



A study on views of Swami Vivekanand on women education in present Indian context

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Abstract

Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902), a great Indian philosopher, thinker, and reformer, defines education as the “manifestation of perfection already present in men”. Vivekanand believed that education should be more than just a collection of facts; it should be man-making, life-giving, and character-building. Individuals are the constituents of society, he says strongly, and if society is to be altered, education must reach everyone—rich and poor. He was also adamant that women be educated, believing that it is the women who shape the next generation, and hence the country's destiny. The upliftment of women and the public was given utmost importance in Vivekanand's educational scheme for India. Swami Vivekanand believed that a nation's treatment of its women is a barometer of progress, and that it is impossible to reclaim India's lost respect and honour unless Indians work to improve women's conditions. Men and women, he believed, are two wings of a bird, and a bird cannot fly with only one wing. As a result, he believes that the world's welfare will be jeopardised until women's conditions improve. Women's education is critical for both the overall development of the country and the improvement of women's conditions in India. #

Keywords: Swami Vivekanand, Women's Education, Indian Context, Social Reform, Character Building

Introduction

Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902), a great Indian philosopher, thinker, and reformer, defines education as the “manifestation of perfection already present in men”. Vivekanand believed that education should be more than just a collection of facts; it should be man-making, life-giving, and character-building. Individuals are the constituents of society, he says strongly, and if society is to be altered, education must reach everyone—rich and poor. He was also adamant that women be educated, believing that it is the women who shape the next generation, and hence the country's destiny. The upliftment of women and the public was given utmost importance in Vivekanand's educational scheme for India. Swami Vivekanand believed that a nation's treatment of its women is a barometer of progress, and that it is impossible to reclaim India's lost respect and honour unless Indians work to improve women's conditions. Men and women, he believed, are two wings of a bird, and a bird cannot fly with only one wing. As a result, he believes that the world's welfare will be jeopardised until women's conditions improve. Women's education is critical for both the overall development of the country and the improvement of women's conditions in India.

However, in India the rate of illiteracy among women is extremely high. According to the 2011 census, 35% of women are still illiterate. It shows that India is not making the best use of its potential workforce. Women's capacities and skills are either unutilised or underutilised. Despite the fast expansion of the educational system, the literacy gap between men and women persists.

As a result, an attempt has been made in this article to reflect the gender disparity in literacy rates and to highlight current government initiatives created and implemented to encourage and foster the growth of women's education in India. In the end, this paper will make recommendations for overcoming the problem of illiteracy among women in India, based on Swami Vivekanand's vision.

Education according to Swami Vivekanand

As per Swami ji education is, "the expression of man's inherent perfection." This suggests that something is already present and just needs to be stated. Knowledge, he claims, is inherent in man and cannot be learned from outside sources. Knowledge, like sparks on a flint, is potentially present in the human mind. The friction that ignites the fire of knowledge is caused by the stimulus of education. And it refers to a person's potential, which is the range of abilities and talents a person is born with, whether known or unknown. The term 'potential' refers to the prospect of reawakening something that has been dormant for a long time (Prabhananda, 2003). The word 'perfect' connotes completion or completion of a task. We can see that every act associated with learning, training, and so on is part of a process that leads to a goal. Swami Vivekanand also defines education as the "life-building, man-making, character-making integration of ideas," rather than a certain "quantity of material that is poured into your brain and runs amok there, undigested for the rest of your life."

Swami Vivekanand's view of women's education is as follows

According to Swami Vivekanand, education for women is also important. He shows how women's illiteracy restrains social progress. "There is little hope for the well-being of the world unless the status of women improves," he said. "It is impossible for a bird to fly with just one wing." "Educate your wife first, then leave them alone. They will tell you what reforms are needed." "The right to interfere is only to provide education." Women need to be empowered to solve their problems in their own way. This is something no one can or should not do for them and our Indian women can do it better than anyone else in the world. Swami Vivekanand's golden statement demonstrates the importance of women's literacy. It will be difficult to control and accelerate the growth of the country until the gap between male and female literacy rates closes. Swami Vivekanand has found that proper education is essential, as women in our country

can face their own difficulties if they receive it. He believed that women should take lessons that emphasized skill development and suggested introducing areas such as sewing, nursing and cooking in particular. His goals and interests then shift to professional skills and education, whose dynamics change with time, technology, and people's lifestyles. Swami Vivekanand believes that the attitudes of Indian men and Western men are very different. They believe that women were born to please Indian men. A true Shakti worshiper is one who recognizes God as the omnipresent power of the universe and sees women as a manifestation of that power. An American man looks at his wife this way and does his best. It explains why they are so wealthy, educated, free and active. Men and women are the two cogs of society. If either of the two fails, the civilization cannot move forward. For this reason, women need the same level of education as men.

Provisions for education in Constitution of India

Article 21-A of the Constitution of India provides free compulsory education for all children aged 6 to 14 as a basic right exercised in the manner required by the state. All children are entitled to a satisfactory and equitable quality full-time primary education in a formal school that meets certain basic norms and standards under the Free Compulsory Education (RTE) Act of 2009. Article 21-A. Article 15 of the Constitution of India prohibits discrimination by gender (Article 15 (1) (3) of the Constitution of India). Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: Everyone has the right to education. Education must be free, at least at the beginner and elementary levels. All students need primary education. Technology and vocational education need to be accessible to everyone, and higher education needs to be open to everyone on the basis of benefits.

After India's independence in 1947, the University Education Commission (1948-49) was established to make suggestions for improving the quality of education. they recommended, " Women's present education is entirely irrelevant to the life they have to lead. It is not only waste but often disability." it further said," The modern educated Indian women is neither happy nor contented nor socially useful. She is a misfit in life.she is highly suppressed and needs opportunities for self expression. The new education must provide the opportunity." In 1958, the government at the time appointed a National Committee on Women Education and most of its recommendations were accepted. The point of their recommendation was to put women's education on par with boys' education.

Shortly thereafter, a committee was formed to address

gender equality in education. For example, the Committee for Distinguishing Boys and Girls Curriculums (1959) recommended a curriculum that is equal and common at various stages of learning. Further efforts were made to expand the education system, and the Kothari commission was established in 1964, mainly dealing with women's education and recommending the government to formulate national policies. This happened in 1968 and the emphasis was on women's education.

Current Situation of Girls' Education in India

In independent India, education has become particularly important and has been occasionally supported through government policies and programs. Therefore, the education system has expanded rapidly in recent years. However, many women remain in the dark, and the gender gap in literacy rates remains terrifying due to their presence. The facts and numbers below highlight the seriousness of the harsh reality of the problem and show that we are facing a very difficult challenge.

Table 1: Literacy rates in India (1951-2011)

Year	Persons	Males	Females	Male Female Gap in Literacy rate
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	64.84	75.26	53.67	21.59
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68

Source: Census of India (*The literacy rate in 1951 targets the population aged 5 and over.) According to the 2011 Census, the "literacy rate" is "people aged 7 and over who can read and write in any language". The literacy rate in India according to this standard is about 74%. Table 1 shows the percentage of Indian men and women who can read and write. The discrepancy increased from 18.30% in 1951 to 25.05% in 1961 and 26.62%. 1981. Since 1991, the gap has steadily narrowed as government policy began to increase the literacy rate of women. By 2011/12, the literacy gap between men and women had widened to 16.68. According to the 2011 census report, the literacy rate for women is 65.46%, well below the national average of 74.04%. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate for women was 65.46%, while that for men was 82.14%, indicating a gender imbalance in education. Since independence, women's literacy rates have improved dramatically, but the gap between men's and women's literacy rates is slowly narrowing.

Table 2: Ranking of States and Union Territories by Female literacy rate: 2011

Rank	India/state/Union Territory#	Female Literacy rate
1	Kerala	91.98
2	Mizoram	89.40
3	Lakshadweep#	88.25
4	Tripura	83.15
5	Goa	81.84
6	Andaman & Nicobar Island#	81.84
7	Chandigarh#	81.38
8	Puducherry #	81.22
9	NCT of Delhi#	80.93
10	Daman & Diu#	79.59
11	Nagaland	76.69

12	Himachal Pradesh	76.60
13	Sikkim	76.43
14	Maharashtra	75.48
15	TamilNadu	73.86
16	Meghalaya	73.78
17	Manipur	73.17
18	Punjab	71.34
19	West Bengal	71.16
20	Gujarat	70.73
21	Uttarakhand	70.70
22	Karnataka	68.13
23	Assam	67.27
24	Haryana	66.77
25	Dadra& Nagar Haveli#	65.93
26	Orissa	64.36
27	Chhattisgarh	60.59
28	Madhya Pradesh	60.02
29	Andhra Pradesh	59.74
30	Arunachal Pradesh	59.57
31	Uttar Pradesh	59.26
32	Jammu &Kashmir	58.01
33	Jharkhand	56.21
34	Bihar	53.33
35	Rajasthan	52.66
	All India	65.46%

Table 2 shows the ranking of states and union territories by female literacy rate in 2011. In the 2011 census, women's literacy rate averaged 65.46% across India, with the highest literacy rate in Kerala at 91.98% and the lowest literacy rate in Rajasthan at 52.66% in the 2011 census. Literacy is the main reason for scholars to improve the social and economic status of women in Kerala.

Table 3: Gender wise Literacy rate in Rural- urban areas

India	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
2001	58.74	70.70	46.13	79.92	86.27	72.86	64.84	75.26	53.67
2011	67.77	77.15	57.93	84.11	88.76	79.11	74.04	82.14	65.46

Source: Census of India 2001 & 2011 [2]

Table 3 compares the gender literacy rates of rural and urban areas in 2001 and 2011. The literacy rate increased from 64.84% in 2001 to 74.04% in 2011, an increase of 9.21%. The literacy rate for women was 53.67% in 2001, but rose to 65.46% in 2011. By comparison, the literacy rate for men increased from 75.26% to 82.14%. The data show that the increase in literacy rates for women in both rural and urban areas is greater than for men in the decade 2001-2011, and that women have grown steadily over the last decade. The gender gap in the literacy rate narrowed from 24.57 in 2001 to 19.22 in 2011 in rural areas and from 13.41 in 2001 to 9.65 in urban areas. The difference in literacy rates between urban and rural areas also narrowed from 21.18 percent in 2001 to 16.34 percent in 2011.

Factors that contribute to the low literacy rate of women

Despite the various plans and policies formulated and implemented by the Government of India. There is still a gap in the literacy rates of men and women in our country, especially to eliminate the illiteracy of women.

In this regard the causes of low literacy rates for Indian women are identified and listed below.

- Gender prejudice in the curriculum (female characters are described as weak and helpless)

- Social discrimination and economic exploitation.
- Employing girls at home.
- The school enrolment rate of girls is low.
- Low retention and high dropout rates.
- Deprived of access to information and alienated from the decision-making process.
- Lack of female teachers at school.
- Remote schools, etc.
- Inadequate school facilities (sanitary facilities, etc.).
- Due to the rapid population growth, girls have been ignored and boys' education has become more important.
- Women are considered a burden once they get married and do not contribute to economic and social development.

Current policies

Before and after independence, India has taken positive steps towards women's status and education. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002 was a milestone for the growth of education, especially for women. According to this, primary education is a basic right of children between the ages of 6 and 14. The government has promised to provide this training free of charge and mandate it for this age group. This company is widely known as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

Since then, the SSA has come up with many schemes for inclusive as well as exclusive growth of Indian education as a whole, including schemes to help foster the growth of female education. The major schemes are the following:

- MahilaSamakhya Programme:** This programme was launched in 1988 as a result of the New Education Policy (1968). It was created for the empowerment of women from rural areas especially socially and economically marginalized groups. When the SSA was formed, it initially set up a committee to look into this programme, how it was working and recommends new changes that could be made.

- **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBV):** This scheme was launched in July, 2004, to provide education to girls at primary level. It is primarily targeted at underprivileged rural areas where women's literacy levels are very low. Established schools are 100% reserved: 75% for younger classes and 25% for BPL women (below the poverty line).
- **National Primary Education Program for Girls (NPEGEL):** This program was launched in July 2003. It was an incentive for SSA to reach girls that other programs could not reach. The SSA called for "the most difficult girl to reach." This program covers 24 states in India. The "Model School" was established as part of NPEGEL to provide better opportunities for girls. The first step in educating and empowering women is to achieve the desired literacy rate. At the same time, noteworthy considerations must be made regarding the teaching of the development of certain professional skills visualized by Swami Vivekanand.

Recommendations

Some Recommendations for Encouraging and Promoting Women's Education in India:

- Engage women's groups, such as self-help groups, to promote women's literacy rates.
- Provide free compulsory education for all girls up to the age of 20.
- Establishment of larger number of elementary schools.
- Change in attitudes of parents and society.
- Elimination gender bias in the school curriculum.

Conclusion

Swami Vivekanand correctly pointed out that the country can never move forward unless Indian women secure a good place in the country. Swami ji said that national progress depends on the treatment of women and it is impossible to regain the lost pride and honour of India without trying to improve women. In his opinion, there is no chance of world well-being unless the situation for women improves. This is one of the main concerns of the Government of India and society in general. This is because educated women now play a very important role in the country's overall development and progress. India is currently optimistic about women's education. After independence, women's education became particularly important and was occasionally supported by government policies and programs. Planners and policy makers recognize that education helps reduce inequality and improve family, social and national status. Despite the various government-created committees and plans and programs to promote women's education, there is still a gender gap in literacy rates. There is no doubt that this gender gap is gradually narrowing, but according to data from the 2011 Census of India, the illiterate rate for women is still 35%. With this in mind, action plans need to be developed and implemented in the future to achieve the goals of maximizing women's literacy rates and promoting national development. Swami Vivekanand's vision for women's education and today's mission to close the gender gap in literacy rates both represent one goal: women's progress, and thus national progress....." Many paths, one goal"

"Arise, Awake & Stop not still the goal is reached"

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