

Aims of Education during Vedic Period in India

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ABSTRACT:

The main aim of education during Vedic period was to know the Truth. During the later period it has been said that four things such as Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha are the aims of our life. In Present time, earning of wealth is the only aim of human life. The ancient India had their distinctive culture and civilization over the thousands of years. In the past, the great saints have played a decisive role in shaping and molding the ancient heritage. The ancient Indian education emerged from the Vedas. The Vedas are the best expression of an enlightened culture and have contained within themselves the seeds and sources of Hindu thoughts and practices. The Vedas have laid the foundation upon which the entire Hindu culture and civilization has been building up through the ages. Veda means knowledge which is gifted by the God to the saints through their meditation. During this period, education was divided into two kinds of knowledge-this worldly and other worldly. This worldly education dealt with the social aspect, whereas, the other worldly education was related to intellectual pursuits for achieving salvation. However, the greater emphasis was laid on the latter because education was regarded as a means of free from life bondage.

KEY WORDS:

Vedas, Vedic Education, True Knowledge, Salvation, Supreme Consciousness, Self-realization etc.

INTRODUCTION:

Vedic people believed that education should prepare individuals in such a way as to prepare them to attain the objective of liberation or self-realization i.e. to be one with the Almighty and to be free from the cycle of births and deaths. In Vedic days the human life was simple and pious and full of religious feelings, ideas and ideals. As persons had a moral standard before them, they performed their duties with great attention and devotion. The ultimate aim of education in Vedic Period was not only to gain knowledge as preparation for life in this world or for life beyond that, but for complete realization of self-for liberation of the soul from chains of life, both present and future. That knowledge was real, which led to emancipation-led from unreality to reality, from darkness to light, and from death to immortality. That's why it is said -*sa vidya ya bimuktaye* (Isoponisad) means that is the real knowledge which makes us able to know the reality of the life and to realize the Supreme soul. Vedic education was divided into many parts but the goal of every part was to know to truth. Vedic education was a continuous process from one tradition to the next tradition so that everyone can study the Vedas through out the entire life of an individual.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The main purpose of this study is to invent the ultimate goal of vedic education and to know the importance of the vedic education system. The other main reason of this study is comparing the vedic education with the modern education and to decide the best of them.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

For the preparing of this research paper so many books have been reviewed. Some of the very important books are such as 1. History of Vedic Literature 2. History of Upanishads and Elements 3.

History of early Vedic Period and so on. Besides these, many research papers of the several journals and reference books have been carefully reviewed.

SYSTEM OF ADMISSION DURING VEDIC PERIOD IN INDIA:

The system of education which was prevalent was altogether different from the present system of education. Student life in Vedic education began with upanayana, when the student goes to his chosen teacher called Acharya. The place of learning was called Gurukul. The ceremony was performed for three days. After the ceremony of upanayana the pupil emerges as a dwija or twice born. This upanayana ceremony, unfolds his mind and soul. After this ceremony, the pupil was called as a Brahmachari, a new and changed individual, both internally and externally, from which he began his student life. Learning was almost monopolized by the Brahmins. As time passed on, the other two castes, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, were also entitled to receive education. But the Sudras in general were denied to study the Holy Scriptures. The home of the teacher or Guru was the centre of learning in Vedic period which was situated in natural surroundings, not artificially constituted. It was functioning in solitude and silence. The age limit for upanayan ceremony was eight years, eleven years and twelve years, respectively for Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.

THE AIMS OF EDUCATION IN VEDIC PERIOD:

Though the main aim of Vedic education was one but in other hand there were several sub-aims available in Vedic period.

- i. The aim of Vedic education was to realize the supreme and achieve Supreme Consciousness
- ii. Inculcation of a spirit of piety and righteousness was the aim of education.
- iii. Preservation and spread of ancient culture was one of the aims of ancient educational system.
- iv. The chief aim was to unfold the spiritual and moral powers of the individual during Vedic period.
- v. The objectives of education were perfection of the physical, mental and intellectual personality of the student.
- vi. Formation of good and moral character was also another aim of Vedic education.
- vii. Inculcation of social and civic duties was one of the aims in Vedic period which was necessary for a better future life.
- viii. For the development of vocational efficiency healthy, positive attitude and dignity of labour were fostered in pupils during Vedic period.

4. Vedic Period in India and Curriculum:

The curriculum during Vedic period, was dominated by the study of the Vedas and Vedic literature, spiritual and moral lessons. The other subjects of teachings were philosophy, grammar, language, literature, astrology and logic. Physical education was also included in the curriculum. Students had to learn riding, archery, wrestling, hunting, jumping, dancing etc. Some professional and technical subjects like Ayurveda or Ciktsavidya (medicine and surgery), astronomy, mathematics, Arthashastra etc. were given due importance in the curriculum.

VEDIC PERIOD IN INDIA AND METHODS OF TEACHING:

There were mainly three steps of learning according to Vedic system. Sravana, the first step meant listening towards the texts as uttered by the teacher. By this method of education, knowledge was

conserved and transmitted to the oncoming generation. The second step was Manana i.e. to internalize or to assimilate what was given to the pupil.

It is a process of deliberation and reflection on the topic. The third step was Nididhyasana (Meditation) by which truth is realised and attained. It was considered indispensable for the realization of the Supreme Reality.

The ancient system of teaching was listening (Shruti). Perception was the direct method of learning. Lecture, dialogue, debate, discussion, question-answer, sightseeing etc. were adopted as the methods of teaching. On the whole both intuitive and empirical methods, both Yogic and Scientific methods were adopted for acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Self-realization aim - Over all aim of education was for the complete realization of self and for freedom of the soul i.e. Mukti or Moksha. And that education would lead to liberation - from unreality to reality, darkness to light, death to immortality

2) Immediate Aim or Vocational Aim - This was to prepare the different castes for their different ways of living and earning for livelihood.

3) Moral, Religious and Spiritual Development Aim - The Education was for education's goal and not for some public exam or service. It was not merely intellectual. But moral, spiritual and Religious too. The life of the pupil was full of custom acts. Prayers were common each pupil was needed to perform spiritual ceremonies punctually. They had to involved in all the religious festivals.

4) Self-control and Self-Discipline - At that time, the best discipline was self-discipline. There was no corporal punishment.

5) Personality Development:

The Guru within the times of yore accomplished that the event of Personality is that the sole aim of education. Human personality was considered as the supreme work of God. The qualities of shallowness, self confidence, self restraint and self respect were the personality traits given. Primary motive was development of personality and character. Ethical strength and virtue were developed to the fullest extent,

6) Stress on Social and Civic Duties:

To contribute to the society while not expecting any returns rather than living a self-centric life.

7) Preservation and Spreading of Culture:

It was thought of that education is that the primary suggests that of social and cultural continuity and its failure, in teaching following generation to simply accept and shift the traditions of thought and action and henceforward, transmit the cultural heritage, was extremely condemned.

MAIN EDUCATIONAL CENTRES OF VEDIC PERIOD :

During Vedic period primary education was imparted at homes whereas higher education was arranged in gurukuls.

These gurukuls, in the early Vedic period, were situated at undisturbed places in forests away from the hustle-bustle of the towns.

However, in the later Vedic period they were established in big towns or at famous centres of pilgrimage.

Besides being the centres of religious propagation, these pilgrimage centres also developed as famous centres of learning.

Some of the chief centres of education during Vedic period were - Taxila, Patliputra, Mithila, Dhar, Kannauj, Kaikay, Kalyani, Tanjaur and Kanchi (were big towns) and Prayag, Kashi, Ayodhya, Ujjaini, Nasik, Karnataka and Kanchi (were pilgrimage centres).

A brief description of some of these centres is as follows :

1. Taxila:

It was the capital of the then Gandhar State in northern India.

It is believed that this town was established by the then Gandhar King Bharat in the name of his Taksha.

Later on, Taksha made this city his capital and invited scholars from different places to settle there.

He donated them villages and entrusted them the responsibility of education.

Thus, this city developed as the centre of education besides being the capital city of the State.

It is mentioned that great scholars of Sanskrit language, literature and grammar for four Vedas, religion and philosophy lived there.

Mention is also found that some scholars were specialists in the field of medicine.

As a result, Taxila developed as the chief education centre of Vedic literature, religion, philosophy and medicine.

Good arrangement for the education of arts, crafts and vocations too was also made there.

This is the reason the Gandhar developed as the most prosperous State.

It remained a chief centre of Vedic and Brahmanic education till 7th Century B.C.

2. Kaikay :

It was the capital of the then Kaikay State in Central India.

It was the chief centre of education in the Upanishadic period.

It had good arrangement for the education of Sanskrit language, grammar, literature, Vedas, religion and philosophy.

The ancient scriptures State that the King of Kaikay, Ashvapati was himself a great scholar and he honoured other scholars too.

He had settled many scholars of repute in his capital.

He also organised scholars' conferences at regular interval in his capital.

It is also mentioned that there was no single illiterate in this capital city.

It also had good arrangements for the education of arts, skills, vocations and military education.

3. Mithila : It was the capital of the then Mithila State in Central India.

Though it developed as an important educational centre much before in the Vedic period and conferences of scholars of religion and philosophy used to be held there but in the Upanishadic period it developed as the chief centre of Vedic education.

SALIENT FEATURES OF VEDIC EDUCATION :

1. Aims of Education : Self-realization was the ultimate aim of education. However, the immediate aim of education was to prepare the different varnas to meet their actual needs of daily life.

2. Free and Accessible : Education was free and accessible to those all who sought it.

3. No State Control on Education : Rulers of the country had nothing directly to do with education. It was a private affair of the people, managed entirely by Brahmins.

Rulers of the country could subsidize it, if they thought fit to do so, with grants of land or money, but could impose no conditions or control on teachers affecting their freedom of work.

4. Autonomy and status of academics : academics were a extremely honored class-honoured even by kings. Kings rose from their thrones to receive nice gurus like Narada, Vashishtha and Vishwamitra. A widely known Sanskrit verse goes to this point on say:

"The teacher is Brahma. The teacher is Vishnu. The teacher is that the ultimate God Shiva.

The teacher is that the nice Brahman (Supreme Divine Soul) incarnate. Bow to that teacher."

5. Gurukuls (Residential Schools): Teachers and pupils lived together and so identified themselves with one another as to able to pray as follows:

"May both of us be guarded ! May both of us be protected! May both of us work together! May the study of both of us be successful (vibrant with power, radiant with light)! May we not be rivals to each other! Om, Peace, Peace, Peace."

6. Curriculum : The subjects of instruction varied according to the vocational needs of the different castes from the Vedas and Vedangas in the case of Brahmins, to the art of warfare in the case of Kshatriyas, and to agriculture and trade, arts and crafts in the case of Vaishyas.

7. Methods of Instruction : The methods of instruction generally consisted of recitation by the teacher and repetition by the pupil, followed by explanation by the teacher, questioning by the pupil and discussion between the teacher and the pupil.

8. Individual Teaching : Pupils were taught, individually, not en masse by the class method where pupils were many, the monitorial plan was followed, the more advanced pupils being appointed to teach the less advanced

9. Forests as Centres of Education: The place of education was generally the forest "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife"

10. Sanskrit as the Medium of Instruction: The medium of instruction in institutions conducted by Brahmins was Sanskrit.

11. Self-Control and Self-Discipline: There was, generally, no corporal punishment. Self-control or self-discipline was considered to be the best discipline.

12. Wide-Spread Education of Women: In the earlier Vedic and Upanishad times girls were free to go through the Upanayan ceremony, live a life of celibacy, they studied Vedas, Vedangas and other subjects along with their brother pupils.

Fire science (metallurgy), Air science (flight), Hydrology (navigation), Space science (space science) Earth science (environment), Surya Vidya (solar study), Lunar study (lunar study), Vidya (weather forecast), Material Vidya (battery) Solid Vidya (Liquid Vidya) Gas Vidya

Solar energy Vidya (solar energy), Day-night studies Srishti Vidya (space research), Astronomy Geography idya (Geography), Kaal Vidya (time), Geology and mining Gems and metals Attraction Vidya (gravity) –

Elemental Vidya, Effect Vidya, Mystery Vidya, Leela Vidya, Visual Vidya, Invisible Vidya, Shabd Vidya, Tactile Vidya, Rasavidha, Form Vidya, Gandhadvidha, Light Vidya, Research Vidya, Weapon Vidya, Shastra Vidya, Sankalp Vidya. Method of choice, method of conduct, method of thought, method of language. Solar energy Telegraphy (communication), Vimana Vidya (plane), Water vessels Firearms Vidya (arms and ammunition), Zoology Botany Yajna Vidya (material science) , Vedic Science Commerce

Agriculture ,Animal husbandry Bird keeping, Animal training Mechanics, Vehicle designing Ratankar (gems) Suvarnakar (jewellery designing) Vastrakar (textile) Kumbhakar pottery) Lohkar (metallurgy) Takshak (guarding) Dying Ayurveda Rajjukar (logistics) Architect Culinary (cooking) Chariot (driving) River manager (water management) Suchikar (data entry) Cowshed manager (animal husbandry), Udyan pal (horticulture), Forest pal (horticulture), Napit (paramedical), This type Education was imparted in Gurukul. The first school in England opened in 1811. At that time there were 732000 Gurukuls in India. In the name of Vedas, adulteration was done by making Hindi adaptation against Vedas. Placental method: - Physical science and placenta Vidha is called spiritual science. Both of them have knowledge of 16 arts. In the Taittiriya Upanishad ,Bhraguvalli translator,5 mantra 1, Rishi Bhragu has ated that-Vijnana Brahoti Vyajanat.It is from knowledge that these beings are born.Those born of science live. They try to enter into science. Meaning:- After performing austerities, he (the sage) knew that in fact all beings are born from science. After origin, they live by science. In the Taitriya Upanishad Brahmanandavalli Translator 8, Mantra 9 it is written that :-Vijnana tanutes the sacrifice. and stretches out actions. The gods of science: all. They worship the Brahman eldest. Vijnana Brahma Chedveda. Science is the increase of sacrifices and actions. All the gods worship science as the best Brahman.Those who know science in the form of Brahman are engaged in contemplation in the same way become and attain the fulfillment of all desires.

Within that God of knowledge that soul is the Brahman form, different from that soul of knowledge, within it that soul is the Brahman form.(All living beings in the world live by craft science.) Vedic knowledge is craft science Tattvajnanavidha Sakshividha Drashtavidha Srijanvidha Planvidha Visrijanvidha, Navasrijan vidha, Parinamavidha, Punarjanmavidha, Praveshvidha, Kundalini Mahavidha, Shikshavidha, Knowledge-Science Mode,Spiritual Knowledge-Science Mode, Ayurveda Knowledge-Science Mode,Ayurvedic Mode, Health Awareness Mode, Trino Ashvina Divyani Bshhaja Tri Parthivani Triru Dattamadbhya. May the auspicious lord carry the peace of the three elements to my son. Rigveda (1.34.6) O (Shubhaspati) craftsmen who observe the deeds of welfare-giving men and (Ashvina) increase the light of knowledge, you both (nḥ) for us (adbhyaḥ) from waters (divyani) light of knowledge and other excellent qualities doing (bshhaja) juicy Soma and other herbs (trih) three for the relief of heat (datta) give (u) and (parthivani) herbs containing the disorders of the earth (trih) in three ways and (mamakaya) to my (soonave) auras or son of knowledge for (शंयोः) happiness and (ओमानम्) the protective behavior signifying entry into knowledge and action (त्रिः) three times and (त्रिधातु) iron copper brass these three metals including groundwater and space going house-like vehicle For my son (trih) three times (vahatam) deliver. Humans should consume the disease-killing medicines produced in water and earth three times a day and make a wooden house-like vehicle made of various metals and install the best medicines like barley etc. in it. Travel between countries and regions . Vishwakarma Kul Shrestho Dharmagyo Veda

Pargah. Samudra Ganitaanaan Cha Jyoti: Shastrastra Chaibahi. Iron, stone, wood and ishtakaan collection. Sutra Prastra Kriya Pragya Vastuvidyadi Pargah. Sudhanaam Chitrakanam Cha Vidya Choshithi Mamagah. Vedakarma good conduct, virtuous truth reader. (Crafts Science) Arthvaveda Meaning :- Vishwakarma dynasty is the best, Vishwakarma dynasty is religious, he has knowledge of Vedas, Oceanography , Mathematics, Astrology, Geography and Astronomy. He is a craftsman proficient in metals like iron, stone, wood, silver, gold etc. Pictures create strange objects and means of happiness. He has faith in Vedic rituals, good conduct and truthful speech are his specialties. The sage of Mantra 58 of Chapter 29 of Yajurveda is Jamadagni, in which it is written Barhaspatya Shilpo Vaishvadev, all the gods are included in Vaishvadev. Shulvam Yagyasya Sadhanam Shilpaam Rupasya Sadhanam. (Vastusutropanishat/Chaturtha Prapathakah - 4.9 ||) Meaning :- Shulb Sutra is the means of Yagya and craftsmanship is the means of its form. There is a big difference between craft and skill, one is making a design through craftsmanship and the other is using it skillfully, both are different. Skill like a barber works efficiently with the tools made by the craftsman , a driver moves the means of transport made by the craftsman efficiently etc. Generally, the work by which a new substance or form is prepared by mixing different substances is called craft. (Unadi 0 Pad 03, Su 028) But the special form is as follows: 1- The replica is called craft "Yad Vai Praturupam Tacchilpam" (Shatpath 0-Ka02/1/15) 2- The work which purifies oneself is called craft (K)"Atma Sanskritirvai Shilpani: " (Gopath 0-U0/6/7) (b) "Atma Sanskritirvai Shilpani: " (Aitareya 0-6/27) 3- There is an instruction to learn the cleverness of the Gods by calling them crafts (Yajurveda 4/9, M.B.) 4- The word craft has come in both the meanings of form and action - (a) "Karmanamasu Cha" (Nighantu 2/1) (b) Shilpmiti form name supathitam" (Nirukta 3/7) 5 - Craft knowledge is the main part of livelihood. It is a means. (Manusmriti 1/60, 2/24, and Mahabharata 1/66/33) 6- Craft work has been called Yagya work. (Valmira, 1/13/16, and Sanskar Vidhi.....

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VEDIC LITERATURE:

The archeological sources of the Vedic Age are non-existent, and the main wellspring of its way of life and progress is the Vedic Literature. The standards of information, love, and Karma are the premise of this ancient Indian literature. The Literature of the Aryans incorporates different types of articulation like verse, show, sentiment, science, and so forth, which is a brilliant inheritance to Indian literature. Different scholarly works like Vedas (Rig-Veda, Sam Veda, Atharvaveda, and Yajurveda), Brahmanas, Samhitas, Aranyakas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and numerous others make us think that they were so anxious to accomplish flawlessness in different circles of life. The Sutra literature and grammar of Panini likewise hold a special consideration of the admirers of literature. The Vedic literature is of great significance as it is the only source to study about the Vedic Age.

VEDIC SHRUTI LITERATURE:

The Vedas are thought to be the earliest Hindu texts. Despite the fact that tradition frequently dates them to the start of the Kali-yuga, scholars estimate that they were written down around 2,500 years ago (3000 BCE). According to some Hindus, the Yajur, the original single Veda, was eventually divided into four. However, according to scholars, the Rig Veda is the first Hindu text. The four Vedas are described in the following Table.

Four Vedas at Glance			
S. No	Vedas	Composed Time Period	Features
1	Rig Veda	1700 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <u>Rig Veda</u> is the oldest and most significant of the Vedas. o It contains 1028 hymns in ten books (known as mandalas)

			<p>that are dedicated to various gods. Indra, Agni, Vishnu, Rudra, Varuna, and other early or “Vedic gods” are among them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It also includes the well-known Gayatri mantra and the Purusha Shukta prayer (the story of Primal Man).
2	Yajur Veda	1000 and 800 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Yajur Veda, the second of the four Vedas, is referred to as the ritual book. ○ It was written about one or two centuries after the Rig Veda. ○ Yajur signifies sacrifice. ○ Yajur Veda is a priestly manual for use when performing yajnas (sacrifices). ○ It is divided into two parts: the older “black”/”dark” (Krishna Yajur Veda) section and the more current “white”/”bright” (Shukla Yajur Veda) section.
3	Sama Veda	200 or 1000 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sama Veda is composed of chants and melodies that are chanted during worship and yajna rituals. ○ It was created just to be used in ritualistic contexts. Sama Veda’s words are recited during rituals like soma sacrifice. ○ It is tied to the Rig Veda and is the shortest of the four Vedas.
4	Adharvana Veda	1000-800 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The fourth and last Veda, Atharva Veda, is frequently referred to as the Veda of magic formulas. ○ Hymns, mantras, and incantations included in the Adharvana Veda fall mostly outside the purview of yajna.

FINDINGS OF THIS RESEARCH:

The Vedas are eternal Knowledge and they inspire us to lead higher lives. Even if we were to suppose that they may not create an urge towards a greater, nobler life, just the fact that their words have come up from the depths of man’s own nature enables them to furnish a channel, a framework, in which idealism can become operative for the welfare of humanity. Hence this attempts to interpret various aspects of education based on the teachings of the Vedas. The study of Vedas was the main aim of Vedic education. Thus, the Rig Veda forms the most vital aspect of Vedic education. The students spend most of their time in self-study, thinking, and meditation. More than worldly materials, knowledge and intellectual plays an integral aspect. The main aim of Vedic education was to attain salvation through education. The teacher teaches the student in Gurukulas and Ashrams. The students and teachers follow the principle of simple living but high thinking. Education helped in observance of celibacy, control over sense and purity of life Admission was based on good behavior and education was free for everyone. Students had great respect and devotion for their teachers and the teacher-student relationship was cordial and conducive. Teachers were held in high esteem. he main focus of education was on practical knowledge and other vocations learning. Education was based on one-on-one teaching. Every teacher teaches one student. The teacher gives importance to the all-round development of the students. The method of teaching was

psychological and natural with practice. Women were given a high place in society. Also, attention was given to their education. There was no bias of students on grounds of caste, creed, color, etc. Students remain busy in thinking and meditation. Thus, this led to the development of originality among them.

CONCLUSION:

Lastly, we may conclude that the Vedic education being mostly spiritual, liberal and contemplative in nature, was meant for all who were really interested, capable and dedicated and were in search of the highest truth and supreme knowledge. Education was free of cost and the students led an exemplary life in Vedic system of education. The teacher-student relationship was very cordial and just like the father-son relationship during Vedic period. Education was not based on caste, creed, colour or religion. It was based on fully secularism. There was no other religion except Vedic. People were almost knowledgeable by nature. There were no blind beliefs or superstitions in the rituals of common people. If we shall compare the Vedic period to our modern period then it can be said that Vedic age was no doubt far better than today's time.

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