

Illustration of Ancient Educational Structures for Elevating Wisdom in Vedas and Upanishads

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Abstract

India was the first country globally to develop a profound education system at the time of the Vedic period. The early Vedic education system and the later Vedic education system were structured by Hindus. During the Vedic period, education had both extensive and narrow meanings. This research has followed the secondary qualitative data collection methods to gather different information. The main aim of this study is to analyze ancient structures of education which were developed in the Vedic period. Thus, the findings of the study indicated that the educational structure illustrated in the Vedas and Upanishads built the foundation cultivating holistic wisdom among individuals.

Keywords: Education, The Vedic Period, Brahmanic Education, Ancient Period

Introduction

The Vedas are a huge body of different religious texts originating in ancient times period of India. The Upanishads are the religious techniques of late Vedic Sanskrit texts still admired in Hinduism. The education organization was developed first in ancient India and is identified as the Vedic education system. Hence, the ancient education system depended on the Vedas and it was defined as the educational system of the Vedic period. Some intellectuals have sub-structured the educational system of the Vedic period into the Brahmani period, Rig Veda Period, Sutra Period, Upanishada Period, and Smriti Period. These were all different periods, yet there was no alteration in the ideals and aims of education due to the prevalence of the Vedas. This is the main reason that the education system of these priions is placed under the Vedic Period. The verse which is “*Swadesh Pijyate Raja, Vidwan Sarvatra Pujyate*” broadly quoted in India describes the importance of education in this country.

The Vedic education system has distinctive qualities and characteristics which did not exist in the ancient system of education in any other country globally. The ancient education system in India was

free from external control such as the government, the state, or any other party politics. It was the duty of the king to observe that educated Pandits trailed their education and executed their duties of conveying knowledge without any interference.

Literature review

In the era of Veda and Upanishad education has played a significant role in the development of society. A significantly used line in the aspect of ancient education is

“यस्यनास्ति स्वयंप्रज्ञा, शास्त्रं तस्य करोतिकिं।

लोचनाभ्याम विहीनस्य, दर्पणः किंकरिष्यति।” (Tuboehand Sukmantara, 2020)

As per the vision of the Aryans, education in the Vedic period was built to acquire prosperity in various fields including spiritual, mental, physical, and development in the social field (Tandon, 2019). On the other hand, the Vedic era supported the system of education as the only way of justifying the debt of the guru based on the feelings of people at that time. In terms of properly addressing the instruction in the Vedic period various terms including modesty, humility, knowledge, and awakening can be used as justified components. Education was seen as a form of opening a third eye of the people associated with the teaching system. A proper focus on education in the Vedic and Upanishad eras has helped people to achieve heights and discover new aspects of life that gifted us the today's world.

“असतोमासद्गमय।

तमसोमाज्योतिर्गमय।

मृत्योर्माऽमृतगमय।” (Adnyana, 2020)

The education system in the period of Upanishad and Ved does not aim to give just knowledge about various topics. It was designed to realize the self-liberation of the soul anyone holds from the life chains based on both present and future times. During the period of Upanishad and Ved the teaching system relied upon an idealistic form, based on various components of learning including spirituality, character formation, religiousness, worship procedure of god, and various other components. However, in general terms at the time of the Vedic and Upanishad eras, the main aim of the education system was to prepare individuals related to different castes in their actual life.

“मनुवेमतरसमादै॥”(Jareonsettasin, 2021)

The overall structure of the education in Vedic era was pupil centred including various steps and formats. In the teaching system in the Vedic and Post-Vedic scenarios, there was an absence of any singular method that has been adopted by the Gurus. The common educational structure followed the recitation process of the pupil followed by the explanation process done by the Gurus. In the recent period, a sloka is still used that *“Swadesh Pujate Raja, Vidwan Sarvatra Pujate”* which means the educational value is praised by the world. The overall process of teaching in the Vedic and Upanishad eras can be divided into two parts including ‘Maukhik’ which is oral and ‘Chintan’ which is the reflection of the self-learning of the pupil (Selvamani, 2019). Apart from that, the pupil under the education system has to bear the responsibility to gather food for their Gurus and for themselves. The pupil followed the process of begging alms to collect necessary food items for daily living. In the Upanishad and Vedic times, the process of begging for alms was not considered bad. This alms-begging process was known to create humility inside the pupil. Apart from that, this process also helped the pupil to only through the service of the society and the sympathy the process of daily living and proper education can be earned. However, for the pupil belonging to a poor background, the process of begging for alms was unavoidable and eternal. Correspondingly, most of the pupils from a prosperous background were also known to beg for alms. It maintained the no-division philosophy under the educational system in Upanishad and Vedic periods.

Methodology

Research methodology is the proper techniques and procedures utilized to recognize, process, select, and determine information about a study. The methodology permits the reader to thoroughly evaluate the reliability and validity of the study in a research paper. This research has followed the secondary qualitative data collection methods to gather relevant information about the topic. The benefits of this data collection method are, saves time, money, and effort, and this also gives structured data (Sileyew, 2019). A major weakness of utilizing secondary data is that it might not answer proper research questions of researchers, they would like to have. Regardless of this weakness this research still adopted this data collection procedure as it provided relevant and proper information about the study. Data have been collected through different articles from google scholar. All the collected data in this study are relevant and ethical, as these were all gathered from reliable sources. At the time of collecting data, the proper timeline has also been maintained, to produce the most recent information.

Findings and Discussions

It has been found that the education system of ancient times in India was mainly the education of the Vedas. The cradles of education were Dharma, Brahmins, and Upanishads Sutras. The literature of Panini, Aryabhatta, Patanjali, Katyayana, Chakra, Susruta, and Kautilya were the other sources of Brahmanic literature. The education of Brahmanic has been the resource of ingenuity for analyzing educational objectives and aims for the next generations (Angiras, 2022).

"सत्यं रूपं श्रुतं विद्या कौल्यं शीलं बलं धनम्।

शौर्यं च चित्र भाष्यं च दशमे स्वर्गयो नयः ॥" (Sharma, 2019)

The aim of Brahmanic education is a mixture of a spirit of religiousness and piety, personality development, social efficacy promotion, social sense, civil inculcation, character formation, and national culture preservation.

"विद्यामित्रं प्रवासेषु भार्या मित्रं गृहेषु च।

व्याधि तस्यौषधं मित्रं, धर्मो मित्रं मृतस्य च ॥" (Gopinathan, and Tan, 2023)

There is a broad gap of education between modern education and ancient education; still, there are some materials of ancient education that can perceive room within modern education both in practice and theory. There were huge educational achievements in the Vedic age such as,

- Different skills of social were evolved from training in the duties
- High attention was given to the child's character development. Teachers put pressure on the individual's personality's integral development
- Education foregrounds spiritual development and the ashram system was taken for reimbursing the people's debt to their forefathers, society, teachers, and the Gods
- Swadhyaya or self-study was contemplated as the most important
- The education medium was a divine pronouncement
- At the time of this period, education of vocational was given in science, Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Military, and Medicine. Handicrafts and Arts were extremely respected; on the other hand, Chemistry and Commerce were also popular (Ramachandra, 2022).
- At the time of residing in Gurukul education has been given to the child in the most favorable environment.
- The education system in ancient times was free, and its different expenses were carried out by the king and the society.

- The students have to adhere to the ideals and rules of the Gurukul. They had to bear the hardship of existence by begging for alms. This specific practice developed tolerance and humility in the students (Mokracek and Mohammed, 2021).
- The parents' minds were first arranged to inculcate within them wanting for their children's education. It has been stated that those parents who did not educate their children were the enemy of their children.

At the time of the Vedic age, women were identified as equal to men, for girls the initiation ceremony or the Upanayana was also performed before their education started. They were also needed to spend a life of celibacy at the time of their education. Some of the significant characteristics of Vedic education are teachers' high status, residential schools, Sanskrit as the mode of instruction, and individual teaching.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the ancient education system of India was quite successful in safeguarding its literature and culture without the assistance of the art of writing. The system of education pervades social values and responsibility sense. The education system of ancient times attained its significance to a comprehensive extent. The ground of Indian culture can be found in the Vedas. The education system has a significant place within society in the Vedic era. It was taken as important and pious for society. Relationships in the middle of pupils and the Guru were much more cordial at the time of the post-Vedic as well as the Vedic periods. Attempts were being developed to infuse "*Satyam Shivam and Sundaram*" in the students. This period also advocated the education of women; a significant was connected to Veda in the education system.

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