



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Philosophical view of Swami Vivekananda with special reference to religion and social change

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### Abstract

Swami Vivekananda's philosophy offers a dynamic integration of spirituality and social duty, grounded in the non-dualistic (Advaita Vedanta) tradition yet profoundly attuned to the practical realities of human existence. Vivekananda posits that religion transcends rituals and sectarian divisions, representing the direct realisation of the divine within oneself and in all entities. He stressed that all religions are viable ways to get to the same ultimate truth, which fostered an atmosphere of harmony, tolerance, and acceptance among everyone. He thought that religious experience should end with realising that everything is connected, and that serving others is the best way to worship. The objectives of the study are to study the philosophical views of Swami Vivekananda and to study the work of Swami Vivekananda in special reference to social change. Present research primarily qualitative in nature. As this strategy is exploratory and a part of qualitative study. The sources of data used by the researchers are basically secondary in nature. Swami Vivekananda thought that religion was more than just rituals and dogmas; it was the realisation of the divine in oneself and in all beings. He stressed that all religions are the same and encouraged people of different faiths to get along and be tolerant of each other. He connected spirituality with helping others, saying that helping the impoverished and disadvantaged was a way to glorify God. His concept motivates social transformation by integrating inner spiritual development with proactive humanitarian action.

**Keywords:** Philosophy; Religion; Social change; Empowerment; Universal

### 1. Introduction

Swami Vivekananda is one of the most important thinkers in modern Indian philosophy. His theories connected spirituality with everyday life. Vivekananda emerged in the late nineteenth century, a time of colonial rule and socioeconomic stagnation in India. He reinterpreted old Indian intellectual traditions, especially Vedanta, so that they could be understood in light of modern social conditions. His philosophy was not limited to abstract metaphysical inquiry; instead, it was profoundly anchored in human welfare, moral obligation, and societal advancement. A dynamic interpretation of religion is at the heart of Vivekananda's ideas. He turned down restricted, dogmatic interpretations and instead stressed religion as a universal reality that may be experienced. He did not see religion as just a set of beliefs or rituals; he saw it as a way to see the divine that is in everyone. His universalistic view made him able to support peace amongst religions by saying that all faiths lead to the same ultimate truth. Vivekananda's philosophical perspective was intimately connected to the concept of social transformation. He thought that real religion should meet both the physical and spiritual needs of individuals. His well-known idea of "Daridra Narayana" (seeing God in the impoverished) shows that he believed that helping others is the best way to worship God. In this way, he turned religion into a strong tool for changing society. He aggressively criticised social problems including caste prejudice, untouchability, and the neglect of women. He exhorted Indians to rise beyond these things and see the intrinsic worth of every person. Vivekananda also stressed how important education is for giving people power and changing society. He imagined an education system

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that would not only teach people things but also help them become better people, more confident, and more responsible citizens. He asked Indians to be strong, both physically and mentally, to help them feel proud of their country and be able to rely on themselves. Swami Vivekananda's ideology is basically a mix of spirituality and social activity. By changing the way people think about religion as a force for unification and service, he set the stage for a new way of thinking about society based on equality, compassion, and human dignity.

#### *Objectives of the study:*

- To study the philosophical views of Swami Vivekananda
- To study the work of Swami Vivekananda in special reference to social change.

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## **2. Research Methodology**

Present research primarily qualitative in nature. As this strategy is exploratory and a part of qualitative study. The sources of data used by the researchers are basically secondary in nature.

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## **3. Results according to the objectives of the study and discussion**

### **3.1. Philosophical views of Swami Vivekananda**

Swami Vivekananda was one of the most important intellectuals in modern India. He made Indian philosophy, especially Vedanta, more useful and global. He was a follower of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and blended spirituality with social duty. He stressed the need to improve the lives of others. His remarkable address at the Parliament of the World's Religions made Indian spiritual traditions known around the world. Vivekananda's philosophy is based on the idea that the soul is divine, that everything is connected, that people should be strong and serve others, and that religions should get along.

#### *3.1.1. Advaita Vedanta:*

Vivekananda had a deep belief in the Advaita philosophy of Adi Shankaracharya. This perspective posits that there exists a singular ultimate reality—Brahman. The individual soul (Atman) is identical to Brahman. The disparities that seem to exist in the world are caused by ignorance (Maya). Understanding this interconnectedness results in emancipation (moksha).

#### *3.1.2. Divinity of the soul*

He taught that everyone has a divine nature. People are not sinners; they are divine beings who have forgotten who they really are. Life's mission is to show this divinity through spiritual practice, good deeds, and realising who you are.

#### *3.1.3. Practical Vedanta*

Vivekananda converted abstract Vedantic ideas into rules for living. He stressed that religion shouldn't only be something you read about or do in rituals; it should be something you do every day. Spiritual practice is helping others, being kind, and doing your duty with sincerity.

#### *3.1.4. Universal religion and tolerance*

He thought that all religions are various ways to get at the same final truth. No one faith is better than another. He was very against religious bigotry and worked for peace, acceptance, and respect between people of different faiths.

#### *3.1.5. Strength and fearlessness*

He stressed that strength is necessary for growth in both the body and the mind. He said that fear, pain, and failure all come from being weak. He told people, especially young people, to be brave, believe in themselves, and have a strong resolve.

### **3.2. Work of Swami Vivekananda in special reference to social change**

Swami Vivekananda was a big part of how people in modern India thought about social transformation. His work linked ideas about spirituality with a strong push for social change and the improvement of people's lives. Here's how he helped

### 3.2.1. Stand up against social inequality

He was very against strict caste distinctions and social inequality. Vivekananda pushed for respect and equality for everyone, no matter their caste, class, or gender.

### 3.2.2. Focus on Human service

Vivekananda thought that helping others, especially the poor and those who are on the outside, was the best way to worship. He was well-known for promoting the philosophy of "Daridra Narayana," which means "seeing God in the poor." He urged people to put compassion and welfare first.

### 3.2.3. Emphasis on Education

He thought that education was the most important thing for changing society. But he didn't simply want people to learn from books. He also wanted them to grow their character, confidence, and practical abilities to help themselves and their communities.

### 3.2.4. Women's Empowerment

Vivekananda was in favour of women being educated and free. He thought that a country couldn't move forward until its women were given equal chances and were hoisted up.

### 3.2.5. Revival of National Pride

During the time of colonial authority, he encouraged Indians to be proud of their spiritual and cultural history. His address at the Parliament of the World's Religions brought Indian philosophy to the world's attention and made people in India feel better about themselves.

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## 4. Conclusion

In summary, Swami Vivekananda's philosophical worldview offers a deep synthesis of religion and social transformation. Based on Vedanta, he redefined religion as a universal and practical force focused on the discovery of the divine within each person. He turned down restricted ritualism and stressed that real religion must show itself through service to others, which gave spirituality a social aspect. Vivekananda's views were very important in bringing about societal change in India. He was very against societal problems including caste prejudice, ignorance, and gender inequality. He believed that education, self-reliance, and moral strength were important for the country's recovery. At the Parliament of the World's Religions, he gave a strong speech that made it clear that all religions are one and that we need to get along and respect each other. As a result, Vivekananda turned religion into a tool for social change. His ideology shows that spiritual awakening and social responsibility go hand in hand and that real social change can only happen when it is based on moral and spiritual ideals. His principles are still very important today for fostering equality, kindness, and respect for all people.

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