



EDUCATION AND VALUE ORIENTATION IN ANCIENT INDIA- REVIEW A SOLUTION FOR PROBLEMS OF THE SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

India maintained its stand as a knowledge bank for the seekers of the world since times immemorial. The known history proves that the spiritual knowledge of India dates back to 35000 BC and aimed at the all round development of a human being. In the past education and value orientation are not separate aspects but two sides of the same coin. The purpose of any education should be to create mature human beings who can become the torch bearers of the society. The present situation is completely different. After completing education the student is not in a position to solve his own problems or the problems of the society rather becoming a money making machine with selfish needs for himself or for his family and at the cost of society. The situation can be corrected when drastic changes are made in the education system by overhauling the curriculum, process of teaching and learning and evaluation techniques. Most of the countries in the world at present are looking towards Indian historical practices of educational system to create mature persons, who can become models of future generations. Violence and crime element of the society cannot be solved by brute force and can be solved only by a change in the attitude of the people. The educated elite should do a lot of research to cater to the needs of the students at the physical level, emotional level and intellectual level, so that there will be no hidden traits in the students which are harmful to the society and at the same time the social needs of the people are to be given importance. Value education should not be a subject in education system but should become a core value of education.

KEYWORDS :

*Agnana thimirandhasya
gnananjana salakaya
chakshurun meelitham ena
tasmai sri gurave namaha*

Salutations are to that teacher who teaches the students to come out of the darkness of ignorance by giving the medicine of knowledge for giving a better vision. In the good olden days, in India there was the practice of Gurukula system of education. In this system the student will be admitted to the Gurukula after the primary initiation into the spiritual practices by the performance of Upanayana by the parents at the age of eight. It is the duty of the parents to select the correct Guru to their child depending on his caliber and need. It is the teacher to decide about the subject of interest and time schedule suitable to the student and the total system is need based education. There will be no school or training till that age and children enjoy love, affection, caring and sharing, physical education, household duties, family values and peaceful enjoyment of infancy so that they become loving caring adults in their lives. The present generation is missing their childhood and entering into the nursery and pre nursery class at the age when they do not have control over their physical needs also. According to psychiatrists this vacuum creates an unhealthy mind leading to possessiveness, attention seeking nature, insecurity and selfish attitude. The people become beasts craving for love and affection from outside as they missed it in their lives and remain as discontented.

After entering into the Gurukula, the student spends time with the guru for eight to ten years depending on the speed of his grasping. There will be no first or second in the class, no pass or fail, and no grading or marking system. Irrespective of their social status students lead simple life, serve the guru, work for the Gurukula and learn at the time of their choice. There will be no fear or tension or adjustment problems to stay in a Gurukula. It was need based education and for leading a happy life in future. The students live with nature and know the importance of protecting the environment. Lord Krishna and Balarama when entered the Gurukula of Sandipani lived as common students. And surprisingly education is free and value oriented and aimed at creating mature human beings. The purpose of education then is not money making but to be useful to the society. By the time they complete their education the students know what will be their future chore and what are their interests in life. This foundation makes the total life happy. It was very strict that students can think about having a

family only after they complete their education.

The students get a clear idea of chaturasrama Dharmas, the Brahmacharyasrama, Grihasthasrama, Vanaprastha and Sanyasasramas. In Brahmacharyasrama, the students are expected to stay away from parents, to stay in Gurukulas, lead a simple life, eat only satwikahara which will be provided by guru pathni, and follow celibacy. The process of teaching will be in the form of question and answer. It was considered a journey along with others sharing and caring one another.

*Sahana vavathu
Sahanau bhunakthu
Sahaveeryam karavavahai,
tejaswina vadheethamastu
Mavidwishavahai
Aum Shanthi, Shanthi shanthi*

'Let us live together, eat together, grow together, let us not hate one another, and let there be peace, peace and only peace.'

In Grihasthasrama the person is expected to maintain a family, look after children, cater to the needs of family, resolve problems, earn money needed by the family, do the needful to get relieved from deva runa, pithuruna and rushi runa. It is his duty to follow the rules of the society for fulfilling the chaturvidha purushardhas, which will be explained during the previous ashrama. The concepts of chaturvidha Purushardhas that is Dharma Artha Kama and Moksha, make a person social oriented and peaceful person, the person knows how to mingle with society, how much money to be earned, how much to be spent towards charity and how to lead a life of attachment with detachment having an eye on ultimate salvation.

A person enters into Vanaprastha when he gets grand children, living a life of prayers and tranquility in vanas and total responsibility will be transferred to the son. There will be no BP or diabetes, no tensions and no expectations from the younger generations and no tensions of old age retirement benefits. And finally a person prepares himself to the transmigration from this life. Every stage of life is accepted as a natural transformation.

It was during the times of Mouryas that the Kings were taught Rajaneethi and Administration in Gurukulas. Chandra Gupta Mourya was taught by Chanikya the principles of politics and

economics. Even today, Chanikya's Artha Sastra is a treatise on political wisdom and administration. During Sathavahana period all Buddhist Aramas became centers of education and the Ashtanga marga, which is nothing but a code of conduct for the society. Students were given strict training in all branches of learning according to their choice. Sanskrit became the language for official communication.

During Gupta period, a separate degree called Kumara Amatya was created in the education system to fill the posts of officers in the Government. The student basing on his needs learns all subjects including Marshall Arts. The great Universities of Buddhism, Nalanda, Vikramasila, Vallabhi, and Takshasila universities flourished during Gupta period. Nalanda University was famous as international University and an entrance examination was conducted to check the capacity and aptitude of the students before admitting them to the institution. Nalanda University was maintained by the grant of 100 villages by Kumara Gupta. It had strength of 1500 teachers and 10000 students and teaching was done in 18 courses. Students had full freedom to select course of their choice. Huen Tsang, the Chinese traveler joined in the university as a student, completed his education became a lecturer there and became vice chancellor of the university during his stay of 14 years. Education was considered as an aspect of prime importance by the Government.

During Pallava period, the inscriptions clearly mention about the existence of Ghatikas where teaching was done in all the sastras including arts of warfare. Every religious institution maintained an educational institute. Morality, devotion, ritualistic practices and income generation skills are part of educational system. During Chola hegemony, the people themselves participated in the process of self governance and good skill oriented education was provided to the students. Each civilian is expected of having knowledge of maintaining records of income and expenditure in village administration. We do not find problems of literacy and illiteracy during this period.

From 8th century to 18th century historically India has undergone the problems of Dark Age due to Islamic invasions and threats to the peaceful coexistence in the society. The educational institutions have lost royal patronage and the definition of education was changed from academic pursuits to martial trainings. Even during this period literary activity continued to some extent and in the next period only literary excellence is considered as education. With the advent of Europeans traditional education system received a blow and classical education was neglected. India had lost its original qualities in the educational system and the generations of students got affected from this. Till 7th century AD common man was speaking, reading and writing Sanskrit and all the inscriptions were in Sanskrit language. Foreign rule for 700 years and neglect of traditional education led to the degradation of value system also.

At present we do not see any peaceful childhood for children. The parents carry lot of tension about education of their children. Corporate education is looked upon as the only choice. The children were exposed to the tensions of the society. Crime elements are increasing. There is a feeling of insecurity in the system. There is a lot of competition in the process of evaluation. Time bound assignments make life miserable to the low and slow learners. The professions which once were pillars of economic activity withered away from the society. Social needs are not answered by the education system. Scholars are not becoming teachers and teachers are not the role models of the society which was once upon a time a practice. The teacher student relationship became artificial and education is receiving a status of business and marketing. Commercialization entered into the lives of people. Indians are running after money making and education is considered as one of the means to become wealthy. It proved a myth.

Dignity of labour in the society is lost as a principle. Student had lost the freedom of choosing subjects of his liking and becoming

frustrated. Only memorizing was becoming the order of the day and creativity is not encouraged in the system. Students are losing the capacity to create and mostly depend on the technology. Family relations are broken and money the monster entered into the human relations. Most of the crimes are done for the sake of properties. Economic disparities in the society increased and social orientation is not considered as a duty of human being. Searching for pleasure in the outside environment is leaving the people as distorted. Nature is not taken care of and concrete jungles are appearing in the society. Villages look less populated where as in cities people live an artificial life. Pollution and health hazards are order of the day. Students are not mentally balanced and for teachers there is no time to be allotted to the students. Every year nearly one lakh students are committing suicides which has to be considered as a grave problem of the society. Lakhs of students who are coming out of educational institutions every year lack employability. Youth of India if present themselves as discontented, disillusioned and dismayed, what is going to happen to the society.

Thanks to the visionaries who felt that the system of education had solutions to all the problems of the society, mere introduction of human values and professional ethics is not going to solve the problems. It also becomes one of the monotonous courses. Whatever is prescribed loses its beauty of being a good subject. Rabindra Nath Tagore when he started Santhini Kethan had an idea of giving value oriented education. Mahatma Gandhi when he published the Wardha education programme specified earning while learning concept. He advised the youth to go back to villages. His Sabarmathi Ashram was an experimentation of living a life of contentment. Swami Chinmayananda, Jiddu Krishna Murthy, Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Matha Amruthanandamayi Kanchi Paramacharya and many others established schools and colleges with value orientation. Education system has to be thoroughly overhauled for a better India.