

REVIEW ARTICLE

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ANCIENT & PRESENT EDUCATION SYSTEM

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ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

Article History:

Received 23 April 2018

Accepted 24 May 2018

Available online 1 Jun 2018

Education is not simply imparting knowledge in a particular faculty or subject or making one fit for securing jobs or fair well in exams, but at the same time is also a training in logical thinking which helps the coming generations adjust to the ever-changing environment. It also means opening the doors of the mind, cleansing the soul and realization of the self. The quality of education greatly influences the quality of manpower for the societal benefits. This paper presents comparison between the ancient and present education system. It highlights the basic structure of ancient education which contributed quality manpower imbuing moral, social and civic values to the society. The present education system is weighed down by several reasons as a result of which the outcome is becoming self centric. This calls for several reforms in present education system which can be implemented from ancient education for overall development of students as a human being.

KEYWORDS

Education system, ancient, present, spirituality, values, development, society, veda.

1. AIMS OF TRUE EDUCATION

Education should aim at making human life better not only through economic upliftment of individual but also through social, moral and spiritual strengthening. This will not only improve human life but also realize the "higher truth" i.e. "*Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya*" from darkness to light. Thus education is not only a way of earning but it also helps to develop human personality with skills, values, morals and enhancement of different attributes of man. So education is a vital means for the potentialities of a human being to emerge in a positive direction so that a man can live in society with full of dignity [1]. "[Education's] central aim is the building of the powers of the human mind and spirit, it is the formation, or, as I would prefer to view it, the evoking of knowledge and will and of the power to use knowledge, character, culture,—that at least if no more" [2]. True and living education helps to "bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate and yet inseparable member" [3]. A truly Integral Education should have three central aims:

- for an individual, it is growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities,
- for the nation, the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the nation-soul and its Dharma,
- to raise both the individual and nation into powers of the life and ascending mind and soul of humanity. "And at no time, will it lose sight of man's highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being" [4].

The emphasis on body, heart, mind and spirit in the educational process is most visible one. As Cenkner quotes Gandhi—"Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education" [5]. Gandhi also emphasises the cultivation of the heart and refinement of human emotions and impulses. "True education is that which cultivates the soul or the spirit, and leads ultimately to the full and complete development of man's body, mind and spirit...Literacy then is not the

primary goal of education: it is the cultivation of character, and the development of the spirit; it is the education of the heart not the head" [6].

2. ANCIENT INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

There is greater urgency to think about ancient education system in India. The history is awesome every Indian will feel proud if we look back to our history. We knew mathematics, we derived theorems, we discovered planets, we calculated distance of sun to earth thousands of years ago and also distance between earth and many other planets, yeah many more such facts and figures are there. But how could India was so great? How it was possible to gain such knowledge? The research reveals that our solid education system was the reason for that. Ancient Education system was a meaningful education system; the idea of education has been very grand, noble and high in ancient India. It aim was "training for completeness of life" and the moulding of character of men and women for the battle of life. As quoted by Swami Vivekananda education was for "Man Making and Character Building". But what were the methodologies of that education? What was so different about it? Below are few of methodologies of that great education system-

2.1 Complete Brahmacharya

Student will initiate his *Brahmacharya* phase through *Upanayana*. A student will be self discipline and self controlled. All sort of pleasure will be avoided and he must do all the work given by a Guru. Two methods of teaching were being practiced during the Vedic period. The first method was Oral and the second was based on Chintan i.e. thinking. In the oral method the students were to memorize the Mantras (Vedic hymns) and Richayas (verses of Rigveda) in order that they might not be changed wrongly and they might remain preserved in their original forms. Thinking method was another part of the teaching method. Through this an attempt was made to reserve the Veda Mantras and Richayas. The thinking principle, Manana Shakti was reckoned higher than the subject of thinking. So the primary subject of education was the mind itself. According to the ancient Indian theory of education, the training of the mind and the process of thinking, are essential for the acquisition of knowledge. So, the pupil had mainly to educate himself and achieve his own mental growth.

2.2 Three processes of Education

Education was concentrated to the three processes of Sravana, Manana and Nidhyaasana. **Sravana**-Means listen and understand. One should understand that it was not just hearing, hearing was different and listening was different. Sravana is listening to the truths as they fell from the lips of the teacher. Knowledge is technically called Sruti or what the ear heard and not what is seen in writing.

Mañana- The second process of knowledge called Manana implies that the pupil has to think out for himself the meaning of the lessons imparted to him orally by his teacher so that they may assimilate fully. Manana is reflecting the things we listened (Shravana). It is discussing the truth of opinions. In this especially Guru will raise the questions, students will answer and the point will be discussed in group.

Nidhyaasana- The third step known as Nidhyasana means complete comprehension by the pupil of the truth that is taught so that he may live the truth and not merely explain it by word. It is the realization of truth. Ancient days Manan (reflection) was a method especially for highly intelligent students. Every student would undergo three phases (**Sravana, Mañana, Nidhyaasana**) every day. Every phase has its own importance, though they look simple but they were very effective.

Gurukul system of education existed during ancient times where students used to reside at guru's place and learn everything which can be later implemented to find solutions to real life problems. An emotional bond between a guru and shishya was must before practicing teaching learning process. The guru imparted the knowledge of everything such as religion, sanskrit, scriptures, medicine, philosophy, literature, warfare, statecraft, astrology, history and many more. The learning was not only to read books but correlating it with the nature and life. It was not memorizing certain facts and figures and writing the answers in examinations. Discipline The gurukul contained students from rich to poor families. Every student used to lead a very simple life in ashrama. The discipline, rules and regulations were rooted in morality and religion. Any violation of rules was treated as a sin and subject to punishment.

2.3 Learning of Vedas

Vedas plays an important role in ancient education system, there are four Vedas. Rigveda contains 1028 hymns and contains 10,522 verses. It teaches stages of life like family life, forest life and renunciation. Yajurveda teaches how to perform sacrifices in life and it has 1,984 verses. Samaveda is study of music, it has 1,875 verses. Atharvaveda is the study of medical sciences and has 5,977 verses. Vedas plays an important role in ancient education system Vedas teach our culture, the meaning of life, how we should live, what is right and what is wrong. Ultimately it is learning of Karma, learning of dedication. Vedas are the roots of Hindu Religion. The education was based on vedas, rules of sacrifice, grammar and derivation, understanding secrets of nature, logical reasoning, science and skills necessary for an occupation. The ancient education system in India had explicitly recognized that the supreme goal of life is self realization and hence it claimed to be unique in the world in several aspects like the society did not in any way interfered with the curriculum of studies or regulating the payment of fees or hours of instruction

2.4 Personality Development

The foremost aim of ancient education system was to develop the overall personality and character. The moral strengths were induced that helped the society to be together. This was because the education started and ended with religious rituals with the sense of whole heartedly devotion for the cause of learning. The formal and informal education were given due importance. The pursuit of knowledge was pursuit of religious values. The personality traits such as self esteem and self confidence were tried to inculcate in pupils through education. The other aim of ancient Indian education included preservation and enrichment of culture, character and personality development and cultivation of noble idea. It being completely residential hence student had to live in the guru's house and learn from him not only what was taught but also observe how his teacher responded in different situations arising in daily life and learn from it

2.5 Education was absolutely free

Each student used to meet the teacher separately and learn from him through separate instructions and guidance. Even student aiming highest philosophical knowledge was duty bound to do some manual labour daily such as collecting fuel, tending cattle etc. The quality of education was beyond compare. The pupils from well to do families such as princes used to pay Guru Dakshina. It had perfect self-sufficiency. There was no

involvement of external beneficiaries. Access to good education was independent of wealth but the emphasis was on the learn ability. Financial position was never a barrier to get the best education. It enhanced originality of thinking among them. The varna was based on karma. One could choose his profession and accordingly, his varna was determined.

2.6 Perfect Teaching Learning Atmosphere

The classes were held in either open space on the bank of a river or in a jungle in quiet, calm and peaceful environment. Temple colleges were known for all the amenities such as hostels, classrooms, laboratories and residential quarters for teachers.

2.7 Personal Attention to Every Student

The gurus were spiritual father. They used to nurse, feed and clothe. The students were taught based on his learning ability. Teachers never assumed themselves in the position of authority but were very gentle and sweet while dealing with the students. Teachers commanded full respect in society and honoured even by kings. Low Student Teacher Ratio Due to low student teacher ratio, the individual attention could be given. The number of students on roll was limited.

2.8 Development of Civic Responsibilities and Social Values

The inculcation of civic virtues and social values was equally important objective of education in India. The Brahmachari after his education in the gurukulas went back to the society to serve the rich and the poor, to relieve the diseased and the distressed. He was required to be hospitable to the guests and charitable to the needy. Everyone had a responsibility to preserve the national culture and act as a transmission medium to spread the knowledge.

3. PRESENT EDUCATION SYSTEM

Due to various changes such as modernization, industrialization, urbanization, privatization, globalization as well as influence of western culture accompanied many problems and evils in Indian society that cause declining ethical values in Indian education system [7,8]. This system has definitely increase literacy rate but not helps in creating educated persons in the society and as a result it does not produce ideal citizens in the country. The main objective of Indian students has remained how to take degree, to earn money and to be careerist without consideration of ethical values and national spirit in their life [9]. Today the Indian society is bound to encounter new and perpetual problems. We see uncontrolled corruption and decrease in ethical values, unlawful activities, inhuman behaviour, Indiscipline, violation of rules, no self realization and immoral consumption, which is slowly breaking the structure of Indian society, nation and the world [10]. It is high time to identify the Aim of Education and major causes of declining Social, moral values and spiritual strengthening in Indian education system.

4. NEED OF TRANSFORM IN PRESENT EDUCATION

Rabindranath Tagore had assessed it long back that the Indian education system needs to change. We live in a society where child spends his parent's earnings and still not getting the standard education and struggling to get the desired employment [11]. The increased competition in education sector sometimes crushes the creativity of millions of students and drives them to commit suicide. Education is treated as a means of achieving wealth. There is a need to think again about & Redefine our education system. Some of the initiatives have been listed below.

4.1 There has been a tremendous improvement in quality of life with the advances in technology

The young generation must realize how to use this technology for spreading knowledge and culture. The education should be imparted in peaceful, clean and natural environment far away from towns and villages [12]. The present education prepares the students for their future career as it used to be in ancient times. The vocational subjects have to be included in curriculum but much is needed to be done to achieve the desired aim. In the race of completing the curriculum, the practical aspects are missed many a times. The current education system is plagued and blamed for several reasons.

4.2 Skill Based Education

The modern education system is tested on the basis of examinations conducted by boards and universities. The method of teaching is mostly one way but it has to be ensured "Are they learning?" If not, which method

of teaching suits an individual has to be focused upon? This requires identification of skills in individual and moulds them into their direction of interest [13]. It is same as "Give a man a fish and you feed him one day, teach him how to catch fishes and you feed him for a lifetime." Similarly, if you teach a skill, you enable him for a lifetime.

4.3 Recruitment of Competent Teachers

Teaching is an honorable profession and hence it has to be preserved. Few teachers blame students for their performance but hardly introspect what and where is it going wrong? They feel it as a safe, well paid, low pressure and unaffected by recession. It is time to recruit competent and superstar teachers. The teaching community needs leaders, self motivated and entrepreneurs in teaching position.

4.4 Interactive Classroom

An interactive classroom intellectually engages the students as active participant with teacher as an engagement trigger that captures and maintain students' attention. The teacher allows the students to apply what they have learnt and give them a context for upcoming lecture material. The teacher feels enriched with students' participation and thinks upon the blend of interactive techniques for next class.

4.5 Students' Participation

Socratic method substitutes self-directed learning opportunities instead of classical lecturing practices. The teachers are encouraged not to teach the content but to teach the students how to learn. Because learning is a process of actively exploring information and validating with previously acquired knowledge and experience and creating new knowledge or re-evaluating existing knowledge.

4.6 Focus on Moral Education

A good teacher forms strong relationship with his/ her students and show that he/ she cares about students as individual. The substance of socratic enquiry is the belief and values the participants. The Professor is a participant in dialogue and is always open to learn something new and does not seek difference to his/ her authority.

4.7 Re-evaluate the objective of Education

Our education system is still a colonial education system geared towards generating babus and pen-pushers under the newly acquired skin of modernity. We may have the greatest number of graduates in the world, but that certainly has not translated into much innovation here. Rather, we are busy running the call centers of rest of the world – that is where our graduate skills end. The purpose of our new education system should be to emphasis on body, heart, mind, cleaning the soul and realization of the self. With the help of these methods we would be able to create Philosopher, scientists, entrepreneurs, innovators, artists, thinkers and writers. who could establish the foundation of knowledge based on economy, Quality manpower imbining moral, social & civic values to the society.

5. CONCLUSION

The best practices of ancient education system can be implemented in modern education system. The aim of modern education is also building character, spiritualism and philosophy rather than wealth and leads a simple life. However, the cordial relationship between a teacher and student is missing due to numerous problems that educational environment has encountered. The study of Sanskrit language, spiritual and religious aspects needs to be given due care to preserve it because it is enriched by the sense of peace, humanity, brotherhood. The level of education is one of the major indicators of welfare, prosperity and security of people in any society. Education is a process by which individuals are equipped with the skills of everyday life. More than a mere system of

imparting and acquiring knowledge, education is regarded as an attempt to transmit the cultural norms of the group to its younger members. Today, India is not innovative, india was the country of innovation. today because of collaboration, invasion, industrialization & privatization, India has lost imagination & the power of innovation. Schools, universities producing clone teach them western values, western literatures, western math, western heroes, these children are becoming totally American or British colonial and totally have lost themselves. First quality of Indians is to know about their culture, their own heroes, Kalidasa was greatest poet ever in the world but our children are not aware about him. They should study about contemporary Indian philosophy. Greatest books like - foundation of Indian culture, the life devine, syntheses of yoga should be the part of our curriculum. So, children could aware about their roots about their history, literature, & Indian heroes.

Indian spirituality & Meditation are very valuable tools of knowledge should be incorporated in Indian education system. These are unique in the world so should be taught in school from kindergarten onwards. Abundant opportunities should be provided to the pupil for the development of his personality. The current educational system tries to achieve a pronounced success in connection with character formation, development of personality, and contribution to knowledge in all branches of learning as well as social wellbeing and material prosperity. The present Indian curriculum must evolve a special form of education whereby harmony will be established between materialism and Spiritualism; and human life so that headed towards greater perfection.

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