

Evolution of Indian Education: The Stages

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ABSTRACT: The history of modern Indian education is traced through some reports of various commissions. Macaulay (1833) accepted the responsibility of providing primary education to the Indians. The objective of education was to provide education of European literature and science and English language, so that the Indians can help the British rulers in their administration. Woods Dispatch (1854) recommended specific course contents, setting up of Department of Public Instruction in five provinces of India, establishment of universities, teacher training centres and provision of grants-in-aid system to the schools. Hunter's Commission (1882) recommended withdrawal of government from running of the schools; instead private bodies were to take charge of schools. It suggested diversified courses for polytechnic school. Hartog Commission (1929) suggested stopping quantitative expansion and starting diversified courses. Zakir Hussain Committee Report (1937) called for a national system of education. Gandhiji's Basic Education scheme was examined.

THE FUNCTION OF EDUCATION: "India claims and has the right to glory in an ancient and long enduring culture, an age of centuries in which art, science, literature and philosophy flourished and the influence of Indian thought spread far beyond the bounds of the Indian world" (O'Malley, 1941). In any country, education is an attempt by the society to transmit its way of life to the succeeding generation so that they can be prepared for the life in the community. The form of education is determined by the values of the society.

EDUCATION IN BRAHMINIC PERIOD: Education in ancient India was in the hands of Brahmins, and children of three higher caste citizens (Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya) used to receive education at the guru's residence. They would be sent to guru's house after upanayana (initiation ceremony of wearing a sacred thread), and reside in the teachers' homes for 12 years for a life of celibacy (brahmacharya). The teachers behaved as their parents and the pupils were treated as family members of the guru. They were identified with each other and uttered the following prayer, "Sang gacchadham, Sang badadham, Sang bo manasi jTinati2m, debo bliTgam yath'i purbe sonFimana up'isate" (Let us be together, let us move together, talk together, our minds be in unity) (Guha, 1963). The ultimate aim of education was for complete realization of self for liberation of the soul from the chains of life. This knowledge leads us from unreality to reality, from darkness to light, from death to immortality.

BUDDHIST EDUCATION: Buddhist education centred around monasteries, whereas, Vedic education was given in the teacher's house and focused on the study of vedas. Buddhist education, at first, was confined to those aspirants wishing to enter the order, but was later given to the whole community. "Thus, it has an institutional character, i.e., the monasteries served as centres of learning and their doors were open for all irrespective of caste, community or country from which they travelled, (i.e., East Indies, Turkistan, Mongolia, China, Korea, Tibet and other places)" (Mookerji, 1947). Buddhism was originally conceived and imparted as ethical principles. Buddha was concerned about the suffering, disease and death of the human beings. He suggested following astanga marga (eight-fold path) namely, 1. Right knowledge 2. Right thought 3. Right speech 4. Right activity 5. Right means of livelihood 6. Right endeavour 7. Right memory 8. Right contemplation (Mookerji, 1947). These are the eight steps, the eight great truths deciphered by Buddha for the guidance of human life. By following this path, man can cut the bondage of misery.

MUSLIM EDUCATION: Islam has, from its inception, placed a high premium on education and has enjoyed a long and rich intellectual tradition. Knowledge ('ilm) occupies a significant position within

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