
GREAT INDIAN EDUCATORS

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Abstract

While the ancient Indian System of education and the Buddhist system provided for women's education, the Muslim institutions admitted very few girls. Generally in rich families individual tutors were engaged to teach girls with full observance of the rule of purdah. Let us illustrate the great Indian educator in general. The need of the teacher is emphasized. Kautilya gives some new information regarding the training to be given to a child before he is old enough to be admitted to formal studentship. Kautilya is primarily concerned with the education of the prince belonging to the ruling Kshatriya caste.¹

Introduction

India is a unique land in the whole world for many reasons. It is the only land where religion of humanity (Manu Dharma) has not only been shaped but perfected and practiced before any civilization came into existence. It is the birth place of many religious faiths as such Santan (eternal), Vedic, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and many more but no one preaching hatred against any other faith while preaching hatred against any other faith while preaching its ideology because each religious faith born in India had its roots in the religion of humanity (Manav Dharma).

During the entire course of history and even prior to it, education has always been and during the entire course in future, till eternity, education will remain the axis of all human developments be it spiritual, moral, mental, ethical, political, economic, social, material, scientific or any other form of it; in all parts of the world. While the ancient Indian System of education and the Buddhist system provided for women's education, the Muslim institutions admitted very few girls. Generally in rich families individual tutors were engaged to teach girls with full observance of the rule of purdah. Let us illustrate the great Indian educator in general.²

Vedic Period

The Vedas have observed "Maturdevo Bhavo, Acarya Devo Bhava" viz., the parent teachers were given the highest regard by the ancient society. A teacher plays his role

in the society in two ways (a) inside the school by preparing students for effective citizenship and (b) outside the school by assuming the role of a social worker and that of a social reformer. Teaching profession is a very challenging one, as each day and each classroom is a novel experience in itself. Each classroom offers ample opportunities to the teacher for learning through his /her experience. In olden days the educational institutions were called as "Ashramam" and teacher was called as "Guru". Guru is a respectable person in the society after mother and father. According to our Vedas Guru is a third God.³

Ancient India was rich in its spiritual and intellectual attainment. The ulterior objective of education, in the past, was to equip the child for spiritual and moral life. The concept of purushartha emphasized the right way of living. Dharma (Righteousness), Artha (Wealth), Kama (Physical well being) and Moksha (Spiritual freedom) were the four purusharthas. The unique feature of value system depicted in ancient Indian thought was that man was given freedom to acquire wealth (Artha) and physical well being (Kama) but it should be in a righteous way (Dharma) to attain ultimate goal of life (Moksha). This kind of voluntary and spiritual control of acquisition of wealth and physical well being within the frame of higher Purusharthas (Dharma and Moksha), sustained a harmonious and virtuous way of living.

Kautilya

Kautilya's date of birth is known exactly to any one with authority but it is well known to everyone that he was the Prime Minister of Chandra Gupta Maurya and almost all the scholars unanimously agree that 'Arthashastra' is his work. Kautilya's real name was Vishnugupta, son of Shri Charakand. Arthashastra is a treasure of various branches of knowledge. The need of the teacher is emphasized. The regulations regarding instruction and discipline will be determined by him according to the subjects of study. Kautilya gives some new information regarding the training to be given to a child before he is old enough to be admitted to formal studentship. Kautilya is primarily concerned with the education of the prince belonging to the ruling Kshatriya caste.⁴

Jagat Guru Shankar Acharya

The greatest towering spiritual personality of his times as it is evident from his name Jagat Guru Shankar Acharya was a great visionary. He was extra ordinary endowed with a keen penetrating intellect and an enormous capacity of assimilating contents pertaining to different branches of knowledge which made him to learn the secrets of Brahma Vidya from his Guru Govindacharya an authority on the subject.

Child Sankar was imbued with a feeling of renunciation from early childhood. Hence he learnt deeply not only the Indian philosophy but also the secrets of Brahma Vidya from his Guru Govindacharya. A few days later, he renounced the world and

became a Sanyasi. After attaining the secrets of knowledge regarding 'Brama', "Life", and "Mortal Creation", Shankar began to preach the philosophy of Vedant and reached Kashi. Under the instructions of his Guru, Shankar began to travel all over the country with the purpose of gaining world prominence as the supreme teacher.

Curriculum

According to Shankar Acharya, reality may be divided in to three catagories namely: 1) Reflection, 2) Practical and 3) Spiritual. The first kind of reality appears to be true for the time being, but later on it turns to be unreal as the mirage of a piece of rope appears to be a serpent in a shadow or darkness. But light clears the mirage and one realizes the reality or truth. Practical reality is our normal and natural behavior with other beings or material things. The spiritual reality is uncontroversial, because it is the reality of 'Brahma'. Keeping in view all three catagories realities, curriculum, should consist of Geography, History, Economics, Sociology, Science, Commerce, Vocational and Technical subjects.⁵

Together with these, for those children who do not evince and interest in getting spiritual knowledge, other subjects as Literature, Psychology, Physics, Biology, and Philosophy should also be included in the curriculum. Those children who show eagerness about Vedant Philosophy, should be afforded full opportunities to understand and study the Vedant Philosophy o the best of their capacities.

Methods of Teaching

Soul is a pure and conscious nature. Knowledge is its attribute. Shankar Acharya held the view that soul is clouded and chained by ignorance. According to Shankar Acharya, there are three kinds of children on the basis of their interests and capacities. They are 1) superior, 2) average, 3) inferior. Keeping into consideration the three types of children, he has laid emphasis on the following three types of teaching:

1. Knowledge Centered
2. Devotion Centered
3. Karma Centered

Swami Dayananda (1824-1883)

Each society, at all times, has had a distinctive philosophy of life which includes historical developments concernig its heritage in political spiritual, cultural, social, economical and educational systems. All this is known as national or social heritage of the society at a given time and this heritage influences every thinker, philosopher, social reformer, rulers etc. and Swami Dayananda is no exception to it.

Profile of Swami Dayananda

Swami Dayananda was born in the native state of Morvi in Kathiawari, Gujarat in 1824. His first name was Mulaji or Mul Sankar. His father's name was Amba Samkar, an orthodox Brahman and devotee of Lord Siva.^[6]

Education According to Swami Dayananda

According to Swami Dayanand, educate in imparts true and real knowledge about matter, self-development and welfare of all living beings. In other words, it should inculcate a spirit of service and help to others. As such, education is that process of gaining real knowledge about all material and divine entities by slow and steady development of good qualities, making one's own life and life of others happy and cheerful.

In this way, according to Swamijee, education is a supreme and most important moral process for the development of mankind. Swami Dayanand says, "A man without education only a man in be free from malice and preach for the well-being of people advancing the cause of righteousness."

Basic Principles of Education

The fundamental principles of education as preached by Swami Dayanand are given below:

1. Mother should be careful about the informal education of the child from the very stage of conception.
2. Before and after conception, parents should not use wine or other intoxicating things.
3. Parents should take pure food items and keep pious thoughts in their minds.
4. The early education of the child should be conducted by parents.
5. Parents should teach the child social courtesy and sweet behavior.
6. The supreme mantra 'Gayatri' should be taught to the child after the age of five and it should be learnt by him by heart.
7. Parents should be careful about right knowledge, good company and control of sense by the child while educating them.
8. Education should be based on Ashram and Dharam.
9. Formal education of the child should be after the sacred thread wearing ceremony.
10. At the age of eight, boys and girls should be sent to schools.
11. There should be separate schools for boys and girls.
12. Schools should be located about five miles from the town in a healthy and attractive surroundings enjoying seclusion also.
13. Schools should be based on philosophy of life.
14. All sections and castes of society should received education. In other words, education should be made compulsory for all.
15. During the period of educational discipline ship, absolute Brahmacharya should be practiced by the child and all desires of wordly enjoyment should be discouraged.
16. Children should receive a balanced diet suited to their physical requirements.

17. While awarding punishment to a child, parents and teachers should not be swayed by passions of jealousy and envy.
18. Education should be logical and includes reasoning and argumentation.
19. Teacher-pupil relationship should be similar to those of ancient times.
20. In the curriculum Vedic literature, Vedant, Upanishads and other religious literature based upon sound reason and Vedic philosophy, should be included. [7]

Aims of Education

According to Swami Dayanand, the following are the aims of education:

1. Self-realization, 2) Revival of Vedic Religion and Culture, 3) Physical Development, 4) Mental Development, 5) Moral Development, 6) Formation of Ideal Character.

Swami Vivekananda (1863 – 1902)

Swami Vivekananda was born in 1863 in Calcutta. Before he became a monk, his name was Narendra Nath Datta. He belonged to the Kshatriya caste. While he was a student in college at seventeen years of age, he came under the influence of Sri Ramkrishna. During his college days, he was a gay youth taking part in many kinds of activities, like boxing, wrestling, swimming and riding etc., but at the same time he was eager for all kinds of knowledge. He was the best student of philosophy and poetry.

He studied all the western philosophy and became very well acquainted with the contemporary philosophy of Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill. Wordsworth and Shelley were his favourite poets. His teachers could very well recognize the genius in him.

Aims of Education

According to Swami Vivekananda, the following are the aims of education:

- 1) Self-Development, 2) Fulfilment Swadharma, 3) Freedom of Growth, 4) Character Formation, 5) To create faith in one's own self, 6) To create self-confidence and self-reliance. 7) Emphasis on practical side of life, 8) To promote universal brotherhood, 9) To develop will to realize the divinity within, 10) To make conscious to achieve perfection, 11) To develop spirit of renunciation.

Qualities of the Teacher

Swami Vivekananda attaches great importance to the personal life and character of the teacher. He thinks that only the person who has renounced his personal gains and the one who has dedicated his life to the service of others can be a good teacher. The teacher should be of a very high character and he should be sinless. He must be pure in mind and heart, only then his words will be valuable. The teacher must have love for his pupils. The teacher must have full sympathy for his pupils. The teacher's real job is to see that there should be no impediments in the child's path to self-development. He is like a gardener who prepares ground for the growth of his

plants, protects them and nourished them so that the plant may grow properly. Similarly, the teacher takes care of the child, provides him a suitable environment and looks after his proper growth. Thus though education comes from within, the teacher is an indispensable part of it. While the motivation comes from within, the teacher activates. He encourages the child to use his mind, body and sense organs. He maintained that no profession is bad provided it is done with a sense of service and self-sacrifice. It is the absence of third dignity of labour which is responsible for the degraded condition of this country. Long before M.K.Gandhi, Vivekananda pleaded for the worship of God in poor. He said, "So long as the millions lie in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who having been educated at their expense pays not the least heed to them". He asked young men to change the situation. He pleaded for universal, compulsory and free education. He asked the educator to reach every village and every hutment so that the country may awake from ignorance. [8]

Conclusion

Above details about the forgiven great Indian Educators of Kautilya, Jagatguru Sankar Acharya, Swami Dayananda and Swami Vivekanand are clearly indicative that they have balanced traditional Indian educational system with present day needs of the society, therefore they are regarded as a towering educators of modern India. In addition to the above mentioned great Indian educators, we must remember the following other eminent Indian Educators. They are Annie Besant, Ravindra Nath Tagore, Mahamana Madan Mohan Malaviya, Gopala Krishna Gokale, Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, J.Krishnamurti. These great eminent Indian educators were dedicated their lives to the education of Indian masses.

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