

Ancient Vocational Education in India

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ABSTRACT

Ancient period is the first stage of the Evolution of Indian Civilization. The ancient period is considered as foundation stone of modern India. In the present era of globalization vocational education plays a vital role besides traditional education for the development of the whole nation. To make the nation self-dependents as well as developmental vocational education is needed. Populated country like India, it is a great challenge to make all the populations educated, so to make all of them educated by proper education vocational education is needed besides formal education. To get education through experience vocational education is needed, and it also helps the students overall development. Handicrafts, arts are important to give the proper education to the pupils and it also helps them to gain experience. To eradicate the boredom of traditional education real experience is very important; the concept of such.

1. Introduction

The study of the history and the main features of education in ancient India is a subject of great interest and importance to the student both of education as well as of civilization. Educational institutions usually mirror the ideals of a nation and enable us to understand the spirit of its civilization. This was more especially the case in ancient times when schools and colleges were the chief centers, wherein the rising generation could be imbued with the traditions of the race and induced to adopt them in its own life. We should not forget in this connection that paper and printing were unknown, and so the masses could be approached not with the help of the modern means of newspaper, magazines or cheap and popular books, but only through the influence that indirectly infiltrated to them from the limited number of students that used to receive education in schools and colleges.

2. Background of the Study

In modern days society is no longer a cosmos but has fallen into chaos and this disorder must be remedied if modern civilization is to survive. As society in the Indian ideal was a community of rational beings, not a fortuitous concourse of atoms, it was regarded as an organism, a body-politic with definite organs, each discharging a definite function for the benefit and health of the whole community. Under this ancient system youths were trained up for their future functions in society on a caste-basic and this is re-appearing in the west, as specialized and vocational training. Thus Vedic study is binding on all belonging to the three twice-born castes. A life of learning or in intellectual career was reserved for the Brahman. The Kshatriya is destined for the political and military and the latter for 'opulence'. It is no wonder, therefore, to find Brahmonical texts never tired of dilating upon the merits to be acquired by following the duties of one's own caste.

3. Research Questions

1. What were the scenario of education in Ancient India?

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the scenario of vocational education in Ancient India.

5. Significance of the Study

History is the foundation stone of modern time. In this analytical study I will find out the aims & objectives, nature, process, medium of vocational education and relevant aspects particularly in ancient India. In this study it will be known about much vocational Education such as art, music, medical science, astronomy etc. which influence modern education system. Finally I am trying to find out the relevance and importance of ancient Indian vocational Education in modern education system.

6. Methods of the Study

Descriptive cum Historical Research Method used in this study. This study mainly adopted the historical cum critical method. Undoubtedly, the present piece of research has its seeds in the History of education but it is confined to explore only those elements that are related to major aspects of vocational education in Ancient India.

Secondary sources of data collection- translated works of original Sanskrit's text as well as instruction with scholars of history and Vedic literature.

7. Source of Data

Primary Source

Visited library for searching manuscripts in Sanskrit. Original Sanskrit text of scriptures, visited museum for historical sources.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are the reports of a person who relates the testimony of an actual witness of an event, the writer of the secondary source was not on the scene of the event but merely reports what person who was there said or wrote. In secondary sources the investigator compiles and summarizes the findings of the work done by other and gives interpretations to these findings. He usually attempts to cover all the important studies in an area in the form of Encyclopedia of ancient India, Vedic education, Mauryan period, Gupta period, abstracts, as sources of quotation. Large number of secondary sources is collection from much vocational education.

8. Result and Discussion

The finest examples of painting, sculpture and architecture of the period can be found in Ajanta, Ellora, Sarnath, Mathura, Anuradhapura and Sigiriya. The basic tenets of *Shilpa Shastra* were followed everywhere including in town planning. Stone studded golden stairways, iron pillars intricately designed gold coins, jewellery and metal sculptures speak volumes about the skills of the metal smiths. Carved ivories, wood and lack-work, brocades and embroidered textile also thrived. Practicing vocal music, dance and seven types of musical instruments including veena, flute and midrange were a norm rather than exception. These were regularly performed in temples as a token of devotion. In classic Indian style, artists and litterateurs were encouraged to meditate on the imagery within and capture its essence in their creations. As *Agni Parana* suggests, O thou Lord of all gods, teach me in dreams how to carry out all the work I have in my mind.

The promotion of social efficiency & welfare was an equally important aim of education. Education was not imported simply for the sake of culture or for the purpose of developing mental powers but for the purpose of training every member of society in the profession which he expected to follow. Society had accepted the theory of division of work which was later on governed by the principle of heredity. Each family trained its children in its own profession. The purpose was to make each individual society efficient.

Nature and organization of vocational education in Ancient India. There was no educational institution like present day in Ancient India. The ritual of Vidyarambha initiated the learner around the age of five to the primary stage of education imparted by a designated teacher the guru, to whom and to whose house the child was entrusted. There are references to these schools as *lipisalas* and to the teachers as *daakacharya*. We also read of the emergence of *prakrity*. The places of learning called *Gurukula*. Individual instruction contributed to the strength of the teaching process enabling the teacher to understand the strength and weakness of the learner and to place to process of education accordingly. The strict adherence to duty or dharma and the regulated life of the home of the teacher the *Gurukula* accompanied by the reverence for the guru, would have been sufficient conditions to maintain discipline in the educational institutions. The decision of the teacher was final and was never questioned.

Grihastha referred to the individuals married life with the duties of maintaining a house hold raising a family, educating ones children, and leading a family-centered and a dharmic

social life. Grihastha stage was considered as the most important of all stages in sociological context as human beings in this stage not only pursued a virtuous life they products food and wealth that sustained people in other stages of life as well as the off springs that continued mankind. The stage also represented one where the most intense physical, sexual, emotional, social and material attachments exit in a human being life.

Vanaprastha the retirement stage where a person handed over household responsibilities to the next generation took an advisory role and gradually withdraw from the world. Vanaprastha stage was a transition phase from a householder's life with its greater emphasis on Artha and Kama to one with greater emphasis on Maksha.

Sannyasa the stage was marked by renunciation of material desires and prejudices, represented by a state of disinterest and detachment from material life, generally without any meaningful property or home and focused on Maksha, peace and simple spiritual life. Anyone could enter this stage after completing the Brahmacharya stage of life.

Nalanda university was one of the first universities which provided residential quarters or hostels for the students. The students returned home after the curriculum was completed. Education was imparted orally. The students at the Nalanda University were taught free of cost.

The Taxila University was one of the first few centers in the world which offered higher education. The university was however established before the Gupta Empire came into existence, somewhere around 700 BC. Taxila University was a centre where a variety of subjects were taught to the students. These included astronomy, medicine, accounts, politics, mathematics, science, law, music, painting and many other subjects. The students of Taxila University had to pay the requisite fees in order to obtain education. Like Nalanda University, Taxila attracted students from foreign countries.

Memorization the preliminary stage of learning was learning by heart the sacred text through indefinite repetition and rehearsal by both the teacher and the taught. Critical Analysis was another method in which knowledge was comprehended. It was through critical analysis that Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhvacharya differed from their teachers on the interpretation of the Brahma sutra composed by Sri Shankara and later came out with their own interpretation of the Brahma sutra. Madhvacharya even made his teacher subscribe to his view which shows that gurus were open to new ideas and views articulated by their students.

The distinguished from all other knowledge termed *Apara Vidya*. Life related knowledge was called *Apara Vidya*. There was *hatu-vidya*, *Sabda-vidya*, *Chikitsa Vidya* etc. All practical aspects of knowledge are known as *Apara Vidya*. The *Mandukya Upanishads* defines *Apara Vidya* as comprise the four Vedas and the six Vedangas. The knowledge of arts, agriculture, war, home science, *sharpaidya*, *mantravidya*, *Ayurveda*, astrology, *Arthashastra* was including in *Apara Vidya*. The Vedic culture occupies the most prominent place in

Indian History. Its impact even on modern India is widely prevalent.

'Aryabhattachya', by Aryabhata was a major contribution in the field of mathematics. Astronomy was overshadowed by Brahmonical superstitions. 'Surya Siddhanta', a work on astronomy consisted of the description of the instruments and the methods of observation which were neither accurate nor impressive.

Sanskrit was the medium of instruction in the Vedic system of Education. Pali was the medium of instruction in the Buddhist system of education. But both system offered vocational education apart from religious education of their respective faiths. There was also a purely vocational system of education wherein master craftsmen and artisans taught their skills to students who worked as apprentice under them.

The greatest monument of this period, executed in the reign of Chandragupta Mauryan, was the old palace at the site of Kumara. Excavations at the site of Kumara nearby have unearthed the remains of the palace. The palace is thought to have been an aggregate of buildings, the most important of which was an immense pillared hall supported on a high substratum of timbers. According to the eyewitness account of Megasthenes, the palace was chiefly constructed of timber, and was considered to exceed in splendor and magnificence the palaces of Susa and Ecbatana, its gilded pillars being adorned with golden vines and silver birds. The buildings stood in an extensive park studded with fish ponds and furnished with a great variety of ornamental trees and shrubs. Kautilya Arthashastra also gives the method of palace construction from this period. Later fragments of stone pillars, including one nearly complete, with their round tapering shafts and smooth polish, indicate that Asoka was responsible for the construction of the stone columns which replaced the earlier wooden ones.

The finest examples of painting, sculpture and architecture of the period can be found in Ajanta, Ellora, Sarnath, Mathura, Anuradhapura and Sigiriya. The basic tenets of *Shilpa Shastra* (Treatise on Art) were followed everywhere including in town planning. Stone studded golden stairways, iron pillars intricately designed gold coins, jewelry and metal sculptures speak volumes about the skills of the metal smiths. Carved ivories, wood and lack-work, brocades and embroidered textile also thrived. Practicing vocal music, dance and seven types of musical instruments including *venal flute* and *midrange* were a norm rather than exception. These were regularly performed in temples as a token of devotion. In classic Indian style, artists and litterateurs were encouraged to meditate on the imagery within and capture its essence in their creations. As *Agni Parana* suggests, "O thou Lord of all gods, teach me in dreams how to carry out all the work I have in my mind."

The Gupta craftsmen distinguished themselves by their work in iron and bronze. Bronze images of the Buddha began to be produced on a considerable scale because of the knowledge the smiths had of advanced metal technology. With regard to iron objects, the best example is the iron pillar found at Mehrauli in Delhi.

On the basis of Revolution of civilization and time sequence educational historian divided the development of

Indian education into three stages. In ancient Indian education the meaning of *Apara Vidya* refers to science, art etc. It means the development of the outer skills of spiritualism. In Vedic education we find cultivation, farming, medical science, blacksmith, fight techniques etc. as education. The study of the history and the main features of education in ancient India is a subject of great interest and importance to the student both of education as well as of civilization. Educational institutions usually mirror the ideals of a nation and enable us to understand the spirit of its civilization. This was more especially the case in ancient times when schools and colleges were the chief centers, wherein the rising generation could be imbued with the traditions of the race and induced to adopt them in its own life.

The aims of Vedic education were to realize the supreme and archive supreme consciousness. In calculation of a spirit of piety and righteousness was the aim of education. Preservation and spread of ancient culture was one of the aims of ancient education system. The chief aim was to unfold the spiritual and moral power of the individual during Vedic period. The objectives of education were perfection of the physical, mental and intellectual personality of the student. Formulation of good and moral character was also another aim of Vedic education for the development of vocational efficiency healthy. Positive attitude and dignity of labor were fostered in pupils during Vedic period.

The aims of education were to provide good training to young men and women in the performance of their social, economic and religious duties. The aim of education was the development of pupil's overall personality. With this view of education as a process of one's inner growth and self-fulfillment, techniques, rules and methods were evolved.

There was no educational institution like present day in Ancient India. The ritual of *Vidyarambha* initiated the learner around the age of five to the primary stage of education imparted by a designated teacher the guru, to whom and to whose house the child was entrusted.

Ashramas or hermitages were another centre where students from distant and different parts of the country flocked together for learning around famous sages and saints.

Memorization the preliminary stage of learning was learning by heart the sacred text through indefinite repetition and rehearsal by both the teacher and the taught.

Critical Analysis this was another method in which knowledge was comprehended. It was through critical analysis that Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhvacharya differed from their teachers on the interpretation of the *Brahmasutra* composed by Sri Shankara and later came out with their own interpretation of the *Brahmasutra*. Madhvacharya even made his teacher subscribe to his view which shows that gurus were open to new ideas and views articulated by their students.

Innumerable references to the supreme or highest knowledge technically called *Para Vidya*. Subjects based knowledge was called *Para Vidya*. By *Para Vidya* the Mundak understands that knowledge through which the ultimate reality was know. *Para Vidya* however is extolled as *Sarva Vidya*

pratitha the foundation of all arts and science as Vedanta the final and highest stage of Vedic.

Ancient India was dominant by the cast system- Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vishay's and the Sudras. Each caste had its own vocation and it received that type of education which would be helpful to its vocation. The upper three castes had the right to education according to their vocation but the Sudra had no right to education. The Brahmins were study Dharmasastras, nitisastra, Arthasastra, Vedas, angas and the Puranas. The knowledge of the arms and of military skill was a must for a young Kshatriya. We know from the Mahabharata how the young pandu and kuru princes were instructed in the various kind of military skills.

To know the present situation the knowledge of history is mandatory. History is the foundation stone of modern time. In this analytical study I will find out the aims & objectives, nature, process, medium of vocational education and relevant aspects particularly in ancient India. In this study it will be known about much vocational Education such as art, music, medical science, astronomy etc. which influence modern education system. Finally I am trying to find out the relevance and importance of ancient Indian vocational Education in modern education system. Ancient period is the first stage of the Evolution of Indian Civilization. The ancient period is considered as foundation stone of modern India. In the present era of globalization vocational education plays a vital role besides traditional education for the development of the whole nation. To make the nation self dependents as well as developmental vocational education is needed.

9. Conclusion

In this study I try to find out that the aims and objectives, nature, organization, medium and relevance of ancient Indian vocational education in modern India. In this study I found that the aims of Vedic education were to realize the supreme and archive supreme consciousness. In calculation of a spirit of piety and righteousness was the aim of education. Preservation and spread of ancient culture was one of the aims of ancient education system. The chief aim was to unfold the spiritual and

moral power of the individual during Vedic period. The objectives of education were perfection of the physical, mental and intellectual personality of the student. Formulation of good and moral character was also another aim of Vedic education for the development of vocational efficiency healthy.

In this study I found that there was no educational institution like present day in Ancient India. The ritual of Vidyarambha initiated the learner around the age of five to the primary stage of education imparted by a designated teacher the guru, to whom and to whose house the child was entrusted. The greatest institution of Ancient India was Vikramasila University, Takshasila University, and Vallabhi University.

In this study I found that the curriculum of vocational education in Ancient India depends on Para Vidya and Apar Vidya. The curriculum of ancient Indian vocational education was hatu-vidya, Sabda-vidya, Chikitsa Vidya etc. All practical aspects of knowledge are known as Apar Vidya.

The Mandukya Upanishads defines Apar Vidya as comprise the four Vedas and the six Vedangas. The knowledge of arts, agriculture, war, home science, sharpavidya, mantravidya, Ayurveda, astrology, Arthashastra was including in Apar Vidya. The Vedic culture occupies the most prominent place in Indian History. Its impact even on modern India is widely prevalent. And it depends on knowledge of literature, philosophy, grammar, Veda, Upanishad, language, astrology, logic, necrology, arithmetic, chnology etc.

The Vedic system of Education. Pali was the medium of instruction in the Buddhist system of education. But both system offered vocational education apart from religious education of their respective faiths. There was also a purely vocational system of education wherein master craftsmen and artisans taught their skills to students who worked as apprentice under them.

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