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EDUCATION SYSTEM IN VEDIC PERIOD

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Abstract:

The basic aim of ancient education was instilling into the minds, of peoples a spirit of being pious and religious for glory of God and good of man. The pursuit of knowledge was a pursuit of religious values. The student had to observe strict regulations. Instruction was important, but was even more significant than teaching was discipline – discipline inculcated through strict obedience to laws and regulations of student life, discipline that was rooted in morality and religion. A student was required to give up lust, anger, greed, vanity, conceit and over joy. Education was free. It was free because no student was required to pay any fees. It was free also because no outside agency could interfere in the matters of education. There was perfect autonomy. No external authority no external beneficiary, no politics was permitted to enter the school or college system. A student had to pay nothing in return for education he received in a Gurukul. The inculcation of civic virtues and social values was an equally important objective of education in India. The Brahmachari after his education in the Gurukulas went back to the society to serve the rich and the poor, to relieve the diseased and the distressed.

KEY WORDS:

Education fundamentals, Features, Forms of Institutions .

INTRODUCTION

The ancient education system has been a source of inspiration to all educational systems of the world. The ingredients, which our present system, lacks, and which were the predominant facets of our ancient system relate to admission policies (upnayan), monitorial system, low teacher pupil ratio, healthy teaching surroundings, free schooling and college education, sympathetic treatment, role of punishment in discipline, regulation governing student life. Imparting and receiving of education was as sacred as anything can be, for example, education started and ended with certain prescribed religious rituals like upnayan and samvartan.

FUNDAMENTALS OF VEDIC EDUCATION SYSTEM:

*Personality Development:

The Basic aim of any system of education should be development of a whole some personality. The Brahmanic system of education stood on former grounds of lofty ideals because its primary aim was development of personality and character. Moral strength and moral excellence were developed to the fullest extent, which we lack so utterly. The moral stature of our educated people is deplorably low. Moral values are at stake —The old values, which held society together are disappearing and as there in no effective programmed to replace them by a new sense of responsibility. Innumerable signs of social

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disorganization are evident everywhere and are continually on the increase. These include strikes increasing lawlessness, and a disregard for public property corruption in public life —The social moral and spiritual values which our ancient system developed in the education have been totally lost sight.

***Formal and Informal:**

Imparting and receiving of education was as sacred as anything can be, for example, education started and ended with certain prescribed religious rituals like upnayan and samvartan. Ancient Indian education was primarily the education of the Vedas. The source springs of education were Brahmins, Upanishads and Dharma Sutras. Amar Kosha, the writings of Aryabhatta, Panini, Katyayana, Kautilya, Patanjali, the medical treatises of Charaka and Susruta were other elements of Brahmanic literature. The Brahmanic education has been a source of inspiration for determining educational aims and objectives to future generations. Not every boy was required to enter studentship it was still a custom to receive education at the hands of his father. How many of the parents look after their children now in this respect. The ancient system gave an equal important to informal education as it did to the formal one.

***Starting Academic sessions solemnly:**

In most of the boy went to a teacher for studentship. The maximum age of entrance into school was different for different castes. The period of schooling was long, at least 12 years for one Veda. The academic sessions started with a special ceremony —upkarman'on the Guru Purnima (Full month of Shravana) and as solemnly closed on Rohini (Full moon month of pausha) with utsarjan'. The whole session was punctuated with holidays especially on new moon full moon days of the month.

***School Hours:**

The school in the Vedic Education System lasted for 7 to 8 hours a day. In fair weather classes were held in the open under shady groves. In the rainy season schools ran in a set of apartment. Temple colleges of the past had been of great renown for having spacious buildings for classroom, hostels and residential quarters for teachers. Gurukuls and Ashrams were generally situated on the river banks or on the lake. The whole atmosphere was quiet, calm and peaceful. It must be noted that schools and colleges were not kept far away from human habitation.

***Freeness:**

We are Never in the history of education will you find such a close contact between the teacher and the taught. The teacher was the spiritual father, he was is to nurse, when the pupil fell sick, he was to feed, clothe and teach his student as he fed, clothed and taught his son. The student also regarded the teachers as he regarded his parents, king & god. Both were united by communion of life. In fact they communed together.

***Maintaining Discipline:**

The learner had to observe strict regulations. Instruction was important, but was even more significant than teaching was discipline – discipline inculcated through strict obedience to laws and regulations of student life, discipline that was rooted in morality and religion A student was required to give up lust, anger, greed, vanity, conceit and over joy. It was ordered to him not to gamble, gossip, lie, backbite, hurt feelings of others, dance, sing, look or talk or touch the other sex and kill animals. It was demanded of every student whether rich of poor that he should lead a simple life in the Gurukul or in the Ashram.

***Teacher & pupil Ratio:**

In the Vedic period all schools and colleges the pupil – teacher ratio was too low. Individual attention was maximum. The number of students in a school was kept very small. But when, under certain conditions the enrolment increased, the teacher sought the co-operation of more advanced and senior boys who were appointed as monitors (Pittiacharya). In the absence of teacher entire work was entrusted to them.

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* Respecting Children's Personality:

If the student obeys the regulation punishment had practically no place in the school system. Peoples received very sympathetic, treatment from their teachers. Their personality was respected Teachers were required to use sweet and gentle speech in dealing with pupil.

* Free Education:

It was free education because no student was required to pay any fees. It was free also because no outside agency could interfere in the matters of education. There was perfect autonomy. No external authority no external beneficiary, no politics was permitted to enter the school or college system. A student had to pay nothing in return for education he received in a Gurukul or Ashram. Access to good education depended not on wealth but on talent. The student was expected, if desired but never compelled to offer a field, cow, horse or even vegetables to his teacher according to his financial position in the society. Education could not be bought one could go up the Ladder as his abilities permitted.

SALIENT FEATURES OF VEDIC EDUCATION:

*Spiritual & Religious Values:

The fundamental aim of ancient education was instilling into the minds, of pupils a spirit of being pious and religious for glory of God and good of man. The pursuit of knowledge was a pursuit of religious values. The life of the pupil was full of ritual acts. Prayers were common every pupil was required to perform religious ceremonies duly. He had to participate in all religious festivals. Education without religions instructions was not education at all. It was believed that a keener appreciation of spiritual values could be fostered only through a strict observance if religious rites.

*Development of Character:

In no Vedic period of the History of India, was so much stress laid on character building as in the Vedic period Vyas Samhita states, —The result of education is good character and good behavior. A conquest does not make a hero nor studies a wise – woman. He who has conquered his senses is the real hero.

*Civic Responsibilities and Social Values:

The inculcation of civic virtues and social values was an equally important objective of education in India. The Brahmachari after his education in the Gurukulas went back to the society to serve the rich and the poor, to relieve the diseased and the distressed. He was required to be hospitable to the guests and charitable to the needy. After a certain period of studies he was required to become a householder and to perpetuate his race and transmit his culture to his own off springs.

* Individually Development:

The Guru in the ancient times realized that the development of individually is the sole aim of education. Human personality was regarded as the supreme work of God. The qualities of self-esteem, self confidence, self restraint and self respect were the personality traits that the educator tried to incubate in his pupils through example.

* National Culture:

The Vedic culture was kept intact and transmitted through word of mouth to succeeding generations. Every individual was required to commit to memory at least a portion of the sacred scriptures. Everyone was required to serve as a medium of transmission. The members of the priestly class learnt the whole of Vedic Literature by heart & passed it on.

FORMS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:

*** Gurukulas:**

Gurukulas were the dwelling houses of gurus situated in natural surroundings away from noise and bustle of cities. Parents sent their wards at the age of five years to nine years according to their castes after celebrating their Upanayan Sanskar. Pupils lived under the roof of their guru called antevasin'under the direct supervision of their Guru. The Chhandogya Upanishad described, such pupils as Acharya Kulavasin'. It was compulsory for these Acharya Kularasins to live with the guru throughout the period of education, leading life of celibacy. Gurukula as the name indicates was the family of the teacher and his residence where the students used to stay during the period of study. Gradually, the Gurukula were extended to include a number of buildings. However the institution was built up around the family of teacher. The primary duty of the student was to serve the teacher and his family. The students were like sons of the teacher and the whole institution lived like family.

***Parishads:**

Parishads were bigger educational institutions where several teachers used to teach different subjects. This may be compared to a college parishad in Upanishads, has been used for a conference of learned men, assembled for deliberations upon philosophical problems. Later on the Parishads'were set up at the places where learned men lived in good number and gradually these institutions became permanent centres of imparting knowledge.

***Sammelan:**

Sammelan literally means getting together for a particular purpose. In this type of educational institutions scholars gathered at one place for learned discussions and competitions generally on the invitation of the king. Scholars were appropriately rewarded.

CONCLUSION:

Ancient Vedic Indian education was primarily the education of the Vedas. The inculcation of civic virtues and social values was an equally important objective of education in India. The Brahmachari after his education in the Gurukulas went back to the society to serve the rich and the poor, to relieve the diseased and the distressed. He was required to be hospitable to the guests and charitable to the needy. After a certain period of studies he was required to become a householder and to perpetuate his race and transmit his culture to his own off springs. Education was free. It was free because no student was required to pay any fees. It was free also because no outside agency could interfere in the matters of education. There was perfect autonomy. No external authority no external beneficiary, no politics was permitted to enter the school or college system.

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