). Love is the natural impetus to
union in the human heart. The object of Bhakti is God. Bhakti is greater than Karma, greater than Raja Yoga, because these are intended for an object in view. The Jnani’s hold Bhakti to be an instrument of liberation, the Bhakta looks upon it both as the instrument and the thing to be achieved. The infinite love of God which enters one’s heart leaves no place for any other love to live there. Love banishes all fear and grants supreme bliss.

6.16 Raja Yoga

The primary work of Raja Yoga is the Yogasutra of Pathanjali. More than three thousand years ago Pathanjali (900 BC- according to Max Mueller) has systematised the methodologies and the process of yoga in the form of Aphorisms or formulae known as Pathanjali’s Yoga Sutras. In the second sutra of chapter one, he says: ‘Yoga chittah vrtti nirodhah.’ i.e. Yoga is to gain mastery over the mind. One cannot directly handle the mind. But can control the mind indirectly. Yoga, according to Pathanjali, is to gain mastery over the mind. That which should not be done comes under the category of ‘Yama’. These are a set of prohibitions to gain
mastery over the mind. They consist of *Ahimsa*, *Sathya*, *Astheya*, *Bhrahmacharya* and *Aparigraha*. *Ahimsa* is non-violence, absence of violence in thought speech or action. *Sathya* is truth, i.e. not to speak untruth. *Astheya* is non-stealing. *Bhrahmacharya* or celibacy is not abstinence from getting married but not to be a slave of sex; and *Aparigraha* is non-possession.

*Niyama* is the set of things which can be done. Just ‘*Yama,*’ or a set of don’ts, cannot make the system complete. Therefore it is necessary to define those actions which can be done also. Together *Yama* and *Niyama* define the complete approach to bring mastery over the mind. Pathanjali’s *Ashtangayoga* contains *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayaama* and *Prathyahara*, which together are defined as *Bahiranga Yoga* (the aspects of yoga which are practiced external to the body). *Dharana, dhayana and samaadhi* are, on the other hand, called *Antharangayoga* i.e. Internal Yoga. Fig 6.2 illustrated pathanjali Ashatanga Yoga.
Geeta has defined how a person who has achieved the ultimate through the process of Rajayoga will be.

“Praśāntamansamhyēnam Yōginam sukhamuttamam UpaitiśāntarajasamBrahmabhūtamakalmaṣam.”

(Bhagavat Geeta- 6.27). It means, ‘supreme bliss verily comes to that yogi whose mind is calm, whose passions are pacified, who has become one with Brahman, and who is sinless’.

Raja Yoga fits in with every-one of these yogas. As each science has its specialised method of investigation, the Raja...
Yoga is the right method of religion. According to Vivekananda, it is scientifically worked out method of reaching the ultimate reality behind everything in the universe. To understand this reality behind every ‘name’ and ‘Rupa’ (form) it is essential that one should first of all understand his own nature.

The instrument suggested for this is the mind itself. To turn the mind to analyse itself in order that it may know its own nature is not an easy task. But it is the only way which can be called the scientific approach to the subject. What is the use of such knowledge? To Vivekananda “Knowledge itself is the highest reward of knowledge” (Swami Vivekananda. 1972, p. 130). There is only one method by which to attain this knowledge and that is ‘concentration’.

There is no limit to the power of human mind. But this power is aroused only by controlling the mind. The purer the mind, the easier it is to control. Raja Yoga enumerates eight steps with which a man can attain this goal. The first is Yama - non- killing (Ahimsa), truthfulness (Sathya), non- stealing and not receiving (Aparigraha) of any gifts. Next is ‘Niyama’ -
cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study and self surrender to God. “The ‘Yama’ and Niyama’ are moral training and without them no practice of Yoga will succeed” (Swami Vivekananda. 1972, Vol 4, p. 137). The next step is ‘Asana’ or ‘posture’. The one thing necessary for the posture is to hold the spinal column in a straight line. Then comes ‘Pranayama’ or control of prana through restraint of breath. ‘Prathyahara’ or restraint of the senses from their objects. ‘Dharana’ or concentration; Dhyana or meditation; and finally ‘Samadhi’ or super consciousness. When a man reaches the super conscious state, all feelings about the body melts away.

A person, through the methods of Karma yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakthi Yoga and Raja Yoga, ultimately acquires Advaita revelation that the knowledge of the paramartha resides within oneself. Fig. 6.3 illustrates main methods of realisation.
6.17 Nature of Education According to Advaita Vedanta

According to Shankaracharya the principle of monotheism should be made the main basis of education. To realise the elements of Brahman (God) should be the principal aim of education. In order to achieve this aim, ignorance (Ajnana or Maya) must be dispelled. When ignorance is removed the unity
between *brahman* and *Atma* (God and soul) will be realised. True education is that which helps one to realise the unity between *Atma* and *Paramatma* (Soul and God) between *Nara* and *Narayana* (man and God). According to *Advaita*, education is a triangular process in which the teacher (*Guru*), the student (*Shishya*) and the subject matter (*pathyakrama*) are the three major sides. From the views of *Advaita Vedanta*, “*Education is a process which has to be continued till one attains salvation (Moksha) which will enable one to feel the inherent presence of God within himself. i.e. he will recognise no distinction between himself and God*” (Chauba. 1994, p. 222).

### 6.18 Two Types of Education

Spiritual and material, i.e. *Paravidya* and *Aparavidya*, are the two different types of education. Spiritual education deals with knowledge regarding God (*Paramatma*). This type of education will enable one to understand the unity between God and Soul.

Under the *Paravidya* or spiritual education, knowledge about practising *Dharma* should be given. The material education or *Aparavidya* pertains to the affairs of the material
world. In the Paravidya or spiritual education the purpose will be to enable the student to become merged into God himself. In the Aparavidya or material education one will be principally involved in mundane affairs and will try to get the pleasures of the senses or ‘Indriyabhoga’.

6.19 Aim of Education According to Indian Philosophy

Education must enable one to perform the four purusharthas – Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha i.e., righteous duties, material prosperity, worldly pleasures and salvation; Artha stands for achievement of material prosperity through righteous means. It is for the attainment of the fourth Purushartha that the other three purusharthas have to be employed. Realizing one’s unity with God i.e. merging oneself into God is the ultimate end of education or Sadhana. In other words, we may say that the ultimate aim of education is to guide the student towards spirituality.

6.20 Educational Philosophy of India and Vivekananda’s Vision

In modern times education is pursued as an instrument of livelihood. Indian educational vision never considered
education as an instrument of livelihood. Indian education was a path towards reaching the ultimate truth. Yet, the concept of education as a means of livelihood was also entertained in this nation and this can be illustrated by the importance the subjects like Vastuvidya (the science of civil engineering), Ayurveda, grammar, mathematics, astronomy, etc. had in our country. Yet, the ultimate goal was still the realisation of the ultimate truth. The best example of this is the content of ‘Katha Upanishad’. In this, a boy named Nachiketa is described as approaching the god of Death, ‘Yama’, to seek ultimate knowledge. This shows an attitude which had no qualms of challenging even death in the quest to acquire ultimate truth. Though Yama extends many material boons in place of the ultimate truth, the boy refuses to accept anything short of his ultimate quest. Katha Upanishad describes Nachiketa finally acquiring his goal of ultimate knowledge.

“Daunmēti vīprītē visūci
Avidyā yā ca vidyēti Jñātā
dvāhīpsinam nacikētasam manyē
dāvākāmā bahavōlōlupanta”
(Unni.2009, p. 46).

It means: ‘There are two sadhanas called Vidya and Avidya.’
They give separate results and are contradictory. Those who are attached to materialistic elements (*Bhoga*) cannot make advances towards *sadhanas* which give higher spiritual levels of achievements. Those who have achieved the higher levels of spirituality are not attracted towards materialistic elements. He understands the different materialistic elements as sources of evil and he rejects them. ‘O Nachikethas, I understand that you seek the ultimate truth in terms of knowledge because your mind is not attracted by materialistic elements which were brought to your notice’. Thus, Nachiketa receives the knowledge of the Ultimate Truth from the god of death only because he rejects materialistic temptations. The slogan ‘*Uthishtatha Jagratha Prapyavarannibodhatha*’ taken from the *katha* Upanishad, is one which is often quoted by swami Vivekananda. This is actually an Upanishadic exhortation to humanity to wake from the sleep of ignorance.

“*Uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpyavarāṇnibōḍhata*
*Kṣurasya dhāra niśita durathyayā*
*Durgam pathastat kavyō vadanthi*”

(Unni. 2009, p. 56).

‘O humans, you have been in ignorance for several rebirths. Now you have been granted this rare human form due to the
blessing of the almighty. Thus reborn, you should not waste even a moment in sin. You should acquire self-awareness (shradha) at the earliest. You may approach pious men and acquire knowledge of the almighty from them. The path towards the truth about Paramathman is alike walking along a knife edge. Only the advice of experienced teachers can make this path easy’. According to Swamiji, the real teacher is the almighty himself. He says “God is the teacher of all teachers, because these teachers, however great they may have been gods or angels were all bound or limited by time, while God is not” (Swami Vivekananda.2005.Vol.1,p. 217). Though human teachers give guidance to us, it is the almighty, who transcends the limitation of time and other limitations, that should grace the student for his success. This is stated in the Vedanta. The same is quoted by Swamiji: “The second deduction is that no knowledge can come without a teacher. It is true, as the modern philosophers say, that there is something in man which evolves out of him; all knowledge is in man but certain environments are necessary to call it out. We cannot find any knowledge without teachers. If there are human teachers, god
teachers, or angel teachers, they are all limited; who was the teacher before them? We are forced to admit, as a last conclusion, one teacher who is not limited by time; and that one Teacher of infinite knowledge, without beginning or end is called God” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.1, p. 217).

It is the ultimate power himself who guides the student to know what he is i.e. omnipotent and omniscient. The mundaka Upanishad also describes the knowledge of this omniscience as the ultimate in knowledge.

“Atha parā yayā tadakṣaramadhitram”

(Mundaka Upanishad. 1. 5)

6.21  Vision of Vivekananda on the Importance of Jnana Yoga

The aim of the Jnana Yogi is to break the eternal cycle of life and death. The one who has no attachment to anything in this life becomes truly liberated from this cycle. Swamiji has described the attitude of a real jnana yogi as described in the Indian philosophy in this manner:

- He seeks nothing but knowledge.
- He is in control of all senses.
- He understands that everything sans one is but illusion.
He should have a burning desire to attain ‘moksha’.

According to Sri Shankara, the human body, the intense desire to acquire knowledge, and the teacher who can guide the human to attain that knowledge – all these will be made available only by the grace of God. Swami Vivekananda too had the same opinion. Swamiji believed that only knowledge could liberate humans. Yet, along with knowledge it is necessary to be pious. After spiritual support, the most important form of help would be intellectual support. According to Swamiji, the imparting of knowledge is more than giving of food or clothing. According to him, ignorance is death and knowledge is life. He quotes the Raja Yoga to establish that the path to knowledge is concentration. He says, the mandatory condition for all inventions in the world is concentration.

The purpose of Jnana Yoga is the liberation of the human soul from all limitations and imperfections. Swamiji describes the Yoga of knowledge as enunciated in the Indian philosophy thus: “Jnana Yoga is Yoga by means of knowledge. What is the object of Jnana Yoga? Freedom. Freedom from what? Freedom from our imperfections, freedom from the misery of life. Why are you miserable? We are miserable because we are
bound. What is the bondage? The bondage is of nature. Who is that binds us? We, ourselves” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 9.p. 208).

The core of Indian educational philosophy is the emancipation from ignorance. It is Swamiji’s knowledge about this aspect of Indian philosophy that makes him comment that the source of all human sorrow is ignorance.

Swami Vivekananda’s concept of education is the same as that found in the Upanishads. This encourages both material knowledge as well as that related to spirituality. Yet, it is the spiritual knowledge, which is the foundation of all materialistic knowledge, that is given more emphasis. Swamiji believed that it was imperative to acquire traditional Indian education, which was based on spirituality, in order to attain a balanced personality.

6.22 Spiritual and Cultural Aspects of Education

The speciality of Indian philosophy is that it is totally spiritual. For India, spirituality is not just ritualistic religiosity. Religion and rituals are but superficial aspects of spirituality. Spirituality is an approach to life. The method of spirituality is
to see the Ultimate in all living and non-living elements. Indians believe that all living elements are but the expressions of the Ultimate. Because of this, Indian religions call for unselfish love of all living beings. The innermost content of Indian education is also spirituality. Culture and spirituality have been created for making humans open-minded and imparting humanistic values to them. The ultimate aim of education according to the spiritual seers of this country, is to impart cultural and spiritual education to the new generation and to curtail their base emotions and to orient them towards universal human values. In other words, the aim of education is to transform a person into a cultured individual. Swamiji’s vision in this respect is: “True knowledge of the world means the knowledge of the soul” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 2, p. 186).

Indian philosophers never believed that spirituality is something that could be taught. It has to be imparted. Only a teacher, who himself has acquired enlightenment, can impart spirituality to his student. For this, it is necessary that the student should be in close proximity to the teacher. That is why ancient Indian education was conducted at a Gurukula (at the
reflective analysis of perceptions on education of Swami Vivekananda

Residence of the teacher. It is the eternal kindness and the love of the teacher which flows into the student as knowledge. Indian gurus (saintly teachers) never bartered their knowledge for fame or wealth. For the Guru, there was only the student’s elevation and the welfare of the world as a whole were the only motives. The Swami has commented thus about the ancient teacher:

“We should see that he does not teach with any ulterior motive, for name, or fame, or anything else, but simply for love, pure love for you. When spiritual forces are transmitted from the teacher to the taught, they can only be conveyed through the medium of love; there is no other medium that can convey them” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.4, p. 27). The status of the Guru who imparted spiritual education was very high. Indian culture teaches us to look upon the teacher as God. Swami says: “In our country the teacher is a mostly highly venerated person, he is regarded as God himself. We have not even the same respect for our father and mother. Father and mother give us our body, but the teacher shows us the way to salvation. We are his children, we are born in the spiritual line of the teacher” (Swami Vivekananda.2005, Vol.4, p.177). Though the children are born through the parents,
Indian culture regards the teacher on a par with the parents in terms of respect. This is because the students are considered as the spiritual offspring of the teacher.

6.23 The Role of the Teacher in Spiritual and Cultural Education

The primary aim of Indian education is to impart cultural and spiritual knowledge to the student. In this, the role of the teacher is crucial, because only a person who has acquired the spiritual and cultural enlightenment through constant sadhana can impart such knowledge. The person who has undergone the rigors of Sravana, Manana, Nidhidhyasana and then gone on to the level of the samaadhi can be called a guru. It is this person who is considered equalent to God in Indian culture. This Guru is called ‘Rishi’ by Indians. It is when the student, without a trace of pride, surrenders himself spiritually to the guru that the flower of knowledge blooms in him. Swamiji says: “The Guru only knows what will lead us towards perfection. We are quite blind to it. We do not know anything. The sort of humility will open the door of our heart for spiritual truth. Truth will never come into our minds so long as there remains the faintest
shadow of Ahamkara (egotism). All of you should try to root out this devil from your heart. Complete self- surrender is the only way to spiritual illumination” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 5, p. 258). For the student the guru is his father. In the Prashnopanishad, this spiritual father is described thus:

“Twam hi nah pitā yōsmākam avidyāyāh param pāram tārayasi” (Prashanopanishad. 6. 8).

That is - 'Thou art our father. It is you who have carried us across the river of ignorance.' Thus the students praise the teacher. This Upanishad hymn makes the spiritual level of Indian education clearer. The sacred works like Bhagavata also exhort us to consider the teacher at par with God.

“Acāryam mām vijānīyat nāvamanyēta karhicit Na martyabudhya sūyeta saṃvadēvamayō guruh”

(Bhagavatam. 11. 17. 27).

That is - 'Know thy teacher as Sri Parameshwara himself. Never disrespect him. Do not find fault in him because of his human form. Because he is the embodiment of all Gods. This reveals the spiritual level of Indian education as well as the status of the Guru, who imparts that education.
6.24 The Method by which Spiritual Education is Imparted

Vivekananda does not consider knowledge as something that comes from the outside. On the other hand, Swamiji considers it as something internal to humans which reveals itself as if on the removal of a veil on acquiring the appropriate education. He says: “All the knowledge that we have in this world, where did it come from? It was within us. What knowledge is outside? None. Knowledge was not in matter; it was in man all the time. Nobody ever created knowledge; man brings it from within. It is lying there” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 2, p. 339).

Human soul is self-contained and pure. But the knowledge about this is lost to most of the people as per Swamiji. Real education is one which helps to recognise the soul as a complete entity, according to Vivekananda. Swamiji understands that there are different methods by which this education is imparted. He says “Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature – external and internal. Do this either by work, or
worship, or psychic control, or philosophy – by one, or more, or all of these – and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or Dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary detail” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 1, p. 124).

Even when the student follows different paths to acquire knowledge, other challenges to him in this quest should not be forgotten. The first one is that materialistic knowledge does not comprise the knowledge of the ultimate truth. In order to attain materialistic knowledge, it is enough that one should have external concentration and attention. Man has developed scientific instruments for this. But in order to understand the ultimate knowledge it is necessary that one should focus his attention inwards. It is here that Indian education becomes ‘spiritual’. In this path of knowledge, India is much advanced compared to other civilisations. For airing materialistic as well as spiritual knowledge, Indian teachers have evolved certain indigenous techniques. Swami Vivekananda was aware of these techniques at the utmost. He says: “In acquiring knowledge we make use of generalisations, and generalisation is based upon
observation. We first observe facts, then generalise, and then draw conclusions or principles. The knowledge of the mind, of the internal nature of man, of thought, can never be had until we have first acquired the power of observing the facts that are going on within. It is comparatively easy to observe facts in the external world, for many instruments have been invented for the purpose, but in the internal world we have no instrument to help us. Yet we know we must observe in order to have a real science.....The science of Raja Yoga, in the first place, proposes to give us such a means of observing the internal states. The instrument is the mind itself. The power of attention, when properly guided, and directed towards the internal world, will analyse the mind, and illumine facts for us” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 1, p. 129).

The same teachers who had evolved a system of observation, generalisation and analysis to study the external material world had evolved a scientific system called Rajayoga to observe and understand the internal world as per the Swamiji. This is the path towards realisation of the ultimate truth using the micro level analysis of the mind. Swamiji says; “All the knowledge that we have, either of the external or the internal
world is obtained through only one method – by the concentration of the mind. No knowledge can be had of any science unless we can concentrate our minds upon the subject” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 4, p. 219).

Swamiji says about the internal self-discipline which the student has to maintain as he ascends along the spiritual ladder. All the ‘Gurus’ stress on the requirement for self-control in the path towards the ultimate truth. “Three things are necessary to the student who wishes to succeed. First – Give up all ideas of enjoyment in this world and the next, care only for God and Truth. We are here to know truth, not for enjoyment…. Second- Intense desire to know the Truth and God. Be eager for them, long for them, as a drowning man longs for breath….Third – The six trainings: 1) Restraining the mind from going outward. 2) Restraining the senses. 3) Turning the mind inward. 4) Suffering everything without murmuring. 5) Fastening the mind to one idea. Take the subject before you and think it out; never leave it. Do not count time. 6) Think constantly of your real nature. Get rid of superstition. Do not hypnotize yourself into a belief in your own inferiority. Day and night tell yourself what really you are until you realize
your oneness with God” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.8, p.37).

6.25 The Importance of Imparting Spiritual Education

Indian seers have considered acquiring knowledge as the primary aim of human existence. While animals experience satisfaction through their sense organs, humans do so by acquiring knowledge. Indian seers have considered that real knowledge would set us free from all sorrows of life. The real knowledge is the knowledge of the soul. Indian tradition is that of worshipping the person who imparts this knowledge on a par with God himself.

“Wisdom (Jnana) is the goal of all life. We find that man enjoys his intellect more than an animal enjoys its senses; and we see that man enjoys his spiritual nature even more than his rational nature. So the highest wisdom must be this spiritual knowledge. With this knowledge will come bliss? All these things of this world are but shadows, the manifestations in the third or fourth degree of the real Knowledge and Bliss” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.3, p.4).
Spiritual knowledge raises the awareness of a person to a higher level. This takes him above all narrow thoughts into a realm of higher thought. He loses all ego and understands that he is not defined by body, mind or sense organs and that he is one with knowledge and bliss. In Swamiji’s words, “I am neither the body, nor the organs, nor am I the mind; I am Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss absolute; I am He’. This is true knowledge; all reason and intellect and everything else ignorance” (Swami Vivekananda.2005, Vol.2, p.462).

According to Vivekananda, the greatest help to a person is the help given to him spiritually. This is because this help frees him from all sorrows. A person who is spiritually strong maintains a balanced life at all times. He is able to face all sorts of crisis in a balanced manner. Swamiji believed that everyone needed a spiritual consciousness to become successful in life. “Spiritual knowledge is the only thing that can destroy our miseries for ever; any other knowledge satisfies wants only for a time. It is only with the knowledge of the spirit that the faculty of want is annihilated for ever; so helping man spiritually is the highest help that can be given to him. He who gives man spiritual knowledge is the
greatest benefactor of mankind and as such we always find that those were the most powerful of men who helped man is his spiritual needs, because spiritually is the true basis of all our activities in our life. A spiritually strong and sound man will be strong in every other respect, if he so wishes. Until there is spiritual strength in man even physical needs cannot be well satisfied. Next to spiritual comes intellectual help. The gift of knowledge is a far higher gift than that of food and clothes; it is even higher than giving life to a man, because the real life of man consists of knowledge. Ignorance is death, knowledge is life. Life is of very little value, if it is a life in the dark, groping through ignorance and misery” (Swami Vivekananda.2005, Vol. I, p. 52).

6.26 Education and Religion Based on Spirituality

India is a land of religions and to the Indian mind “Religion is the manifestation of Divinity already in man” (Swami Vivekananda. 1972, Vol. 4, p. 358). Centuries of education have always been in that line; and the result in that, it is the one concern in life. The Indian philosophy teaches that evil and good are eternally enjoined, the obverse and the
reverse sides of the same coin. All the work against evil is more subjective than objective. It is more educational than actual, however big one may talk. Says Vivekananda: “Everybody can show what evil is, but he is the friend of mankind who finds a way out of the difficulty” (Swami Vivekananda. 1972, Vol. 3, p. 215).

Spirituality in India has only one meaning, it is realisation of the internal. The defining philosophy of the Indian race is freedom of the soul. There will be no more India if Indians change their spirituality and their religion. From time immemorial, the Indian ideal is the soul. Nothing is above it. The greatest name man ever gave to God is ‘Truth’ and it is the fruit of realization.

“Religion does not consist of creating temples, or building churches, or attending public worship. It is not to be found in books, on in words, or in lectures, or in organizations. Religion consist in realisation” (Swami Vivekananda. 1972, Vol. 4, p. 179). Many a time religion is understood according to its most superficial aspects. In the Indian context, religion is none other than the realisation of the
divine self. Yet, those superficial people who confine religion to symbols and idols do not understand the meaning of spirituality. In Swamiji’s concept, religion has nothing in common with communalism.

In his opinion, spirituality is the inner-most core of education. Spirituality is the treasure house of eternal truths and these truths have been realized by the ancient Rishis of India. Spirituality gives a man infinite strength, “strength is goodness, weakness is sin” (Swami Vivekananda. 1973, Vol.3, p. 160).

Spirituality is the way of the heart. It is the heart which takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach. Temples and churches, books and forms, are simply the kindergartens of religion to make the spiritual child strong enough to take the higher steps. Spirituality or religion is not ideas or dogmas nor in intellectual argumentations. It is actually the heart’s possession. “The intense love that humanity has ever known has come from religion” (Avinashilingam, 1967, p. 47).

Education and Religion have the same method in assimilation of ideas in the light of experience. It is the
continuous reorganization of such experience that makes them either conservative or progressive forces in a nation. In India, spirituality is the nation’s soul. Whether it is right or not the nation is bound by it and so it must be strengthened. Swamiji says, “If our national life of these ten thousand years has been a mistake, than there is no help for it, and if we try to form a new character, the inevitable result will be that we shall die” (Ranade. 1963, p. 39).

In the West, tyranny of the wise and priest-craft are not as degenerated as they are in India. Swamiji says, “Stand up and reason out. Have no blind faith” (Swami Vivekananda. 1972, Vol. 4, p. 216).

It is high time that Indians assimilated their ancient ideals. They must feel the fragrance of their flowers contained in the Vedanta. “If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library” (Swami Vivekananda. 1973, Vol. 3, p. 302).

All religions and spirituality, except that of India, believe that the universe in its entirety is composed of parts separated
from each other—God, Nature, and Man—each stands by itself isolated from one another. But in India, education seeks to find unity in the midst of diversity. Everything in India is spiritual and everything finds expression in religion.

In order to make the country potentially strong with muscles of iron and nerves of steel, it is necessary that the Indian mind should be trained to focus its attention on the highest goal of man-making education. “It is man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want” (Swami Vivekananda. 1973, Vol. 3, p. 224).

6.27 Knowledge of the Self or Self-Realisation

The ultimate goal of mankind and the end all of religion is but one—the re-union with the divinity which is the true nature of this universe. Both the goal and the methods employed for reaching it are called ‘Yoga’. There are various such Yoga’s or methods of union but the chief ones are Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. These different forms of yoga are adapted to the different natures and temperaments of man. These divisions are not quite exclusive of each other. Each
blends into the other, Vivekananda says, “Our various yogas do not conflict with each other; each of them leads us to the same goal and makes us perfect” (Swami Vivekananda. 1973, Vol. I, p. 92).

The *Karma Yoga* is the method by which a man realizes his own divinity through unselfish work and adherence to duty. The *Bhakti Yoga* is the way of realization of divinity through devotion to a personal God. The *Raja yoga* aims at realization of the divinity through the control of mind and the *Jnana-yoga* is the way to experience a man’s divinity through knowledge.

According to a higher psychological analysis of the *Advaitists*, all these various changes in the world are caused by space, time and causation and are differentiated only by form and name. They say that the same divine nature is present in the lowest worm as well as in the highest human being. The individualized self which makes one different from all other beings is the cause of hatred and jealousy and all other evils. “And when this idea of self has been got rid of, all struggle will cease, all misery will vanish” (Pavithrananda. 1946, p. 120)
Vivekananda was a versatile genius who had mastered the Upanishads, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, the Bhagavat Gita, the Bible, and the Koran, and also the entire Western thought from Plato to Spencer. He had great respect and admiration for the Vedic and vedantic tradition of India represented by Sri Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva and had the highest and deepest devotion to his master Sri Ramakrishna, who taught him the lessons of purity and strength.

To him, divinity is as real as unity in diversity. He regards time, space and causation as relevant only to the phenomenal world. ‘Maya’ in this context is a statement of fact of this universe. Of how it is going to fit into his grand ideal, of Advaita and spirituality, the divine or guiding light.

The central concept of Vivekananda’s system is the Brahman which means supreme energy. It is the highest reality, knowledge and bliss. He says, the Brahman is the general cause of all these manifestations. “As a widely travelled man of great experience, he was awake to the significance of scientific advancement and so he pleaded for a unity between the Indian
ideal of contemplation and Western ideal of mastering external nature” (Swami Vivekananda. 1972, Vol. 4, p. 157).

Vivekananda pleads that in India what is needed is the re-establishment of spirituality and nothing else. “Before flooding India with sociological or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas” (Swami Vivekananda. 1973, Vol. 3, p. 221). He admits that there are some good points in the present system of education but it has tremendous disadvantages and the good things are all weighed down. The Englishman believes in himself and has that strength to stand on his legs. This belief is yet to come in India though it has been preaching religion all these ages.

6.28 The Importance of Concentration

To Vivekananda, the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. He says: “If I had to do my education once again I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment and then with a perfect instrument, collect facts at will” (Swami Vivekananda. 1968, Vol. 4, p. 38).
Vivekananda is convinced of the fact that the power of concentration is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge. All success in any line of work is the result of concentration. As soon as a person tries to call on his thought and concentrates his mind upon any one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses may rush into the brain and consequently disturb the mind. “How to check these impulses and bring the mind under control is the whole object of the study of Raja-Yoga” (Swami Vivekananda .1972, Vol. 2, p. 391).

In Raja-Yoga it is impersonal principles that everyone can practice and find full expression of the divinity in man. Proper food, proper exercise, proper sleep and proper wakefulness are required for keeping the mind under control. The yoga-way is to keep the body pure and strong by doing ‘Pranayama’, which consists of a series of simple breathing exercises. Through this way, the mind acts on the body and the body in turn acts upon the mind. Every mental state creates a corresponding state in the body and every action of the body has its corresponding effect on the mind. The physical body is the gross part and the mind is
the fine part. So in the training of the mind, it is easier to reach it through the body.

The Guru should understand the nature of his disciple and teach him the method which suits him best. There are infinite ways of practicing yoga, but two are of general importance. 

“They are (1) Reaching the reality by negating every known experience and 2) thinking that you are everything in this universe” (Swami Vivekananda, 1968, Vol. 6, p. 107).

6.29 Meditation-its Significance

Meditation is a process which leads the mind towards the realization of the self. It takes the mind to the subtler aspects of one’s innate qualities and finally paves the way to understand the source of mind. Meditation is the Easiest approach to spiritual life. “There are three stages of meditation. The first is what is called ‘Dharana’, concentrating the mind on an object. When the mind has become steady it is called ‘Dhyana,’ meditation. And there is a still higher state that is ‘Samadhi’ or absorption when the soul reaches its final destination” (Swami Vivekananda 1972, Vol. 4, p. 228).
6.30 Knowledge and Experience

Vivekananda believes that all knowledge, secular or spiritual, is based upon experience. Whether it is inductive reasoning or deductive reasoning, experience is the real master. The scientist appeals to some universal experience of humanity. Religion also is a real experience.

Every man should work for himself to attain this experience. Every educated man or woman wants to apply the discoveries of secular reasoning to religion. The first principle of reasoning is that the particular is applied by the general, the general by the more general until one reaches the eternal.

6.31 The Need for Spiritualised Education

Modern education is influenced by the crass consumerism. Real education happens only when the student is given value based education, which imparts humanism and helps him to lead a life on this basis. The reason for the conflict between nations and peoples is because education has been reduced to a tool for livelihood. It is here that the spiritualised education which seeks to unify the human mind, has significance. It is in this context that the core of Swamiji’s educational concept
becomes spirituality. He says: “Whenever the world has required it, this perennial flood of spiritually has overflowed and deluged the world. Gifts of political knowledge can be made with the blast of trumpets and March of cohorts. Gifts of secular knowledge and social knowledge can be made with fire and sword. But spiritual knowledge can only be given in silence like the dew that falls unseen and unheard, yet bringing into bloom masses of roses. This has been the gift of India to the world again and again. Whenever there has been a great conquering race, bringing the nations of the world together, making roads and transit possible, immediately India arose and gave her quota of spiritual power to the sum total of the progress of the world” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.3, p.222).

According to Swamiji, India should teach spirituality to the world. This is because India is the land of spirituality. He said “This is one great truth India has to teach to the world, because it is nowhere else. This is spirituality, the science of the soul” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, p.160).
6.32 Cultural Aspects

The educational system of any nation should be tailor-made to inculcate its students with a pride in their cultural identity. Unfortunately the educational system of independent India is not very much different from the system foisted upon us by the British. Subsequently, the post-independence generation could not understand, let alone identity with the cultural identity of our nation. The basic concept around which our culture revolves in the concept of ‘Yajna’. The *Yajna* actually captures the call for sacrifice for the sake of the society in its symbolic ritual. The educational process of ancient India was a ‘Yajna’ (Yaga) too. The Guru and *Sishya* were supposed to acquire ‘purity’ for this *Yajna* (Education). The Guru was considered as God in this *Yajna* ritual in.

"Acāryam mām viśānīyat nāvamanyēta karhicit
Na martyabudhya sūyeta sarvadēvamayō guruh"

(Bhagavatha. 11-17.27)

This means the ‘Acharya’ or teacher is Sri Parameshwara himself. Never dishonour him. Nor find any fault in him for his human form. Because the guru is the manifestation of all the
gods put together. This concept of ‘guru’ is the speciality of Indian culture. But today, there isn’t an educational system to impart this cultural knowledge of which the above ‘Guru’ concept is an integral part. The Thaithiriopanishad says:

“Mārdēvō bhava, pitrdēvō bhava,
Acāryadēvō bhava, atithidēvō bhava”

(Thaithiriyopanishad. 1.11-2)

That is, ‘mother is God, the father is God, the teacher is God, the guest is God’. The culture which saw Godliness in the mother, father, teacher and guest, is the culture which Swami Vivekananda dreamed of strengthening. The cultural identity should be strengthened from the early age. The individuality should be buttressed with the cultural identity. According to Swamiji, only if good culture influences the mind and the intellect, the individual will be inclined to carry out good deeds. This will enable the individual to control the Indriyas (sense organs). Only in this way, the character will be rooted in strength.

Unfortunately, the cultural heritage of India is totally ignored. The courses offered in schools and colleges are
essentially Western courses not suitable to Indian conditions and realities. They are rigidly mechanical and establish no relationship between the teacher and the taught. Education on national lines alone can solve these problems. “We must have the whole education of our country, spiritual or secular, in our own hands and it must be on national lines through national methods as far as practical” (Swami Vivekananda. 1972, Vol. 3, p. 302).

6.33 Education for Culture

Education is worthless if it does not promote a love for the nation. Education as a cultural instrument has a threefold function; conservation, transmission and renewal of culture. Renewal of culture is as much important as conservation and transmission, if the society is to be dynamic and strong.

To attain this end, the people are to be properly equipped and allowed to compare, contrast, reject or accept the things that are placed before them. One cannot expect to strengthen democracy in India by merely borrowing the arguments of Western thinkers. But it is possible to take up some basic
democratic ideas and synthesise them with the nation’s cultural heritage.

To Vivekananda, the task of the educationist is to show them all the ways of economic well-being and leave them to a natural process of self-adjustment. For economic and cultural education a well-directed and systematic training of the head, heart and hand is essential. It is on the strength and integration of these faculties that the well-being of the individual as well as the society does depend. Dr. Radhakrishnan remarks: “A man’s culture is not to be judged by the amount of tabulated information which he has at his command, but the quality of mind which he brings to bear on the facts of life” (Radhakrishnan, 1936, p. 20). To make it short, Swami Vivekananda believed that only an educational system which reflects India’s cultural identity and cultural values can save this nation.

6.34 Cultural Education for Refining the Human Mind

It is when a person lives according to humanistic values that the society considers him to be cultured. The system of
education that imparts humanistic values is called cultural education. Indian culture is one which has a world view of which the concept of ‘Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam’ is the core belief. In short, Bharatheeya concept is that the world is a family. The basis of this belief is that all the living beings are born out of the same source. Love and mutual co-operation are all part of this approach. Indian religions and culture are interlinked. Cultural values were imparted from generation to generation through religious rituals. Indians believe that different religions seek the same truth through different paths. Therefore there is no scope for communalism and religious hatred. Today we are feeling the ill-effects of an educational system which fails to convey this refined concept to the students. Our education system should be designed in such a way as to convey a sense of pride about our ancient culture. Our education should make our students to see the presence of almighty himself in all forms of life. Through this, Swamiji believes, we should be able to free the humans from all forms of narrow ideas. “Ignorance is the cause of all this bondage. It is through ignorance that we have become bound; knowledge will cure it by taking us to the other side. How will that
knowledge come? Through love, Bhakti; by the worship of God, by loving all beings as the temples of God. He resides within them. Thus, with that intense love will come knowledge, and ignorance will disappear, the bonds will break, and the soul will be free. (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, p. 128).

Swamiji’s says that the mind of a person who lacks culture, wanders towards pleasure of the senses and other similar affairs. This will ultimately cause sorrow to the person. The Swamiji says that in order to make the mind open and for it to become blissful it is necessary to impart cultural instruction. “An uncultured man loves the pleasures of the senses intensely; as he becomes cultured, he begins to love intellectual pleasures and his sense enjoyments become less and less... So when a man gets even higher than the plane of the intellect, higher than that of mere thought, when he gets to the plane of spirituality and of divine inspiration, he finds there a state of bliss, compared with which all the pleasures of the senses, or even of the intellect, are as nothing” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, p. 72). The Swamiji clarifies how cultural awareness raises a person to a plane of constant bliss and
towards knowing the ultimate truth. The ideas of spirituality, culture and religion are mutually complimentary in the Indian context. The awareness of these elements is mandatory for the development of a complete personality.

6.35 National Integration through Education

The investigator cannot believe that there exists a nation in the world which is as diverse as India. The diversity exists in all spheres which include language, attire, diet and customs. Yet underneath these external dissimilarities we can observe the existence of a unity. The unity amidst this diversity is the culture of this Nation. Swamiji believed that India was not just a geographical entity consisting of a collection of stone and sand. His belief was that India is a living entity. It can be stated that there was not a person who loved this nation as much as Swamiji did. Swamiji toured the whole nation on foot so that he could come into contact with, feel and understand the reality that is India. He was most saddened by the British domination of this nation. He was one of those unique individuals who saw education as an instrument for the complete and irreversible liberation of the country.
6.36 Nationalization of Education

Education on national lines has been recognized by all advanced countries as necessary equipment for national progress. But the system of education in India is yet to realise this great need. Here millions live without any education at all. To Vivekananda, no education can be called national unless it inspires and ensures love for the country. The present Indian system is defective in this context and it lacks a comprehensive ideal. There is very little creative originality in the current education process.

6.37 National Integration – Problems and Crisis

Nationalism is the uniqueness of a nation. Nationalism develops from the love of the nation into which an individual is born and his love for the common traditions associated with the nation. Yet, in certain circumstances, this sense of nationalism may be lost and he may fall a prey to narrow regional interests. It is when people forget their nationalism and instead opt for religion, language and caste identities that a nation faces a threat to its existence. In India where there is a lot of diversity in terms of the above identities, there is a chance that these identities
may be seen as contradictions. Not only that, the foreign invasions, which continued for more than a thousand years in this country, have also wounded the sense of national feeling in this country. We can sustain nationalism in this country by an instructional process which makes the people proud of their history and traditions. There should be a curriculum of education which imparts such an instruction. If this does not happen, issues of terrorism, separatism and casteist and communal issues will pose a threat to the unity of the nation. The British who wanted to maintain Indians as their subjects established a system of education which tore apart the feeling of nationalism of this country. The increasing separatism indicates that even in post-independence India we have not been able to evolve a system of education which imparts nationalism to our people. It is in this context that Swamiji’s idea of ‘National integration through education’ has gained importance. “The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, to develop their lost individuality.... Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries, and at last the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be
opened to what is going on in the world around them; and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man, and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put chemicals together, the crystallisation comes in the law of nature. Our duty is to put ideas into their heads, they will do the rest. This is what is to be done in India. It is this idea that has been in my mind for a long time” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 4, p. 366).

Many a time, the real threat for national integration is the feeling of helplessness that prevails among the economically and socially downtrodden people. It is possible that those who are denied the basic facilities of housing, education, clothing and food, even while residing under the same constitution may also find the concept of national love alien. It is often the dissatisfaction caused by inequalities that leads to ideas of separatism. Swamiji’s heart was pained by the condition of these downtrodden elements. He says: “I consider that the greatest national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics
would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks”” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 5, p.p. 222-223).

It is impossible to impart the lessons of national integration among the masses while they are uneducated. The main hindrance to national education is literacy. Superstition, unwanted rituals, and other immoral tendencies are all born out of illiteracy. Therefore the first thing the people who want to social renovation should do is to educate the common masses. Swamiji says “Therefore, even for social reform, the first duty is to educate the people, and you will have to wait till that time comes”” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, p. 216).

Many a time narrow religious beliefs have proved to be a hindrance to national integration. The idea that one’s own religion is the only right path has gradually led to communalism and religious separatism, and this in turn has led to bloodshed. In Swamiji’s opinion, we can solve this problem only through correct religious instruction. According to ancient Indian teachers, all religions are different paths leading to the same ultimate truth. Swamiji believed that the educational system
should impart this idea to the students. He said: “If one religion be true, then all the others must be true. Thus the Hindu faith is yours as much as mine” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005. Vol. I, p.10).

Swamiji believed that the diversity which existed in India does not indicate contradictions. In post-independence India, where there is a conscious attempt to portray diversity as contradictions, Swamiji’s approach towards this issue is relevant. “Unity in variety is the plan of the universe” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005. Vol. 2, p. 381). He continues, “Help and not fight, Assimilation and not Destruction, Harmony and Peace and not Dissension” (Swami Vivekananda.2005.Vol.1, p. 24). Through close observation, Swamiji understood that India is a land of diversity. Though the country was diverse in terms of language, attire, geography, religion and caste, the factor which unified the people was the cultural nationalism of this country. Swamiji pointed to how the religious identity in India was an instrument of integration whereas it caused division in other countries. The reason for this is that the cultural foundation of religions in India is built on Universal values. Swamiji’s argument is that the education system in this
country should be able to impart this cultural nationalism. Swamiji’s was an in-depth approach towards the crisis facing the national unity and his solutions to these problems have also been of the same detail and depth. He said, “The problems in India are more complicated, more momentous, than the problems in any other country. Race, religion, language, government - all these together make a nation..... Here have been the Aryan, the Dravidian, the Tartar, the Turk, the Mogul, and the European - all the nations of the world, as it were, pouring their blood into this land. Of languages the most wonderful conglomeration is here; of manners and customs there is more difference between two Indian races than between the European and the Eastern races. The one common ground that we have is our sacred tradition - our religion. That is the only common ground, and upon that we shall have to build. In Europe, Political ideas from the national unity. In Asia, religious ideals form the national unity. The unity in religion, therefore, is absolutely necessary as the first condition of the future of India. There must be the recognition of one religion throughout the length and breadth of this land. What do I mean by one religion? Not in sense of
one religion, as held among the Christians, or the Mohammedans, or Buddhists. We know that our religion has certain common grounds, common to all our sects, however varying their conclusions may be, however different their claims may be. So there are certain common grounds; and within their limitation this religion of ours admits of a marvellous variation and infinite amount of liberty to think and live our own lives” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.3, p.p. 286-287).

Swamiji believed that in India, religion has a large role. In a land where even the most illiterate person was highly religious, swami believed that religion should be used as an instrument for national integration. If the right religious education is given, it can be ensured that religion does not deteriorate into communalism. He believed that by ensuring inculcation of the secular and universal Vedic- Upanishads thoughts right from the lowly hut to the most opulent mansion, universal popular education could be guaranteed. He said “So every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political
ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas. The first work that demands our attention is that the most wonderful truths confined in our Upanishads, in our scriptures, in our Puranas must be brought out from the books, brought out from the monasteries, brought out from the forests, brought out from the possession of selected bodies of people, and scattered broadcast all over the land, so that these truths may run like fire all over the country from north to south and east to west, from the Himalayas to Comorin, from Sindhu to the Brahmaputhra” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, p. 221).

Swamiji considered illiteracy as the main stumbling block to national integration and sought to find immediate solution for the same. But there was little scope to expect people to flock to educational institutions in a country where poverty and unemployment were widespread. According to Swamiji, educated youth should reach the lowly huts with the gift of education. The seers who have abandoned all materialistic elements and who wander the villages with their spiritual message should also do their bit to educate the public in order to promote national integration. He says, “Now if the mountain does not come to Mohammad, Mohammad must go
to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him. There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing ‘Sanyasins’ in our own country, going from village to village, and teaching religion. If some of them can be organised as teachers of secular things also, they will go to place to place, from door to door, not only preaching, but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera, globe, some maps, etc.... They can teach a great deal of astronomy, and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations they can give the poor hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a life time through book” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.4, p. 363). Every unbiased person will acknowledge that it is due to caste discrimination and the subsequent monopoly of education by the rich that the vast majority wallows in illiteracy and are denied justice. Cultural works which generate pride among the masses have become the private property of religious apostles who have used these as ‘sacred texts’ for their own use. Thus, the ordinary citizen, denied proper education, have become people bereft of pride
and self-confidence. Thus the majority in the country have been kept away from the national mainstream. To evolve a solution to this problem, Swamiji sought to bring education to the poor and the downtrodden. So he has said: “The chief cause of India’s ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again we shall have to do it in the same way, i.e. by spreading education among the masses” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 4, p. 482).

Swamiji believed that in order to bring a people back to their original national bearings the target of the work should be the ordinary people of the land. He considered it possible to inculcate in the people, who have been separated from their national bearing, both pride and organisational consciousness, using the medium of education. For this work, Swamiji put his trust in the educated youth. Swamiji dreamed of a situation when nationalists would arise from the toiling masses in the fields, the fishing folk, and lowliest of the cobblers, and the coolies. He said: “You merge yourselves in the void and
disappear, and let New India arise in your place. Let her arise-out of the peasants’ cottage, grasping the plough; out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler, and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer’s shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts, and from markets. Let her emerge from groves and forests, from hills and mountains. These common people have suffered oppression for thousands of years - suffered it without murmur, and as a result have got wonderful fortitude” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.7, p. 327).

6.38 The Importance of Technical Education and Women’s Education

For national integration to become possible it is necessary to have equal opportunities for all. It is also necessary to ensure means of livelihood. Swamiji must have been convinced of the need of self-sufficiency for livelihood and hence he had stressed on education that guaranteed livelihood. He also considered the need to improve the plight of a major part of the society that is the womenfolk and he saw this as an important step in the path of national integration. The fact that his concept
Reflective analysis of perceptions on education of Swami Vivekananda

on education included women’s education and livelihood based education shows how much his thoughts on this subject were scientific. He said: “It would be better if the people got a little technical education, so that they might find work and earn their bread, instead of dawdling about and crying for service” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 5, p. 367.).

To think that Swamiji’s stress on the education of women came at a time when the world had yet to wake up to the need for the same shows the extent to which he was progressive. His progressive outlook can be understood by his own words: “Educate your women first and leave them to themselves; then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.6, p. 115). Swamiji believed that with the education of women aimed at providing them self-sufficiency, it was necessary to teach them religion and culture. Religion, arts, science, housekeeping, sewing and hygiene should be taught to women as part of education, as per the Swamiji.
6. 39 Education on National Lines.

The first task of education is to make the people of the country strong. “The first Gods we have to worship are our countrymen. Till then there is no salvation for the race. In India, a man considers another man educated if only he can pass some examinations and deliver good lectures. The education which does not help the people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring strength of character, cannot be treated as worth the name. Modern education has changed the fashion of the day. Today the child is taken to school in pomp and glory and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool. There is no use in keeping this trend. The greatest task of education is to reform the human mind. The ideal system for India therefore, is that, we must have the whole education of our country, spiritual or secular, in our own hands and it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as possible” (Swami Vivekananda. 1973, Vol. 3. p. 362).

Education is a continuous process. It should cover all aspects of life, physical, material, intellectual, emotional, moral
and spiritual and all stages of life from birth to death. Moreover, it must meet the needs to tackle problems of men and women in all walks of life. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, “As long as I live, so long do I learn” (Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. 1978, p. 329). Vivekananda practiced this idea throughout his life.

6.40 National Integration Through Emotional Integration

In a country like India with its vast population and varied problems, it is essential that increased socialisation should be achieved. Through increasing intercommunication it is possible to suggest a workable programme of emotional integration regardless of parochial and linguistic belongings. The ideals of universal brotherhood and social justice can be promoted through social accommodation of different interests. The scientific ingenuity of man is to be adjusted with his moral insight.

“During the freedom struggle days there was no problem of national integration, because then the main goal of winning independence had bound the entire nation into one thread. But on achievement of independences, some disruptive
forces have surfaced. Various political parties, numerous languages spoken by the people, various states, various classes and castes, regionalism, poverty, various communities, etc. may be cited as examples of these forces” (Chaube. 1994, p. 281). From the cultural viewpoint India has always been one country since time immemorial. Our social reformers have always thought of one India. Great kings and emperors have always aspired to rule over the whole of India as one country.

“Education is a very powerful weapon for national integration. Through education we can give the necessary motivation to children i.e., the future citizens of the nation. In the organization of curriculum, in admission in various educational centres, and in appointment of teachers, our general policy should be such as to encourage the propagation of national elements and not to give any place to caste, religion, class and community. In the organization of our schools, colleges, and universities preference should be given to national ideas whenever possible. Only then we shall be able to promote nationalism in the students, teachers and the people as a whole” (Chaube. 1994, P. 281). If, through a system
of education an emotional bond can be established, then it would be possible to realise national integration. The methodology of education should be designed for this purpose.

The problem of emotional integration in India is to be analysed both at the individual and societal level. Emotional integration is possible only through social interactions and inters-personal relations. Vivekananda suggested that there should be a sense of identification with the spirit of the nation in all individual and social activities.

Vivekananda believes that emotional integration is possible if the different sections of the society are reawakened to the need for an inner unity. India’s fidelity to the religious roots of emotional integration should be re-established to regain her lost energies. For this, “the society and the educational system should have knowledge of each other” (Chatterjee. 1976, p. 194).

6.4.1 Patriotic View Points and Education.

Swamiji is known as the prophet of nationalism. He is the person who had exhorted the people of colonised India to throw all their millions of deities into the sea and then to worship
mother India as their only deity. For nationalism to become integral to the peoples psyche it is necessary for them to imbibe the nationalism, which is based on their knowledge of the nation’s culture and traditions as also the awareness of the sacrifices that the national heroes had undergone in the past. For this, it is necessary to impart elements of national pride from a very small age, inside the classrooms.

An educational system which does not inculcate love for the nation in the minds of the young generation is of no use for the nation. For this love to be a reality, the glorious history of the nation should be a part of the curriculum. A vision of a bright future should be included, to act as a beacon of hope.

Only when the history of the valiant ancestors and the story of their bravery and struggle form a part of the curriculum, will education be any good for the nation. Unfortunately, India’s educational system projected neither our cultural identity, nor our glorious history nor did it serve in any way to create a love for this nation in the hearts of the new generation. We are still following the educational system, designed by the British, meant to douse the self-confidence of our nation.
Swamiji’s speeches were those which ignited the flame of nationalism in the heart of the nation’s body. For many national leaders like Gandhiji, Swami Vivekananda was the inspiration. Vivekananda believes that three things are necessary for igniting patriotism and achieving freedom. They are (1) Love for the motherland (2) a strong will to resist evil. 3) Steadfastness in achieving the desired goal. His deep convictions about patriotism and freedom are very vividly seen in many of his poems. The third stanza of his ‘Song of Sanysin’ goes thus:

“Strike off thy fetters! Bonds that bind thee down
Of shining gold or darker, baser one;
Love hate – good – bad – and all the dual throng.
Know slave is slave, caressed or whipped, not free;
For fetters, though of gold are not less strong to bind.
Then off with them Sanyasin bold; say Om Tat Sat, Om!”


These lines really reflect the socio-political and cultural aspects of India in the 19th Century and also the force with which
Vivekananda prepared the people of India to fight against all kinds of social evils.

Nationalism is not just the love for a geographical entity. It is the love for millions residing in that nation. It is the love for the traditions of that nation. Looking from that perspective, it can be undoubtedly stated that there is no nationalist who can be compared to Swami Vivekananda.

6.42 The Role of Swamiji in Building a Theoretical Base to Indian Nationalism

According to Swami Vivekananda, India is a sacred land (Punya Bhumi). For Swamiji, India was not just a geographical entity made of stones and sand. It is a living organism. It is this approach which forms the basis of the Swami’s nationalism. According to him, India is our motherland. “This is the motherland of Philosophy, of spirituality and of ethics, of sweetness, gentleness, and love” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005. Vol. 3, p. 147).

The belief that souls are born in India so that they can break the eternal cycle of birth and death is an ancient one. The belief that the gods have assumed human form and created this
land is also eternal. Swamiji establishes that it is these beliefs that form the foundation of the emotional attachment of the people to this land. “If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed Punya Bhumi, to be the land to which all souls on this earth must come to account for Karma, the land to which every soul that is wending its ways Godward must come to attain its last home, the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality - it is India” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.3, p. 105).

Swamiji’s nationalism was never a narrow ideology. There was no other person who provided such a strong theoretical base to the concept of Indian freedom. His putting forward the idea of national love was a contributing factor that led to the movement for the political freedom of the nation. People like Sri. Sukumar Azhikode have commented upon this aspect of Swamiji’s contribution. “One of the strongest spiritual forces which led to the political freedom of modern India was Swami Vivekananda” (Azhikodu. 2011, P. 41).
Swamiji who came to the scene as a prophet of nationalism was to accomplish a great mission through his life. It is his exhortations, filled with love for the nation, which woke up a whole nation from its slumber. According to Nivedita Reghunath Bhide, Swami Vivekananda was a monk who bore the message of nationalism. “Swami Vivekananda was not just a monk; he was a monk with a national mission” [Yuva Bharati. 2011, Sept. P.8].

His speech at Chicago was the culmination of his nationalistic mission. The contribution of Swamiji towards national resurgence can be measured by that single speech delivered at Chicago. That speech in Chicago resonated with intense nationalism and national pride. “The Chicago campaign was part of this mission of renaissance of Bharat. Let us also be brave and choose a grand noble cause as our own life’s mission, a national goal of life rather than just individual” (Yuva Bharati. 2011, Sept., P.8).

6.43 National Renaissance Through National Love

Swamiji’s love for the nation was uncompromising. His declared policy was to love each and every grain of our nation.
Swamiji saw this love for the nation as the single factor which would lead to national renaissance. He saw the love for the socially oppressed as a clear indicator of the love for the nation. He saw this national love as the means by which the nation could be liberated from the foreign yoke. Swamiji’s stand was that only if one could identify with the oppressed, one could be really called a patriot. He said: “One word more and I have finished. They talk of patriotism. I believe in patriotism, and I also have my own ideal of patriotism. Three things are necessary for great achievements. First, feel from the heart. What is in the intellect or reason? It goes a few steps and there it stops. But through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates; Love is the gate to all the secrets of the universe. Feel, therefore, my would-be reformers, my would-be patriots! Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins,
becoming consonant with your heartbeats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005. Vol. 3, p.p. 225-226).

Swamiji considered the urge to help the poor and the helpless as the first step towards becoming a patriot. Swamiji was not prepared to recognise a person as a patriot without such an urge. Swamiji saw the person’s affinity for anything connected with the nation as the litmus test of patriotism. He wanted to implement a system of education which would help develop this affinity. At any, point when the issues of patriotism were discussed, one could see Swamiji using words that came right from the heart. He was of the opinion that an emotional affinity towards anything connected with the nation should be developed. He said: "The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, India’s gods and goddesses are my God. India’s society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my old age’. Say,
brother.... ‘The soil of India is my highest heaven; the good of India is my good”’ (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 4, p. 480).

India has an ancient culture. Swamiji understood that India’s nationalism flowed from this source. He repeated that the new generation should draw strength from this ancient history and tradition. “Look back, therefore, as far as you can, drink deep of the eternal fountains that are behind, and after that, look forward, march forward and make India brighter, greater, and much higher than she ever was. Our ancestors were great. We must first recall that. We must learn the elements of our being, the blood that courses in our veins; we must have faith in that blood and what it did in the past; and out of that faith and consciousness of past greatness, we must build an India yet greater than what she has been” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, p.286).

Swamiji was a great optimist as far India’s future was concerned. He was prophetic in his prediction that India, which was a great power, would one day arise to take its rightful place. But he stressed that the combined strength of the people of this country was imperative to make this happen. He had more faith in the power of the organised human action than in any divine
intervention. History proved that his words could inspire millions through its idea of a resurgent nation. “Let us all work hard, my brethren; this is no time for sleep. On our work depends the coming of the India of the future. She is there ready and waiting. She is only sleeping, arise and awake and see her seated here on her eternal throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than she ever was - this motherland of ours. The idea of God was nowhere else ever so fully developed as in this motherland of ours, for the same idea of God never existed anywhere else” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, p.154).

For national resurgence, there should be a generation who worships Power. Swamiji opposed anything which promoted weakness. He would quote with example that weakness led to slavery. “The weak have no place here, in this life or in any other life. Weakness leads to slavery. Weakness leads to all kinds of misery, physical and mental. Weakness is death” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005. Vol. 2, p.3). By strength, he did not mean just muscular strength. He wanted people who had the determination to see through any crisis and the intelligence to solve any problem. He believed that only such strong people
could lead a country towards progress. “What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and the secrets of the universe, and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005. Vol. 3, p.190).

6.44 Patriotism Through Education

While Western education destroyed the self-confidence of the Indian population and implanted in them a sense of slavery, Swamiji wanted a national education that turn them into patriots. He exhorted that if someone was not able to visit an educational institution due to lack of means, then education should reach his doorstep. According to Swamiji, Nationalism is meant to improve the lot of the downtrodden and to strengthen them through education. He explains his stance thus: “Who feels there for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken forever in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way out? Who feels for them? They cannot find light of education. Who will bring the light to them - who will travel
from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God - think of them, work of them, pray for them incessantly - the Lord will show you the way. Him I call a ‘Mahatman’ (great soul) whose heart bleed for the poor, otherwise he is a ‘Duratman’ (wicked soul)” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.5, p.58).

Swamiji was for an education which encouraged people to abandon personal comforts and selfishness and instead prompted people to think of the nation. He understood that a system of education which constantly bombarded the intellect with powerful ideas would lead to a social revolution. Swamiji used to say that it was necessary to prepare educated youth to carry out this national task. “Everyone must work out his own salvation. Our duty is to put the chemicals together; the crystallisation will come through God’s laws. Let us put ideas into their heads, and they will do the rest. Now this means educating the masses” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 8, p.307).

There is no other person who has discussed the issue of nationalism as a sustaining factor in the growth of a nation.
“Educate and raise the masses, and thus alone a nation is possible” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005. Vol. 8, p. 307). These words are relevant for all ages.

6.45 Morals and Values through Education

The national policy on Education (1986) highlights the urgent need for value based education in view of the growing erosion of essential values and increasing cynicism in society. With a well designed curriculum, it is possible to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of desirable ethical, spiritual and social values. Education should foster universal and eternal values. Value education should help to eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstitions and fatalism. Education which inculcates universal and eternal values like compassion, courage, honesty, tolerance and truthfulness, etc. will help in developing balanced individuals and in creating a humane society.

6.46 Meaning of the Term ‘Value’

Value stands for ideals men live for. Values are part and parcel of the philosophy of a nation and that of its educational system. They are the guiding principles of life which are
conducive to all-round development. In the words of John Dewey: “The Values mean primarily to prize, to esteem, to appraise to estimate. It means the act of cherishing something, holding it and also the act of passing judgement upon the nature and amounts of values as compared with something else” (Aggarwal. 1997, p.p. 384 - 385).

6.47 Education and Need for Inculcation of Values

The various commissions set up to study educational reforms in post-independence India have called for value-based education. Commissions like the Kothari commission have commented that the lack of direction and values seen among youth of our country are a direct result of the lack of value-based education. “The expanding knowledge and the growing power (of science) which it places at the disposal of modern society must therefore, be combined with the strengthening and deepening of the sense of social responsibility and a keener appreciation of moral and spiritual values. Inculcation of desirable values in the pupil is felt essential for meeting our crisis of character. In the situation that is rapidly developing,
it is equally important for us to give a proper value orientation to our educational systems” (Aggarwal. 1997, p. 386).

6.48 Education for Character

To Swami Vivekananda, without humility and character there is no education. Character is nothing but a bundle of habits. When a desire, thought or act is constantly repeated, it becomes a habit. Right thoughts and right actions will lead to right habits and these habits will serve as character traits of a person. What is required for the formation of character is only a change of heart and a change is one’s own conception of the world, which is actually a projection of one’s own mind.

In his opinion, an unsophisticated cobbler or fisherman, who is in possession of character, is more educated than many who have modern schooling which is nothing but literary training. As whitehead puts it, “Education with inert ideas is not only useless, it is, above all things, harmful” (Whitehead.1960, p.2). Vivekananda fully agrees with this view and says that the misery of man will continue to exist until man’s character changes.
6.49 Morals and Values for character formation.

The main objective of education right from the Vedic ages in India was character formation. The core aim of the ‘Gurukula’ education was to teach a life based on moral values. The Gurukula education used to start with a reminder of eternal human values and moral values. In Mandukyopanishad, the student prays everyday to the almighty for blessings for his Guru, his classmates and the people all over the universe.

“ॐ भद्रम कर्णेभिः श्रुयां भद्रम पास्येन्मुक्षाभिर्याजत्राः
स्थिराङ्कांस्तुतुवाभस्तानुभिर्यासेमा देवहितां यदायः
स्वास्तिना इन्द्रो व्र्द्धास्रवाह स्वास्तिना पुषाः विस्वा वेदाः
स्वास्तिनांस्तर्क्ष्यो अरिष्टानेमि स्वास्तिनो
भ्रसपतिर्दधात्तु
ॐ हृं संतिः संतिः संतिः” (Unni.2009, p.91).

‘O devas, may we hear refined words. Let words of accusations, false praises and abuse and such sinful words not be heard. Let our lives be devoted to the Yaga. Let our lives be constantly be engaged in the worship of the Lord. Let it be so that we see only good things. Let us not see sinful or destructive sights. Let our organs and limbs be strong and healthy. Let our
lives not go along the path of materialism and wrongdoings....’

The student prayed for the good of the whole world.

From this introductory hymn, it can be deducted the depth to which value based approach was prevalent in Indian education. Swami Vivekananda’s opinion was that ignorance was the cause of all evil. His dream was the destruction of sin and the construction of a value based society. For this, he had proposed the concept of Universal education. He says: “Ignorance is the mother of all the evil and ... We may convert every house in the country into a charity asylum, we may fill the land with hospitals, but the misery of the man will still continue to exist until man’s character changes” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. I, p. 53).

Swamiji has proposed certain psychological approaches to lead humans towards eternal values. His simple logic is that if good thoughts are constantly fed into the human mind, it will automatically result in good deeds. This is the reason why Swamiji insists that the curriculum should be value based. According to Swamiji, if the students are given the right education and thought process through their curriculum texts, they would lead to good actions. Good thoughts would lead to
good actions and these constant good actions would lead to good habits. This was Swamiji’s logic and this is in line with modern educational psychology. He establishes his point of view in this manner: “If a man thinks good thoughts and does good works, the sum total of these impressions will be good; and they, in a similar manner, will force him to do good even in spite of himself. When a man has done so much good work and thought so many good thoughts that there is an irresistible tendency in him to do good, in spite of himself and even if he wishes to do evil, his mind, as the sum total of his tendencies will not allow him to do so; the tendencies will turn him back; he is completely under the influence of the good tendencies. When such is the case, a man’s good character is said to be established” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.I, p.54).

Swamiji says that it is even possible to be free from the tyranny of the senses by constant occupation with good thoughts. Then the character of the person becomes refined. Swamiji sees this character building as the primary purpose of education. There is no need to be concerned about someone who has acquired these ‘satvic’ tendencies. Swamiji’s aim was
such an education system which would create value based individuals who would not be tempted by sin. He says: “He controls his own inner forces, and nothing can draw them out against his will. By this continuous reflex of good thought, good impressions moving over the surface of the mind, the tendency for doing good becomes strong, and as the result we feel able to control the ‘Indriyas’ (the sense- organs, the nerve-centres). Thus alone will character be established, and then alone a man gets to truth. Such a man is safe for ever; he cannot do any evil. You may place him in any company, there will be no danger for him. There is a still higher state than having this good tendency, and that is the desire for liberation” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. I, p. 55).

6.50 Concept of Moral Values as per Swami Vivekananda

“Every selfish action, therefore, retards our reaching the goal, and every unselfish action takes us towards the goal; that is why the only definition that can be given of morality is this: That which is selfish is immoral, and that which is unselfish is moral”( Swami Vivekananda. 2005,Vol. I, p.110).
Swamiji’s concept of morality would seem simplistic, yet had a deeper undercurrent. Any unselfish deed was, according to him, a good deed and any selfish one was a bad deed. His concept of morality sprung from a social situation when the countrymen had surrendered their freedom as a result of a combination of personal arrogance, selfishness and destructive competition. The moral concept of India is a product of the Vedanta. From the realisation that the universal soul and the one within them are one and the same, humans acquire the affinity to love and serve all the living things around him. Swamiji quotes the Upanishads to establish that the foundation of morality is the love and kindness towards all living beings. “There are moments when every man feels that he is one with the universe, and he rushes forth to express it, whether he knows it or not. This expression of oneness is what we call love and sympathy, and it is the basis of all our ethics and morality. This is summed up in the Vedanta Philosophy by the celebrated aphorism, ‘Tat Twam Asi’, ‘Thou art That’” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. I, p. 414).
6.51 Morality Based Traditional Education

We normally attribute imparting of morals and values as the aim of ordinary educational process. But in the Indian thought-science of Raja Yoga, the student can succeed in acquiring the ultimate knowledge only if he is morally upright. The eight steps of Raja Yoga are: Yama, Niyama, Aasana, Praanayama, Prathyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi. Each and every one of these is value based and gives stress to morals. ‘Yama’ means non-injury, truthfulness, non-covetousness, chastity, not receiving anything from another. All these good qualities purify the human mind. In this, celibacy is the fundamental quality of all morals. In ancient India, it was mandatory that students should be celibate. Ahimsa indicates non-injury to any living being by word or deed. There is no happiness higher that what a man obtains by this attitude of non-offensiveness, to all creation. By truth we attain fruits of work. Through truth everything is attained. In truth everything is established. Relating facts as they are - this is truth. Not taking other’s goods by stealth or by force is called Asteya, non-covetousness. Chastity in though, word, and deed, always,
and in all conditions, is what is called Brahmacharya. Not receiving any present from anybody, even when one is suffering terribly, is what is called Aparigraha. The idea is when a man receives a gift from another, his heart becomes impure, he becomes low, he loses his independence, and he becomes bound and attached.

Here it describes the various moral values which the student should have in order to realise the ultimate truth. Swamiji says, “The following are helps to success in Yoga and are called Niyama or regular habits and observances; Tapas, austerity; Svadhyaya, study; Santhosha, contentment; Shaucha, purity; Ishvara Pranidhana, worshipping god; Fasting, or in other ways controlling the body, is called physical tapas. Repeating the Vedas and other mantras, by which the Satva material in the body is purified, is called study, Savdhyaya” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. I, p. 190).

The processes described here are all value based actions designed for reaching the ultimate truth. Internal and external purity are mandatory for observing these actions. The outer purity can be achieved using water or any other cleaning
material. The inner purity is that of the mind. This can be achieved only by good deeds. These show how much Indian educational system was based on values.

Indian seers had aimed at purification of the heart through educational processes. They had discovered that in a pure heart, knowledge would be easily reflected. Knowledge is something which is internal to a person. This knowledge is revealed if the heart is pure and transparent enough. So, purification is seen as the most important action in the path to eternal knowledge. Thus Indian seers believed that one cannot be purified but by value based education. This is described by Swamiji in this manner: “The pure heart is the best mirror for the reflection of truth, so all these disciplines are for the purifications of the heart. And as soon as it is pure, all truths flash upon in a minute; all truth in the universe will manifest in your heart, if you are sufficiently pure” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. I, p. 414).
6.52 The Role of the Guru in the Education of Values

The Vedantis say that it is mandatory that the Guru should also have the values which he wants to inculcate in the student to reach the eternal truth. This is because none of the values can be ‘taught’. It can only be imparted as if from one vessel to another. For this to happen, the Guru himself should set an example of moral life which should be apparent to the student. The Upanishads have thoroughly discussed these moral values.

The hymn which describes the values which the student should have is applicable to the teacher also.

“Satyēna Labhyaastapasā hyēśa ātmā
Samyag jēśēna brahmacaryēṇa nityam
Anthaśśarīrē jōtiścmaayōhi śubhro
Yam paśyanti yatayah kṣhīṇadoṣhāh”

(Unni.2009,p.87).

‘The abode of knowledge who resides in the heart of every being, i.e. The Paramathma, will be revealed to only the pure and knowledgeable seeker. For this, the seeker of the ultimate should have the following qualities: Truthfulness, unselfishness,
constant endeavour for knowledge, and celibacy. On the other hand, one who is immersed in materialistic pursuits has no chance to know the eternal truth. ‘In other words, only a person who is centred on moral values can achieve the ultimate knowledge. A real guru is someone who has acquired the experience of the ultimate knowledge. This means that the Guru should be someone who has led a strictly value based life. “The Acharya (teacher) of the Vedic age was responsible not only for imparting knowledge, but also in moulding the character and personality of the pupils. The Acharya was an affectionate father, an effective teacher, and a person of high moral and spiritual qualities. He taught with his heart and soul” (Nithyananda Bhat. 2011, January-March,p.23).

The task of the teacher was not just imparting knowledge. His main task was moulding the personality of the student. In that sense it should be deducted that, in the Vedic ages, along with knowledge, the moral and spiritual quality of the Guru was also very much relevant. In his discourse on ‘The ideal teacher,’ Sri Sathya Sai Baba tells teachers that they should not forget that ‘personal example’ is the best method of teaching. “If we
don’t show by example what we teach of what use is our teaching and what impact it will make on the children’s mind?” (SaiBaba.2005, p.121).

In the opinion of the saint, who can be considered as the most recent proponent of ancient Indian spirituality, personal example is the best teaching tool. It can be seen that this is very true of moral education. Mahatma Gandhi was another person who had a lot to say about value based education. He said, “If teachers impart all the knowledge in the world to their students but inculcate not truth and purity among them, they will have betrayed them and instead of raising them, set them on the downward road to perdition. Knowledge without character is a power for evil only, as seen in the instances of so many talented thieves and ‘gentlemen rascals’ in the world” (Mahatma Gandhi. 1995, Vol. 6, p. 529).

Gandhiji’s comment that education without morality will create thieves and rascals is relevant considering the present situation in our country. From this, it follows that, if there is moral decline in the society, the main culprits of this decline are the architects of the educational system. It is because of this that
people like swami Vivekananda had argued for a value based educational system.

6.53 Individual Development through Value Inculcation

It is through moral education that the primary objective of education, i.e. personality development, can be achieved. Love, kindness and truthfulness are all eternal values. The relevance to these values go beyond the boundaries of time and space. When these values prevail, there will be internal and external peace in the world. There will be mutual respect between religions. Therefore, value based education is mandatory not only for personality development but also world peace. Swamiji has given new interpretations to the concept of values. Swamiji sees God, who is the embodiment of values, in the downtrodden masses. For the emancipation of the soul, he has called for serving these masses as one would serve God. This is actually a belief system which springs from raising the kindness one feels towards the living beings around us, to the level of spiritual experience. This idea, which sees God in the downtrodden and the deceased, is actually a radical shift from
the traditional concepts of morality. It is imperative to have such radical concepts as tools for personality development. He says, “I should see God in the poor, and it is for my salvation that I go and worship them. The poor and the miserable are for our salvation, so that we may serve the Lord, coming in the shape of diseased, coming in the shape of the lunatic, leper, and the sinner! Bold are my words; and let me repeat that it is the greatest privilege in our life that we are allowed to serve the Lord in all this shapes” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005. Vol. 3, p.p. 246-247).

The action of leading an illiterate person towards the light of knowledge, according to the Swamiji, is an action which stems from kindness and motivated by the desire to do good. According to Swamiji, it is only when the so-called literate people abandon their false pride and come forward to serve others that their level of consciousness increases. He said “Bring light to the ignorant, and more light to the educated, for the vanities of the educated of our time are tremendous! Thus bring light to all and leave the rest unto the Lord, for in the words of the same Lord, ‘To work you have the right and
Reflective analysis of perceptions on education of Swami Vivekananda


In man there are brutal, kind and even godly tendencies. The aim of education is to lift a person from his base tendencies through inculcation of human moral values to reach God consciousness. It is only then that it can be said that there has been personality development. It is not mandatory that a person acquires human values through scientific or technical education. It is because of the fact that the present system of education is unable to increase the goodness within individuals that the modern society has a multitude of technically savvy criminals. It is here that Swamiji’s ideas of personality development become more relevant. “**Virtue is that which tends to our improvement, and vice to our degeneration. Man is made up of three qualities - brutal, human and godly. That which tends to increase the divinity in you is virtue and that which tends to increase brutality in you is vice. You must kill the brutal nature and become human, that is, loving and charitable. You must transcend that too and become pure bliss - Sachidananda, fire without burning, wonderfully loving, but**
without weakness of human love, without the feeling of misery” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005. Vol. 6, p.112).

Through the word ‘personality development’ Swamiji means the development of the intellect and that of the heart. Modern education mostly focuses on the development of the intellect. But this is only a partial form of development. It is imperative that, along with the intellect, the heart should also develop. This means that there should be an emotional elevation of the individual. The heart is the centre of all values and morals. Swamiji says: “What we really want is head and heart combined. The heart is great indeed; it is through the heart that comes the great inspiration of life. I would a hundred times rather have a little heart and no brain, than be all brains and no heart. Life is possible, progress is possible for him who has heart, but he who has no heart and only brains die of dryness” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.2, p.145).

In Swamiji’s opinion, the right education would create a personality with Sri Sankara’s intelligence and Sri Buddha’s compassion. Only when kindness is combined with sharp intelligence, can a completely perfect personality be created.
Swamiji says, “We want harmony, not one-sided development. And it is possible to have intellect of a Shankara with the heart of a Buddha. I hope we shall all struggle to attain to that Blessed combination” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 2, p.143).

6.54 Man Making Education

The ultimate aim of education is the development of character and personality. If morality and eternal values are included in the educational curriculum, the total personality development of the child will become a reality. The idea of all education, all training, should be this man-making. But, instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the outside. What use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow.

Purity and morality have always been the objects of religion; a pure, moral man has control over himself. All minds are the same, different parts of one mind. He who knows one lump of clay has known all the clay in the universe. He who knows and controls his own mind knows the secret of every mind and has power over the mind.
The development of personality is closely linked with development of mind. For a good personalities to flower, the child should be presented with role models of high moral fibre and purity of action. The role model should be able to impart positive thoughts and visions. We can say personality development has taken place only if man starts to live a life based on eternal values. Swamiji has given this short description of those eternal values: “Doing good to others is virtue (Dharma); injuring others is sin. Strength and manliness and virtue; weakness and cowardice are sins. Independence is virtue; dependence is sin. Loving others is virtue; hating others is sin. Faith in God and oneself is virtue; doubt is sin. Knowledge of oneness is virtue; seeing diversity is sin. The different scriptures only show the means of attaining virtue” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 5, p. 419).

Only when there is a comprehensive change – change in the body, mind and intellect – can there said to be ‘personality development’. The method of a good education system is the creation of an environment for this personality development.
6.55 The Real Task of Education

Educationalists of the East and the West have time and again presented a wide variety of meaning to the concept of education. But in the absence of a standard or a touchstone for testing these meanings, the student of education is tantalized to find out a suitable choice.

But every student should know that there are certain objective values of education which are fundamental and eternal. These are ‘Truth, Beauty and Justice’. Disinterested pursuit of any of these values will lead to spirituality and its attainment is sure to manifest in the divinity of every man.

To Vivekananda, the human mind is the infinite library of the universe. A person comes to know of his mind when it begins to operate in a given environment. All knowledge the world has ever received comes from the mind and all discoveries are the result of the activity of the mind. Education alone can bring to light the wonderful capacities of the human mind, which is a part of the universal mind.

The foregoing ideas of Vivekananda have a common note in them. It is that the Vedantic ideals can be translated into
action by men of imagination and vision. Every educated man should take the mission of imparting to the uneducated the fundamental ideas that each soul is potentially divine and that unity in diversity is the plan of nature. This can be done by work, worship, psychic control, or philosophy.

To make it short, the educational vision of swami Vivekananda is of relevance today. This is the adaptation of traditional Indian concept of education to the present reality. It can be termed essential to today’s situation in the country as it combines the ancient knowledge of the Vedas and the Upanishads with modern technical finesse. This system will serve to reinstate the cultural and spiritual values, which are being eroded, so as to inculcate the new generation with nationalism, and help them imbibe a value based world new as well as to uphold the principle of national integration, in the midst of diversity.
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