

## **CHAPTER – II**

# **Education – Meaning, Origin, History and Philosophy of Education**

***“Literacy is a bride from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. Especially for girls and women, it is an agent of family health and nutrition. For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential.”<sup>14</sup> - Kofi Annan***

There are certain necessities without which a man cannot live a life of his own. One of these is education. The Greek philosopher Aristotle has said that man is social animal by nature and by necessity. If good is the aim man's life, then its pursuit and achievement involves fulfillment of certain conditions. It implies that every individual should be conscious of his own good and develop his power of action to realize it. But simultaneously he must be conscious of the good of the others and help in creating those conditions which lead to the development of their power of action. Consciousness of this fact that individual can be realized in common with the good of the others is the essence of rights<sup>15</sup>.

---

<sup>14</sup> By Dr.RATTANSINGH (INDIAN BAR REVIEW vol. XXXVIII (3) 2011), BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA TRUST, NEWDELHI. (Page 89-91, 99-110)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

## **2.1 Meaning, Definition and Purpose of Education:**

The word education comes from the Latin word e-ducere, mean "to lead out". It is indeed, difficult to define education. Education is a relentless process of becoming<sup>16</sup>. To the human being we educate and to the animal we train. According to Wikipedia Encyclopedia, education in the broadest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on mind, character or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense education is a process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another.

Education is the basis for development and empowerment for every nation. It plays a vital role in understanding and participating in day to day activities of today's world. It builds one's character and plays a significant role in transmitting one's culture, belief and values to others in society. It helps in creating innovations and meeting the growing needs of every nation. The development of a nation is not measured through the buildings it has built, the roads it has laid down, bridges it has constructed but by the human resources, the nation has developed through a well-defined system of education. Although the physical facilities are usually important they are perishable and valuable. In the absence of proper education, the nation can hardly develop these and maintain them. Education is therefore more crucial factor not only to equip the

---

<sup>16</sup> V.Narayan Karan Reddy, (1979) *Man Education and Values*, New Delhi: B.R. Publication, at 50

new generations with skills so essential for earning a livelihood but also to create among them an awareness to social and environmental realities and inculcate in them scientific temper, independence of mind and spirit which are of paramount importance for them to become responsible citizens<sup>17</sup>.

Frankly admitting the importance of education does not require any emphasis. The fundamental purpose of education is to transfigure the human personality into a pattern of perfection through a synthetic process of development of the body, the enrichment of the mind, the sublimation of the emotions and the illumination of the spirit. It is a preparation for a living and life, here and hereafter. To quote an old Sanskrit adage: "Education leads to liberation – liberation from ignorance which shrouds the mind; liberation from superstition which blind the vision of truth.

The growth of society is not possible without education. It is with this reason that almost all the eminent educationists have unanimously agreed that education is the pillar on which the entire fabric of nation resides. Whether a society is formed through contract or communication, education plays its vital role in preservation and transmission of social values. The process through which they are transmitted is educational and the process through people are brought up and made conscious of their rights and duties are social. A non-social human

---

<sup>17</sup> P.L.Mehta and Rakhi Poonga (1997) *Free and Compulsory Education*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep publication, at 1.

being is made social through and educational process and therefore education is called a social process<sup>18</sup>. It prepares the child for adult life where he will be in a position to fulfill his responsibility of adult life. In the words of Lodge, "Life is Education and Education is Life"

*Dr. Radhakrishnan has rightly said that: "A civilization is not built of bricks, steel and machinery, it is built with men, their quality and character". So the true aim of education is to develop in the body and in soul all the beauty and all perfection of which they are capable<sup>19</sup>.*

It may be said with quite a good degree of precision that India was the only country where knowledge was systematized and where provision was made for its imparting at the highest level in remote times. Whatever the discipline of learning, whether it was chemistry, medicine, surgery, the art of painting or sculpture, or dramatics or principles of literary criticism or mechanics or even dancing, everything was reduced to a systematic whole for passing it on to the future generations in a brief yet detailed manner. University education on almost modern lines existed in India as early as 800 B.C. or even earlier. The learning or culture of ancient India was chiefly the product of her hermitages in the solitude of the forests. It was not of the cities. The learning of the forests was embodied in the books specially designated as Aranyakas "belonging to the forests". Indian

---

<sup>18</sup> Jagannath Mohanty, (1982), *Indian Education in the Emerging society*, at 150.

<sup>19</sup> *Supra* note 4.

civilization in its early stages had been mainly a rural, sylvan, and an urban, civilization.

The ideal of education has been very grand, noble and high in ancient India. Its aim, according to (Herbert Spencer) is the 'training for completeness of life' and the moulding of character of men and women for the battle of life. The history of the educational institutions in ancient India shows how old is her cultural history. It points to a long history. In the early stage it is rural, not urban. British Sanskrit scholar says "Some hundreds of years must have been needed for all that is found" in her culture. The aim of education was at the manifestation of the divinity in men, it touches the highest point of knowledge. In order to attain the goal the whole educational method is based on plain living and high thinking pursued through eternity.

Learning in India through the ages had been prized and pursued not for its own sake, but for the sake, and as a part of religion. (It was sought as the means of self-realization, as the means to the highest end of life. viz. Mukti or Emancipation. Ancient Indian education is also to be understood as being ultimately the outcome of the Indian theory of knowledge as part of the corresponding scheme of life and values.

The scheme takes full account of the fact that Life includes Death and the two form the whole truth. This gives a particular angle of vision, a sense of

perspective and proportion in which the material and moral, the physical, and spiritual, the perishable and permanent interests and values of life are clearly defined and strictly differentiated. Of all the people of the world the Hindu is the most impressed and affected by the fact of death as the central fact of life. The individual's supreme duty is thus to achieve his expansion into the Absolute, his self-fulfillment, for he is a potential God, a spark of the Divine. Education must aid in this self-fulfillment, and not in the acquisition of mere objective knowledge.

A single feature of ancient Indian or Hindu civilization is that it has been molded and shaped in the course of its history more by religious than by political, or economic, influences. The fundamental principles of social, political, and economic life were welded into a comprehensive theory which is called Religion in Hindu thought. The total configuration of ideals, practices, and conduct is called Dharma (Religion, Virtue or Duty) in this ancient tradition. From the very start, they came, under the influence of their religious ideas, to conceive of their country as less a geographical and material than a cultural or a spiritual possession, and to identify, broadly speaking, the country with their culture.

The Country was their Culture and the Culture their Country, the true Country of the Spirit, the 'invisible church of culture' not confined within physical bounds. India thus was the first country to rise to the conception of an extra-territorial nationality and naturally became the happy home of different races,

each with its own ethno-psychic endowment, and each carrying its social reality for Hindus is not geographical, not ethnic, but a culture-pattern.

Education has been defined as “a process of development in which consists the passage of human being from infancy, to Maturity, the process by which he adopts himself gradually in various ways to his physical and spiritual environment.” In this definition the ability of social adaptation means the development of social qualities like co-operation, co-ordination among social groups and communities.

Article 26 (2) of Universal Declaration of Human Rights has stated the purpose of Education as – “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious group, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace”.

“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, atleast in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Article 26 (1) of Universal Declaration of Human Rights



## 2.2 Development of Education in Vedic Period

It was particularly observed in one of the Upanishads "He who is possessed of supreme knowledge by concentration of mind, must have his senses under control, like spirited steeds controlled by a charioteer. From the Vedic age downwards the central conception of education of the Indians has been that it is a source of illumination giving us a correct lead in the various spheres of life. "Knowledge, says one thinker, is the third eye of man, which gives him insight into all affairs and teaches him how to act".

To attain salvation by realizing the truth has been the aim of education, during this period. Only that education was regarded true which helped one to realize the supreme truth. According to the Upanishads 'truth' alone is the knowledge and other worldly knowledge is untruth. The worldly knowledge was regarded as ignorance. Upanishads maintain that one cannot attain salvation through worldly knowledge because through this one becomes involved in illusion (Maya).

**Upanayan Samskar:** Upanayan Samskar was considered important both in the Vedic and Post-Vedic periods. This is evident at several places in the Rigveda. But different values were adhered to in the two periods. It was not necessary during the Vedic period to have the Upanayan ceremony before starting education. But

during the Post-Vedic period Upanayan ceremony was considered necessary for starting education.

The word 'Upanayan' means to come near. In the context of education this word signifies that the student come near the teacher for receiving education. The Upanayan ceremony became so important during the Post-Vedic period that it was usually regarded as second birth of the individual. Brahmins began to be called as Dvija (the twice born or born again). It was after the Upanayan that the Brahmin boy could be called a Dvija.

Two births signify the worldly and spiritual births. On the Upanayan occasion the Guru (receptor) used to give him his Mantra (Advice). His spiritual life used to begin from this advice. That is, from this day his education was started which ultimately led to his spiritual development in due course of time. The Upanayan ceremony is still vogue in certain religious groups in the world, though in different forms.

### **The Important Place of the Teacher:**

During this period the teacher (Guru) enjoyed a predominant place not only in his Gurukul (seat of learning) but in the entire society. He was regarded as a great guide for all. To his pupils he showered all love and affection and used to teach them whatever he knew, but before doing this he always tested the

deservingness of a particular pupil. The pupils were free to discuss any points freely with the Guru.

### **Curriculum during the Post-Vedic Period:**

During this period the curriculum included more subjects than during the Vedic age. During the Post-Vedic period the curriculum consisted of Vedas, History, Puranas, Grammar, Mathematics, Brahma-Vidya, Nirukti (etymological interpretation of words), Astronomy, dance, Music etc. Veda mantras (Vedic hymns and verses) were principally taught in the Vedic Period.

### **Question-Answer System in Upanishad Literature:**

The entire Upanishad literature is on the question – answer system. Through this system difficult and abstract ideas were made simple. The terse-spiritual elements were explained through this method. This method is successfully used by Socrates in Greece to explain abstract ideas.

### **Daily Routine of Students:**

During the Post-Vedic period the Ashramas (schools) were generally organized and run by Gurus (preceptors). It was compulsory to adhere to laid down rules of discipline and conduct. No distinction was made between students in this respect. Everyone was required to observe celibacy. Rules of conduct were enforced keeping in view the physical, mental and moral development of

students. Strict adherence to rules of conduct and discipline was an inseparable aspect of education in those days.

### **Practical Education:-**

Practical education consists of three parts

- To beg alms
- To prepare fire for the Yajna-Kund.
- To look after the animals and other fellow beings of the Ashrama (School).

There were varying aims of all these three aspects of practical education, Begging of alms was meant to teach politeness. Preparing of fire for the Yajna-Kund signified mental development of students. Rearing up Ashrama animals and agricultural works were meant to make the students self-dependent.

**Moral Education:** - Leading of a disciplined and controlled life is the real basis of moral education. Moral education affects the conduct of the individual. Therefore observance of celibacy was considered necessary for good conduct.

**Mental Development:** - Hearing, Thinking and Meditation were three parts of mental education. Thinking over the heard things and perception through meditation were the accepted methods of mental development.

### **Teacher's Place in the Ancient Indian Society:-**

In the ancient Indian society the teacher always enjoyed a dignified place. During the Vedic and the Post-Vedic periods the teacher's place was second to

that of God only. He was more respected than the king in society. The Guru-Ashrama was known as the Gurukul (the family of a teacher) and the Guru was regarded as a rishi (sage) or Acharya (the one who practices what he professes).

The Guru was the guide and could help anyone to carve out his course of action. He used to bring light wherever there was darkness. During the Upanishad period also, when self-study was considered as dignified the place of Guru in society remained intact. It was believed that no knowledge could come without the assistance from the Guru. It was thought that the attainment of salvation was not possible without the help of the Guru.

### **Restriction on Teachers:-**

The teacher was expected to lead a life of penance free of worldly things. He, too, was required to follow all the rules of the strict discipline, thinking and meditation which were prescribed for the students. After the demise of the Guru even one of his disciples could succeed him if his son was not considered worthy.

### **Women Education:-**

Many changes were introduced in women's education during the Post-Vedic period. This led to the fall of Women's education. During the Vedic age the women enjoyed equal educational rights. During the Post-Vedic period they were deprived of the social and religious rights. They were not allowed to participate in social functions. Ultimately the position of women in society fell down so low

that the birth of a girl was regarded as a curse on the family. But an upward trend again appeared in the status of women during the Upanishad period. Now they were given social and educational rights again. Once again they were given equal status with men and many women became as a learned men. Many women became Acharya (Principal teacher- Guru) in Ashramas.

**Convocation Address:** - After receiving education for twelve years students used to assemble near their teacher (Acharya) for blessings before going home. The teacher used to tell them how to lead a life of house holder (Grihastha), how to take care of the society and the nation and how to serve the humanity as a whole. The teacher used to tell all these in a ceremony which was known as Samavartan Samaroha like the modern convocation address.

### **Different Types of Gurukuls in Ancient India**

Initially, the gurukul system had the advantage of being egalitarian and fair. The teacher there observed the children's attitude, aptitude and ability, and educated them accordingly. As this was done without the interference from any external source (parents can be very pushy!), the educators were able to match the individual's temperament with the trade they learned. Later, however, this was corrupted and educators were no longer independent-rather they were paid to teach a particular skill to a particular group of students. (Sound familiar?) I am

not just making this up either-there is written evidence for this namely in the Mahabharata.

At the time when Drona and Drupada were students, the system was still fair and open. Princes and paupers went to the same Gurukul to learn life skills. There, different children learned different skills and the gurukul was able to develop the skills of a particular child to its maximum potential. As a result, a Brahmin was taught Danurveda and became highly skilled in the martial arts. Impressed by his skills, a prince sought his friendship, as he knew he would need such men in his army, sadly, he forgot his friendship and an animosity took root which culminated in the great Bharat war.

In the same generation, from an open system that Drona attended, he came to run a gurukul that was elitist and exclusive. He was paid to teach the Kuru princes and hence refused to teach any other student, no matter how talented. The fact that Akalaya sought Drona's tutelage, shows the system was changing so fast, most people could not comprehend that education could be restricted in this way! Education was supposed to be open to all and this was a rare, new experiment in education whereby a teacher was "paid" to teach a specified group of students only.

Parashurams's gurukul was also elitist and hence flawed. By being totally closed, and yet so well reputed. It encouraged sincere seekers to twist the truth

or, lie, in order to get in. Karna's entry was surely not the first, and I am sure not the last into this them. From an egalitarian Gurukul of Sandipani, came Lord Krishna and Sudama. Theirs was a friendship that lasted the test of time. Krishna's knowledge culminated in the great Bhagavad-Gita. This great scripture still continues to inspire, so many centuries after its first recitation.

From the Gurukul of Parushuram, came Karna, who sacrificed everything, including ethics, at the altar of his misplaced idea of "friendship". He was unable to save himself with the knowledge gained at his Gurukul, as it was gained with deceit. It cost him his life!

From the Gurukul of Drona, came the Great War, annihilating an empire as old as time! Harvest of hate is bitter indeed, all those connected with this Gurukul, died a painful acrimonious death.

**Varna System and Education in Society:** - The Varna system in the Vedic age was based on one's work or duty (Karma). Members of a family used to engage themselves in different types of work (profession) and their work decided their Varna. During the Vedic period one could choose a particular profession as he liked and accordingly his Varna was determined. But during the Post-Vedic period Varna came to be determined by birth. Consequently the whole society was divided into four Varnas



- Brahman
- Kshatriya
- Vaishya
- Shudra

The Brahmins occupied the supreme position and enjoyed more rights. Kshatriyas resented their superiority. Consequently a clash ensued between Brahmins and Kshatriyas. In the clash Kshatriyas won over Brahmins and took administrative powers into their hands. In the Varna system the Brahmins and Kshatriyas became predominant. The Vaishyas and Shudras came into lower groups. In Varna hierarchy Shudras were kept at the lowest order of society. Thereafter, they were regarded as untouchables and they were denied all social and religious rights. Vaishyas remained superior to Shudras. Vaishyas divided themselves into professional groups such as – goldsmith, blacksmith, potter, cobbler, milkman, and sweet-seller etc. The Post-Vedic literature does not contain much about the education of Vaishyas and Shudras. Agriculture was the main occupation of Vaishyas during this period.

## **Characteristics of Education**

The terms like Knowledge, awakening, humility, modesty etc are often used to characterize education in the Vedic period. Ancient texts consider the

uneducated person as an ignorant beast. Education is regarded as a source of light. The main features of Vedic education are as follows.

**1. Knowledge:** Education is knowledge. It is man's third eye. This means that knowledge opens man's inner eye, flooding him with spiritual and divine light. Through education, the development of every aspect of human life becomes possible. Knowledge protects an individual like a mother, inspires him to follow the path of good and conduct as a father does, and gives the pleasure that one's wife provides.

Education leads to the development of personality. The word 'Veda' originates from the root 'Vid' which bears the meaning of knowledge. Sayana declares that the Veda is a means to the obtaining of the adored that which is worthy of worship, as well as means to the banishment of the undesired, the evil. Knowledge of the four Vedas (Rig-Veda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda) along with the knowledge of Shruthi, Smriti etc, provided an individual, with new knowledge which broadened his intellectual horizon.

**2. Aims of Education:** - Education had an idealistic form in the Vedic period. The teachers laid stress upon worship of God, religiousness, spirituality, formation of Character, development of personality, creation of an aptitude for the development of culture, nation and society. To quote Dr. Altekar "The objectives

of education in ancient India were worship of God, a feeling for religion, formation of Character, fulfillment of public and civic duties, an increase in social efficiency or skill, and the protection, the propagation of national culture. These objectives and ideas took an individual along the path of spiritual development.

The objectives and ideals were:

**Emphasis upon knowledge and Experience:** - The Gurukuls laid emphasis upon knowledge and obtaining of experience. Students exhibited the knowledge obtained through discourses and discussions conducted in a concourse of scholars,

**Spirituality:** - During Vedic period, many hypothesis concerning spirituality took birth. Nature was regarded as divine and worshipped. Knowledge came to be seen as the instrument of salvation. Fire sacrifices, fasting and taking of vows became a part of life. Education was given the objective of inculcating control over these aspects and learning right conduct based on them.

**Fulfillment of Duty:** - Great importance was attached to developing such qualities as discipline, obedience, performance of hostly duties, rendering help others, fulfillment of social responsibilities, etc. Through such education skills were developed in the students and education was also provided for earning a livelihood, by teaching necessary skills. According to Dr.Mukerjee "Education was

not exclusively theoretical or literary it was related to one or the other manual skill.

**Sublimation of Instincts:** - Man is the virtual slave of the instinctive drives embedded in his psyche, when he is obsessed by his senses; he often adopts the wrong path. The objective of education was to sublimate these instinctive tendencies, to turn the mind away from material knowledge and centre it upon the spiritual world, thus establishing control over materialistic and base tendencies.

**Growth of Character and Personality:** - The objective of education was the formation of character and personality of children. It was achieved through an appropriate environment, lessons on right conduct, and teachings based on life, character and ideals of great persons. Education aimed at developing the virtues of self-control, self-respect, love, cooperation, sympathy, etc in the students.

**3. The 'Upanayan' Ritual:** - The word 'Upanayana' means to take close to, or to bring in touch with the teacher. A ceremony called the upnayana ceremony was performed before the child was taken to his teacher. This ceremony was performed at the ages of 8, 11 and 12 for the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas respectively. The ceremony signaled the child's transition from infancy to childhood, and his initiation into educational life. In this context, the term

‘Upanayana’ means putting the student in touch with his teacher. With the passage of time, the ceremony came to be confined to the Brahmin class only.

**4. The Method of Education.** During the Vedic period, the Gurukul method prevailed, in which the student lived in the house of the Guru, Along with his colleagues, he led a celibate life and obtained education in the house of the Guru. It was the teacher who occupied the initially the primary place, but in the later period, it was the student who occupied the central place in education. The process of education passed through the three stages of comprehension, meditation, memory and nidhi-dhyaasana. The Gurukuls were the centers of education, in which education was imparted only by individuals of character and ability. The student remained with his Guru for 12 years. There were parishads or committees to satisfy the student’s thirst for knowledge.

**5. Celibacy or Brahmacharya.** Every student was required to observe celibacy in his specific path of life. Purity of conduct could become students in a Gurukul. On entering called a ‘makhla’. Its quality depended on the caste of the student. The students were not allowed to make use of fragrant, cosmetic or intoxicating things.

**6 Service of the Teacher.** Every student was required, while residing in the Gurukul, to serve his teacher compulsorily. Any violation of the Guru’s instructions was regarded as a sin, and subject to stern punishment.

**7. Alms System.** The student had to bear the responsibility of feeding both himself and his teacher; this was done through begging for alms, which was not considered bad. The reason behind the introduction of such a practice was that accepting alms induces humility. The student realized that both education and subsequent earning of livelihood were made possible for him only through societies and its sympathy.

**8. Practicality.** The education of that period encompassed the necessary activities of life. According to Dr. Alteker, the purpose of education was not to provide general knowledge about a variety of subjects, but to produce specialists of the best kind in various spheres.

**9. Duration of Education.** In the house of the teacher, the student was required to obtain education up to the age of 24, after which he was expected to enter domestic life. Students were divided into three categories.

(a) Those obtaining education up to the age of 24 – Vasu

(b) Those obtaining education up to the age of 36 – Rudra

(c) Those obtaining education up to the age of 48 – Aaditya

**10. Education for the individual.** In the Vedic period, every teacher devoted himself to the integral development of each student. He aimed at the physical and intellectual development of his wards. The maximum attention was devoted to the individual development of every student.

**11. Curriculum.** Although the education of this period was dominated by the study of Vedic literature, historical study, stories of heroic lives and discourses on the Puranas also formed a part of the syllabus. Students had necessarily to obtain knowledge of metrics. Arithmetic was supplemented by knowledge of geometry. Students were given knowledge of the four Vedas – Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. The richness of the syllabus was responsible for the creation of Brahman literature in this period.

### **Universities of Ancient India**

Takshasila was the most famous seat of learning of ancient India. Takshasila was also the capital of Gandhara and its history goes back into hoary antiquity. It was founded by Bharata and named after his son Taksha, who was established there as its ruler. Janamejaya's serpent sacrifice was performed at this very place, As a center for learning the fame of the city was unrivalled in the 6th century B.C. Its site carries out the idea held by the surroundings of a university. The valley is "a singularly pleasant one, well-watered by a girdle of hiss." The Jatakas tell us of how teachers and students lived in the university and the discipline imposed on the latter, sons of Kings and themselves future rulers though they might be! The Jatakas (No.252) thinks that this discipline was likely "to quell their pride and haughtiness".

It attracted scholars from different and distant parts of India. Numerous references in the Jatakas show how thither flocked students from far off Benares, Rajagaha, Mithila, Ujjain, from the Central region, Kosala, and Kuru kingdoms in the North Country. The fame of Takkasila as a seat of learning was of course due to that of its teachers. They are always spoken of as being "world renowned" being "authorities", specialists, and experts in this subject they professed. Of one such teacher we read: "Youths of the warrior and Brahmin castes came from all India to be taught the art by him' sending their sons a thousand miles away from home bespeaks the great concern felt by their parents in their proper education.

As shown in the case of the medical student, Jivaka, the course of study at Takshasila extended to as many as seven years. Jataka No. 252 records how parents felt if they could see their sons return home after graduation at Taxila. One of the archery schools at Takshasila had on its roll call, 103 princes from different parts of the country. King Prasenajit of Kosala, a contemporary of the Buddha, was educated in the Gandhara capital. Prince Jivaka, an illegitimate son of Bimbusara, spent seven years at Takshasila in learning medicine and surgery.

Takshasila a Center for Higher Education: The students are always spoken of as going to Takshasila to complete their education and not to begin it." They are invariably sent at the age of sixteen or when they "come of age".

## **Different Courses of Study**



The Jatakas contain 105 references to Takshasila. "The fame of Takshasila as a seat of learning was, ofcourse, due to that of its teachers. They are always spoken of as being world-renowned,' being authorities. Specialists and experts in the subjects they professed. It was the presence of scholars of such acknowledged excellence and widespread reputation that caused a steady movement of qualified students from all classes and ranks of society towards Takshasila from different and distant parts of the Indian continent, making it the intellectual capital of India of those days.

Thus various centers of learning in the different parts of the country became affiliated, as it were, to the educational center or to the central University of Takshasila, which exercised a kind of intellectual suzerainty over the world of letters in India." Takshashila was destroyed by the Huns in 455 A.D.

The Jatakas constantly refer to students coming to Takkasila to complete their education in the three Vedas and the eighteen Sippas or Arts. Sometimes the students are referred to as selecting the study of the Vedas alone or the Arts alone. The Boddhisatta (Buddha) is frequently referred to as having learned the three Vedas by heart. Takshila was famous for military training, wrestling, archery, and mountain climbing.

**Science, Arts and Crafts:** The Jatakas mention of subjects under scientific and technical education. Medicine included a first hand study of the plants to find out

the medicinal ones. Takkasila was also famous for some of its special schools. One of such schools was the Medical Schools which must have been the best of its kind in India. It was also noted for its School of Law which attracted student from distant Ujjeni. Its Military School was not less famous, which offered training in Archery. Thus the teachers of Takkasila were as famous for their knowledge of the arts of peace as for that of war. Much attention was paid to the development of social and cultural activities in all possible ways. Dancing and dramatic groups, singers and musicians and other artists were given encouragement and offered employment. During the Sangam epoch in South India, the three principal arts, Music, Dance and Drama were practiced intensively and extensively throughout the country, and the epic of Silappadikaram contains many references to the practice of these arts.

Next, to Takkasila ranks Benares as a seat of learning. It was, however, largely the creation of the ex-students of Takkasila who setup as teachers at Benares, and carried thither the culture of that cosmopolitan educational center which was molding the intellectual life of the whole of India. There were again certain subjects in the teaching of which Benares seems to have specialized. There is an expert who was "the chief of his kind in all India."

**Mithila:** Mithila, was a strong hold of Brahminical culture as its best in the time of the Upanishads, under its famous Philosopher-king Janaka who used to send out periodical invitations to learned Brahmins of the Kuru-Panchala country to gather to his court for purpose of philosophical discussions. Under him Eastern India was vying with North-Western India in holding the palm of learning. In those days, the name of the country was not Mithila but Videha. In the time of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and Buddhist literature, Mithila retained the renown of its Vedic days. Its subsequent political history is somewhat chequered. When Vijaya Sen was King of Bengal, Nanyadeva of the Karnataka dynasty was king of Mithila in A.D. 1097. King Vijaya defeated him but was defeated by his son Gangadeva who recovered Mithila from him. This Karnataka Dynasty ruled Mithila for the period A.D. 115-1395, followed by the Kamesvara Dynasty which ruled between A.D.1350-1515. It was again followed by another dynasty of rulers founded by Mahesvara Thakkura in the time of Akbar, and this dynasty has continued up to the present time.

Mithila as a seat of learning flourished remarkably under these later kings. The Kamesvara period was made famous in the literary world by the erudite and versatile scholar, the Jagaddara, who wrote commentaries on a variety of texts, the Gita, Devi-mahatmya, Meghaduta, Gita-Govinda, Malati Madhava, and the like, and original treatises on Erotics, such as Rasika-Sarvasva-Sangita-Sarvasva.

The next scholar who shed luster on Mithila was the poet Vidyapati, the author of Maithili songs or Padavali generally. He has inspired for generations the later Vaishnava writers of Bengal.

Mithila made conspicuous contribution in the realm of severe and scientific subjects. It developed a famous school of Nyaya which flourished from the twelfth to the fifteenth century A.D. under the great masters of Logic, Gangesa, Vardhamana, Pakshadhara, and others. This Schools of New Logic (Navya Nyaya) was founded by Gangesa Upadhyaya and his epochmaking work named "Tatva Chintamani", a work of about 30 pages whose commentaries make up over 1,000,000 pages in three centuries of its study. Gangesa is supposed to have lived after A.D. 1093-1150, the time of Ananada Suri and Amarachandra Suri, whose opinions he has quoted.

By its scholastic activities Mithila in those days, like Nalanda, used to draw students from different part of India for advanced and specialized studies in Nyaya or Logic, of which it was then the chief center.

**3. Nalanda:** Nalanda was the name of the ancient village identified with modern Baragaon, 7 miles north of Rajgir in Bihar. The earliest mention of the place is that in the Buddhist scriptures which refer to a Alana village near Rajagriha with a Pavarika Mango Park in Buddha's time. The Jain texts carry the history earlier than the Buddhist. It was the place where Mahavira had met Gosala and was

counted as a bahira or suburb of Rajagriha was Mahavira had spent as many as fourteen rainy seasons. Nalanda, when Fa-hien visited it, was called Nala and was known as the place "where Sariputta was born, and to which also he returned, and attained here his pari-nirvana. Nalanda was not a sectarian or a religious university in the narrow sense of the term, imparting only Buddhist thought. Subjects other than Buddhism were taught as fervently. Almost all sciences, including the science of medicine were taught. So were the Upanishads and the Vedas. Panini's grammar, the science of pronunciation (Phonetics), etymology, Indology and Yoga were all included in the curricula. Surprisingly, even archery was taught at Nalanda. Hiuen Tsang himself learnt Yogasastra from Jayasena.

Knowledge of Sanskrit was essential for all entrants in spite of the fact that Sakyamuni delivered his sermons in Pali. Knowledge of Sanskrit meant complete mastery of Sanskrit grammar, literature and correct pronunciation, and was compulsory to enter the portals of the university. On the authority of Hiuen Tsang, we can safely say that the entrants to Nalanda were supposed to be well-versed in "Beda" i.e. Veda, Vedanta, Samakhya, Nyaya and Vaisesika. I-Tsing also confirms this in his accounts.

Nalanda was an example of the Guru-Shishya parampara, a great Indian tradition. The authority of the Guru (teacher) over the shishya (student) was absolute, and yet, dissent was permitted in academic matters. Free education:

out of the income of the estate. In Nalanda, swimming, breathing exercises and yoga formed an integral part of the curriculum. Harshavardhana, of the Gupta dynasty was a great sportsman and he encouraged his subjects as well. Another great contemporary of Harsha, Narasimhan or Mamallah was also a great wrestler. He belonged to the Pallava dynasty.

Yuan Chawang, a Chinese student at Nalanda, wrote: "In the establishment were some thousand brethren, all men of great learning and ability, several hundreds being highly esteemed and famous; the brethren were very strict in observing the precepts and regulations of their order, learning and discussing, they found the day too short. Day and night they admonished each other, juniors and seniors mutually helping to perfection.... Hence foreign students came to the institution to put an end to their rounds and then become celebrated and those who shared the name of Nalanda were all treated with respect, wherever they went."

Though Buddhism and Hinduism became arrayed in opposite philosophical camps, they were both given their places in the university curriculum. There was no intellectual isolationism of the type that characterizes modern sectarian institutions of the Christian world. According to eminent Indian historian, R C Dot, "Buddhism never assumed a hostile attitude towards the parent religion of India; and the fact that the two religions existed side by side for long centuries

increased their tolerance of each other. Hindus went to Buddhist monasteries and universities, and Buddhist learnt from Brahmin sages.”

According to Alian Danielou (1907-1994) son of French aristocracy, author of numerous books of philosophy, religion, history and arts of India: “Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveler, stayed five years at Nalanda University, where more than seven thousand monks lived. He mentions a very considerable literature in Sanskrit and other works on history, statistics and geography, none of which have survived. He also writes of officials whose job it was to write records of all important events. At Nalanda, studies included the Vedas, the Upanishads, cosmology (Sankhya), realist or scientific philosophy (Vaisheshika), logic (Nyaya), to which great importance was attached, and Jain and Buddhist philosophy. Studies also included grammar, mechanics, medicine, and physics. Medicine was highly effective, and surgery was quite developed. The pharmacopoeia was enormous, and astronomy was very advanced. The earth’s diameter had been calculated very precisely. In physics, Brahmagupta had discovered the law of gravity.

**4. Vallabi:** Vallabi in Kathiawad was also a great seat of Hindu and Buddhist learning. It was the capital of an important kingdom and a port of international trade with numerous warehouses full of rarest merchandise. During the 7th

century, however, it was more famous as a seat of learning. I-tsang informs us that its fame rivaled with that of Nalanda in eastern India.

**5. Vikramasila:** Like Nalanda and Vallabhi, the University of Vikramasila was also the result of royal benefactions. Vikramasila, found by king Dharmapala in the 8th century, was a famous center of international learning for more than four centuries. King Dharmapala (c.775-800 A.D.) was its founder; he built temples and monasteries at the place and liberally endowed them. He had the Vihara constructed after a good design. He also erected several halls for the lecturing work. His successors continued to patronize the University down to the 13th century. The teaching was controlled by a board of eminent teachers and it is stated that this Board of Vikramasila also administered the affairs at Nalanda. The University had six colleges, each with a staff of the standard strength of 108 teachers, and a Central Hall called the House of Science with its six gates opening on the six Colleges. It is also stated that the outer walls surrounding the whole University was decorated with artistic works, a portrait in painting of Nagarjuna adorning the right of the principal entrance and that of Atisa on the left. On the walls of the University were also the painted portraits of Pandits eminent for their learning and character. Grammar, logic, metaphysics, ritualism were the main subjects specialized at the institution. Destruction of Vikramasila by



Moslems: In 1203, the University of Vikramasila was destroyed by the Mahomadens under Bakhtyar Khilji. As related by the author of Tabakat-i-Nasari:

“The greater number of the inhabitants of that place was Brahmins and the whole of these Brahmins had their heads shaven; and they were all slain. There were a great number of books on religion of the Hindus (Buddists) there; and when all these books came under the observation of the Musalmans, they summoned a number of Hindus that they might give the information respecting the import of these books; but the whole of the Hindus had been killed. On becoming acquainted (with the contents of those books), it was found that the whole of that fortress and city was a college, and, in the Hindu tongue, they call a college a Bihar (vihara).”

After the destruction of the Vikramasila University, Sri Bhadra repaired to the University of Jagadala whence he proceeded to Tibet, accompanied by many other monks who settled down there as preachers of Buddhism.

**6. Jagaddala:** Its foundation by King Rama Pala. According to the historical Epic Ramacharita, King Ram Pala, of Bengal and Magadhd, who reigned between A.D. 108-1130, founded a new city which he called Ramavati on the banks of the rivers Ganga and Karatoya in Varendra and equipped the city with a Vihara called Jagadala. The university could barely work for a hundred years, till the time of Moslem invasion sweeping it away in A.D. 1203. But in its short life it has made

substantial contributions to learning through its scholars who made it famous by their writings.

**7. Odantapuri:** Very little is known of this University, although at the time of Abhayakaragupta there were 1,000 monks in residence here. Odantapuri is now known for the famous scholar named Prabhakara who hailed from Chatarpur in Bengal. It appears that this University had existed long before the Pala kings came into power in Magadha. These kings expanded the University by endowing it with a good library of Brahmanical and Buddhist works. This Monastery was taken as the model on which the first Tibetan Buddhist Monastery was built in 749 A.D. under King Khri-sron-due-stan on the advice of his guru, Santarakshita.

**8. Nadia:** Nadia is the popular name of Navadvipa on the Bhagirathi as its confluence with Jalangi. Once it was a center of trade borne by the Bhagirathi between Saptframa (on the river Sarasvati near Hoogly) and the United Provinces, and in the other direction by the Jalangi between Saptagrama and Eastern Bengal.

**9. Madura Sangham:** Madura Sangham was another seat of learning. The Sangham was known for its learning and academic prestige. Writing about the Tamil institutions, Dr. Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1871-1947) remarks: "There are two featurers with regard to these assemblies that call for special remark. The first, the academics were standing bodies of the most eminent men among the

learned men of the time in all branches of knowledge. The next, it was the approval of this learned body that set the seal of authority on the works preserved to it." Scholars were honored irrespective of sex. Aiyangar continues: "A Ruler of Tanjore, poet, musician, warrior, and administrator, did extraordinary honor to a lady of Court, by name Ramachandramha, who composed an epic on the achievements of her patron, Raghunatha Nayaka of Tanjore. It appears that she was accorded honour of Kanaka-Ratna Abhisheka (bath in gold and gems). She was, by assent of the Court, made to occupy the position of "Emperor of Learning"

**10. Benares:** Benares has always been a culture center of all India fame and even the Buddha's day it was already old. Though not a formal university, it is a place unique in India, which has throughout the ages provided the most suitable atmosphere for the pursuit of higher studies. The method of instruction as also the curriculum followed there in early times was adopted from Takshasila. Benares University was famous for Hindu culture. Sankaracharya as a student was acquainted with this university. Benares is the only city in India which has its schools representing every branch of Hindu thought. And there is no spiritual path which has not its center in Benares with resident adherents. Every religious sect of the Hindus has its pilgrimage there. In ancient days, Sarnath figured as a recognized seat of Buddhist learning. Rightly, therefore, it is this holy city the very

heart of spiritual India. Alberuni, the noted Arabian historian, mentioned Benares as a great seat of learning and Bernier, who visited India, described it "as a kind of university, but it resembled rather the school of ancients, the masters being spread over different parts of the town in private houses." Kachipuram was another such institution of learning in South India. It came to be known as Dakshina Kasi, Southern Kashi. Huien Tsang visited it about 642. A.D. and found Vaishnavite and Shaivite Hindus, Digambara Jain and Mahayan Buddhists studying together.

Navadvip belonged to comparatively recent times and was founded by Sena Kings of Bengal in about 1063 A.D. and soon rose to be a great center of learning. It imparted instruction in Vedas, Vedangas, Six systems especially Nyaya. Chaitanya was a product of Navadvipa. It had 500-600 students, when A.H.Wilson visited it in 1821, drawn from Bengal, Assam, Nepal and South India.

## **Libraries in Ancient India**

The great seats of learning in ancient India like Nalanda Vikramasila, Pataliputra, and Tamralipti are said to have contained libraries of their own and striven hard for the promotion of education and learning in the country, the evidence for which comes from the writings of Hieun-Tsang and It-Sing who spent some time in some of the centers and studied the Buddhist philosophy. They were given all facilities to copy down the manuscripts which they wanted from

the libraries. Each of these institutions must have maintained a well equipped library for the use of teachers and students.

The library in ancient times was called either Saraswati bhandara or Pustaka bhandara. Many libraries were located in temples. In South India, records contain references to Nagai, Srirangam, Sermadevi and Cidambaram, Kacipuram and Sringeri. In this connection it may be mentioned that libraries in ancient Cambodia were all located in temples and the inscriptions from some temples in the area bear evidence to that.

Library is mentioned for the first time in the inscriptions of the king Indravarman at Preah Ko and Bakong (Cambodia). They were rectangular with gabled ends and at first with a single vaulted hall. The temples of Prasat Bantay Pir Chan, and Angkor wat contained libraries in which the main deity of the temples was oriented. It is also interesting to note that the walls of the library were sculptured with panels depicting scenes from the epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

“India has lost much of its great treasures of ancient texts during the successive invasions by foreign rulers. Our great libraries at Nalanda and other places were burnt to ashes. Sachan who collected and edited Al Beruni’s works said: “It was like a magic island of quiet and impartial research, in the midst of a world of clashing swords, burning towns, and plundered temples.

The work of many eminent scholars contained thousands of volumes of translations of Indian texts, whose original were lost in India owing to the depredations of Mohammedan iconoclasts who destroyed hundreds of Hindu and Buddhist seats of learning, in India including the world famous Nalanda University." "The Christian missionaries in the West coast took away and burnt many valuable manuscripts. Many great scholars died without passing down their knowledge to the descendents. In their quest for livelihood during the nine hundred years of foreign rule, the descendents did not care to preserve their knowledge."

Many of these universities were sacked, plundered, looted by the Islamic onslaught. They destroyed temples and libraries and indulged in most heinous type of vandalism. These were particularly heinous crimes the burning of the Library of Nalanda ranks with the destruction of the Library of Alexandria as the two most notorious acts of vandalism in the course of Islamic expansion. Nalanda, Vikramashila, Odantapura, and Jagaddala are the universities destroyed by Mohammad Bakhtiar Khilji around 120 A.D. For more refer to The Sack of Nalanda,)

Gertrude Emerson Sen (-1982) historian and journalist and Asia specialist, wrote on the plight of the universities: "Night was to descent on all the great centers of traditional Indian learning, however, when the untutored Muslims of

Central Asia poured into India with fire and sword at the beginning of the 11th century.

## **Professional and Useful Education**

### ***Medical Science***

Medical Science is no doubt of hoary antiquity in India. The Vedic literature refers to the healing feats of Asvins, who though originally human beings, were later deified by a grateful posterity. This science was fairly well developed by the 4th century B.C., for the Greeks, who had accompanied Alexander, were very well impressed by the skill of Indian doctors in curing the cases of serpent bites. The Jatakas refer to the medical students as Taxila treating for cranial abscesses and intestinal displacement. Medical education was usually imparted by private teachers. The student had to be well versed in Sanskrit, for most of the books on medicine were written in that language. Practical training in surgery and pharmacy and constant discussion were some of the important features of the training.

**Training in Surgery:** The beginners were taught how to hold and use the surgical instruments by practicing upon pumpkins, water melons etc. under the teacher's direction. Puncturing was demonstrated on the veins of dead animals, the manner of holding the probe on dry Alabu fruits, application of bandages on

stuffed human figures and the use of caustics of soft pieces of flesh. Susruta emphasizes on the importance of dissection for perfecting the student's knowledge; and points out that mere book learning cannot give a clear idea of the actual internal constituents of the human body. Corpses used to be decomposed in water and students were then required to dissect them and visualize the nature of skin, muscles, arteries, bones, internal organs, etc. Anatomical knowledge that was imparted was fairly high when compared with the contemporary standards elsewhere,

Small pox inoculation is an ancient Indian tradition and was practiced in India before the West. In ancient times in India smallpox was prevented through the tikah (inoculation).

Dharmapal has quoted British sources to prove that inoculation in India was practiced before the British did. In the seventeenth century, smallpox inoculation (tikah) was practiced in India. A particular sect of Brahmins employed a sharp iron needle to carry out these practices.

The Hindus were the first nation to establish hospitals, and for centuries they were the only people in the world who maintained them. The Chinese traveler, Fa-hien, speaking of a hospital he visited in Pataliputra says: "Hither come all poor and helpless patients suffering from all kinds of infirmities. They are well taken care of, and a doctor attends them; food and medicine being



supplied according to their wants. Thus they are made quite comfortable, and when they are well, they may go away.

India continued to be famous for its medical skills throughout the ancient period. Her doctors could perform surgical operations for cataract, hydromel, abscesses, extraction of dead embryos etc. They were in demand in Mesopotamia and Arabia for guiding and training the physicians there.

### **Veterinary Education**

“Veterinary science had developed into an Indian medical specialty by that early era, and India’s monarchs seem to have supported special hospitals for their horses as well as their elephants. Hindu faith in the sacredness of animals as well as human souls, and belief in the partial divinity of cows and elephants helps explain perhaps what seems to be far better care lavished on such animals... A uniquely specialized branch of Indian medicine was called Hastyaurveda (“The Science of Prolonging Elephant Life”).

### **Military Education**

In modern times military training is usually given only by the state authorities when recruits join the army. Such was not the case in ancient India. The average citizen and villager were expected to be able to defend his own hearth and home: The Arthasastra expressly lies down that every village ought to be able to defend itself.

**Military Training:** There were also some cities in the country, famous as centers of military training. Taxila, situated in the north-west, had naturally become a center of military training. Kshatriyas and Brahmins from all over the country used to go to this frontier city for getting mastery in the military profession. In one military college of the city there were 103 princes receiving training in the different branches of the military art, which included elephant-lore, horsemanship, and cavalry training, and the instructions in the use of the different weapons then in use.

### **Commercial Education**

There was considerable inter provincial and foreign trade going on in the ancient times. The maritime activity of ancient India were considerable, and the trade with South East Asia, Egypt, Greek and Rome was very profitable to Indian during the early centuries.

### **India a Land of Hindus, is it?**

There is a feeling in the minds of many, that India is and was a Hindu country having always had a majority of Hindus. This again is a misconception. In historical times the population of India was never in majority of Hindus. Swami Vivekananda<sup>21</sup> estimated Buddhist to be two thirds of population and Dr. Ambedkar<sup>22</sup> says Buddhist were in majority. Then there were Jains and

---

<sup>21</sup> L.M.Joshi, Studies in culture, p. 358Buddistic

<sup>22</sup> Anthill. Castes. P.146

Veerashaivas and Tribal religions in addition to Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. So taking Hinduism as religious faith, they were neither the most ancient nor the most numerous. If one considers Hindu not as religion but as geographical entity like as Hindu comes from pronunciation of Sindhu, then also one has to consider others as a part of, and rightful owners of, this land, irrespective of their religious faith.

And Hindu or Aryan as cultural entity has a very poor claim and one could not accept the conditionality of respect for Rama and Krishna etc. as a precondition of nationality, as Gail Omvedt very rightly analyses the situation and comments, "In other words, the construction of Hinduism as achieved by the Hindu-nationalists and accepted in various forms by many supposed secularists as well, rests on a trick: conflating the two contradictory definitions of a broad, territorial, pluralistic, historical identity with a religious culture that continues to give dominance to an Aryan / Vedic / Sanskrit / brahmanic core."<sup>23</sup>

Dr. Ambedkar very rightly said, "It must be recognized that there never has been a common Indian Culture, that historically there have been three Indias, Brahmanic India, Buddhist India, and Hindu India, each with its own culture... It must be recognized that the history of India before the Muslim invasions is the history of a mortal conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism."<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> [Dalit visions p.95]

<sup>24</sup> [vol. 3 p.275]

### **2.3 Buddhist Educational system**

This brings us to another question. What was the Educational system of Buddhists. Buddhists had their own educational system and was entirely based on different principles. Buddhists never believed in caste distinctions, they believed in equality of all men, they believed in equal status to women. Even after the fall of Buddhism, the education system continued through the siddhas. The students used to utter 'om namao siddham' at the start of their studies. The present 'ganesha namah' is quite recent. The remnant of this system of siddhas, the word 'onama' meaning 'beginning' a corrupted form of 'om namah siddham' still exists in Marathi language.

To understand the difference between Brahmanic and Buddhist methods of education is a crucial point which should not be missed if one wants to realize the implications of the education system in Indian society. The ancient India was known all over the world for Buddhist Education, not Brahmanic.

Brahmanic education was essentially a single individual teacher with his small group of disciples and pupils at his residence. On the other hand, Buddhist system is institutional i.e. monastic. This difference is significant, leading to different lines of evolution. Prof. Mookerji says, "The necessity of a domestic environment in the brahmanical system did not favour the expansion of a small school under an individual teacher into a large educational federation, controlled

by a collective body of teachers, as was the characteristic of the Buddhist system.<sup>25</sup> It gave birth to those large scale monastic universities, with thousands of teachers and students, and attracted students from all over Asia. Evolution which continued for more than fifteen hundred years culminated in establishing Universities like Nalanda, Vallabhi, Vikramasila, Jagaddala, Odantpuri etc.<sup>26</sup> Though these universities started as training grounds for monks, did not remain places for cloistered meditation but developed into seats of culture and learning, and remained so till got destroyed by Muslim invasions.<sup>27</sup>

Those were the times, without any books, all teaching were imparted by word of mouth. Books came not before first century B.C. Students had to learn by heart Dharma and Vinaya, and at the end of learning these used to be a ceremony of Paravana, on the last day of varsavas.<sup>28</sup> The remnants of this Buddhist practice, remains even now in the form of "Kojagiri" in Maharashtra and by other names in other areas like "Pujagiri" in Bengal.

During the course, there was unrestricted freedom to argue, to dispute, and debate and each was expected to think reason and decide for himself all matters of vinaya and dharma,<sup>29</sup> the facility, presumably was absent in gurukuls.

---

<sup>25</sup> Ancient Indian Education, p.460, quoted from 2500 years of Buddhism, (TYB) Bapat P.V. ed, p.156

<sup>26</sup> [S.Dutta, TYB, p.157]

<sup>27</sup> [S.Dutta, ibid. p.157]

<sup>28</sup> [Ibid. p 157]

<sup>29</sup> [Ibid. p. 160]

The subjects were not only dharma and vinaya but they were trained in varied cultural subjects, in the tenets of other faith, in systems of philosophy, and even the subjects of pragmatic importance like agriculture and architecture. Afterwards, when books began to be written, these centers developed huge splendid manuscript libraries.<sup>30</sup>

We have seen in gurukuls, admission was based on basis of caste, reserved only to all dwijas technically. But only to Brahmins in practice, because in Kali Yuga, there were only two varnas, Brahmins and shudras, and the last Kshatriya kula was that Nandas, because they did not want to recognize the Mauryas as Kshatriyas. We also know that people of all castes were admitted to Buddhist sangha, and in Buddhist centers of learning, the admission was open not only to monks of different Buddhist sects but, also to untrained seekers of knowledge and learning, even to non-Buddhists, irrespective of caste and sect, religious denomination or nationality.<sup>31</sup>

It is also worth noting that the system of education was totally free and for the benefit of residence and learning in a monastery, there could of course be no question of payment. The monasteries were maintained by grants from princes and people alike as an act of spiritual merit.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> [Ibid. p. 161]

<sup>31</sup> [Ibid p.161, 170]

<sup>32</sup> [Ibid. p. 162]

## **2.4 Jain system of Education**

Jainism is much more ancient faith than Buddhism. Jainas or Tirthankaras are founders of Jainism. There were twenty three teerthakaras before Mahaveera, who was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha (6th century BCE) and is credited with formulation of a sect known as Jainism. Jainas laid great stress on right knowledge and right conduct for self-realization. It was a full-fledged sect with well-organized sanghas in north before arriving in Karnataka.

Scholars differ in their opinion on identity, date and time of the entry of first Jaina preceptors in the South. Jaina traditional accounts and literature state that the great ascetic Bhadrubahu was foretold about a calamity and famine of twelve years in the north and migrated with his disciple Chandragupta and the entire sangha or community of ascetics to Sharavanabelagola in the fourth century BC. Chandragupta, the disciple is identified with Chandragupta Maurya, grandfather of Emperor Ashoka who ruled from 322 B.C. – 298 B.C. Another theory is that Chandragupta was a grandson of Ashoka, who was Jaina by faith. However, it is generally believed that arrival of sage Bhadrubahu in the third century before the Christian era laid the foundation of Jainism in Karnataka. Shravanabelagola (Hassan District) became a great center of pilgrimage and learning. It has retained this unique honour for more than twenty-three centuries

now! Very few places in the world can claim this long uninterrupted tradition of learning and imparting religious education.

Most of the education in ancient times was imparted orally and the students had to listen attentively. Sravana or Samana (listening) came to be identified with student ascetics who were supposed to be ardent listeners of a guru's teaching. Belagola means white and pure lake. The great lake between two hills is so clean and sparkling that the surroundings are clearly reflected in the water. Shravanabelagola and its surroundings teem with monuments and inscriptions and epitaphs. They latter erected in memory of great gurus and preceptors, who provided life-long spiritual guidance to monks and masses. Similarly a number of epigraphs on the hillocks of Chikkabetta and Doddabetta bear witness to the continuous tradition of unflinching devotion of the Jaina disciples towards their gurus.

The fifty-seven feet-tall statue of Gommata at Shravanabelagola is the very embodiment of teachings of Mahaveera, which stresses compassion, renunciation, non-violence and readiness to undergo any suffering to achieve the three goals. The life history of Gommata or Bahubali, who outshone in valor, intelligence and good looks, but who sacrificed everything including the huge empire he inherited, is ever enchanting and enlightening.



Shravanabelagola boasts of self-inscribed letters or signature of the great Kannada poet Ranna. Ranna might have engraved it when he visited the sacred place as a devotee. Several well known Kannada poets like Mallishena, Boppana, Mallinatha and Nagavarma have composed writings on stone, attesting thereby that the place was renowned for academic excellence and a testing place for seasoned of Jainism like Kondakunda, Samantabhadra, Pujoyapada, Jinasena, Puspadanta and Somadeva etc. hailed from Karnataka and their works in Sanskrit and Prakrit are studied throughout India. Jainism, unlike Buddhism continues to flourish over centuries in this land.

Jainism is divided into two sects of Svetambara and Digambara. The Svetambara monks wear white and Digambara ascetics who practice extreme renunciation have to discard even the last piece of cloth or the barest necessity of life, to overcome worldly binding. Similarly sallekhana or death by observing religious injunction of fast unto death is not only permitted in Jainism, but also held in high esteem. Individuals who have died observing sallekhana are remembered in special epitaphs known as nishidi or nisadi stones.

The Jain contribution to Karnataka has been tremendous and manifold. Most of the distinguished early poets like Pampa, Ponna, Ranna and Janna were Jains. So were the early lexicographers and grammarians of the Kannada language. In the field of architecture, sculpture and painting Jaina element

outshines all others. All this was possible due to the liberal patronage of royal dynasties, rich merchants and traders and munificent householders. Jaina faith lays stress on charity as a path towards self-realization.

This charity is fourfold, consisting of food, shelter, medicine, and donating of books. This aspect of charity had helped the spread of education and learning in a great measure. Granthadana or giving of religious books was common to all faiths but among Jains it took an institutionalized form and helped masses a good deal to acquire knowledge.

As in the case of Buddhistic system, layanas or lenas (caves) were constructed in early centuries for temporary residence of the Jaina monks, around jinalayas or temples with teerthankara idols. The jinalayas were basically places of worship and meditation, and grew into centers of learning. Basadi or originally residential quarter came to denote a building consisting of a shrine, place for group worship, and became a shelter for wandering monks as also residence for teachers, scholars and students. The inscriptions registering grants to basadis run into hundreds throughout the state of Karnataka providing huge amount and land.

All activities in jinalayas or basadis were concentrated around five revered great persons, called Panchaparamesthis. Among these, Arhats and Siddhas were equivalent to Jinas and teerthankaras. Acharyas or the learned were peripatetic

gurus as well as heads of the basadis. A group of sadhus or monks accompanied on Acharya while touring and they were termed gachchas. Several such gachchas are mentioned in inscriptions.

Next in the educational hierarchy came upadhyayas. They were subject teachers. Sadhus were also known as sramanas who were always on the move and had close contact with the masses. A Jaina nun was known as sadhvi or kanti or ganti and this class of sadhus and sadhvis have contributed a good deal of towards propagation and spread of Jaina learning.

The local people administered jinalayas. Their total involvement in the maintenance helped organization of religious ceremonies, festivals, and arrangement of lectures and discourses of moving acharyas. Jaina mathas also came up, which were bigger establishments and catered to religious and spiritual requirements of the community. All the Jaina Preceptors, acharyas, upadyayas and sadhus or shramanas were recluses and did not have a family or place of their own. They belonged to the whole humanity. To avoid attachment to worldly things, they kept on moving. Jaina mathas and basadis that existed throughout the country made provisions for the stay, food and religious discourses of ascetics. These mathas provided shelter and education to students of other faiths as well.

The sadhus and student ascetics used to live together in the mathas and jinalayas, hajjis or karakas or gantis also had a place there. With the arrival of Acharyas, the place buzzed with activity. The village community accorded warm hospitality and arrangements were made for the address of the acharya attended by the whole congregation. The acharyas in assembly solved religious issues, and provided direction.

There was provision for education from primary level to highest education in a Jaina matha. Education of youngsters began at the age of five years. The Acharya or Upadhyaya initiated the young boys. Drawing letters of siddhamatraka or table started with Siddam Namah. The boys wrote on fine sand, spread on a board with their fingers. After mastering siddhamatraka they wrote on folding blackboards (kadata) with chalk (balapa) and finally went on to write on palm leaves. Ratnakarandashravakachara or code of conduct for householders was studied by heart by boys and girls alike.

This handbook of 150 verses was written by sage Samantabhadra in Sanskrit but was translated in all Indian languages and studied in pathasalas or schools attached to the basadis and mathas. Stress was laid on learning through regional language. In northern parts of India it was Ardhamagadhi or variation of Prakrit, and Karnataka it was Kannada. Many works in Sanskrit and Prakrit got translated into Kannada.

However, learning a higher level had to be in Sanskrit only. All existing sects deemed knowledge as whole and study of Vedas, Upanishads, different darsanas (schools of philosophy), shastras (science) and puranas were studied by Buddhists, Jains, Tantriks, Shaktas, Shaivas and Vaishnavas. Tradition mentions sixty-four arts a person had to learn and Jains added eight more to the list. Special mention may be made of chemistry, science (vijñana) and manufacture of small machines. Perhaps the merchant class – the main patrons of Jainism – encouraged the study of these for the promotion of different arts and crafts.

The method of learning various subjects was traditional, i.e. memorizing repeating, and reproducing. Vada or discussion formed the main platform in Jaina system and training was given in oratory. Most of the famous preceptors were great orators and established supremacy of Jainism over other sects by arguing, disputing, and discussing logically. Tarkasatra or science of logic occupied prominent place in Jaina syllabus. Titles like Vadikolahala (who causes confusion among arguers) Prativadi bhayankara ("terror to counter arguers") Vadi-raja (king among disputers) Vadibha simha (lion to elephant-like arguers) were given by the king to the scholars in the assembly of the learned. Later, such titles were conferred to established disputants of other faiths as well. Jaina students devotedly listen to an Ascetic Teacher under the Shade of a Tree. A Jaina guru was the most respected in the Jaina community and we have a good deal of

pictorial evidence. Sculptures depicting teachers imparting lesson are several. Stools (tavanekolu) to keep the palm-book ready to depicted in numerous sculptures. Self- study was given due importance and a student is shown as reading a palm-leaf book with great attention. In one sculpture, a mendicant is studying palm-leaf books under a tiled roof with oil lamp.

Sallekhana samadhis or nishadi stone memorials erected for the departed revered, illustrate the teachers in preaching pose with palm-leaf texts in hand. The jaina monasteries invariably had libraries of palm-leaf books and these included treatises on many secular subjects besides Jaina agamas or holy texts. There were texts of other languages and regions as well. When we realize that a manuscript of Bilhana's Vikramankadevacharita depicting life and achievements of Chalukya king Vikramaditya of Karnataka was found in a Jaina library of Jaisalmer (Rajasthan) and a copy of Pampa's Adipurna in Ara (Bihar), we could visualize the length and breadth of the country these books traveled in ancient they received for preservation over centuries. Perhaps many more old and rare manuscripts are stored in the libraries of well-known Jaina monasteries. But these are not easily available to scholars who are of non-Jaina faith.

The Jaina monastic life was well organized and an officer known as pravajyadayaka selected student-ascetics after careful examination. Family backgrounds, educational and religious learnings were considered. After getting

admission, a supervisor, known as the niryaṇaka kept a watch on the behaviour of each and every student. Wrongdoers were admonished in time and waywardness punished. Rigorous training and study awaited the incumbents. They had to make their own arrangements for day-to-day needs and beg for food. Spicy food was to be avoided. Training was given to restrain basic instincts like anger, joy, and sorrow and show equanimity to all creatures under all circumstances.

Besides food and shelter, books were distributed free at jinalayas and it is likely that medical instruction was also imparted at the free hospitals attached. Hospitals big and small were attached to Jaina mathas where sick cattle and birds were also treated besides human beings. Jainism stood for compassion towards all living beings (sarvajeevidayapara), and youngsters developed this trait early in life.

The role of the merchant community in the promotion and spread of Jainism is significant, they toured the entire subcontinent and beyond, in caravans (sarthavaha) built hospices along trade routes. They provided transport and protection to sadhus and sadhvis and received religious instruction gratefully. They patronized several shrines and mathas and gave hefty donations of land and cash for the upkeep and maintenance of basadis, orchards, tanks,

inns and wells. All passersby folk benefited by these charitable deeds, irrespective of caste or creed.

The trading class knew several languages and scripts and mastered accounting. Their grants helped the Jaina system of education and there was no dearth of funds at anytime. The basadis and mathas of Karnataka attracted ascetics from all over. Mudabidri, Karkala, Venuru, Barkuru (all in South Kanara district) Haduvalli, Gerasoppa Banavasi (North Kanara district) Ballegavi, Humcha (Shimoga district) Koppal, Bankapur (Dharwad district), Kogali, (Bellary district), and Terdal (Blegaum district) were well known centers of Jaina learning. Sholapur and Kolhapur, now in Maharashtra, attracted scholars from far and wide.

Reference has been already made to Sharavanabelagola as age-old center of religion and learning. Banavasi being center of Buddhism in early centuries also shore as a Jaina center. Jaina erudition and teachings of Mahaveera were compiled, scripted and propagated in book-form from Banavasi for the first time. Shatkhandagama, an anthology of tenets of Jainism in Prakrit language took shape in Banavasi. Sage Pushpadanta who authored it lived in 2 century BC It is the most ancient anthology on Jainism.

Special mention has to be made regarding the instruction available for women in Jaina system. It is well known that Buddha welcomed women to sangha or monastic organization after initial reluctance and hesitation. The Jaina



order had no such dithering. From the times prior to Mahaveera, Jaina nunneries existed. Dharmadana or imparting religious education was a mission with this class. Wandering nuns created cultural awareness through discourses, which were attended by all classes and without gender discrimination.

We come across grants to ajjis in inscriptions. This term is similar to arye or aryake, a learned nun. An ajji or kanti was entitled to initiate disciples into renunciation. Ajjis with several male disciples figure in inscriptions and literature. There were well versed in Jaina cannon and religious practices, since they had to initiate various disciples of different caliber and attainment, they had to remember and practice elaborates injuctions and rites.

As late as 14 century B.C. the Tapogachha University in Gujarat conferred various degrees on learned women, they were 1)Ganini (leader of gana), 2. Pravarthini (Propagator) and 3) Mahattara (The great or superior). The first and second category of female ascetics seems to have traveled across the country, providing spiritual guidance. Mahattara was a leader of nuns. We know one Mahattara par excellence by the name of Yakini. Haribhadrasuri is a great name in Indian literature. He wrote books on Jaina ethics, yoga, logic, rituals and commentaries on shastras, besides stories. He calls himself Yakini-Mahattara-sunu or son of great nun Yakini! This suggests that she must have been a genius and a great influence on his scholastic life.

Many sadhvis and kantis mastered and preached Jaina Agamas or holy texts. Some of them have erected monuments in memory of their gurus. The kantis were employed as instructors to princesses, to teach reading, writing and various arts. There were nuns who specialized in astrology and logic. Administrators like Jakkiabbe who administered a division, and several queens who ruled provinces, towns and religious establishments were of Jaina faith. The legendary queen Shantala excelled in music, dance and drama. Undoubtedly they all availed the facilities of education in Jaina system of those times.

We have to go back to Shravanabelagola to have pictorial evidence of sadhvis who moved from place to place. In the wall murals of the Jaina matha is a scene of instruction wherein a senior nun is engaged in reading out and explaining to juniors who are intently listening with folded hands. Another scene depicts a nun addressing an assembly. From the dress of the instructor we can guess that she is a visiting sadhvi from north or west India. This only proves that wandering and preaching nuns were quite common.

The basadis continued to impart popular education where shravaka-goshtis or listening assemblies were held. Women learnt to read and recite Jinagamas, participated in community singing and listened to the stories of great men in Jainism. Kannada classics speak of housewives attending such sessions and their menfolk encouraging it.

Jaina devotees undertook copying out sacred texts and donating them to basadis and individuals. Attimabbe's grant of a thousand copies of Shantipurana was a landmark. Those who could not arrange donation on such a large scale engaged copyists on a moderate scale. Others undertook it upon themselves. Basadis in Kolhapur are in possession of such manuscripts of copies of holy texts made by nuns and commoners. These holy texts and classic were read out to the conglomeration on special days and weeks. The ajjis used to conduct story-sessions and recitals. In the days when education could not be separated from religion, both mingled to motivate individuals with character -building and leading a pious life.

## **2.5 Education in Ancient India**

Secondary Education coincides with education of grades 6 through 12 or the second stage of education that commences after primary education and continues up to beginning of higher education. In the early Vedic period (2000-1000 BC) education was a family responsibility, being given by the father to the son. In the later Vedic age (1000-500 BC), the age of UPANISADS, education was institutionalized and it took a definite shape. In this period Brahmanic education entered Bengal.

With the formal ceremony of Upanayan the guru or the teacher accepted his pupil. The normal age of upanayan was 8 for a Brahman, 11 for a Kshatriya

and 12 for a Vaishya. The guru's home was the school where the pupils lived for the whole period of education as a member of the family. Thus a residential feature was seen in the education imparted in ancient India. No tuition fees was charged but pupils used to render personal manual services. In the early Vedic schools, education was confined to young Brahmins. In the later Vedic period before 500 BC, the education of the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas came under Brahman control.

The purpose of instruction was to inculcate in the minds of the pupils the necessary direction for all their future life according to their position in the caste. The guru's school usually received state support in the form of allotment of rent-free lands. But guru had full autonomy to decide what to teach and how to teach. Generally in guru's school the pupils studied the three main VEDAS: the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda and some times the Atharvaveda and also metaphysics and preliminary course on grammar, logic, ethics, biology, arithmetic, doctrine of prayer, astronomy and also all branches of culture and knowledge as were known then.

For Brahman and Kshatriya pupils the courses of studies were similar at the elementary stage. In the advanced stage the curricula differed. The former studied Vedas and other higher subjects relating to their vocation as priests and the latter learnt military tactics, archery and politics. The curricula showed that

guru's school provided both general and occupation oriented courses. The period of study usually lasted till the age of 16 and sometimes, till the age of 24. The relationship between the guru and the pupil was cordial and personal. The guru was highly respected in ancient India.

For others education was craft oriented. Traders i.e., the Vaisyas studied grammar and trade crafts. Their education was organized according to apprentice system. The SUDRAS were involved in agricultural and related economic activities and numerous arts and crafts. Their education was also production and craft centered. In later Vedic period the rigidity of caste system made access to education restricted.

Towards the end of ancient period two types of schools were developed: The toll or pathsala and network of indigenous elementary schools. The tolls were seats of higher learning including secondary education. They imparted instruction through Sanskrit and provided traditional classical learning. In early Vedic period, boys and girls at the age of eight after upanayan enjoyed equal educational facilities. Girls started their studentship at guru's home. Young maiden's completing their education was married to learned persons. In Vedic society a wife was a regular partner in the sacrificial offering of the husband.

So she had to acquire Vedic knowledge which was essential for performing religious rites and ceremonies. But as a result of social changes in later period,

women lost their liberal social status as well as opportunity for education. In later period, Brahmanic education flourished along with Buddhist education. It also continued throughout Muslim and British periods. In Bangladesh, tolls are the secondary level institutions of Brahmanic education. Buddhist education centred on monasteries or viharas. The primary idea of Buddhism was to provide for proper instruction of the novice in the doctrines of the Buddhist faith and to secure supervision over his conduct while he was becoming habituated to the monastic life.

The first step of admission or initiation in Buddhism is called prabbajja and after admission, the candidate becomes a novice and is placed under a discipline of a preceptor. After completion of the no vitiating period he becomes a bhikshu (monk), a full-fledged member of the order. From this provision for the instruction of novices arose the Buddhist education system. In Buddhist system, the pupil does all the menial work and renders the services the preceptor requires. In turn, the teacher gives the pupil all possible intellectual and spiritual help and guidance by teaching and instruction. A competent bhikshu generally accepts 2 novices. The group of young bhikshus lived in the vihara. Such residential viharas were developed in various parts of India including the present territory of Bangladesh.

Viharas were seats of higher learning and were supported by a system of elementary education. No secondary level institution was developed as such as that time. But elementary level courses prepared the students for advanced specialized studies at the Viharas. So it is presumable that elementary education covered both primary and secondary level education.

Huen Tsang was stayed in India from 629 to 645 AD found that primary course started at the age of 8 and continued up to the age of 15 and subjects like grammar, arts and crafts, medicine, reasoning and inner science were taught. I Tsing who stayed in India from 673 to 687 AD observed that at elementary level pupils studied five major vidyas such as grammar and lexicography, arts, medicine, logic and science of universal soul or philosophy. After completion of this stage, the period of specialized higher studies began. Buddhist monastery primarily prepared the students to teach sacred literature. But I Tsing found that some monasteries also had secular sections where the students were given instruction in subjects related to their practical life.

Buddha with great reluctance consented to admit women as disciples on their renouncing the household stage. Rules were developed for regulating the life of the nuns under complete subjugation of monks. Gradually, an order of nuns was created for education and training the nuns. But there is lack of evidence and training they had in nunneries. One of the contributions of Buddhist

education was that through offering the secular curricula along with religious ones in viharas and admission of laymen and non-Buddhists to attend those institutions, Buddhims stimulated the demand for education among common people.

## **2.6 Education in Muslim period**

Since the establishment of Muslim rule in India (around 1204-1206), Bengal was ruled as a province of Delhi empire and sometimes it was an independent state. The Subahdars, the independent rulers and Nawabs established maktabas and Madrasahs as educational institutions. Maktabas provided primary education and madrasahs were seats of secondary education and higher learning. The madrasahs of Bengal were in a flourishing condition during Muslim rule. These were run with state funds.

The nobility and the private individuals were also found to set up and run madrasahs at their own initiative. Many illustrious scholars, administrators and officials were graduates of madrasahs in Muslim Bengal. In the school of Shah Mubarak his sons Faizi and Abul Fazal, historian Badauni and other scholars studied. In the madrasah run by Sharafuddin Abu Taoama in Sonargaon students studied both secular and religious subjects. During the rule of emperor Shahjahan



the madrasahs of Jahangirnagar specialized in teaching science, theology, philosophy and mathematics.

Madrasah education was free. The teacher enjoyed high status in the society. The courses of madrasah generally included other Islamic studies. Secular subjects such as history, logic, geography, algebra, astronomy, medical science, chemistry and other technical, vocational, professional subjects were more cultivated in some centers. The medium of instruction was Persian but Arabic was compulsory for Muslims students. Teaching of history was one special feature of madrasah education during Muslim period. As a result, there learning centers could produce some illustrious historians in the subcontinent. Generally Muslim students studied in madrasah. Akbar adopted a policy so that Hindu youths can study at madrasah.

Women during Muslim rule did not have opportunity for education due to Purda system. But there are evidences that in HAREMS of kings, nawabs and nobles some ladies, daughters, sisters of kings and nobility received education and some of them attained great distinction. But great mass of Muslim women received no education at all except some domestic training in performance of household duties.

The tradition of madrasah education continued during the British period but its nature and character of flourishing period changed to a great extent. In

early 19th century as reported by Adam (1835-1838) there were various types of madrasahs and wide range of courses such as Grammatical works, Rhetoric, Logic, Law Doctrines of Islam, Ptolemy and Astronomy; courses of Natural Philosophy, Science, History and Literature were also taught. Role learning was given a large place and the main aim of a teacher was to pass on the pupil the learned tradition, which he himself had received.

During the decadence of Muslim power due to lack of state patronage, financial support from the landed aristocracy and nobility and change of official language from Persian to English madrasah education lost its past glory. Rather it assumed conservative character and used classical language as medium of instruction. Madrasah education with some modifications is continuing in Bangladesh.

## **2.7 Education in British Period**

European trading companies began their commercial activities in India from 1600 AD. Gradually, the Portuguese, the French, the Dutch and the English settled in some important parts and commercial centers. Among them the English East India Company was ultimately able to establish their rule in India. Till the early 19th century, they did not evolve any definite educational policy.

It was only in the Charter Act of 1813 that education of the Indian people was included within the duties of the East India Company and an annual sum of

10,000 pounds was provided for their educational activities. However, the company mainly spent the money for oriental learning. The progressive reformers of Bengal such as Rammohan ROY protested against this and demanded western education for the people of this country. But the company did not pay any attention to this. However, as per the Charter, missionaries were allowed to work in the country. This had great impact upon the development of modern type of English schools at primary and secondary levels.

One of the important events of this period was the endorsement of Macaulay's Minute in Lord BENTINK's Dispatch of 7 March 1835, which provided that western learning should be spread through the medium of English language. Use of English as medium of instruction in public education was announced as a formal policy. As a result, a good network of English high schools and colleges were established in Bengal, mostly due to government initiative and support. The new high schools demonstrated fairly high standard of instruction in language and literature, but their standard was low in practical subjects. The syllabus was mainly bookish.

Secondary education received a new orientation in Wood's Education Dispatch of 1854. It provided that the government would give grant-in-aid to high schools on fulfillment of some conditions. Specifically, schools should provide secular education. This policy ultimately enabled the government to withdraw

from the field of educational activities and shoulder the responsibility upon the Indians. However, grant-in-aid system scholarship scheme for students of all levels and creation of department of Public Instruction resulted in appreciable expansion of secondary education in Bengal,

The Indian Education Commission of 1882 addressed the issue of secondary education at a great length. The government accepted its recommendations to transfer all government secondary schools to private bodies and to establish a model government high school in each district head quarters. By the beginning of the 20th century the province of Bengal experienced a spectacular growth of secondary education. There were 3,097 English high schools in India in 1901-1902 and nearly a half of them were in Bengal. At the district level, Bengal had more schools than any other presidency. There was an English secondary school for every 104.3 square miles. It also had the largest number of unaided schools. With low fees and easy admission these schools came up to cater to the demand for western education.

Secondary education experienced a setback as a result of Lord Curzon's regressive education policy adopted on the basis of Simla conference (1901) for strict control over high schools by the universities and the Education Department. However during Curzon's period, the partition of Bengal in 1905 offered a better opportunity for the development of education in East Bengal. Henry Sharp, the

first Director of Public Instruction of East Bengal, initiated educational improvement programmed. He arranged a special aid programme for Muslim students such as scholarships at every level of education and provision of free places in government aided schools for eight percent of Muslim students. For greater participation a Muslim hostel was established in every government school. As a result, there was a substantial increase in the number of Muslim's students in primary and secondary schools. The increase was about 35% from 425,800 in 1906-1907 to 575, 700 in 1911-1912. The policy of promoting education in eastern Bengal continued under unified government of Bengal throughout the rest of British period.

Under diarchic rule in 1921-1937, there was an increase in the number of secondary schools in rural areas; large expansion in secondary education of girls, adoption of mother tongue as a medium of instruction, some improvement in training and service conditions of teachers. During the World War II the development of secondary education was slackened. In the post war period some efforts were made to introduce vocational courses in high schools and establish technical, commercial and agricultural high schools.

On the eve of the Partition of Bengal in 1947, two types of schools, middle school and high schools provided secondary education. Middle schools offered education of grades one through six and high schools grades seven through ten.

There were nearly 20,000 middle schools and 2,000 high schools. More than a half of them were supported from tuition fees and donations contributed by the people. Less than 40% of the high school received grant-in-aid from the state. Forty schools were directly supported by the state. For teacher's training of middle school there were five normal schools. Two training colleges, one in Calcutta and the other in Dhaka were set up to train high school teachers.

It was J.E.D. Bethune who first established a regular secular girl's high school in 1849 in Calcutta with six pupils. Bethune's experiment was so successful that it became a model of girls' school in other provinces of India. But progress of girl's secondary education was very humble. By the end of the century (1896-1897) there were only two girls' English high schools; one was Bethune School in Calcutta and the other Edern School in Dhaka.

The impetus of girls' education came from the Indian Education Commission of 1882. According to the several recommendations of the commission the government of Bengal started to give higher grants to girl's schools. Special subjects suited to the girls were included in curricula. Enrolment of girls in mixed schools was started. The District and Municipal Boards also started to contribute a fair share of funds for girls' education. Education of Muslim girls entered into the scene particularly with the efforts of Nawab Faizunnesa Choudhurani and Roquiah Sakhawat Hossain. Gradually, the opening

of female training schools, starting of fee concession, prize and scholarship schemes greatly helped promote girls' education in Bengal

### **Hermitages**

The Mahabharata tells of numerous hermitages where pupils from distant parts gathered for instruction round some far – famed teachers. A full-fledged Asrama is described as consisting of several Departments which are enumerated as following:

- Agnisthana, the place for fire- worship and prayers.
- Brahma-sthana, the Department of Veda
- Vishnuthana, the Department for teaching Raja-Nithi, Arthanithi and Vartta
- Mahendrasthana, Military section
- Vivasvata-sthana, Department of Astronomy
- Somasthana, Department of Botany

Garuda-sthana, Section dealing with Transport and Conveyances

Kartikeya-sthana, section teaching military organization, how to form patrols, battalions, and army.

The most important of such hermitage was that of the Naimisha, a forest which was like a university. The presiding personality of the place was Saunaka, to

whom was applied the designation of Kulapati, sometimes defined as the preceptor of 10,000 disciples.

The hermitage of Kanva was another famous center of learning, of which a full description is given; it is situated on the banks of the Malini, a tributary of the Sarayu River. It was not a solitary hermitage, but an assemblage of numerous hermitages round the central hermitage of Rishi Kanva, the presiding spirit of the settlement. There were specialists in every branch of learning cultivated in that age; specialists in each of the four Vedas; in sacrificial literature and art; Kalp Sutras; in the Chhanda (Metrics), Sabda (Vyakarana), and Nirukta. There were also Logicians, knowing the principles of Nyaya, and Dialectics (the art of establishing propositions, solving doubts, and ascertaining conclusions). There were also specialists in the physical sciences and art.

There were, for example, experts in the art of constructing sacrificial altars of various dimensions and shapes (on the basis of a knowledge of Solid Geometry); those who had knowledge of the properties of matter (dravyaguna); of physical processes and their results of causes and their effect; and zoologists having a special knowledge of monkeys and birds. It was thus a forest University where the study of every available branch of learning was cultivated.

The hermitage of Vyasa was another seat of learning. There vyasa taught the Vedas to his disciples. Those disciples were highly blessed Sumatra,



vaisampayana, Jamini of great wisdom, and Paila of great ascetic merit." They were afterwards joined by Suka, the famous son of Vyasa.

Among the other hermitages noticed by the Mahabharata may be mentioned those of Vasishta and Visvamisra and that in the forest of Kamyaka on the banks of the Saraswati. But a hermitage near Kurkshetra deserves special notice for the interesting fact recorded that it produced two noted women hermits. There "leading from youth the vow of brahmacharya, a Brahmin maiden was crowned with ascetic success and ultimately acquiring yogic powers, she became a tapassiddha", while another lady, the daughter not of a Brahmin but a Kshatriya, a child not of poverty but affluence, the daughter of a king, Sandilya by name, came to live there the life of celibacy and attained spiritual pre-eminence.

### **Period of Panini**

When we study how these institutions grew we find that students approached the learned souls for the acquisition of knowledge. Parents too encouraged it and sent their boys to the institutions. When their number to increase the institutions formed with these students began to grow gradually. With the lapse of time these institutions turned into Universities.

## **2.8 Religion and Education**

In Islam 'mazhab' is a way of imparting education for virtuous conduct. According to the philosophy of this religion, 'namaz', 'Riha' and 'Hajj' are

considered, a method for creating universal love and feeling of neighborhood. To give some benefit to the society or social service are considered as a part of this religion.

Some narrow minded people evince necessary opposition by equating religion with sects. We should clearly understand the meaning which means spiritual development of human society through the welfare of mankind. In other words; religion means human religion which every society is prepared to accept. A sect (belief) is a specific religious view point of a group of persons. That is the individual belief of the persons of that group, based on the wider values of religion. It is not necessary for other sects to accept that belief. Hindu religion accepts the opinion of Vedas, Islam that of the Quran and Christians of Bible. Hindu Dharm has been divided into Buddha sect, Jains, Sikh, Vedic (Sanatan and Arya Samaj) according to the different methods to philosophers of Hindu Dharm. Some agitators and diplomats propagated it as different religions in order to create faction in Hindu Dharm. The idea behind this propaganda was to cut of the organization and unity of Hindu Dharm. It is amazing that some Hindus also accepted the sects as different religions.

Islam Dharm has its original form the word 'Salm'. 'Salm' means peace which has been interpreted as knowing God peacefully and surrendering the self before Him. This is the true nature of Islam. Whenever some one seeks the

shelter of God, forgetting his vanity and pride, he attains all-round development and divinity is radiated from his personality. In Christian religion, Christianity was formed from the word 'christos' which means 'bathed in Divine wisdom'. Thus Christian religion extends that divine wisdom which creates brotherhood, love, sympathy and tolerance in the human society.

Vedic religion, is based on Vedas, 'Ved' means knowledge. Hence Vedic Dharm means that scientific knowledge which by recognizing the existence of 'Inner self' and 'Supreme self' i.e. 'Antaratma' and 'Paramatma', develops human qualities like, non-violence, truth, humanism, love and compassion, etc. Thus religion is a source of morality. Science can be of great help in this direction, but science devoid of religion is meaningless. Religion is all –pervading and Universal. So it should be included in education.

Due to ignorance and superstitions some universe followers of religions have strangled humanity and have committed great atrocities. The reason for such violent attitude is misinterpretation of religion. These religions hypocrites of violent nature committed so many atrocities on humanity that man began to hate religion. These committing oppressions in the name of religion were non-Vedic (unwise) and selfish. Religious reformers born from time to time led the people to the right path and presented the true nature of religion like Buddha, Mohair, Shankaracharya, Dayanand, etc., were such great personalities. In the

Western countries Rousseau and Locke suggested to save education from wrongly interpreted religion. Corrupt practice, in various religious bodies in the name of religion created hatred for religion.

### **Relation between Religion and Education**

Religion and Education are closely associated with each other both are of spiritual tendencies. Spiritual, material or physical urge are dealt with by religion as well as by the education. "Both seek to emancipate man, not from contact with his environment, but from slavery to it." As has already been discussed education creates certain values of life and help in the modification of behavior. It gives certain moldings to the life, while religion beautifies the life by cultivation of truthful heart with the moral and spiritual values.

In this way religion and education have different ways but the same aim of achieving God through cultivating three absolutes truth, religion and goodness. Religion must be given suitable places in the curriculum because it is the core of our culture and 'heritage'. Gentle given a fine statement in regard to the place of religion in the curriculum.

Gentle says: "National cultures have never been more conscious than now of the higher needs of the mind, needs that are not only aesthetic and abstractly intellectual but also ethical and religious. For a school without an ethical and religious constant is an absurdity." Thus, religion should find a suitable and

proper place in the sphere of education. Education, according to Pestalozzi, is aimed at: "natural harmonious and progressive development of man's innate powers." Wider education means an education which broadens the outlook, awakens the inner powers and teaches us to respect all the religions. In this manner, a teacher should enable the pupils to cultivate religious attitude and mentality through education. Religion in this sense does not mean merely a bundle of rites and of dogmas followed by symbols and emotions with these collective and mutual efforts lead a person towards self-realization and self-understanding. Rousseau and Wordsworth believed in nature and education on the lane; of nature. The essence of their philosophy was to worship nature in practical way.

Truly speaking, religious education does not mean something separable but pure, honest and beneficial. Education is nothing but religion, because both the religion and the education aim at harmonizing the person to the ultimate truth. Religion is the pure form of education.

### **Cautions in the Teaching of Religion**

An evaluation of advantages and limitations of religious education leads us to be conclusion that religion should be given a place in education. But religion should be included in such a way that the above mentioned defects religious education may be avoided. One of the objectives of religious education is self-

realization and to inspire virtuous conduct. It is necessary to make efforts in this direction. Self-realization and virtuous conduct are inner-impulses. They cannot be imposed on anyone. Sermons and instructions alone will not achieve religious aims. Moral development and virtuous conduct through religion is possible only when opportunities are provided for such behavior. A religious atmosphere in schools can make it possible. The incidents are greatly influenced by the ideal behavior of teachers. So the teachers themselves should present examples of ideal behavior by leading a religious, moral and virtuous life. The teacher alone cannot create a religious atmosphere in schools. All teachers should co-operate in this process.

Religious education should be kept away from narrow mindedness. It will be better to give religious education based on logic, analysis and criticism; otherwise it may lead to superstitions fanatics, jealousy and narrow-mentality.

In schools, religion should not be taken as an end in itself. It is simply a means for all-round development of the individual. The schools are not to be made temples, mosques, or churches by titling religious education to a particular sect. Schools are not to fulfill the functions of religious institutions other the religious institutions should work as schools. If religious institutions make an attempt for the all-round development of children through spiritual development; they will certainly lessen the burden of schools. It is, therefore,

necessary for the religious bodies to take the form of educational obligations to the extent possible.

### **Educational Functions of Religion**

A man is attracted towards religion only when he is mentally, healthy and a sound mind besides in a sound body. So it is the function of religion to co-operate in the physical development of children. In Vedic religions behaviors the ideal of celibacy is for the sake of physical development. The child who observes restraint up to maturity and takes physical exercises for the development of body makes him sturdy. This restorative power prepares him for household life and his regulated behavior keeps him healthy till death. Some religious people think that good physical health creates a liking for worldly pleasures and happiness. So a person desirous of religious knowledge should not pay any attention to physical development. This is their fanaticism. Religion should first of all educate the individual for his physical and mental development. Body, mind and senses are means of inhibiting religion.

Religion should always mean performing of duties. To think only of the next world (Parlok) through religious knowledge and to forget this world (Ih-lok) is not fair. The first field of performing duties is this world karma-kshetra (the field of action) is another name of Dharma-kshetra (fields of religious). The man who succeeds in the karma-kshetra of this world is entitled to reach the other

world (Parlok). Therefore, religion should prepare man for the karma-kshetra (the field of action). The field of action of the individual is determined on the basis of his aptitudes. So religion should inculcate in the child the ability to choose his field according to his interest, aptitude and to get success engaging him in it.

The basis of religion is knowledge. An ignorant person cannot be religious. A person may be familiar with religion and religious behavior after he has attained knowledge. The bases of religion are logic, analysis, observation, contemplation and freedom of thought. So the child should be provided opportunities for independent thinking, logic, meditation, analysis and observation with an open mind. The doubt of some persons that the child does not believe in religious facts on the basis of arguments, analysis, observation etc. is baseless. The permanent religious feeling is always based on perception. To have faith in religion without independent thinking, logic and analysis will be blind-faith and fanaticism. Some people consider aesthetic sense and artistic sense as hindrance to religion. But this is not true. Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram (Truth, Bliss and Beautiful) are the bases for artistic and aesthetic sense. Satyam and Shivam are the bases of religion. A thing which is not true or for happiness cannot be beautiful. The carving of Jain idols in Ellora caves and Jatak stories connected with the life of Lord Buddha and their carving in Ajanta, the poetry of



Sur, Tulsi and Mira and all considered unique for propagation of religious feelings.

So religion should diffuse an aesthetic sense also,

Although it is true function of schools to develop the moral and character of the child, but religious institutions can bring about better moral and character development, if they pay attention in this direction. The very meaning of religion is to inspire virtuous conduct and virtuous conduct develops moral and ethical qualities. Today the country needs able and noble citizens. The religious institutions can fulfill their national duties by giving education virtuous conduct.

### **Argument in Favor and Against Religious Education**

**Those who want to separate religion and education, argue in the following way:**

To give place to religion in education is not practicable, because children of all religions come to receive education in schools. In such a situation which religion is to be taught in a school? If one particular religion is taught in the school, the followers of other religions will not accept this position. It will lead to mutual ill-will quarrel and disturbance.

Religion education is generally based on preaching. So long as desired changes are not brought about in the environment and ideal examples are not presented till then good conduct cannot be spread through religious education. Hence mere teaching of religious doctrines in schools will not achieve the goal of education.

It is not possible for the modern teacher to analyze religious knowledge dispassionately because he may be faithful only to one particular religion. Consequently, the students will be incapable of understanding the true and obscure meaning of religion. It will be better to analyze religion with the help of science but the teachers will not accept it because science may injure the personal beliefs. In fact, it will be difficult to get able and suitable teachers for religious education. It is a difficult task to correlate education and true human religion. Every teacher may not be capable of this.

Doubts and mental conflicts are created in children as they cannot understand the abstract processes of sin virtue, reward and punishment as explained in religious educational schools.

Religious education emphasizes religious sermons and religious knowledge. But life is not conducted according to those sermons. Man cannot become virtuous simply by getting knowledge of religion. He becomes virtuous only when he puts the same into practice. This is not done in schools.

Man imbibes 'religion' through self-realization. Self-realization is individualistic. Hence inclusion of personal elements in religious conduct is natural. In the school environment, collective and social tendencies are found. So, personal view point of religion cannot be given importance. This view point may be suitable to those

children who agree with that line of thinking but not to others who follow other view point.

It is observed that religion means qualities should be developed. But history bears testimony to fact that humanity has been oppressed in the name of religion and place of love, compassion, sympathy and co-operation, the feelings of enmity, hatred, jealousy and opposition have grown. Such examples in the history of religion may create irreligious feelings in children.

### **Argument in favor of Religious Education**

There may be some strength in the above arguments. But this strength will be there only to the extent to which education is imparted on the basis one particular religions without understanding the true meaning of religion. Religion is universal, omnipresent and eternal. It is necessary to present its universal form.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **The Hindu Synthesis of the Transcendental and Education:**

*Author Benoy Kumar Sarkar writes: "The ideal of realizing the infinite in the finite, the transcendental in the positive, manifested itself also in the educational system of Hindu India. The graduates trained under the 'domestic system' of the Gurukulas or preceptors' homes were competent enough to found and administer states, undertake industrial and commercial enterprise; they were builders of empires and organizers of business concerns.*

It was because of this all-round and manly culture that the people of India could organize vast schemes of colonization and conquest, and not content with being simply confined within the limits of mother India, could build up a Greater India beyond the seas, and spread culture, religion and humanity among the subject and hospitable races. It is not for education, how else can we account for the remarkable progress of the nation in architecture, sculpture, medicine, dyeing, weaving, mathematics, ship building, chess, navigation, military tactics, and implements and all such aspects of socio-economic and economic-political life as have to depend on the help of physical and natural sciences?"

The percentage of literary people in India was more than that at present. At least up to the 7th century A.D. this system worked most satisfactory. People showed brilliancy in all departments. E.g. Mathematics, Astronomy, Medicine, Chemistry, Poetry, Drama, Grammar, and Philosophy. No nation could excel these people at that time. From the 4th century B.C. to the 11th century A.D. all foreigners who came in contact with India and studied her civilization critically were very much impressed by it. They spoke highly of Indian character specially their truthfulness, honesty, and sense of justice.

The influence of the system of education was very great among the people in general. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador who came to India in the 4th century B.C. remarked "for whereas among other nations it is usual in the

contests of war, to ravage the soil, among the Indians it is on the contrary. They never use the conquered as slaves." Idrise, the Arabian traveler and scholar in his Geography written in the 11th century A.D. says, "The Indians are naturally inclined to justice and never depart from it in action. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to their engagement were well known and they were so famous for their qualities that people came to their country from every side." Abul Fazal, the author of Aini Akbar, in the 16th century notes, "The Hindus are admirers of truth and showed unbounded fidelity in all dealings."

The Hindus were conscious about their ideal. Though spirituality is their goal they never neglected the material affairs. They were in the words of Wordsworth, "true to the kindred points of heaven and home' and knew fully that matter and spirit are interrelated, one cannot be conceived without the other. This ideal is maintained by the system of education which is based on a sound method.'

Dwelling on this wonderful effect of this system of education unparalleled in history Sir Monier Williams says, "And here I may observe circumstances in the history of India are more worthy of investigation than the antiquity and perseverance of her institutions. It has existed almost unaltered since the description of its organization in Manu's code two or three centuries before Christian era. It has survived all religious, political and physical convulsions from which India suffered from the immemorial. Invader after invader has ravaged the country with fire and

sword but the simple self contained township has preserved its constitution intact, its customs, precedents, and peculiar institutions unchanged and unchangeable amid all other changes." (Source: Brahmanism and Hinduism p. 455) .

The realization of the ultimate Reality was the ideal of India. Material progress was never the end in itself but was considered as a means to the realization of the end. *Apara Vidya* dealing with material progress could never bring peace. From all these it appears that the aim of education was not only material progress but also spiritual growth. Regarding the system of education in ancient India it is known from the account of Ewan Chowang, the Chinese traveler, that boys at the age of seven began studying grammar, arts, painting, logic and scriptures and Brahmin and Buddhist teachers were highly efficient and persevering. The doors of education were open to all whether they belonged to the order of monks or of householders.

Ramesh Chandra Dutt, in his *Civilization in Ancient India*, p. 127, writes: "Buddhism had never assumed a hostile attitude towards the parent religion of India, and the fact that the two religions existed side by side for long centuries increased their toleration of each other. In every country Buddhists and orthodox Hindus live side by side. Hindus went to Buddhist monasteries and universities, and Buddhists learned from Brahmins sages. The same kings favored the

followers of both religions. The Gupta Emperors were often worshippers of Shiva and Vishnu, but loaded Buddhists and Buddhist monasteries with gifts, presents and favors. One king was often a Buddhist and his son an orthodox Hindu; and often two brothers followed or favored the two religions without fighting. Every court had learned men belonging to both the religions, and Vikramaditya's Court was no exception to the rule."

Mr. Ernest Binfield Havell says that the system of education during the 7th century was very much improved and better than was under the British. Even up to the 15th century, the educational institutions in every Hindu village were maintained either from the income of some temple or from the produce of land set aside for the purpose of villages.

From this, a picture of the educational system of ancient India can be derived and also come idea of the high standard of civilization then prevailing in the society. During the formative period of the modern educational systems in Europe and America, the pedagogy of the Hindus, especially on its elementary side, has played an important part.

It is well-known that primary education was grossly neglected in America during the first half-century of her independence. In England even so late as 1845, 3.2 percent of men and 49 percent of women had to sign their names on the marriage register with a cross. In the age of paucity of "public schools" private

educational efforts naturally elicited the people's admiration. And none drew more sympathy and support than Andrew Bell's (1775-1823) "mutual-tuition" or "pupil teacher" or "monitorial" system of school management.

What, now, is the origin of this much-applauded mutual instruction or monitorial system, the so-called Bell-Lancasterian "discovery" in the pedagogy? Historians of education are familiar with the fact that the plan of making one boy teach others has been indigenous to India for centuries. Bell, himself, in his *Mutual Tuition* (pt. I. ch. I, V) describes how in Madras he came into contact with a school conducted by a single master or superintendent through the medium of the scholars themselves. And, in fact, in England the monitorial system or the method of making every boy at once a master and a scholar is known as the Madras System; Bell, a Christian missionary in Madras took the Indian system of education back to England, and introduced it there. Until then, only the children of the nobles were given education there and he started education for the masses in England. So. We gather that it is from India that the British adopted the system for educating the masses. England's debt to India in pedagogies has been fully acknowledged in the tablet in Westminster Abbey, which describes Andrew Bell as "the eminent founder of the Madras system of Education, which has been adopted within the British Empire, as the national system of education for the children of the poor".



## **2.9 Some Important Questions**

### **Is Guru Kula Education Suitable for present India?**

A few days ago, there was an article in the Hitavada, by Mr. Chaitanya Hazarey, praising highly the 'gurukul system' of education, condemning the British System of education now prevalent in India, and attributing to the present system of education all the discredit, holding it responsible for all the ills of India. Mr. Hazarey is of no consequence, but many prominent highly educated ignorants, like one of Vice-Chancellors of an Indian University, also seem to hold similar views, so this article. It cannot be gainsaid that the present educational system needs some changes, but certainly, it cannot be accepted that 'gurukul system' is an answer.

### **Is Education Responsible for Unemployment?**

The author thinks that the present system is responsible for unemployment, presumably because 'educated youths' become useless for manual labour and white collar jobs are not available in plenty. The argument is not new. At the time of Mahatma Jotirao Phule, his father was advised by his Brahmin 'divanji' to withdraw the child from school as the child will be useless for agriculture. Thanks to Ligit sahib and Gaffar Beg Munshi who persuaded Govindrao, Jotiba's father, against the advice and restarted the education of the child after waste of three years, and thus a "Father of Social Revolution in India" was born.

There is a whispering method of propagation of ideas in India. In this method, you do not have to give a sermon or a lecture or write an article or make T.V. serial. All you do is to casually whisper among your co-participants in any social, religious or political function. It may be casual meeting when you are in trip to market to get vegetables or attending somebody's marriage or a lecture in the hall or seeing a cinema in Ganesh festival. You casually mention your idea. Only thing it must be done purposefully, and in strong terms. The fellow opposite usually agrees with you on these occasions. If he does not seem to agree, you change the subject. By this method, the ideas can be planted in the minds of the gullible.

One such idea is, education better be in mother tongue, that way it is easier to understand and retain, etc. But their own children are sent to England Convent schools. In their houses, not only servants but also the cat and dogs and other pets are conversed with in English.

Other idea is 'best is agriculture, medium is business and worst is the service'. The concerned advisers are of course sending their children to lucrative services. The said article seems to be a part of such a campaign. It may be due to ignorance or may be by design. Similar is this advice to masses by these classes. I have heard many people saying, what is the use of taking education when services are so scarce. This is wrong idea in the minds of 'masses' rooted by

'classes'. The scarcity of jobs should not deter the masses from obtaining the degrees. The mind gets developed and one can get the wisdom to differentiate between good and bad. One can make best use of information technology which can be put to best advantage of the public. For example, the situation is turning in such a way that, in near future, one can not be, called a literate, if one does not know about computers. Let us forget about computing in regional languages, with due apology to C-Dac, you can not catch up with the world that way. As it is, it appears that, the revolution of Internet has already bypassed India's bahunas for want of knowledge of English language.

### **Was the British Education only for making Babus?**

Many people think so. May be it is true only in superficial sense. One cannot ignore the awakening and aspirations created by Missionaries in the minds of masses. But what were choices available to the British that time? Lord Macaulay who was responsible for making the choice of Modern English Education for Indians, had only one alternative i.e. to give traditional education of Sanskrit and vernacular languages and Brahmanic sastras. Who would have benefited there by. It is learnt that early Brahmins opposed the education of masses about secular education. Would they have allowed the non-brahmins to learn sastras?

In the reign of last Peshave, daxima was given to all and sudry Brahmins. Brahmins used to come from Kanchi, Srirampattam, Kumbhakonam, Tanjavar, Kashi, Kanoj and Mathura and flock together to create a crowd in Poona, once numbering sixty thousand at a time. We also know that even after the end of Peshawai, a very welcome event by the masses, and especially at the women of Poona, Britishers continued to please Brahmins, though with reduced amount, for Sanskrit books. When there was demand for daxina by other Brahmins for Marathi books, there was hue and cry from orthodox Brahmins. However, later half the amount was given to Marathi books also after a big struggle. Thus Brahmins resisted against Marathi to prevent lower classes from learning. [Hanja Keer, "Mahatma Phule", (MF) Marathi, p.38ff.] Would they have allowed the non-Brahmins to get benefit of Britishers. In any case, it was the good fortune of Indian masses, that modern education was decided to be imparted to them by Lord McCauley. Otherwise, there would have been no spread of modern ideas and whatever little enlightenment we now see in masses would not have been there. They would have been slaves of the Brahmins, who in the name religion controlled their minds. Now at least the SCs and STs are out of their grip, and some OBCs also are out of their fetters, though the majority of OBCs are still slaves of Brahmins, in spite of all efforts by the Bahujan leaders like Phule, Shanu, Ambedkar, Periyar, Narayan Guru and many others like them.

The elite wants to hide from the masses that, India had a double slavery. Slavery of masses by Brahmins was the real slavery in micro level, experienced in every nook and corner of the country. Slavery of British was over the macro level and was not important to masses. They never came in contact with those rulers. They only came in contact with those rulers, who were Brahmins, no matter who ruled above. That is the reason south Indian leaders like Dr. P.Varadarajulu Naydu said that British Imperialism has enslaved our bodies only, but Brahmanism has enslaved our souls. The British have taken away our wealth but as it has dominated over social and religious fields, Brahmanism has killed the feeling of self respect and freedom in the minds of non-brahmins. [MF-p.314] this feeling was universal among the masses.

What was the essence of Gurukul Education? Mr. Hazare seems to be very fond of Gurukul education. First thing gurukul was never open to the majority of masses. About 85 to 90 percent of population was outside the pale of Gurukuls. Only the 15 percent population was being catered by Gurukuls. That too, only the boys were admitted and not the girls, thus bringing the total possible population to be only about seven percent. There were no criteria for admission apart from the caste and whims and fancies of the teacher. Examples of denial of admission to very meritorious candidates on the basis of caste are seen. Glaring example is of Ekalavya. Not only the guru Dronacharya denied admission to Ekalavya, but

demanded Ekalavya's thumb as gurudakshina for education NOT imparted by him. Many people feel it is irony of fate and mockery of awards, that such a name is associated with highest sports awards in this country, without any protest from the sufferers of the system.

Second example is of Karna, who got admission to Parashurama's class, which was exclusively reserved for the Brahmins, on false statement of caste. Benefit of his knowledge, labeled as unlawfully obtained, was withdrawal when his caste became known, which ultimately led to his death.

Example of Satyakama Jabala is mentioned by many orthodox people to erroneously show that education in Upanishadic times was open to low caste people. This is a wrong inference drawn from his story. Satyakama was asked by his guru his caste. His mother sent a word to the guru that she did not know the exact father of the child as she had relations with many people.

This frank statement, the guru declared, can only be a statement of a son of a Brahmin. So the admission to the gurukul was done on the basis of Brahmin caste. Not only that, the test applied by him, and his presumption of Brahmin caste, was derogatory to non-Brahmins, because it was his belief that only Brahmins could speak such a truth and non-Brahmins could not have uttered such truth.

### **What were the Criteria of Selection of Teachers in Gurukul?**

Mr. Hazare seems to be very sure that teachers selected were of high caliber in knowledge and character. How this idea comes to his mind, is difficult to understand. As a matter of fact there was no central authority controlling the appointment of teachers.

There was no fixed syllabus. The main purpose of this learning was to preserve the Vedas and guard them from non-Brahmins. Each and every person by virtue of being a Brahmin had an inherent right to be a teacher. He could open an ashram and take pupils as and when he likes, and he could give certificate of completion of studies as and when he chooses. He was not bound by any law of land or any convention of teachers' body.

There used to be guilds and bodies of merchants and craftsmen, but I am unaware if some institution was established to supervise the teaching and conduct of the teacher in such gurukuls. Most of the gurukuls were single teacher residential ones free from any royal or academic control. What was the guarantee of quality under these circumstances? It is a matter of egotism, vanity and conceit to think of quality in such teaching institutions. These had no respect in foreign lands and never attracted any foreign students.

What was the Course Content?

There seems to be misconceived that a student coming out from such a school had all the requisite qualities of a good citizen. This is far from the truth. He used to have learned by heart the Brahmanic sastras, which hardly make him versatile. He could never think of outside matters. What is not in his books, does not exist from him. Alberuni, for example, mentioned that Indian scholars have no knowledge of civilization abroad, and they disbelieve if somebody tells them about it. Their thought process centered on the rituals, vratas and ceremonies. After education, their main task involved in seeing that nobody transgress the caste rules, no widow gets remarried, see that all girls married before puberty, and generally nobody transgresses the caste. If anybody did transgress these rules, then this product of gurukul was to sit as the judge to punish the guilty by excommunication and things like that, so that supremacy of Brahmin is maintained and the divinely ordained system of chaturvarna works smoothly to the advantage of some and peril to the rest.

#### Knowledge of Brahmins at the Time of Arrival of the British

If anybody has any doubt the standard of education of gurukuls and has any wrong ideas, he better see what is recorded about the knowledge of Brahmins at time Britishers' arrival. The Brahmins of Poona thought, their town was the whole world. They never tried to find out who were the British and from where they have here. They believed that Calcutta was in England and England was in



Calcutta. Any knowledge except Sanskrit was considered as a gate way to Hell. They honestly believed that Indra tells the cloud to pour down the rain. The clouds are the elephants of Indra and on his order they make rain. Poona was such a dark valley of ignorance. [MF-p.8] such was the knowledge of scholars. The modern stories of intelligence of Birbal, Tenali Ram, and Nana Fadnavis are all fables, fabricated to stress upon the masses the false merit of Brahmin scholars over the royal princes.