# Chapter IV

## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Significance of Ancient Vedic Educational System</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>The Curriculum Transaction Modes in the Vedic and Upanishad era</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Synthesising the Educational set up of India</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Public Educational System which Prevailed in India prior to the British Occupation</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>The Dynamics of Ancient Indian Education</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>The Reflections of Western Occupation in the Indian Educational Scenario</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>The Cultural Invasion and its Impact on National Cohesion</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Freedom Struggle and the Emergence of National Education</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Diversified Thoughts on Emerging National Education</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Era of Crisis and the Evolutionary Move to Social Reform through Education</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Maharshi Dayananda Saraswathi (1824-1883)</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Bala Gangadhar Tilak (1856 – 1920)</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Rabindranath Tagore. (1861 – 1941)</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948)</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.15 Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) ..................... 151
4.16 Sri Aurobindo (1872 – 1950) .......................... 153
4.17 The Vision of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo’s Thoughts on National Education .......................... 158
Chapter IV

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

OF THE STUDY

Indian tradition of education started with the Vedas, which are considered the most ancient among the literary works. Before they were written down, the Vedas were passed on through generations by oral recitations. In the ‘Gurukula’ traditions of ancient India, the students (Shishyas) acquired the knowledge (Veda jnana) of the Vedas from the teacher (Guru) directly. There developed a tradition of education which can thus be described as ‘Vedic’.

4.1 Significance of Ancient Vedic Educational System

The vast Vedic literature can be divided into four. 1) Samhitas 2) Brahmanas 3) Aryanakas 4) Upanishads.

“Samhitas consists of four traditional Vedas, Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharva Veda. Rigveda contains
mantras called Riks which are in the form of prayer, praises and hymns to the gods. Samaveda consists of melodious songs addressed to the gods and hence possess a high degree of musical appeal. Yajurveda deals with sacrificial performances and formulae. Atharva Veda deals with both white and black magic. It also deals with various arts and sciences. To each of these Samhitas, different Bhrahmanas, Aryanakas and Upanishads are attached.

Classification of Vedic literature can also be done from another point of view. 1) Karma Kanda – which deals with sacrificial performances. 2) Upasana Kanda - which deals with worship. 3) Jnana Kanda – which deals with the right knowledge of Brahman.” (Radhalakshmi. 1997, P.P. 9-10)

On the basis of the above classification we can put Vedic literature also into three sections. Samhitas and Bhrahmanas come under Karma Kanda. Aryanakas come under Upasana Kanda and Upanishads under Jnana Kanda. Karma Kanda can be considered the feet of a man. Upasana Kanda can be considered as the heart and Jnana Kandas the head. These represent the Psycho-motor, affective and cognitive domains of
the mind. Since the most important organ of man is the head, the *Jnana Kanda* or the portion of knowledge is important. Vedic education system has been depicted in Fig. 4.1

**A Symbolic Representation of Vedic Education**

![Image of a symbolic representation of Vedic education](image)

Fig. 4.1

### 4.2 The Curriculum Transaction Modes in the *Vedic* and *Upanishad* era

The primary form of acquiring knowledge was the process of acquiring it directly from the *Guru*. The *Vedic* education was a devoted effort (*Sadhana*) which demanded...
both unswerving faith (Shradha) and deep concentration (Ekaagratkh). Sravanam (listening) Mananam (reflective thinking), Nidhidhyasanam (meditation) – it is through these processes of training that the student acquired knowledge. The aim of education in the era of the Upanishads was the Brahmasakhshakara or the knowledge of the Brahma. Upanishadhic education claimed that by knowing Bhrahma, the cause of the Universe, the Universe itself could be understood. Yet, before transmitting the knowledge about the Bhrahman, the Guru would test the student to know whether he is qualified to acquire that knowledge. There were four pre-requisites for the student to acquire the knowledge about the Bhrahman.

1) Discrimination between the eternal and the transient (Nithya –Anithya Vasthu Viveka).

2) Indifference to enjoyments in this life or in heaven (Vairagya).

3) Six-fold virtues (Shad-sampsath)
   a) Control of the mind (Sama)
   b) Control of the sense organs. (Dama)
   c) Detachment from the worldly pleasures. (Uparathy)
d) Faith in the words of the teacher. \textit{(Shradha)}

e) Endurance of pleasures and pains with equanimity. \textit{(Thithiksha)}

f) Deep concentration \textit{(Samaadhana)}

4) Desire for emancipation or liberation \textit{(Mumukshutva)}

Teachers were known as \textit{acharyas} because they were models for their students. The teacher became the spiritual father of the pupil and this became the foundation for a very healthy teacher-pupil relationship. The important instructional methods identified in the Upanishads are the following.

1) Oral method

2) Illustrative method

3) Demonstration

4) Catechetical method

The ultimate goal of education in the Upanishadic period can be said to be self-realisation. In fig. 4.2, important instructional methods in upanishadic era have been portrayed.
During the Upanishadhic period, women had access to higher education. Maitreyi, is referred to in the Brahadaranyaka Upanishad as a scholar and was the wife of Yajnavalkya who himself was a Brahmajnani.

**4.3 Synthesising the Educational set up of India**

During the Upanishadhic period the educational structure was prevalent in the forms of ‘Gurukulas’ and were widespread.
The writings of Greek and Chinese travellers are replete with references to our ancient universities of Nalanda and Taxila.

Dr. F.V. Thomas, one of the most distinguished ideologists writes: “There is no country where the love of learning has so early an origin or has exercised so lasting and powerful an influence. From the simple poets of the Vedic age to the Bengali philosopher of the present day there has been an uninterrupted succession of teachers and scholars” (Thomas. 1891, P.1). The concept of ‘Guru – Parampara’ or a succession of ‘Spiritual masters’ is unique to India. The wisdom of the ages is communicated from one generation to other through the medium of their ‘Gurus’. Ancient Indian educational system combined theoretical education with job-orientation. “The system was also very thorough, as students had to learn vocation according to their ‘varna’ or family traditions. There specialisation was stressed” (Mukeraji.1961, P. 69).

Traditional Indian education was value based. The emancipation of soul through the realisation of the eternal truth was the ultimate aim of traditional education. Yet the materialistic aspects of life were never denied. “The teachers
(Gurus) of the Upanishads were not ‘life – and world – negating escapists or ascetics. Yajanvalkya was a householder, and king Janaka was well versed in state affairs. The disciples (sishyas) fetched fruits from the forests and tended cattle for their master before they sat at his feet to imbibe the Brahma- Vidya. They were put through a rigorous regiment to make them fit to tread the path ‘sharp as the razor’s edge’. Faith, Chastity, truthfulness, and humility, were regarded as the basic desiderata. Fearlessness was also considered a criterion synonymous with steadfastness, earnestness, and fortitude. Maitreyi (wife of Yajnavalkya) and Nachikethas (son of Vajashravasa)- the latter a mere boy – both passed the crucial initial test of right discrimination: between what most people desire (wealth, power, etc.) and what is most desirable (imperishable good)” (Sharma.1967, P. 48).

4.4 Public Educational System which Prevailed in India prior to the British Occupation

The public education as envisaged in ancient India was truly public, in the sense that it served to grant education to one
Historical background of the study

and all irrespective of their social and economic status. It may, however, be noted that during the pre-British days, a state administrative machinery of the modern type did not exist and education was self-controlled. Both the ruler and ruled considered it a religious obligation to help the spread of education. Liberal grants and donations were given for the promotion of education, and scholarships were awarded to deserving students. Royal patrons built universities and other educational institutions and endowed them with funds, but they neither claimed any authority over them nor interfered with their management. The royal courts were the sanctuaries of poets, musicians, and learned men. Even big landholders were morally bound to spread education, and almost every important village had a primary school of its own.

Ancient India had its own views on education and institutions which taught these views all over the country. “The most well-known and controversial point which emerged from these surveys was an observation made by William Adam in his first report that there seemed to exist about 1,00,000 village schools in Bengal and Bihar around the 1830’s”
(Dharampal. 1983, P. 12). Similar statements had been made much before W. Adam, for areas of the Madras presidency by men like Thomas Munro, who said, “every village had a school” (House of commons papers. 1831, P. 468).

“Observations made by Dr. G.W. Leitner in 1882 show that the spread of education in the Punjab around 1850 was of a similar extent” (Dharampal.1983, P.12). In this period the ordinary people of England had seldom access to educational institutions. This contrast only highlights the superior position which our nation enjoyed at that time.

“The collector of Malabar sent details of 1594 scholars who were receiving education in theology, law, astronomy, metaphysics, ethics and medical science in his district from private tutors. The collector of Madras on the other hand reported in his letter of February 1826 that 26, 963 school level scholars were then receiving tuition at their homes in the area under his jurisdiction. More will be said about this private education subsequently” (Dharampal.1983, P.20). This shows that education was available throughout the country.
4.5 The Dynamics of Ancient Indian Education

It was observed that life itself is the great teacher of life and that life, which is in its outer movement a series of meeting between individuals and circumstances, has in its inner heart a secret method of progression from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, and from death to immortality. It was further observed that this process of life can be systematically organised and methods can be built by which the intended progression can be accelerated. Accordingly, education came to be conceived as a methodised organisation of life in which threads of progression are so woven that each individual can be aided to bring about a judicious acceleration of the rate of his growth and development.

“The home of the teacher, which came to be called the ashram or gurukula, was centered on students, and each student received individual attention. The teacher looked upon his task as that of an observer, as a helper, as a guide – not as that of a taskmaster. He had no rigid or uniform methods; but he applied every possible method in varying manner in regard to every student. For Satyakama, the teacher would apply the
simple method of learning through the activities connected with grazing cattle; for Shvethaketu, the teacher would apply the method of meaningful questioning and demonstration through apt examples; Pippalada asked his pupils to dwell for one year in holiness and faith before they could put their questions; and Bhrigu was asked by his father and the teacher, Varuna, to concentrate himself in thought and discover the truth of matter, of life, of Mind, and of the supermind and of the Bliss by successive and higher and higher meditations. Often the teacher communicated through silence so as to destroy the doubts in the minds of the pupils; the teacher taught students in groups but also individually; the teacher, in fact, utilised every incident of life for imparting knowledge and experience” (Joshi. 2000, P. 126).

Ancient Indian educational system was aimed at the comprehensive development of all aspects – physical, intellectual and spiritual- of an individual. This methodology of education was followed in thousands of institutions of the country. The students educated by these institutions in which external values were dealt with emerged as cultured nationalists.
But the recurrent foreign invasions resulted in the destruction of our educational institutions and systems.

4.6 The Reflections of Western Occupation in the Indian Educational Scenario

There have been recurrent invasions of our nation which have weakened the unity, integrity and national culture of our country. We have in our history a thousand year resistance to foreign occupation. We have never accepted any domination by any foreign power. There has been a constant armed resistance to the occupying forces in one part of the nation or the other. The early invaders like the *Shakas, Kushans* were assimilated by the country’s culture and later became a part and parcel of this nation’s culture and nationality. The most recent invaders were the Europeans. Their strategy was different from all the earlier invaders. They understood that the first step in conquering the land was to conquer the mind of the people. The use of guile to conquer the mind of the people was given equal emphasis as the use of strength to conquer the land. This dual strategy overwhelmed the nation and its people.
The first step in the war for mental domination was the destruction of the pride and self-confidence of the native population through a well calibrated educational system. The system tarred this nation’s culture and history. The ultimate aim of this tool of mind control was to enslave the Indian people to the British for all time. Macaulay’s infamous minutes on educational system for India provide ample proof to strengthen this argument.

Macaulay arrived in India on June 10, 1834. His mission was to formulate a blueprint for the educational system for Indians, which would help sustain the British colonial rule in the country. “On February 2, 1835 he expressed his opinion on the subject through the infamous minutes, written in his characteristic prose style marked by rhetoric and antithesis” (Mukerji. 1961, P.76).

Macaulay, who pointedly belittled Sanskrit and other Indian Languages, recommended the adoption of English as the medium of instruction in India. Through the English language Macaulay sought to promote Western culture in the country. Language is the medium of culture; the two are inseparable.
Macaulay ever aware of this truth emphasised the need for the adoption of English language in a dominant role. Macaulay rejected the claims of Arabic and Sanskrit as against English, because he considered that English was better than either of them. His arguments in favour of English were:

1. It is the key to modern knowledge and is, therefore, more useful than Arabic or Sanskrit.

2. It stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the West. In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling classes. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East.

3. It is possible to make the natives of these country thoroughly good English scholars and to that end our efforts ought to be directed.

4. It was impossible to educate the body of people, but it was possible through English education to bring about “a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect and that education was to filter down from them to the masses” (Mukerji. 1961, p.76).
4.7 The Cultural Invasion and its Impact on National Cohesion

The foundation of India’s survival is its culture. People like Maharshi Aurobindo called this culture ‘Sanatana Dharma’. In his famous ‘Uttarapara’ speech, he has stated emphatically that it was from sanatana Dharma that the concept of the Indian nation emerged: “... I spoke once before with this force in me and I said then that this movement is not a political movement and that nationalism is not politics but a religion, a creed, a faith. I say it again today, but I put it in another way. I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatan Dharma which for us is nationalism.....when the Sanatan Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatan Dharma was capable of perishing, with the Sanatan Dharma it would perish. The Sanatan Dharma that is nationalism” (Sri Aurobindo. 1972, Vol. 2, P. 10). It is from this ‘Arsha’ culture that the religion and nationalism of the nation has emerged. Swami Vivekananda was another person who strongly believed that the Indian nation would die if its culture perished. In Vivekananda’s words:
“Shall India die? Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct. All idealism will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force and competition as its ceremonies, and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be” (Swami Vivekananda, 2005, Vol. 4, P. 348).

Our love for the nation, spirituality, morals and values, philosophy and the concept of national integration are all connected to our culture. This culture was handed over from generation to generation through our perfect system of education. Acharya Dharam Pal in his book ‘Indigenous Indian education’ has commented in detail about the system of public education which prevailed in India until the 18th century. This education system was in a sense all encompassing and had provided education to one and all without any reservation.

The report given by British officer Adam about the system of education which prevailed in Bihar and Bengal during the period of AD 1836 – 1838 is commented upon by Acharya
Dharam Pal in his works. “In his first report, which is a general statement of the situation and a presentation of the data which he could derive from post 1800 official and other sources, Adam came to the conclusion, firstly that every village had at least one school and in all probability in Bengal and Bihar with 150748 villages there will still be 100000 villages that have these schools” (Dharampal. 1983, P.P. 42, 43). Secondly, on the basis of personal observation and what he had learned from other evidence he inferred that on an average there were around hundred institutions of higher learning in each district of Bengal, and consequently he concluded that the 18 districts of Bengal had about 1800 such institutions. He further observed that while the elementary schools are “generally held in the homes of some of the most respected native inhabitants or very near them the institutions of higher learning had build ‘sometimes three or five rooms’ and ‘in others nine or eleven rooms’, with a reading room which is also of clay. These latter places were also used for the residence of the scholars, and the scholars usually fed and
clothed by the teachers, and were required by assisted by the local people” (Dharampal. 1983, P.P. 42, 43).

It is seen that the Vedic education gradually grew from the Upanishadic period through the age of Buddhist era. The growth was continuous. Yet, subsequently, consecutive foreign invasions led to the destruction of Universal centres of learning like Nalanda, Taxila and Vikramasila. The same fate befell many other universities of India. Yet, the uprooting of the basic education system of this nation, which had roots even in its villages, was done as a result of the well planned effort of the British Empire. It was Macaulay’s educational system thrust upon this nation that led to the total collapse of the truly all encompassing system of public education which was prevalent in this nation. It was the English education which rapidly led English culture to conquer the nation. The people lost ideas of national pride and respect for their ancestors. In Swami Vivekanda’s words a new generation, which had no respect for the ancient traditions, grew up. “The education that you are getting now has some good points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all
weighed down. In the first place, it is not a Man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education. A negative education or any training that is based on negation is worse than death. The child is taken to school and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool, the second thing is that his grandfather is a lunatic, the third thing is that his teachers are hypocrites, the fourth that all the sacred books are lies! By the time he is 16 he is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless. And the result is that 50 years of such education has not produced one original man in the three Presidencies” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, P.P. 301-302).

Macaulay was implementing the game plan of conquering the land by conquering the mind through his education. The British colonial rule was different and more comprehensive than other such colonial structures. They established their dominance in the fields of politics, culture, society and intellect. Their dominance extended through the domains of religion, language, judiciary, administration and education.
4.8 Freedom Struggle and the Emergence of National Education.

It can be observed on close examination that the political slavery of a nation starts with the slavery of the mind of its citizens. The British colonialists established a system of education designed to mentally enslave the people of this nation. It is this understanding that led to the nationalist leadership to establish an order of national education in parallel with the struggle for independence.

The Congress started a ‘National Educational Body’ in 1906 at its Calcutta conference. Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Maharshi Aurobindo, Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore were spokesmen for a system of National education. Aurobindo describes the situation which prompted nationalists to think about the need for indigenous education: “All that appears to be almost unanimously agreed on is that the teaching given in the existing schools and the universities has been bad in kind and in addition denationalising, degrading and impoverishing to the national mind soul and character because it is
overshadowed by a foreign hand and foreign in aim, method, substance and spirit. But this purely negative agreement does not carry us very far; it does not tell us what in principle or practice we desire ought to put in its place” (Sri Aurobindo. 1972, Vol. 17, P 191).

A nationalistic education becomes truly nationalistic only when it is one with the national soul, internalises the national culture, and is able to impart these cultural values to the new generation.

4.9 Diversified Thoughts on Emerging National Education

Organisations like the Bhrahma Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society, Ramakrishna Mission etc. have tried to inculcate national education in pre- independence India through their activities. But the movement for National education took an organised form only during the National struggle for independence during the period of 1905-1910. The form this acquired was as a Swadeshi Movement wherein large number of educational institutions was opened all over the country based on this national concept. Later on, when Gandhiji
started his non co-operation movement, a number of educational institutions were started as an adjunct to the main movement. Along with this a number of well known institutions like the DAV College, Deccan Educational Society, Vishwa Bharathi and Benares Hindu University were started which imparted national education.

The basic features of the national education are...

- The national education would encompass the cultural identity of the people of the nation.
- The national education should be available to one and all in an unified manner.
- It should be based on democratic values, should be discriminatory in a positive sense and should provide equal opportunity to one and all.
- It should uphold cultural traditions and impart cultural values.
- It should be capable of inculcating the love for the nation and national pride.
- It should be able to teach the student to view diversities not as contradictions. Instead he should be able to
identify the unifying identities within the national diversity.

- It should be able to impart humanistic values and should lead to self dependence.

The Calcutta Conference, of the congress held in 1906, passed a resolution calling for Swadeshi education. The Congress called for an educational system which would reflect the glory of the nation, which would uphold the interest of the nation, and which was controlled at the national level. The basic features of the educational system upheld by the Indian National Congress was as follows:

“1. **National Control**: The educational system of the country should be controlled indigenously.

2. **Love for the nation**: The national education should inculcate a love for the nation and a desire to serve the nation among the students.

3. **Religious education**: The role of religion in the culture of the nation cannot be denied. Therefore religious education should be an important part of the national education.
4. **There should be no imitation of Western education:** The education of this country should not be an imitation of the Western system. Instead it should reflect the cultural and intellectual traditions of this country.

5. **The medium of education should be Indian languages:** English as a medium of instruction hampers education system in India. Therefore the medium should essentially be Indian languages.

6. **Low fees:** The fees collected from the students should be kept to a minimum. Only such a facility can ensure that the students living in the lowest strata of society get access to education” (Dikshit. 1966, P. 145).

During this period a number of social reformers who saw national education as a prerequisite for political freedom rose up. They believed that the people should recover their national identity through appropriate education. The thoughts of some of the important social reformers regarding education sheds light into the importance of this research matter and the relevance of the same.
4.10 Era of Crisis and the Evolutionary Move to Social Reform Through Education

The story of British rule in India is well known. In the first half of the 19th century they could reap a good harvest in India by suppressing the ‘Sepoy Mutiny’. One of the inevitable results of the British rule was the introduction of Western thought and education which made deep inroads into the social and cultural life of India. This, in turn, created a kind of de-spiritualisation and de-nationalisation among the educated minds of the country. Hinduism in those days presented to the external observer “a medley of the highest forms of spiritual and yogic discipline combined with primitive forms of worship and sacrifice” (Radhakrishnan. 1957, P. 527), and the only recourse was to have a cultural revival by going back to the Vedas and the Upanishads. The enslaved motherland gave birth to a long line of social reformers. All of them had their own original views and approaches. A philosophy and a vision of national reconstruction combined with a love for the motherland grew among the people in those dark days of enslavement. Swami Dayananda Saraswathi, Balagangadhar Tilak,
Ravindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Aurobindo were stirred by the emotion of those times. All of them considered education as a tool of social reformation.

Our historic struggle for independence, which spanned across the 19th and 20th century, is unique in the history of the struggle for freedom all over the world. Many of our leaders and social reformers shared a common view regarding the movement for freedom. They understood and agreed to the view that it is not possible to initiate or maintain an agitation for independence without evoking a sense of nationalism among the Indian population. Many contemporary leaders and thinkers believed that the only way to give the population a sense of national identity was to identify and connect with their traditional identity. Among these contemporaries Maharshi Dayananda Saraswathi, Balagangadhar Tilak, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Ravindra Nath Tagore and Maharshi Aurobindo believed that the struggle to achieve ‘Swa–Tantra’ (our own way) should include the establishment of an educational system which would liberate the people from
mental slavery. The views of the contemporaries were similar in the most basic sense.

4.11 Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883)

Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati visualised clusters of teachers spread over the entire length and breadth of the country nestled in groves of woods and trees where pupils could be trained in the ancient knowledge contained in the Veda as also in rational modes of thought so as to be equipped with invincible knowledge and robust character forged by constant practice of truth, self-control and fearlessness.

Dayananda was a great scholar and a social reformer. His commentaries on the Vedas, his crusade for the downtrodden people and women and his stress on education gave a new vitality and strength to Indian people. He prepared the foundations of India’s political independence. He insisted both on the moral purification of the individual and the necessity for social reconstruction. He did not take any active part in politics but he was passionately attached to his motherland. He was permanently irreconciled to idol worship. He regarded it unVedic. He had a great mastery over Sanskrit and was a
profound Vedic scholar. “Against the authority of the puranas he took his stand on the Vedas, the age – long rock of Indian civilisation and culture” (Varma. 1971, P. 601).

Dayananda Saraswati believed that education must be made universal. He went further to say that like food and shelter education was a democratic right of the people. The Dayananda Anglo Vedic Movement was an important part of the system which imbibed national education. The DAV school was established in 1886 in Lahore. Following this a number of schools were started all over India. Important personalities like Lala Lajpat Rai gave leadership to the DAV movement. The institution gave emphasis to Sanskrit education, spread of Hindi, value based education as well as close and warm relationship between the students and the teaching faculty.

Dayananda believed in the supremacy of the spirits. He had an optimistic vision of India’s historical evolution. He was the founder of Arya Samaj which came into existence on April 10, 1875. He insisted both on the moral purification of the individual and the necessity of social reconstruction.
Dayananda tried to make the people of India understand that political and social strength should have cultural strength as their bedrock. Dayananda was also very keen in preparing the moral and intellectual foundations of independent India.

4.12 Bala Gangadhar Tilak (1856 – 1920)

Tilak, by his strength of character, appeared as one of the determined opponents of British rule in India during the time of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. He was also a great educator who was mainly responsible for the establishment of the Poona ‘New English School’ the Deccan Education Society and the Fergusson College. He rightly understood that the teachers and preceptors of the Vedic and upanishadic periods were renowned not for materialistic prosperity, but for scholarship, integrity and devotion to duty. He believed that the incorporation of the old ideal was quite essential for the regeneration of the motherland. During the swadeshi agitation days, he tried his best to start a large number of schools for educating the downtrodden sections of the society.

Tilak had a firm faith in the immortality of the human soul. He was thoroughly at home with the Vedanta, the
Mahabharatha and the Gita. His greatest asset in life was his firm moral character. He had a passion for independence both for himself and for his country. He wanted gradual and peaceful change in society and refused to imitate the West in social reforms. He was always opposed to bureaucratic interference in social and religious matters. Since he was a nationalist, he tried his best for political emancipation of the masses. He thought that the social and religious solidarity of the people would enable them to fight against the foreign bureaucracy.

His political and educational thoughts represent a fusion of ancient Indian thought and the democratic ideas of the modern West. He believed in the supremacy of the concept of freedom. He said, “Freedom is the very life of the individual soul which Vedanta declares to be not separate from God but identical with Him” (Tilak. 1933, P. 354).

Tilak’s spirit and ideas were more realistic than that of Mahatma Gandhi. Although a profound scholar of the Vedas and different systems of Hindu philosophy, Tilak recognised that the English education had to make contributions to the growth of the Indian body politic. He put foremost importance
on religious education and character training. He also stressed the necessity of imparting industrial or vocational education. Further he wanted political education to be imparted to the common people so that they would get enlightened of their rights and duties.

In short, Tilak was a proponent of national education imparted through modern means and scientific techniques. He was one of the pioneers of the Deccan Educational Society. He established the Poona New English School specifically to impart national education through modern means in 1880. Tilak was a proponent of an educational system which mated modern Western education with national values and traditions.

4.13 Rabindranath Tagore. (1861 – 1941)

Rabindranath Tagore was a great poet, patriot, philosopher all rolled in one, who lived as a contemporary of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo in the last phase of the 19th century. He had an immensely moving voice and was a literary genius who was widely admired. He composed the famous national anthem ‘Jana Gana Mana’ and believed in the cultural synthesis and international unity of the nations of the world.
Tagore’s songs and messages contained in them some of the noblest ideals of Indian culture which gave inspiration to social and political workers. His experiments in education brought leading personalities from Europe to Viswa Bharathi. He regarded the ‘Absolute’ as the supreme man and intensely believed in the concept of God realisation. Tagore felt there was harmony between the transcendental kingdom of God and the secular realm of man.

Tagore was a humanist and his humanism was nurtured on spiritual foundations. To him the finite is only the medium for the multiple expression of the infinite. Tagore believed in God and regarded man as the incarnation of God. Hence he wanted the exaltation of the spirit of man. He agrees with the views of Vivekananda when he says, “The infinite personality of man comprehends the universe” (Tagore. 1931, P. 25). Like Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, Tagore has a spiritual conception of men’s personality. Personality is the spiritual principle of unity.

Like Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, Tagore accepted the immense worth of the spiritual heritage of India. To him it
was of no purpose to graft soulless materialistic civilisation of
the West in the Indian soil. He was always opposed to
meaningless social stratifications which paved the way for
social tyranny. Although Tagore belonged to a wealthy family,
he did not like the ethics of that class.

Tagore had an original view about education. It was a
concept which called for education to be in tune with the
environment. He believed that education should be one with
nature. It was a poet’s sensitivity expressed in the context of
education. His Institution, Viswabharathi, was a manifestation
of his poetic sense of education. Tagore believed that Indian
students should develop into citizens of the world through a
system of proper education. He was against the system of
education proposed and implemented by Macaulay. He
proposed an alternative national educational policy. He believed
that the education should be connected to the people, the life of
the people, the nation and its culture. He had a different take on
Values based education. He believed that values should not be
imposed. It should be understood naturally like free air.
Education should enable a student to assimilate ideas through
individual effort. He was against spoon feeding. He was against learning by rote. He believed that the student should have the capability of applying whatever he had studied. He observed that the Macaulay’s system of education produced students who were storing knowledge without analysis or use.

There are some similarities of vision among Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. All of them were nurtured by the same fountainhead of knowledge represented by the Vedas and Upanishads. While Tagore and Sri Aurobindo were well known writers, swami Vivekananda was an accomplished orator.

4.14 Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948)

Gandhiji was an inspired teacher and a moral revolutionary. He believed that violence interrupted the real social revolution. His philosophy of ‘Sarvodaya’, ‘the good of all’, is based on the concept of unity of existence. He interpreted history in terms of the progressive vindication of the superiority of Ahimsa.

The major goals in his life were:

- To purify politics.
Historical background of the study

- To kindle love in human heart.
- To rehabilitate freedom of man and
- To restore and teach the dignity of human labour.

By religion he did not mean any particular faith. He did not divorce politics from religion. He took them as body and soul. Love and Ahimsa meant the same thing for him. Without Ahimsa it was not possible for him to seek truth. He pointed out that the lives of Buddha and Christ were inspired by the synthesis of selfless work and deep love. He was a real ‘Karma Yogi’ following the ideal of Swami Vivekananda.

Gandhiji always criticised the foundations of sophisticated technological and lustful aspects of Western civilisation. The chief evils against which Gandhiji fought were imperialism and untouchability. In South Africa he fought against racial discrimination of the Whites. In India, as a social reformer, he fought against all social injustices.

He saw that India lived in the villages. His simplicity and self-denial made him one with the lowest strata of the nation. He wanted every man in India to cultivate the spirit of self-
Historical background of the study

respect and self-expression. “While conceding that people are controlled by their environment, Gandhiji would like them to live by self-direction and not by mere habit” (Bose. 1947, P. 203). In other words he would like to have them live as individuals acting at the moral level.

His attachment to village industries and Khadi was intense and deep. In the Charka he wanted to symbolize the dignity of labour. His basic education programme or craft-centred education was designed in such a way as to train the pupils to be self-sufficient.

Gandhiji pointed out that the British educational system created foreigners out of natives in their own land. Real education seeks to bring out the best from the students. This will not be possible by filling the minds of the students with irrelevant facts. This educational system is actually one which strangles the students’ personality and imposes a heavy burden upon them. Gandhiji recognised that the present educational system delinked the student from the reality of life around him. He rejected the textbook-centred system of education. In his opinion, the teachers required the textbooks more than the
students. The prerequisites of a good educational creed are the capacity to question and enquire. Gandhiji was in favour of a system of job oriented education. He said, “Our educational system is that which was rejected by the Europeans. The educated class among them keep on changing the methods adopted for education. We, on the other hand, keep clinging on to the models that they reject because of ignorance” (Mahatma Gandhi. 1983, Vol. V, P. 105).

Gandhiji recognised those factors which stood against the concept of national education. He said, “The foundation of modern educational edifice - the system of education and the curriculum have been imported from Oxford, Edinburgh, Cambridge and London. It is clear that they are foreign. Unless this edifice is rejected, there is no scope for implementing a national educational policy” (Mahatma Gandhi. 1983, Vol. 5, P.111).

Gandhiji, like Swami Vivekananda, wanted spiritualisation of all human actions. He was a critic of capitalism because capitalism was against the principle of equality. The Vedantic idealism, which is the basis of
Gandhism, is not a reactionary philosophy, it teaches the supremacy of eternal truth.

Both Gandhiji and Swami Vivekananda have many aspects in common in establishing liberty and justice for the exploited mankind. If Swami Vivekananda was mainly concerned with religious and social uplift of the masses. Gandhiji was deeply involved in the attainment of freedom for India. In line with Swami Vivekananda, Gandhiji too believed in the doctrine of re-birth. He says, “I believe in rebirth as much as I believe in the existence of my present body” (Mahatma Gandhi. 1924, P.18).

The ultimate end of life and hence of education is realisation of truth which is the same as knowing one’s self. To Gandhiji, the Western culture had denationalised the people. It bred in the people of India a sense of inferiority complex. Inspired by Swami Vivekananda, he considered education as of no use if it did not promote love for the best things in one’s own national culture, without which no nation could rise. The only hope for the future generation is in educating its future
citizens in the principles of love and tolerance which these great leaders have preached to humanity.

4.15 Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)

Swami Vivekananda understood that the liberation of India from the foreign yoke could be achieved only through universal education. Swamiji’s words became the source of inspiration for many nationalists like Gandhiji. Though he did not take part directly in the national struggle for independence, Swamiji had a decisive role in shaping the ideological position of the struggle. He was a great man who repeatedly proclaimed that education formed the fuel for social revolution. He put forward the concept of 'Man Making Education'. His concept of education was one which accepted all forms of worship as it was based on the Indian Vedic concept and outlook. His words were prophetic and his voice was one of strength and self-confidence. He said, “... And still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves, and stand up on that faith and be strong; that is what we need” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, P. 190). The Swamiji did not see ‘education’ as a tool for political freedom. He believed
that it was the duty of the educated people to liberate the crores of people from illiteracy and poverty. He said, “So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them..! I call those men who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those two hundred millions who are now no better than hungry savages !” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 5, P. 58).

National integration, spirituality and eternal values were the core of the educational system put forward by Swami Vivekananda. He envisaged a system of education which could create universal citizens who were patriotic at the same time. “Act on the educated young men, bring them together and organise them. Great things can be done by great sacrifice only” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 4, P. 34).

Swamiji was led by the belief that the future of the nation could be determined by a set of youth who were educated and organised. He gave his fellow brethren, a dynamic gospel of supreme fearlessness and strength. He mercilessly denounced
the arrogance and the sophistication of the upper classes of Indian society. He was one of the first thinkers in India to offer a sociological interpretation of Indian history. He was also a socialist because he championed the cause of social equality. Once Vivekananda declared “I am socialist not because I think it is a perfect system but half a loaf is better than no bread” (Swami Vivekananda. 1968, P. 38). In short Vivekananda marshalled into service all possible aids for cultural revivalism of the 19th century which were used in later years by great leaders like Subhash Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi.

4.16 Sri Aurobindo (1872 – 1950)

History has revealed that Sri Aurobindo who had his education in the west later on became an ardent proponent of the East. Even though Sri Aurobindo was educated in the West, he never became ‘westernised’. The revolutionary, poet, philosopher evolved into a yogi. Tagore in his poem written in 1907 has this to say about Aurobindo “With Aurobindo the psychology of the nation underwent a drastic change. Aurobindo is the messenger who has brought forth the undying flame of God. The chains of bondage, which till now
were enslaving us, now lie at Aurobindo’s feet. Aurobindo is the soul of Bharat Varsha” (Parameswaran. 1988, P.8).

Aurobindo was totally different from contemporary thinkers and politicians. He was a complete nationalist and an uncompromising idealist. “My life and framework are different. My mission was to impart a sense direction to the freedom movement. My duty was to convince the people of the need for freedom. This was made possible at the Amruthsar Congress. Now my task is to think about what our people are to do with the freedom that is imminent” (Parameswaran. 1988,P.11). Like any Indian ‘Rishi’, Aurobindo realised that ultimate truth manifested in the ‘soul’.

The foundation of Aurobindo’s thought is spirituality. His view was that people should move away from mechanical social formations towards spiritualised societies. Aurobindo worked for such a social transformation. He comments thus on his worldview: “The People should be transformed from the technology based society to a spiritual one” (Parameswaran. 1988, P. 19). Aurobindo was aware of the need of an appropriate educational system for social change more than
anyone else. Aurobindo had his own unique ideas about such affairs.

In the article titled ‘An introduction to National Education’, written by Sri Aurobindo in the weekly ‘Arya’ during the period of November – December 1920 and on the January of 1921, his ideas on education are explicitly revealed. According to Aurobindo, there are no two opinions on the question of national education. Yet, he believed that the National education should also take into consideration and appropriate the positive aspects of the latest of Western education. Aurobindo was one of the pioneers of the concept of national education. There is no other thinker who has approached the question of National education in such an in-depth manner. Aurobindo’s idea of national education did not reject modern science or embrace narrow nationalism as he believed that education fundamentally should embrace humanism. Even while being rooted in nationalism, Aurobindo dreamed about evolution of man into a supramental being as the ultimate goal of human development. Like Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo too saw education as a prerequisite to
social change. He said, “Education on a national scale is an indispensable precondition of our social amelioration” (Sri Aurobindo. 1972, Vol. I, P. 535).

The concept of national revival forms the core of the educational view of Aurobindo also. He considered that for achieving Unity and strength it was imperative to have the correct form of education and organisation. He said, “Strength and Unity are our objectives; ceaseless and self reliant labour is our motive power; Education, organisation and self help are our road” (Sri Aurobindo. 1972. Vol. I, P. 75). Aurobindo believed that the liberation of India from colonial rule was a necessity for the whole world. He believed so because of his faith that the Indian intellect and knowledge accumulated over the ages should serve in the betterment of the whole mankind. Thus Aurobindo, like Swami Vivekananda, also believed that the wealth of India’s knowledge accumulated in this country should be freely dispersed throughout the world. Aurobindo said, “So with India rests the future of the world. Whenever she is aroused from her sleep, she gives forth some wonderful shining ray of light to the world which is enough to illuminate
the nations. Others live for centuries on what is to her a thought of a moment. God gave to her the book of Ancient Wisdom and bade her keep it sealed in her heart, until the time should come for it to be opened. Sometimes a page or a chapter is revealed, sometimes only a single sentence. Such sentence have been the inspiration of ages and fed humanity for many hundreds of year” (Sri Aurobindo.1972,Vol. I, P. 713).

According to Aurobindo, “The aim of education is twofold; there is a collective aspect and there is an individual aspect. From the collective point of view, education is expected to turn the individual into a good citizen, i.e., into a person who has harmonious relations with the other members of the community, who is useful to the society and who fulfils with zeal his obligations as a citizen” (pavithra. 1962, P.1).

There are lot of similarities in the views of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. Their societal outlook is almost the same. Even though both of them were moulded in the die of the educational system of the West, both of them firmly believed in Bharatheeya cultural values.
4.17 The Vision of Swami Vivekananda’s and Sri Aurobindo’s Thoughts on National Education

The promotion of national education as the essential agenda of the nationalist moment was achieved by the ideas of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. Their ideas were similar in many ways. The examples in the similarities of the thoughts of these personalities can be seen in their congruence of ideas in matters relating to – pride in India’s culture, uncompromising nationalism, belief in value based education, their emphasis on humanism, their idea that nationalism had a symbiotic relationship with internationalism, universal concept of religion. Their ideas on education should have served to strengthen the nations Unity, Integrity and progress. Unfortunately it was seen that free India did not give adequate importance to their vision on education.

Education should have served as the backbone of national resurgence. Though our nation achieved political freedom, the shackles on our education remained. The importance given to national education in pre-independence Bharat was not
replicated in post-Independence India. Not only that, there was an effort to implement a system of educational reforms based on the erstwhile ‘Macaulayist’ educational system.

The education system thus designed, which had a colonial slant could not in any way contribute to the resurgence of the newly ‘free’ nation. There was resurgence in sectarianism. Instead of national integration there is seen to be an increase in Communalism, Casteism, Separatism and Terrorism. The tendency to portray the diversity as contradictions also was seen to increase. The cultural icons which represented the cultural unity of this country were sought to be portrayed as symbols of religion. The emotional integration which should have evolved in post-independence India, was not achieved because sufficient attention was not given to education. Though it was envisaged in the Article 45 of the constitution that within ten years all the young between 6 and 14 years should be given free and compulsory education, even today about one third of the 110 crore population of India remain illiterate. We need not look anywhere else to find the reasons for the present challenges facing the nation. It is on this occasion that the
National educational concepts of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo which form part of their well thought out worldview, achieves significance.
REFERENCES

4. Ibid. p.p.42-43
6. Ibid.p.13
7. Ibid.p.12
8. Ibid.p.20
13. Ibid. p.111.
16. Ibid. p. 76
18. Ibid. p. 11
19. Ibid. p. 19
25. Ibid. Vol. 17, p. 191
27. Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 75
28. Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 713


31. Ibid. Vol. 3, p.190

32. Ibid. Vol. 5, p.58

33. Ibid. Vol. 4, p.34


