

Relevance of Ancient Indian Education System in Modern Era



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Abstract

Any modification brought about in the behaviour of an individual, as a result of his interaction with the environment, constitute learning. The history of the world proves that education has been the root cause for the any change that takes place in the social, cultural, spiritual aesthetic, political and economic aspects of human life. It is education which not only transforms the human animal into a rational human being, but also prepares and develops him to survive and adjust with surroundings so as to lead his personal as well as social life successfully. Indian have understood the importance of education from the ancient times. That's why world's oldest university, The Nalanda University, holy books like Ramayana and Mahabharata, residential institutes of old times i.e. Gurukuls for education where some of the prime characteristics exhibited in Indian society which has effected not only Indian but whole world in the field of education. The ancient education system has been a source of inspiration to all educational system of the world. Today, in the modern era, where everyone is trying to adopt some of our traditional characteristics which are much more appropriate and worthy in these changing period of time. This paper will discuss the relevance of ancient Indian education system in modern education system and to offer valuable suggestions and conclusions for the effective functioning of modern educational system.

Keywords: Education, Vedic Education, Modern Education.

Introduction

Today, in this modern era, where everyone is trying to adopt modern outlook in each and every aspect of life, we sometimes feel, rather need, to adopt some of our traditional characteristics which are more appropriate and worthy in these changing period of time. In ancient India teaching was considered on the basis of ancient holy books 'vedas' and is considered as a holy duty which a Brahman was bound to discharge irrespective of consideration of the fee teacher were expected to devote their lives to the cause of teaching in the missionary spirit of self-sacrifice, and the society. It also helps in laying down the principal that both the public and state should help the learned teachers and educational institutions in constructing the socially acceptable citizens not only on knowledge but also on affective and psychomotor levels. Society realized that 'Vidyadana' or the gift in the cause of education was to be the best of gifts, possessing a higher religious merit than even the gift of land. On the occasion of religious feasts, students and teachers were invited and donations were given liberally. These all characteristics of Vedic education system set the aims which are found to be relevant even today.

Review of Literature

Number of studies has grown in the area of vedic education considerably. But still much work needs to be done. Scholars have analysed the growth and development of Vedic Education with great care and they have examined every aspect of the ancient education system. These studies are very important raw material for the present study.

Sri. Aurabindo (1948) in his edition titled Mahabharata and Ramayana showed that the Ramayana embodied the Indian imagination to its highest and tenderest human ideals of character, made strength courage gentleness; purity fidelity and self-sacrifice familiar to it in the most harmonious forms colored, so as to attract the emotion and the aesthetic sense. Saran (1954) attempted to analyse the Gurukula system of education and to explore the possibility of reinstating it in India in a modernized form. He has studied some peripheral concepts regarding the Gurukula system, in comparison with western models —in order to show

the superiority of the rishi-aim of God realisation, and some suggestions and exhortations were given. His main suggestions are:

1. the pupil should read and question their guru in a homely atmosphere.
2. The students should develop a religious outlook and aim at God-realisation.
3. Education should be imparted in a democratic way and
4. it should help to strengthen the national solidarity along with international understanding.

Radhakumud Mookerji (1960) in his detailed study of Ancient Indian Education brings to light the educational ideas found scattered in Hindu thought. He has stated that the aim of life and education was the realization of the absolute truth known as God. Education must aim at self-fulfilment and not merely the acquisition of knowledge. Education must not be limited to the brain or to the development of the physical senses. The aim should be to transform the entire personality of man. Education is a process of control of the mind. The total individual is its chief concern. The pupils have to imbibe the qualities and ideals of the teacher. The students should catch the ideas of the teachers.

Charle's (1971) in his study points out that Bhagavat Gita contains many ideas which could become the basis for a sound advanced philosophy and the same is quite significant for various aspects of Educational systems in India.

Prabhupada's (1983, 1985, 1987, 1989) contribution to the present debate of relevancy is especially significant in relationship to understanding the principles of the Vedic culture, social system and educational philosophy. Through his translation and commentary on The Srimad-Bhagavatam and The Bhagavad gita, Prabhupada reveals the essence of his educational philosophy. Three salient features are prominent in his overall analysis and will be examined in light of recent research in teaching children to develop their independent thinking skills. These features are that:

1. The human form of life is temporary like others, but it affords one the opportunity to inquire into the nature of reality,
2. This inquiry is most effectively conducted under proper guidance, and
3. The real goal of education is to develop character.

Sreebhuvanam (1992) critically analysed the vision of Adhyatma Ramayanam with respect to its contents and aim. The investigator points out the difference between Vidya and Avidya and reveals the importance and the ways and methods of attainment of self-realization. Radhakrishnan (1993) critically examined the Advaita philosophy in Ezhuthachan's Adhyatma Ramayanam with respect to Advaita philosophies in Bhagavat Gita and other Indian epics. The investigator points out the importance of Advaita philosophy and its practical implications in the modern world.

Ramashrya Sharma, (1994) in his book -A socio-political study of Ramayana, revealed every conceivable bit of information about education, state,

kingship, administration, war and military organization, position of women and mythology. It emphasized the importance of moral values in molding personality. The book also brought out the spiritual and material values of education whose relevance can be seen in the present world.

Bhurijana (1995), Urmila (1992), and Jagadisa (1982) are the sole contributors to the literature of a contemporary approach to implementing the concepts and principles of Vedic education in the modern classroom. These authors are experienced educators and have a practical, as well as philosophical appreciation, of the problems encountered at the implementation phase. Bhurijana book, The Art of Teaching, 1995, incorporates contemporary research with examples for clarification from the books and lived example of Prabhupada. Almost half the book is dedicated to organization and discipline, which indicates a strong emphasis on creating the appropriate environment and maintaining it for the purpose of effective teaching.

The study on Educational Ideas of Upanishads by Surendran (1998) reveals that Universal integration was the ultimate aim of education and it was comprehensive in all respects. Objective based approach in education was prominent and there was a perfect harmony in teacher-pupil relationship. The Upanisadic society was purely secularist. The study on Educational Ideas in Vedic period and its relevance to Modern World (1999) is the contribution of Peethambaran Pillai. The study reveals that Education should ultimately aim for self-realization and the Education system should be re-arranged to promote the spirit of enquiry by adopting problem solving method.

Joshua David Stone (2003) pointed out that the Ramayana contains the essence of the more technical Vedic scripture with a simplistic treatment to reach the common men. He also asserted that the Ramayana is a text book of morals and ideals for youth and people of all ages to enjoy and aspire. He pointed out the high educational ideals that the Ramayana focuses.

Aparna Basu (2005): According to him, to achieve their aim not only did Brahmans develop a system of education which, survived even in the events of the Crumbling of empires and the changes of society, but they, also Through all those thousands of years, kept a glow of torch of higher Learning. In the words of Aparna Basu, Education in ancient India was free from any external control like that of the state and Government or any party politics. It was the kings duties to see that learned Pundits, pursued their studies and performed their duty of imparting knowledge without interference from any source what so ever.

Swami Sunishthananda, (2005) According to him, the best teachers are those who not only teach but also make their pupils worthy citizens possessing noble virtues. In an ideal educational process, a teacher is supposed to be a father figure, a role model. He attempted to interpret various aspects of education based on the teachings.

Paul G. O'Sullivan (2008) in his Research Gurukula system of education examines the social dimension of Vedic education and considers the importance of a supportive culture. He Presents the Gurukula system of education (Gurukula) in a contemporary context. He has given in details about the Gurukula system of education and his main focus was that in modern education institution should be like gurukula type.

The Important Aims of Education in Indian Ancient Period

1. Education for other world lines,
2. Character formation,
3. All round development for Personality.
4. Intellectual Development,
5. Spiritual Development,
6. Preparation for living,
7. Preserving and Transmitting Culture- Education only a means and not an end in itself.

Objectives of Ancient Indian Education

As in present time also education is supposed to be a mean to attain all round development in context of not only knowledge but also at affective and psychomotor domain of individual. In Vedic period, education has an idealistic form, in which the teachers laid stress upon worship of god, religiousness, spiritually, formation of character, development of personality, creation of an interest, for the development of culture, nation, and society.

The Prominent aim of Ancient Indian Education can be Given as Under

1. Physical and Intellectual Development
2. Religious And Spiritually
3. Emphasis Upon Knowledge And Experiences
4. Sublimation of instinctive tendencies
5. Preservation And Spread of Culture
6. Promotion of Social Efficiency and Happiness
7. Development of Character And Personality
8. Learning by doing

Need of Ancient Indian Education in Modern Era:

There are many qualities of ancient Indian education that we can adopt in modern education System :

1. Due to lack of moral values in modern education system, human is becoming social animal. Vedic education is necessary to develop its moral value. In fact, moral education is what makes a human being a human being.
2. To make current education indigenous meaningful and value based.
3. To build an emotional intimate relationship between teacher and student.
4. Reducing economic pressure to make education accessible to all.
5. To develop disciplinary qualities in students.
6. Education for self-reliance of students for earning a living.

Relevance of Ancient Indian Education in Modern Era:

1. Lately we all find that our social interaction is limited to our families, friends, relations etc as community welfare is never our main aim/motto of life- Vedas aim at building Social Capital of the followers of Vedic 'Sanatan' Dharma. Vedas

therefore, guide us to community welfare/Universal Brotherhood/One Global Family i.e. Viswa Bandhutva and Vasudhaiva-Kutumbkam.

2. In social service the concept of Success is difficult to define. So, Vedas advise it is better to be a man of value than of success. For Value system Vedas have a science of Axiology covering comprehensively of all Idealistic, Ideational and sensate values.
3. Research in social sciences and medical sciences has found that helping others not for recognition, is good for heart. It is great way to exercise your heart and soul. On social service there are a number of mantras/riks/hymns in Vedas, which inspire 'humans', 'to be human.'
4. Vedas specifically guide us to modern sociologists TEACH principle of Transparency, Ethics, Accountability, Conduct and Human welfare.
5. Unless self rule (Swaraj) is at the grass root level in Democracy, the rulers tend to become autocratic, corrupt, hypocrite and tyrannical. So, Vedas advise us to establish two main institutions of Swaraj viz. Vidhta and Sabha and scientific rules for governance for the welfare of the citizens.
6. Ishta theory of Vedas describes paths could be different so long as these paths aim at the welfare of mankind and other animate and inanimate life. Similarly after study of Vedas six schools of Indian philosophy (Darshana)- based on monism, Dualism, and even Atheism developed but, all aimed at the welfare of mankind. Thus, Vedas in whatever way we describe are meant for the welfare of mankind.
7. Vedas do not consider matter as inert and explain in a large number of hymns that matter has unsuspected vitality. All religions should aim at unity in diversity i.e. (should lead to universal brotherhood-viswa bandhutva), global family of the same One God (vasudhaivan kutumbkam), global trade and global market for the material and spiritual welfare of mankind.

Suggestions

Following suggestions can be made regarding education-

1. The medium of instruction should be the mother tongue of the child.
2. Education should be provided opportunities to learn by doing.
3. Learning should be encouraged through experience.
4. Coordinate the learning process.
5. Education should create useful citizens.
6. There should be mental labor as well as physical labor.
7. All the child's powers should be harmoniously developed through education. According to Mahatma Gandhi " True education is that through which the physical, mental and spiritual development of children is encouraged.

8. The aim of education should be to liberate the person from all kinds of economic, political and mental slavery in his parent life.

Conclusion

Education system in the Vedic era was very standard and comprehensive. It was fully capable of development of physical and intellectual and character development, development of civics, social, moral and spiritual values, social efficiency and happiness, preservation and spread of culture, infusion of piety, and religiousness and development of best type of personality. In Vedic era Education had the prominent place in society. It was considered as pious and important for society. A great importance was attached to Veda in education system, self study Swadhyaya was considered more important during that period. Thus it can be conclude that, although keep a eye on today's need and change in conditions, it will be very difficult to adopt all the aspects of vedic education, but it is also very sure that some of the basic assumptions on which vedic education was based can be adopted in present education system also, which will ensure and take our education system on to the path for which it is aimed for.

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