

Swami Vivekananda's Insights into Political Philosophy and National Rejuvenation: An Impetus to Governance

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Abstract: Though Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) is best identified as a monk and philosopher responsible for introducing Vedanta in the West, a remarkable political insight is hidden in the writings of this genius. The present article aims at explicitly investigating Vivekananda's ideas of political philosophy and the idea of rejuvenation of the country and tries to determine whether these ideas are relevant today in the context of modern governance in India. The present study is based on qualitative and hermeneutic-textual design of research based on primary sources including The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda and secondary publications. The article starts from examining Vivekananda's unique theory of nationalism, then moves to his theory of social power which includes four social classes, analysis of colonial government and the idea of education for man-making. Later, the study showed how these ideas are utilized in practice as part of decentralized governance and social security system, service ethics and modern education policy represented mostly by the National Education Policy 2020.

Keywords: Swami Vivekananda, Political Philosophy, Nationalism, National Rejuvenation, Governance, Man-Making Education, Practical Vedanta, Public Administration, India

INTRODUCTION

Political philosophy has typically not manifested in terms borrowed from Western political thought such as state, sovereignty, social contract, or positive law in Indian philosophy. Instead, it often uses a more indigenous vocabulary such as Dharma, self-realisation, and moral constitution of individuals and the community [1]. Among the major exponents in this tradition is Swami Vivekananda. He neither was a politician nor founded a political party, nor did he write a text, or lead any activity to fight against colonialism. However, his lectures made in India and the West between 1893 and 1902, his letters to disciples, and most importantly, his Bengali essay on Present-Day India gave rise to a coherent description of his theory of the nation, theory of the social power, and conditions of revival of the oppressed [2-3].

The task that this article is attempting to solve consists of two parts. First, what did Vivekananda mean by political authority, social order, and nation as a collective subject compared to the colonial liberal constitution of his contemporaries and to the revolutionary nationalism that followed him? Second, and more importantly, does this philosophy developed using religious and moral vocabulary at the end of the 19th century still works as an idea for the governance of the constitutional, pluralist and modernising Republic of the

21st century? Scholars have recognised Vivekananda as a significant figure of Indian nationalism [2,4], and other nationalists such as Subhas Chandra Bose acknowledged the influence of Vivekananda on their thought [5]. However, an investigation of the applicability of his philosophy is still absent in literature.

The structure of the paper is as follows. The first part of the article reconstructs the conceptual framework of Vivekananda's political system, including his spiritual nationalism, understanding of practical Vedanta, and cyclic theory of social power. This is followed by the description of his idea of national revival, which is based on man-making education, charitable activity, youth mobilization, and empowerment of women and minorities. Finally, the implications of this theory in governance, taking into account decentralisation, welfare, civil service ethics, and educational policy, are considered.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current research employs a qualitative and interpretative method to analyze the political philosophy of Vivekananda, concepts of national revitalization, and the theories of governance. In this section, the author portrays the research method, aims, sources and the method of analysis used in researching and interpreting the primary and secondary materials.

Research Design

The methodology proposed is qualitative and interpretative in nature and has been selected in accordance with the requirements of the analysis of political and philosophical texts. It is noteworthy that the subject matter of the analysis is different ideas as opposed to measurable social facts and phenomena, which gives rise to the use of hermeneutic-textual analysis, which involves detailed reading, contextualization, and comparison of primary texts in tandem with the doctrinal and comparative methods, which presuppose the placing of Vivekananda's ideas in the broader discourse of Indian political philosophy.

Objectives of the Study

This study adheres to four particular objectives, which are:

- To compile the components of Swami Vivekananda's political philosophy stated in his works and speeches
- To examine his thinking on revival of the nation, including the major features of this thinking
- To point out areas of convergence between this political doctrine and reality of governance in India today

Sources of Data

The investigation is based on two types of references. The primary reference includes original writings and speeches of Vivekananda, most of which have been published in the book *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, particularly volumes 2, 3, 4, and 6 [3,6-8]. This again includes the English version of *Bartaman Bharat, Modern India* published in volume 4. The secondary reference consists of established studies of Vivekananda's philosophy of social and political philosophy [2,9-10], including biography and institutional studies [11-12], and research on nationalism, caste, and social thoughts [4,13-15]. Government policies and constitutional documents, particularly National Education Policy 2020 [16] and the Constitution of India [17] also serve as significant references for analyzing current governance.

Method of Analysis

The study analyzed the primary and secondary data using thematic content analysis. Specific conceptual themes were recognized primarily from sources as concepts of nation, service, personality, caste and state power, education, and critique of imperial rule, and later on organized deductively into categories basis the organization of the article into the three broad topics of political thought, national revival, and governance aspects. Comparative perspective was then applied to compare these themes with modern systems of governance.

Scope and Delimitations

The research is restricted to Vivekananda's specific activities related to politics and socialism, it does not include any exploration of his philosophical views, his comparative theology or any contributions made by him in the field of yoga, except for that which relates to his political philosophy and civic ideas on political issues. The work is also limited to the Indian context only, with reference to Western political terminology in places where it helps make clear the unique position of Vivekananda in politico-social ideas.

Limitations of the Study

This research, as a textual-hermeneutic investigation, does not utilize original empirical tools such as surveys or interviews, and its conclusions about the relevance of governance are interpretative, and descriptive rather than causal or statistically proven. In addition, the use of the English translations of Vivekananda's writings in Bengali such as *Bartaman Bharat* adds another layer of interpretation, and the paper has indicated, whenever possible, where such translations could affect the meaning. Finally, since Vivekananda did not produce a systematic political document, reconstructing his 'political philosophy' involves the process of scholarly synthesis.

Review of Literature

The academic literature on Vivekananda's political and social thought includes four major categories. The first category consists of the first studies that consider Vivekananda specifically in the context of political thought, most notably the comparative analysis of Indian political thought conducted by Dalton [2] and Mohapatra's [9] study of Vivekananda's political philosophy. These studies prove that, despite being a monk, Vivekananda had a recognizable ensemble of ideas about freedom, power, political community, and national revival.

The second category includes a huge amount of literature on Vivekananda and nationalism. Modern scientific studies depict Vivekananda as one of the key personalities in the formation of Indian nationalist thought [4], while more general studies of the intellectual history show the spiritual, moral, and civilizational background of Vivekananda's nationalism [2,10]. A common statement in these studies suggests that Vivekananda tried to dissociate his mission from party politics and revolutionary activities and preferred to achieve social changes through education, as well as the recovery of self-confidence [2,9].

The third, historically important, category of literature reveals the connection between Vivekananda's religious nationalism and the development of Hindu nationalist discourse in India. This aspect is studied in Sharma's intellectual history (2013), which identifies

Vivekananda's "restatement of religion" as part of the broader tradition of religious-based Indian nationalism. This aspect should be interpreted with caution as it states that Vivekananda's religious nationalism should not be seen as ideologically neutral, while at the same time pointing out that Vivekananda's religious thought is different from the interpretation made by those people who put a more simplistic and exclusive meaning in Vivekananda's legacy.

The fourth aspect of literature related to the topic of governance of this article is the study of Vivekananda's pedagogical thought. Vivekananda believed that the main aim of education should not be merely the accumulation of knowledge, rather, education should focus on the formation of character and self-sufficiency [6,8]. These ideas resemble the assumptions made in the National Education Policy 2020 that seeks for holistic and multidimensional development of people, apart from the formation of ethical values and values that are contrary to rote learning [16]. In the frame of this article, there is a review of all four aspects of Vivekananda's thought and come up with a logical and consistent conclusion.

Swami Vivekananda's Political Philosophy: Conceptual Foundations

Vivekananda did not formulate any systematic political theory in the usual sense when it comes to defining a political ideology that can be presented as a conventionally developed political philosophy known as political theory, but nonetheless it can be said that his writings include a consistent framework of ideas about nationhood, social power, human dignity, education and collective regeneration. This particular section tries to reconstruct key ideas of his political thought.

The Nation as a Spiritual and Moral Entity

In his theory of nationhood, Vivekananda diverges considerably from the conventional nineteenth-century European model, in which notions of nation are generally defined through shared ethnicity, language, territory, or the sovereign state apparatus. Vivekananda maintains that the Indian nation draws its strength from the distinctive features of Indian civilization in terms of religion, philosophy, and morality, rather than military and economic power. For him, the revival of national life in India requires the revival of belief in spiritual heritage, as it is impossible for people who have lost faith in their civilization to be regenerated just by external political institutions [2,4,10]. This is not to suggest that Vivekananda was unconcerned about India's economic and political domination. Rather, he connects national revival with restoration of self-respect and the moral and educational development of the masses [2,8].

This spiritual view of nationhood has a universal aspect as well. Scholars note that Vivekananda's nationalism is not just a form of political nationalism, as his idea of the revival of India is closely related to its contribution to humanity and expressed in spiritual and moral terms [2,4].

Practical Vedanta and the Political Self

The second core element of Vivekananda's political philosophy is the idea of Practical Vedanta, which refers to the application of the Upanishadic idea of the divinity inherent in all beings in relation with practical, daily problems in social life and politics. In Vivekananda's interpretation of Vedanta, the teaching becomes a basis for the right of people to dignity and social responsibility: the divine self is found in every person, hence there is a moral difficulty in reconciling the observations of the real world with the reality of the spiritual [13,6].

The Cyclical Theory of Social Power

Possibly the most peculiar and least conventionally 'religious' aspect of Vivekananda's political theory is his cyclical view of social power, formulated in Bartaman Bharat (Modern India). In a historical survey, Vivekananda holds that political and social supremacy passes through four stages corresponding to the four social castes: the priest String phase, the warrior caste participation phase, the merchant phase, and finally a stage in which the working caste takes command of the situation [2-3]. Within the framework of this theory he interprets social transformations and promotes a phase when the working class shall become socially dominant [3].

Intriguingly, Vivekananda connects dawning superiority of working class with revolutionary politics of his time, which he generally describes as socialism, anarchism, and nihilism, calling these movements important signals of the beginning of social transformation [3]. However, he was not in favor of violent class insurrection, on the contrary, his message is all about educating people, forming their character, helping others, and lifting them up [2,9]. Debate persists about the meaning of his social and caste theory and its comparison with more recent theories of caste discrimination based on rights and structural solutions to caste issues [13-15].

Critique of Colonial Governance and Western Political Models

With respect to Vivekananda's views, one notes that he does not articulate a categorical criticism of British colonial rule. In fact, Vivekananda's critique of colonialism was not articulated through a theoretical discussion of the concept of constitutional rights, but rather through a counter-argument that can be seen as a

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defense of Indian civilization. He did not believe that Western systems of politics and economy were the only indicators of civilization and emphasized the role of Indian philosophy and spirituality for the progress of civilization [2,4]. At the same time, he was not eager to link his endeavors to the political activities of any political organization and was more inclined towards creating awareness among people through education and social service. It was in this regard that he founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897 [11-12].

Vivekananda's Original Contribution to Political Thought

The major contribution of Vivekananda in the field of political philosophy is the fact that he did not make a distinction between political philosophy and moral and spiritual composition of a particular individual. In the situation of a colonial setting where constitutional and institutional concepts became vitally important in political discussions, he offered a native vocabulary of national strength built on the Indian traditions and moral confidence, education, and social renewal [2,4]. Thus, he contributed to the intellectual decolonisation of political identity by putting the foundations of vindicated power and dignity in Indian philosophy and not in colonial ideas [8,10].

Vivekananda's cycle theory of power demonstrates originality of his political thinking. He expressed in *Bartaman Bharat* the idea of the emergence of working class as well as working people explaining social evolution according to the original framework of his own rather than adapting it to the classical class approach [3]. The historical and moral meaning of his statement is still not clear, however, it is an essential part of his attempt to explain social power through Indian ideas and concepts instead of colonial doctrines [2,9].

Vivekananda's approach to religion and civic duty is just as remarkable. Instead of regarding renunciation as a completely private pursuit he combined it with spiritual discipline and social activism that would later become institutionalised through Ramakrishna Math and Mission [11-12]. Thus, this concept is a synthesis of spirituality and serving society and is one of the most significant contributions to modern Indian political and social thought [2].

National Rejuvenation in Vivekananda's Thought

The concept of national revival takes paramount importance in the social and political ideology of Vivekananda, as he viewed the transformation of individuals and societies as vital to the revival of India. This part discusses the key tools of revival mentioned by him in his writings, which include education, service, youth participation, social empowerment, and national integration.

Man-Making Education as the Foundation of Rejuvenation

Although Vivekananda's political philosophy examines the fundamental causes of national degeneration, in its theory of national regeneration, education is regarded as the primary remedy. The desired education is described as 'man-making' and 'character-building' revealing the importance of ideas, strength, self-confidence, wholeness which means being more than merely accumulating information [6,8]. His famous formula states that education is the process of manifestation of perfection already present in the individual, while the wider analysis of education in colonial India underlines the necessity of education in producing independent and socially responsible individuals [3,8].

This philosophy of education has three aspects directly related to national regeneration. The first point made by Vivekananda is that education should reach the masses as national development depends on the dissemination of knowledge from privileged groups [3]. The second point is that Vivekananda reiterated the importance of women's education and development linking national advancement to their access to education [7]. The last point is the necessity of physical and mental strength as a prerequisite for spiritual and civic development with the famous contrast introduced by him between rigorous physical education and text-based religious knowledge used to show the importance of strength and confidence [8].

Renunciation and Service as a Civic Ethic

The ethical lexicon for the national life as defined by Vivekananda revolves around the two themes of renunciation (*tyaga*) and service (*seva*). He has played a vital role in converting these ideals from their typical monastic interpretation into a structured plan for the actual practice of social work [11-12]. The foundation of the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897 has institutionalised this ideology through efforts in various fields like relief, education, health care, and welfare. This is especially significant in view of the fact that it shows how the concept of altruistic service can be institutionalised and channelled towards public needs rather than being directed towards the governmental machinery of the state.

Youth as the Primary Agency of National Regeneration

Vivekananda frequently described young people using strength, fearlessness, self-confidence, moral character, and service, which made the young an essential element of his national regeneration idea [8]. This insistence has now resulted in legal formalization in India: 12 January, when Vivekananda was born, has officially been declared National Youth Day in India by the Indian Government

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since 1985 [18]. Subhas Chandra Bose mentioned in his autobiography that reading the works by Vivekananda during his youth gave him considerable intellectual breakthrough [5]. The described reception shows the link between Vivekananda's words about moral character and the later development of Indian nationalism and youth philosophy.

Empowerment of Women and of the Historically Subordinated

According to Vivekananda, national rejuvenation could not occur until a significant part of society was excluded from education, equality, and opportunities. In Vivekananda's works, there is a constant connection between the theme of national restoration and the idea of the social and educational awakening of those at the bottom of social stratification [3,15]. This belief of Vivekananda together with his devotion to women's education marks his national revival program as aimed at broader consequences for national strength, although his later critics have questioned the effectiveness of his suggestions about caste inequality [13-14].

Unity in Diversity as a National Resource

The last aspect discussed above in Vivekananda's rejuvenation programme is his effort to conceptualise national unity without losing the diversity of the country. According to him, Indian national identity is constituted by a shared civilisational heritage along with the diversity of Indian culture, which is the historical trait of India [4,6]. Despite the fact that this understanding is radically different from the legal definitions of constitutional pluralism that came about after independence, it demonstrates an important example in the history of attempts of balancing national unity with cultural plurality.

From Philosophy to Praxis: An Impetus to Governance

This part of the study discusses ways in which Vivekananda's ideas about politics and national regeneration can be thought of as a source of inspiration for modern government processes. As stated in the argument, the relationship is not strictly causal. The article does not claim that actual government measures were developed on the basis of Vivekananda's philosophy, nor does it urge a causal link to be established in the government-related ideas and practices of the 19th-20th centuries. It is rather implied that his works are of significance today and can be used to provide current strategies with the useful vocabulary.

Ethical Foundations for Public Administration

For a long time, public administration theory has struggled to find an answer to the question of what governs the discretionary power exercised by officials

beyond the limits of formal law and procedures. Vivekananda's notion of character, service, and dignity of human beings presents a normative framework of civil service ethics. His philosophy of Practical Vedanta indicates that spiritual dignity is inherent in every person, serving as an ethical equivalence to equality in public administration but remaining separate from the legal guarantees of equality provided by modern constitutions [9,13].

Decentralisation and Grassroots Self-Reliance

The emphasis of Vivekananda on the moral and educational awakening of common people and his belief that national strength should be developed through self-respect and self-reliance converge with the subsequent constitutional commitment of India to decentralized governance at the normative level. The Constitution mandates the government to organize village panchayats and lays the framework for such institutions through Part IX [16]. Although Vivekananda did not propose a Panchayati Raj plan, the relation brought in here can be interpreted as his stress on mass revitalization can be associated with decentralized governance.

Education Policy and the National Education Policy 2020

The modern implications of Vivekananda's ideology can be found in education. His idea of creating a man through education means education that focuses on moral character, independence, strength, and values as well as the development of a virtuous individual [3,6,8]. Just like Vivekananda, the National Educational Policy of 2020 focuses on all-round and interdisciplinary development, morality, ethical and constitutional values, and moving away from rote learning [16]. The connection should be understood as conceptual resonance rather than the evidence of implementing Vivekananda's educational philosophy.

Inclusive Welfare Administration and the Antyodaya Principle

The emphasis placed by Vivekananda on the importance of social and educational upliftment of marginalized groups for the rejuvenation of the country provides a philosophical basis, although in a general sense and not regarding its specific methods, for subsequent welfare approaches that seek to prioritize the disadvantaged groups. In Bartaman Bharat and other related writings, Vivekananda makes a connection between the masses' condition and the strength or weakness of the nation on repeated occasions [3]. From this point in perspective, it can be understood that his views are an indication of a bigger issue connected to the business of development administration, namely, that established institutions need actors who have sufficient economic, social, and educational means to perform their duties.

Leadership, Character, and Institutional Culture

Vivekananda's stress on courage, self-confidence, character, and discipline is relevant in many public leadership and public education contexts, apart from specific policy areas. The themes remain part of the celebrations on National Youth Day, where Vivekananda's values are introduced as a source of motivation for youth [18]. The applicability of his ideas to civil service is best understood in the context of normative application of his ideology, rather than anything resembling an official doctrine.

Legacy: Shaping the Architects of Modern India

The impact of Vivekananda upon subsequent nationalist leaders is a significant piece of historical evidence for the acceptance of his ideas. Subhash Chandra Bose notes in his autobiography that he came across the writings of Vivekananda when he was around fifteen, and that the experience left a significant mark in his world view and personal belief systems [5]. This evidence of the existence of a particular impact of Vivekananda can be used in support of a thesis about the circulation of his ideas beyond the limits of explicitly religious institutions and the relevance of his ideas for the education of the future national leaders. However, this evidence does not imply that there exists a direct institutional legacy that can be traced in all aspects of the administrative structure of independent India. The studies in mind prove that the ideas of Vivekananda became an essential part of the basic intellectual background that contributed to the emergence of modern India [2].

Synthesis: A Foundational Normative Grammar for Governance

All these governance connections aforementioned imply that Vivekananda's philosophy contains a normative lexicon built around service, morality, independence, public enlightenment, and universal advancement, which can be applied in conjunction with contemporary governance issues. The primary continuity in this regard manifests across educational and youth discussions. Nevertheless, the connections with decentralization, welfare development, and civil service values involve interpretations of Vivekananda's theories but do not produce assertions of direct institutional impact [16,18].

Discussion: The Enduring Significance of Vivekananda's Political Vision

In summary, we can conclude that the significance of Swami Vivekananda to Indian political and social philosophy is multidimensional. He has diagnosed interdependencies behind the weakness of the nation, namely disregarding people, providing limited education, and losing self-confidence [2-3,8]. Additionally, he has provided ethical vocabulary informing modern education

and youth agenda through emphasis on service and character, strength and dignity of man [16,18]. Hence, governance relevance argued for in this paper can be seen as grounded interpretation rather than as assertion of any direct policy derivation.

However, for the purpose of academic fairness, we should stress that the approach of Swami Vivekananda to the issue of social change has been moral, educational and service-oriented, rather than legalized construction of operation plan. This is, therefore, a clear distinction from Ambedkar's approach of advocating for rights, legal safes, and structural changes in tackling the caste system [19]. Therefore, contemporary literature sees the ideation of Vivekananda on caste as a mixed heritage whereby he promotes serious criticism of untouchability and degradation but fails to resolve the issue of institutional restructuring [13-15]. Instead of arranging both approaches into absolute opposition or simple complementarity, the study treat them as different normative and institutional approaches whereby their differences reveal pros and cons of governance philosophy based on morality and education.

Thus, it is possible to argue that the strongest cases for relevance of Swami Vivekananda's ideas for governance concerns the ethical issues occurring in the context of his concepts, namely what character to possess when exercising authority by the government, how to define service to the less privileged and how education should function (the issues that will be discussed in further research).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this work has been to analyze and evaluate the significance of Swami Vivekananda's political philosophy and idea of national regeneration drawing on primary texts. The study states that Swami Vivekananda introduced a new way of thinking in Indian political theory by formulating a spiritual/civilizational theory of the nation which gave the Indian nationalism an indigenous source of collective self-respect as well as a cyclic concept of power, which predicted the rise of the political power of working class. Along with this, he provided a comprehensive theory of national resurgence connected with man-making education, unselfish service, empowerment of youth, and an idea of improving women and suppressed castes.

The author further states that this theory is relevant for contemporary Indian governance especially as far as education and youth policy are concerned [16,18] since it emphasizes such elements of education as holistic development of the students, character development, moral values, and responsibility. Furthermore, Bose's confession about the influence of Vivekananda provides evidence about the effects of Vivekananda's ideas on the representatives of nationalist movement [5]. In a broader

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sense, it can be stated that the contribution of Swami Vivekananda's ideas to the analysis of governance lies in the ethical links between authority and service, strength of the nation and education, leadership and character, which makes it possible to consider these concepts normative now. In addition, this work outlines some directions for future research which could involve comparative analysis of the ideas of Vivekananda, Gandhi, Tagore, and Ambedkar and empirical study of how Vivekananda's ideas are interpreted in modern policy.

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