

Original Article

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CHICAGO SPEECH AND ITS EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines Swami Vivekananda's landmark 1893 speech at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago as the conceptual foundation for his educational philosophy. While the speech is often analyzed through a theological lens, this study argues that its core tenets universal brotherhood, the inherent divinity of the soul, and the rejection of sectarianism formed the blueprint for what Vivekananda termed "Man-making education. The present researcher wants to investigate the educational implications of Chicago lecture of Swami Vivekananda. To fulfill this intention the present researcher has taken this topic: "Swami Vivekananda's Chicago speech and its educational implications".

Keywords: Swami Vivekananda, Chicago Address, Delor's Commission, Hinduism, Value Education, Man-Making Education, Universal Brotherhood

INTRODUCTION

On September 11, 1893, Swami Vivekananda introduced the East's spiritual heritage to the West. His opening appeal to universal kinship signaled a departure from the dogmatic, exclusionary education systems of the 19th century. Vivekananda's vision was not merely to reform religion, but to reform the human being through a holistic system of learning. This paper explores how the Chicago Address serves as the philosophical catalyst for an education system focused on character, strength, and the manifestation of inner perfection.

[Bandyopadhyay et al. \(2012\)](#), discuss about aspects of Swamiji as a pioneer of Post-Colonial thoughts, particularly in the field of education organized by UNESCO, popularly known as Delor's Commission Report.

According to [Barman \(2016\)](#) study, Swami Vivekananda viewed education as a "man-making" process aimed at revealing inherent perfection, emphasizing character building, mental strength, and intellectual expansion. His philosophy integrated religion as the core pursuit of universal truth, stressed moral development through self-control, promoted humanism and social service, advocated for the education of women and the masses, and sought to synthesize Western science with Indian spirituality.

According to [Behera \(2018\)](#) study, Swami Vivekananda's "Man-Making" education defines education as the manifestation of divine perfection already in man. The study highlights that the teacher serves as a pivotal facilitator and guide with a versatile and virtuous character to effectively mold students.

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According to Digambarrao (2014) article in the *Conflux Journal of Education*, Swami Vivekananda's concept of "Man-Making" education involves the harmonious development of the body, mind, and soul. This educational philosophy emphasizes character formation, self-reliance, and nation-building over simply accumulating information.

Nair and Hardikar (2021) study examines the alignment between Mahatma Gandhi's "Nai Talim" and modern Life Skills Education (LSE), arguing that Gandhi's emphasis on developing the "3 Hs" (Head, Heart, and Hand) aligns with core life skills such as critical thinking, empathy, and self-reliance. The study concludes that integrating Gandhian principles into modern curricula is essential for creating socially responsible individuals. Also, discuss Delor's report and Gandhi's educational thought.

According to Sarkar (2015) article, Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of education is presented as a solution to India's social and moral issues, advocating for a "man-making" ideal that defines education as the manifestation of inherent perfection within individuals, balancing Western science with Eastern spirituality for national development and character building. The article criticizes modern education's overemphasis on scientific learning at the expense of moral values and emphasizes the teacher's role as a guide fostering self-reliance and universal brotherhood.

Tripathi et al. (2015), according to the study in the *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach & Studies*, Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of education, centered on the manifestation of perfection and character building, remains relevant for addressing modern life's challenges and fostering self-reliance and national development. The study emphasizes that "real education" should prepare individuals for the struggle of existence by strengthening the intellect and cultivating character rather than merely accumulating information.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To explore the interdisciplinary approach of education from Chicago address.
- 2) To discover the spirit of peaceful coexistence from the historical speech.
- 3) To find out the source of national and international brotherhood from that discourse.
- 4) To show the four pillars theory of education as the learning output of Chicago address.
- 5) To elicit the basis for seeds of peace education and value education of present era.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- RQ1. How Chicago address be considered as the inspiration as inter disciplinary approach of education?
- RQ2. What message of Chicago address influenced or promoted the spirit of the peaceful coexistence?
- RQ3. How fundamental duties of Indian constitution are influenced or inspired by the discourse of Chicago address?
- RQ4. How Delor's commission report on education may be considered as the learning output of Chicago address?
- RQ5. How is peaceful education and value education of present curriculum may be treated as a by product of that historical discourse?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Socio-cultural interpretation of Chicago lectures will be established educational implication of the historical lectures series of Swami Vivekananda will be drawn out. Inter disciplinary approach in education will be elevated by the inspiration of this study. Harmony of global human society and the spirit of peaceful co-existence will be actualized in vain.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- 1) Swami Vivekananda is a paragon of multi personality. His thought in is different area and different context. But here the present research only tries to explore the ideas of Swami Vivekananda towards education.
- 2) Swami Vivekananda delivered many lecture in India and also out of India in the context of education. Researcher decided to explore only from Chicago lecture series.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This is a historical and qualitative research. Researchers have enlisted the help of primary and secondary sources of data in this research study. The primary source is content analysis of Chicago lecture of Swami Vivekananda. The secondary source is views on Chicago lecture of eminent authors and the help of some tertiary sources has been taken accordingly.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

Researcher will go through complete work of Swami Vivekananda and reference books intensively and after memoing and coding data will be collected.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Research question wise analysis and interpretation:-

RQ1. How Chicago address be considered as the inspiration as interdisciplinary approach of education?

- 1) As the different stream having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different parts which men take through different tendencies, various through they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee (Response to welcome, 11 September 1893).
- 2) The sacred Vedas teach that our true identity is the spirit, not the physical body. While the body is subject to decay and death, the soul is eternal and will continue to exist long after the physical form has perished. This soul did not begin with this life; it has a past that predates its current embodiment (Paper on Hinduism, 19 September 1893).
- 3) The Vedas do not portray the universe as a bleak, inescapable prison of harsh laws or an endless cycle of cause and effect. Instead, they reveal that at the core of all existence permeating every atom and force is a supreme being. It is by this Divine authority that the elements function: the wind blows, fire provides heat and rain falls from the clouds, and life follows its cycle unto death (Paper on Hinduism, 19 September 1893).
- 4) Hinduism and Buddhism are so deeply interconnected that neither can truly thrive without the other. History has proven that a separation between them is detrimental; the Buddhist path requires the intellectual rigour and philosophical foundation provided by the Brahmins, while the Brahmin path requires the boundless compassion and "heart" of the Buddhist (Buddhism: The fulfilment of Hinduism 26th September, 1893).

Learning output:

- 1) Education is not a collection of isolated fields. Just as rivers reach their full potential only when they merge into the ocean, individual academic subjects achieve perfection only when they collaborate and flow together into a unified body of wisdom.
 - 2) A human being is more than just a physical body or a mind; our true essence is the eternal soul. To understand this requires deep realization. Similarly, branches of knowledge like science, arts, and commerce must transcend their narrow boundaries and blend together to reach their highest form.
 - 3) Society does not thrive on science or commerce alone, but through their collective contribution. Much like the natural elements clouds, fire, and air must work in harmony to sustain the world, different professional fields must cooperate to meet the complex needs of humanity.
 - 4) A single seed cannot grow into a healthy plant with only light, or only water, or only air; it requires all three elements simultaneously. In the same way, a person's overall development cannot be achieved through one subject alone; it requires the combined nutrients of diverse knowledge
 - 5) Just as Hinduism and Buddhism are not replacements for one another but essential partners, academic disciplines like history and chemistry are not substitutes for each other. Every field of study is interdependent and acts as a vital collaborator in the pursuit of truth.
- RQ2. What message of Chicago address, influenced your promoted the spirit of the peaceful co-existence?
- 1) Hinduism and Buddhism are inseparable; one cannot truly exist without the other. History has demonstrated that the Buddhist path lacks stability without the intellectual foundation and philosophy of the Brahmin, while the Brahmin tradition becomes hollow without the compassion and heart of the Buddhist (Buddhism: The fulfilment of Hinduism 26th September, 1893).
 - 2) The goal of religion is not for a Christian to convert to Hinduism or Buddhism, nor for a Hindu or Buddhist to become a Christian. Instead, each person should absorb the best qualities and spirit of other faiths while maintaining their own unique identity. One should evolve according to their own nature and traditions, using the wisdom of others as nourishment for their own personal spiritual development (Address at the final session 27th September, 1893).
 - 3) The Hindu preached peace and love as a doctrine which would yet bring all mankind into harmony (Swami Vivekananda in Chicago new findings pp. 93).
 - 4) He spoke at the final session on September 27 in his Landmark words—Help and not Fight, Assimilation and not Destruction, Harmony and Peace and not Dissension (Swami Vivekananda in Chicago new findings pp. 100).

Learning output:

- 1) It is mentioned in the Gita that god is one and the same. There is no conflict between people of different religions. We are all sons of God.
- 2) Hinduism does not accept any caste distinction high and low. Since everyone is a child of God, we are all children of the one world mother so we have a duty to co-exist peacefully together.
- 3) To maintaining world peace no Hindu needs to be a Christian, No Christian needs to be a Hindu or Buddha. Peace and world brother hood will be maintained only if they follow the religion that they really follow. Because the method is religiously different but the target is the same.
- 4) In Swamiji's speech, he wanted to say that I want peace not war. His opinion is not hate but real humanity by increasing love.

RQ3. How fundamental duties of Indian Constitution are influenced or inspired by the discourse address?

- 1) I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal tolerance, but we accept all religion as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has shelter the persecuted and the refuses of all religions and all nations of the earth.
- 2) "Children of Immortal Bliss" – what a sweet and fulfilling name! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name—heirs of immortal bliss—yea, The Hindu refuse to call you sinners. We are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. We divinities are on earth—sinners! It is a sin to call a man a 'show'.
- 3) Some of Buddha's Brahmin disciples wanted to translate his teaching into Sanskrit, but he distinctly told them, 'I am for the poor, for the people: let me speak in the tongue of the people' and so to this day the great bulk of his teachings are in the vernacular of that in India.
- 4) With reference to that, Rev. Borrow also said, "When Vivekananda addressed the audience as 'sisters and brothers of America', there arose a peal of applause that lasted for several minutes" (Swami Vivekananda in Chicago new findings, pp. 89).
- 5) On the subject of "Hindu philosophy". He discussed the various religious beliefs and superstitions, giving many illustrations of their causes and effects. But the principle of all religions, they declare, is the same and means that the state of the soul is unconditional and independent. It does not require any internal force for its existence. "We are all aiming for the same thing, all travelling in the same direction, all going to the same place." (Swami Vivekananda in Chicago: new findings, pp. 144).

Learning output:

- 1) Hinduism and India are tolerant of other religions. And inspired by the feeling of world brotherhood. This tradition of India is acceptable to all religions and countries.
- 2) People of every religion should keep in mind that 'hate the sin, not the sinner'. Hinduism believes that we are all children of God and everyone has infinite potentiality.
- 3) The educated people of the country have such acceptance, but the uneducated cannot be left out. Society should bring the light of education to the uneducated and give them awareness.
- 4) Addressing the American people in Chicago, Vivekananda said, 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' and everyone was happy to clap for a few minutes. This proves that world brotherhood is acceptable to all. Hinduism, or Indian philosophy, which considers every human being to be a child of God, believes that the goals of all religions are one: to attend to God through sincere holiness and peace.
- 5) When we can give up our small self, then we will find ourselves, who is greater than the small self and who is for the society, for the country, and for the world.

RQ 4. How Delor's commission report on education may be considered as the learning output of Chicago address?

- 1) Vedas: no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different people at different times. Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so it is with the laws that govern the spiritual world (Paper on Hinduism 19th September, 1893).
- 2) I am not speaking English. It is not my mother tongue; in fact, no words of my mother tongue are now present in my consciousness, but let me try to bring them up to know (Paper on Hinduism 19th September, 1893).
- 3) The Vedas declared, 'No'. I am a spirit living in a body. I am not the body. The body will die, but I shall not die. Here I am in this body; it will fall, but I shall go on living. I had also a past. The soul was not created, for creation means a combination, which means a certain future dissolution (Paper on Hinduism 19th September, 1893).

- 4) The Vedas teach that the soul is divine, only held in the bondage of matter; perfection will be reached when this bond bursts, entering the world. The use for it is therefore Mukti—freedom, freedom from the bonds of imperfection, and freedom from death and misery (Paper on Hinduism 19th September, 1893).
- 5) The Hindu religion does not consist of struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma, but in realising -- not in believing but in being and becoming. (Paper on Hinduism 19th September, 1893)
- 6) The whole object of their system is by constant struggle to become perfect, to become divine, and to reach God. What becomes of a man when he attains perfection? He lives a life of infinite bliss. He enjoys infinite and perfect bliss, having obtained the only thing in which man ought to have pleasure, namely God; enjoy the bliss with God (Paper on Hinduism 19th September, 1893).

Learning output:

- 1) The title of the Delor’s commission report was treasure within, which coincides with Swamiji’s definition of education, “Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man”, which fits perfectly with the educational thinking that Swamiji has.
- 2) The two main aspects of Delor’s commission are international brotherhood place and sale duty, which can be found in sandwiches and various Chicago lectures. Also, the four pillars concept of education.
- 3) Just as the gravitation of the earth existed before it was discovered, so human beings need to know that the qualities like spirituality, humanity, and purity already exist in human beings (Learning to know).
- 4) A Christian does not have to be a Hindu. A Hindu does not have to be a Buddhist or Christian, but every believer will practise his religion in the right way. This is the concept of learning to do.
- 5) Hinduism believes that we are all children of God, brothers of each other. So, we have to give up our hatred and live in peace. The idea of learning to live together follows this idea for Swami Vivekananda.
- 6) Swamiji, in his last Chicago speech, said a few words in particular, which are 'Help and not Fight, Assimilation and not Destruction, Harmony and Peace' – all these words in the concept of learning to get along together.

RQ5. How peaceful education and value education of present curriculum may be treated as a by-product of that historical discourse?

- 1) “I am a Hindu. I am sitting in my own little well and thinking that the whole world is my little well. The Christian sits in his little oil and thinks the whole world is his well. The Mohammedan seats in his little oil and things – that is the whole world. I have to thank you, America, for the great attempt you are making to break down the barriers of this little world of ours and hope that, in the future, the Lord will help you to accomplish your purpose.”
- 2) The moral, ethical and spiritual relation between soul and soul and between individual spirit and the father of all spirits was there before their discovery and would remain even if we forget them (Paper on Hinduism 19th September, 1893).
- 3) So then there's the Hindu belief that he is a spirit. He cannot be pierced by the suit, burnt by fire, melted by water, or dried by the air. The Hindu belief is that every soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere but whose centre is located in the body, and that date means the change of this centre from body to body. Not reach the soul bound by the conditions of matter. But somehow or other it finds itself driven down to matter and thinks of itself as matter (Paper on Hinduism 19th September, 1893).
- 4) It is an insult to a starving people to offer their religion; it is an insult to a starving man to teach him metaphysics (Religion is not the Crying Need of India, 20th September, 1893).
- 5) On the subject of “Hindu philosophy”. He discussed the various religious beliefs and superstitions, giving many illustrations of their causes and effects. But the principle of all religions, he declared, is the same and means that the state of the soul is unconditional and independent. It does not require any internal force for its existence. “We are all aiming for the same thing, all travelling in the same direction, all going to the same place” (Swami Vivekananda in Chicago: New Findings, pp. 144).

Learning output:

- 1) Every religion has to come out of its own narrow confines and accept other religions; this is the lesson we need to learn.
- 2) Every soul is a child of Parramatta. So there is no difference between you and me.
- 3) None of us are body or mind; we are part of Parramatta. Whom the fire cannot burn. The air cannot dry, and the sword cannot cut. That is, the soul is immortal, so we should not be subject to inanimate pleasures. The inanimate must be under the person.
- 4) People of any religion do not believe in idol worship. However, one should not belittle another religion under any circumstances because to belittle another means to belittle oneself. Just as the rose gives fragrance no matter what name

it is called, so God is gracious everywhere no matter what name it is called. The suit cannot pierce him, the fire cannot burn him, the water cannot melt him, and the air cannot dry him.

- 5) The concept of world peace is "Live and let live", which comes from Unity in Variety.
- 6) People of any religion do not believe in idol worship. However, one should not belittle another religion under any circumstances because to belittle another means to belittle oneself. Just as the rose gives fragrance no matter what name it is called, so God is gracious everywhere no matter what name it is called.
- 7) The essence of all religions is the same, but the reason for disagreement is accepting the same truth in different situations, so we must learn the lesson of peace.
- 8) It is not right to convert any person under any circumstances from one religion to another. One religion must respect other religions.

MAJOR FINDINGS

What the present researcher has found from this study is-

- Traditional Hinduism teaches people to be tolerant and to live together.
- Every person on every subject is not self-sufficient, they need each other's cooperation.
- Life never ends. Future life is always determined by present action.
- The inanimate is mortal, the soul is immortal. Although the body is destroyed, the soul is not destroyed. So we must have self-respect.
- Moral life is not possible on an empty stomach. So people must be action oriented.
- 'Live and let live' is the crux of humanity.
- In order to maintain world peace and harmony, people need to widen the path from national brotherhood to international brotherhood.
- There is no such thing as a caste in the society. The only thing that exists is the division of labour. Therefore, every human being deserves equal status. All are children of God.
- All religions want to bring out the inherent humanity of the people. This humanity is above superstition. Humanity unites all religions.
- The educational concept of the Delor's Commission seems to be hidden in Vivekananda's Chicago Lecture Series.

CONCLUSION

Swamiji went to Chicago to attend a religious meeting at the request of his disciples. Through his six series of lectures, he became Vivekananda of the world from Vivekananda of India and he taught the world International Brotherhood, Harmony and Peace, Help and Not Fight, Assimilation and Not Destruction etc.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Due to time constraints, it was not possible for the current researcher to enlist the help of a book by a foreign author on Swami's Chicago Lecture.

SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Swami Vivekananda was a real genius. His educational thoughts, philosophy and various lectures are in valuable resources to India and the world. That is why there is no end to research in his different aspect of thought.
- Research on the philosophical aspects of the Chicago Lecture of Swami Vivekananda.
- Research on nationality and Vivekananda.
- Research on women's education and Vivekananda.
- Study on educational thought of Swamiji.

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