

Vedic Education System with special reference to its Sanskrit Literature

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1. Introduction

The education system which was evolved first in ancient India is known as the Vedic System of education. In other words, the ancient system of education was based on the Vedas and their for it was the given name of Vedic education system. Some scholars have sub divided Vedic educational period into Rigveda period Brahmani period, Upanishada period, Sutra(hymn)period, Smriti period, etc. but all these period, due to pre dominance of the Vedas, there was no change in the aims and an ideals for education.

The education system of Vedic period has unique characteristics and qualities which were not found in the ancient education system of any other country of the world. In the words of Dr.P.N.Prabha, "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 show ever"¹

2. Concept of Vedic Education System:-

Man is the most intellectual being in the creation. He is endowed with the power to receive knowledge, to think, to imagine, reflect and speculate about his past as well as his future. In this hierarchy of education, the Vedas are the first to revealed, the other being evolved from them.

Vedic education is the mirror of all the education of culture of India lies in the number (1) Rig Veda (2) Sam Veda (3) Yajur Veda (4) Atharva Veda.

3. Salient Feature of Vedic Education:-

- (1) **Source Of Light:-**In Vedic period education was considered as a source of illumination which enlightens an individual in all walks of life. It was only education that truth could be perceived & wisdom could be attained.
- (2) **Knowledge The Third Eye:-** According to Vedas education is knowledge opens inner eye, flooding him with spiritual and divine life.
- (3) **Agency Of Improvement:-** The illumination as described will bring a complete change the person & this change is for the better education makes us civilized, refined, polished and cultured.
- (4) **Not Merely Books learning:-** Illumination is them cultural concept of education. It does not mean that it has always to come from books. Thus education is not merely book learning.

4. Objectives of Vedic Education:-

The prominent aim of Vedic education can be given as under:-

- (1) Physical and intellectual development
- (2) Religious and spiritually
- (3) Emphasis upon knowledge & experiences
- (4) Sublimation of instinct
- (5) Preservation and spread of culture
- (6) Promotion of social efficiency happiness
- (7) Development of character and personality
- (8) Immediate and ultimate answer

5. Curriculum:-

Vedas & Vedic Literature:-

The curriculum was dominated by the study of Vedas and Vedic literature spiritual and moral lessons. There are four Vedas namely

- (1) Rig Veda (2) Yajur Veda (3) Sam Veda (4) Atharva Veda²

The word "VEDA" means "Knowledge", "knowledge par excellence, i.e. the sacred, spiritual knowledge". It is a mass of literature which had grown up in course of many centuries and was orally handed down from generation to generation.³

The Vedic literature comprises the four Vedas and their Samhitas, Brahmanis, Aranyakas and Upanishads embodying diverse facts of knowledge. This emphasis on knowledge is inherent in the word 'Vid'(to know) from which Veda is derived.

The word Veda derived from root vid (to know) meaning knowledge par excellence. Vedic texts sruti (heard) believed to have been directly revealed to the authors by gods. Rigveda the oldest religious text in the world, compiled in 1500-1000 B.C. has 1028 hymns(1017 + 11 valakhilyas) divided into 10 mandalas or 8 Astikas, Written by of seers: Atri, Angiras, Bhardwaj, Gritsamad, Kanva, Vishwamitra, Vamveda and Varistha. Book I to VI are earliest, while VII and X are later editions and Book IX is compilation of some hymns of the other books. It is the foundation of all Vedic literature consist mainly of lyrics in praise of different gods, mainly Indra, Varuna and Agni.

Yajur Veda is in the form of prose distinct from Vedic form of Rig veda contains sacrificial formulas and rules has 2 recensions: (1) The older Black or Krishna Yajur Veda Kathana Maitriyani and Taittiriya 'Samhita (2) White or Sukla Yajur Veda or Vajasanayi Samhitas. Sam Veda contains all the Rig Vedic hymns except 75 which were set to tune. Atharva Veda is collection of spells and charms or primitive magic.⁴

Brahmanas are appendices to the Vedas deal with the rules of sacrifice and contain ritualistic formulas for the

respective Veda and priests. While Aranyakas are the final parts of the Brahmanas Aranyakas (meaning forest books) were taught in the forest due to their dangerous magical powers. Upanishads are Commentaries appended to the Aranyakas and deal mainly with philosophy more than 100 but only 12 important ones; derived from Upa-ni-sad (to sit down near someone).

Non- Sruti Literature:

It developed for the understanding of the Vedic literature and written in the form of sutras written in prose form. The Vedangas are limbs of the Vedas. There are six Vedangas: Siksa (phonetics), Kalpa (rituals), Vyakaran (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Chhanda (metrics), Jyotisha (astronomy). Yaska's Nirukata (5th C.B.C.) on Vyakaranpingala wrote on chhanda.⁵

Method Of Teaching:-

In this period verbal education was imported in such a way that it could be preserved for thousands of years. The hymns were learnt by remembering and they were realized through meditation. The sound words to varres were pronounced in their organized forms. The Acharya, corrected the mistakes or their disciples by repetition. The people of Vedic age believed that pronunciation of the hymns caused sin and destroyed their effects.

6. Role Of Teacher During Vedic Period:-

During the Vedic period the Gurukul method prevailed in which the students lived in the house of the Guru. The process

of education passed through three stages of comprehension, meditation and memory. The Gurukuls were the centres of education in which education was imparted only by individuals of characters and ability. The students remained with his guru for 12 years. Teachers laid stress on the integral development of the individuals personality.

Every student was required while residing in the gurukul to serve his teachers compulsorily. Teacher was a very respectable person who has qualities of head and hand. Any violation of Guru's instruction was regarded as a sin and subject to stern punishment.

The student has to bear the responsibility of feeding both himself and his teacher. D.R. Altekar had said that a relation between a student teacher was a direct one. It did not function through an institution. The duties of the teacher including teaching, making arrangements for boarding and holding the students.

7. Conclusion:-

Education System and Sanskrit literature in the Vedic era was of the height 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 & religiousness and development of best type of personality.⁶

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