CHAPTER II

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The fountain-head of Indian culture and education is the Vedic literature. The mode and administration of education in ancient India was based on the Vedas, and as such they are rightly regarded as the prime source of cultural tradition in this country. Besides the Vedas, the epics, the Puranic chronicles, the Upanishads and other scriptures aided and advanced the natural growth of moral consciousness and gave a highly religious and moral bent to education. Many a nation of the world has drawn inspiration and instruction from this extraordinary educational experience. It has gone a long way in establishing supreme human values in the world. In one way or another it has influenced educational philosophy at home and abroad. It has led to the evolution of much of the social and political thought everywhere. The Vedas explicitly and unequivocally forbid eating without work: that man has no right to eat who does not perform yajnas, who does not work. Such sacred admonitions lend dignity to labour. The physical closeness of Nature and the moral instruction gave a unique character to the educational process.

2.02 Content and Administration of Education:

In ancient India education was administered by learned and holy hermits who lived a life of pious seclusion in the
forests. Their hermitages were the schools and academies of the time. Under the open sky or in the cool shade of trees these sages and seers taught the scriptures, the sciences and the practical arts of life. This task was performed by them as a kind of religious obligation without a thought of personal advancement or gain. Their own example of simple living and high thinking induced similar feeling in the minds of their pupils. Their piety and asceticism left an indelible impression on the faculties of the young acolytes. Young people eager for learning would resort to these hermitages in the thick of the forests; they came from distant places, belonged to different social groups, and lived together with the teacher as members of one family. In the truest and the most practical sense of the word these hermit-teachers were educational philosophers. They were all men of great probity and were venerated far and wide for their learning and piety. There was an elevated and privileged class in the society of the time. This concept of a forest university has earned plaudits from educational philosophers everywhere for its functional simplicity and efficacy as well as for its moral nature.

2.03 Ancient Culture and Political Instability

The glory of ancient India is unparalleled in the history of the world. But in the seventh century AD. the Islamic Arabs began periodic forays and raids with the sole intention of
converting the entire population to Islam and establishing Islamic suzerainty over the land. This resulted in social and cultural disorder and political instability, and brought to an end over the years the peace and prosperity for which this country was famed in ancient times. Not only the cities were sacked and the villages ravaged, but shrines were razed to the ground and great seats of learning such as Taxila and Nalanda were disorganized and demolished. Invaluable ancient manuscripts were lost or destroyed, and men of learning were made captives and carried away to the Arab Kingdoms of the west. Faint glimmerings of the Indian intellectual achievement in philosophy and physical sciences thus reached Europe through the Arabs during the period of the Crusades, and this knowledge led the way to the Renaissance in Europe which eventually brought about a dramatic change in the social, economic and religious attitudes there. It was this knowledge which was chiefly instrumental in the shaping of modern European thought, The progress of the West during the last three hundred years owes as much to the wealth of knowledge as to the material wealth which this country has lost as a result of the Islamic invasions and the imperialistic rule of the British.

During the period of Muslim rule in India, Sultans and subsedars, emperors and ulamas went all lengths to turn away the people of this country from the faith of their forefathers and every means was employed to bring them into the Islamic fold.
But such was the vitality inherent in the Indian religious and cultural traditions of the past that the majority of the people remained unaffected by such proselytizing manoeuvres. Saints, poets, scholars, and leaders of religious movements in the medieval era and thereafter reinforced traditional values and beliefs, while the Rajput rulers in central India and the Solankis in Gujarat held in check the onward march of Islam. During the reign of the Solankis a number of Jain sages and scholars did invaluable work in salvaging the rich heritage of the past, and the foremost among them was Hemachandracharya who gave to Gujarati language its first manual of grammar, 'Siddhahem.' Himself of Jain faith, he committed himself to the preservation of Shaivism in the State. During this period a good deal of scholarly literary and philosophical work was undertaken which was based upon ancient literature. These compilations, commentaries and original compositions of the time throw a flood of light on the state of education and contain some excellent adages and expositions of educational philosophy.

2.04 Sufism and Monotheism

As we have seen, the Muslim rulers of the country moved heaven and earth to make India an Islamic nation. When they could not win over the population by offers of wealth and worldly advancement, they launched upon a policy of outrage
and oppression which gave rise to the feeling of mistrust and hostility among the common people belonging to the two communities. This atmosphere of fear and hatred was quite alien to the spirit of Hinduism, and very soon there appeared the Sufisaints like Kabir, Rahim and Rasakhan who preached the unity of all religious faiths and created a climate of mutual understanding and appreciation. The core of their teachings was that there is one God and we are all His children. Their message couched in the common language of the people went home to the meanest mind and became a part of Indian culture.

2.05 The Nineteenth Century: Political and Social Awakening

The nineteenth century ushered in several reformist movements seeking to remove the dirt which had accumulated over the centuries in religious convictions and social conventions. Some of these attitudes and usages had outlived their usefulness and their continued existence was an encumbrance and an impediment to the progress of the individual and the community. Several organizations set up schools and academies realizing that the first step in reformation is to educate public opinion. The educational institutions infused the spirit of patriotism and reverence for the past while at the same time they sought to incite the spirit of inquiry and independent judgement. They laid particular stress on the education and emancipation of
woman, on the eradication of untouchability and casta distinctions on humanitarian work and missionary zeal. While the Brahmo Samaj in Bengal did way with orthodox practices and breathed new life into the ancient heritage of spiritual wisdom, the Arya Samaj strongly advocated a return to the basic tenets of the Vedic religion and established schools and academies for an intensive study of Vedic ritual and literature. But the most illustrious son of India at this time was Swami Vivekananda who made it his life mission to rouse the will and conscience of his young countrymen and instil into them the spirit of social service and enthusiasm for the high moral and religious values of Indian culture. At the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in the year 1893 he boldly asserted that Hinduism is not only the oldest religious creed in the world but that it is also the mother of all other creeds. His noble and assiduous exertions on behalf of the Hindu faith soon bore fruit in the increased interest enucleated by the Western countries in the spiritual doctrines of ancient India. His life work can well be summed up in his own words: Acquire the power of will and action, work hard, and you will definitely reach the goal. At this time in India there were persistent efforts made by enlightened minds to abolish evil social customs and to establish a rapport with modern Western values and norms. Rajah Rammohan Roy devoted his life to remodelling education so as to make it a fit vehicle for the scientific temper.
When Gandhi took on the leadership of the political struggle for independence in India, he had already perfected his weapons of truth and nonviolence through arduous tests and trials in South Africa. His first move was to alter the course of the struggle by insisting on village-oriented programmes, for it was among the simple suffering village folk that he saw the true image of India. His insistence on truth and nonviolence gave a unique character to the political activity of the time. Fearlessness was his watchword when fear of the police, of the landlord, of the government filled the minds of all his countrymen. The real test and touchstone of true education, he believed, was the knowledge of self, of society and of God it gives us. Of religion he had the view that it was an inextricable part of human life, and that the life of a man without religion was no better than a brute's. Righteousness is the basis of a man's character in this world, and the basis of righteousness is love of truth. This was, in the main the core and kernel of his philosophy of life.

Indian economy is primarily based upon rural agricultural produce, and the only way to increase national income is to raise the standards of living and work and education in the villages. Gandhi's ideal was to make every village a self-sufficient unit which would not be dependent upon urban centres.
for food, clothing, education, employment and medical facilities. In order to achieve this end he advocated the adoption of the Basic Education programme. He wanted the able young sons of the soil to remain in their respective villages and work for village uplift rather than migrate to urban industrial complexes engaged in producing things which people did not really want. He also admonished the rich to look upon their riches as social capital held in trust for social needs and welfare rather than as private personal possession. He wanted them to cut out all forms of conspicuous consumption. A good life, according to him, is a simple life. He was a great votary of the ancient Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, and he preached the doctrines of selfless service and universal brotherhood which are the very essence of that ancient work. He was a staunch opponent of racial discrimination and castes distinctions. He loathed the use of violence in any form, and for him the means were as important as the ends. By leading a nonviolent struggle for freedom he demonstrated the fitness of the ancient adage: 'Truth is forever victorious.'

Another great son of India, Rabindra Nath Tagore, not only enriched world literature and brought honour to his country by being the first Indian to be awarded the Nobel Prize, but also contributed largely to the cause of education by establishing the twin institutions of Shantiniketan and Visvabharati. Tagore's fundamental educational viewpoint was that for the right ethical, aesthetic and intellectual development of a child as well as for
its physical fitness it was necessary to give it full scope for free activity in a natural environment. He showed great insight into the intricate workings of a child's mind. While Gandhi's concept of education was utilitarian and social in its implications, Tagore's view was based on sounder psychological premises. Perhaps the ideal format for education in India would be a judicious fusion of these two ideologies.

Vinoba Bhave, greatly influenced by Gandhi's thought and for a long time associated with his numerous activities, carried on the work of the Mahatma after his death. He initiated the practical application of Gandhi's programme of Basic Education. Like his mentor, he believed that only this kind of approach would suit conditions in India, for whereas indolence had become the general habit of the Indian mind the prime need of the hour was to preach the ethic of work. For this reason he insisted that education should not be confined to classroom learning but go hand in hand with useful productive work. But his concept of education was not wholly utilitarian, for he declared that the ultimate end of education is righteousness and nobility of character. Vinobaji also propagated the doctrine of Sarvodaya which puts an end to class conflicts and seeks the welfare of all sections of society. He also conceived the novel idea of Bhudan which aims at a just and proper redistribution of land without resort to law or coercion. Like the sages of
old he delivered his message in person to every home and hamlet in the country. In this way he brought about some revolutionary rethinking on educational and social themes.

The elevated position of women in ancient times had suffered steady decline through the ages. This can partly be accounted for by the influx of alien people with different social norms and attitudes. But the fact remains that in the early years of the twentieth century the condition of women in the country was no better than that of dumb driven cattle. Maharshi Karve realized that the only way for the enlightenment and emancipation of women was through education, and it was largely owing to his persistent and strenuous efforts that a number of institutions were set up which gave women easy access to knowledge. This was no mean achievement in an age when there was strong prejudice against the education of women. When women started going to school and college, it produced a dramatic change in social outlook since women as mothers and wives were considerably more influential than any number of reformers and demagogues. In the long run, the nation as a whole benefitted as a result of Maharshi Karve's pioneering work. It raised the status of women in society and enabled them to contribute their mite in the cause of national reconstruction. In Gujarat the agitation for social reform went hand in hand with the development of education in the region. In the year 1820 the Government of
Bombay established the Bombay Education Society which started schools in Bombay, Surat and Broach. Five years later the Native Education Society was founded by Ranchhodbhai Giradhabhai Jhaveri. The system of in-service training of teachers and the publication of textbooks brought about a revolutionary change in educational theory and practice. Later on Daduabhai Pandurang Shastri and Durgaram Mehta made valuable contributions to the spread of education in this part of the country. In this way in the early years of the twentieth century a lot of useful work was done in remodelling education to suit modern conditions of life.

Social reformers such as Narmad, Navalram, Mandshanker, Mahipatram and others found in education a fit instrument of social changes, and many of them actually taught in schools. They were the first product of the initial contact between Eastern religion and Western thought. Manishanker Bhatt, better known by his pen-name of 'Kant' was the most outstanding lyric poet of his time, but for a considerable part of his life he worked as Education Officer in the erstwhile Bhavnagar State. In 1895 he wrote a history of education 'Shikshan no itihas.' The poet Nanalal also did some original thinking on the nature of education and the basic tenets of Arya Dharma.

But this initial tardy movement of social change received
a mighty fillip and acceleration by the advent of Mahatma Gandhi who put his indelible impress upon every aspect of social life in India. He was our greatest apostle of peace, non-violence and truth. Under his wise leadership the nation achieved some measure of unity, fearlessness and moral elevation. As a writer he adopted and advocated a simple and economical prose style, for he was of the opinion that truth needs no embellishment. A generation of creative writers received inspiration from Gandhi’s life and work. He founded the Gujarat Vidyapith with the avowed intention of reorienting education to suit national character and conditions. As Dhirubhai Thaker has rightly observed, the supreme genius and saintliness of the Mahatma irradiated every part of national life.

As we have noted earlier, India was well renowned in the ancient world for her learning, culture, spirituality and science. Indeed, many nations looked up to India as a world teacher. Here were born great and holy men such as Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Mahavir, great and wise monarchs such as Asoka, great and valourous warriors such as Pratap and Shivaji, great and learned philosophers such as Shankara and masters of physical sciences such as Varahmihir and Bhaskara. In the course of her long history India has suffered from a great number of invasions by boorish and brutish hordes which has
resulted in the importation of many ungainly practices and the influx of many evil social customs. Nevertheless, the vitality of India culture has withstood these onslaughts of alien forces and retained its pristine glory as can be seen in the life and work of Gandhi in own times.

The knock-out impact of the Industrial Revolution combined with the imperialistic fiscal policies of the British rulers led to the ruin of traditional village crafts and industries, and the exodus of village folk to the cities caused great social disorder and moral degeneration. The old values of life were forgotten and for a long time there were no new values to take their place, poverty and lack of social harmony and order led to unscrupulous conduct and beggarly habits of mind. But with the growth and extension of modern education there arose a cadre of public spirited and progressive social workers and demagogues who launched several movements for social reforms including the emancipation and uplift of women, the eradication of untouchability, the uprooting of superstitions, the changing of law and custom, and the creation of a scientific temper and a democratic outlook. At the back of these modern ideas was the general awareness of a rich and noble heritage, sound and systematic efforts were made now to refashion social order and remodel education to suit our national character and conditions of life. Gijubhai Badhaka, Nanabhai Bhatt, Ramanbhai Nilkanth
and others broke new ground in education and made it a fit instrument of national upsurge and awakening. The influence of Gandhian ideology pervaded educational philosophy and it became a primary objective of educational activity to inculcate the spirit of self-discipline and self-reliance, to promote civic virtues and democratic values. This philosophy is even now being translated into actual practice by Shri Darshak at Sanosara.

2.07 Educational Philosophy in Ancient India

In any study concerning education in India it is deemed most essential and imperative to take notice of the educational postulates and practice of the Aryans and to examine critically the religious, ethical and social aspects of the system. Throughout the ancient period in the history of India, the teachers as well as the poets and philosophers were denizens of the forest who led immaculate and impregnable lives devoted to learning and piety. They lived in perfect harmony with the natural surroundings and the social set-up of the time. They were sages who made no claims on worldly position, power or pelf. They were the custodians of culture and interpreters of religious truth. They enjoyed an elevated position in the social hierarchy of the day and commanded the respect of all sections of society. Over and above their daily work as teachers and writers they acted as priests and preceptors to the royal households. They sat on councils and
were chief counsellors to kings and the common man, for even when they lived in solitude in the thick of the forest they kept themselves well informed of all that happened outside. Their habits and manners were not those of common forest dwellers, and though their entire way of life was of the simplest, it did not lack the graces of civilization.

The educational philosophy of these ancient sages and seers was in keeping with the tenets of Indian religion and traditions of Indian culture. It was meet and proper for the maintenance of social order, for the raising of social ethics, for all-round individual development as well as for common welfare. They laid equal stress upon useful arts such as agriculture and cattle rearing and moral and philosophical instruction. From the time of initiation to the very end of the scholar's stay in the ashrams the teacher was solely responsible for his education. Scholars lived together with the teacher as members of one family and the bearing of the teacher towards the taught was not devoid of affection and sympathy. A fine illustration of this feeling of tenderness is provided by the story of Krishna and Sudama who lived under the tutelage of the sage Sandipani. One day the two boys were sent out to fetch firewood from the forest and lost their way. When they did not return to the ashram, the teacher went out to look for them in blinding rain through the tangle of forest paths.
2.08 The content and administration of Education during the Epic Period

During the long span of the Epic era there were outstanding influential teachers like Vyasa, Vasistha and Drona who were revered throughout the country. They were not only the repositories of knowledge but also the custodians of culture and interpreters of religious truth. We hear about the sage Visvamitra who went to the king and demanded the service of the Princes, Rama and Laxmana, to mount guard against the Rakshases who were all the time disorganizing and defiling religious rites and austerities. That the king had finally to give in shows the tremendous power and influence wielded by teachers in ancient times.

The teachers in those days carried out the function with a sense of religious obligation without a thought of material gain. They were supported by the rulers and the rich. Affluent and indigent scholars were both welcomed, and no caste barriers barred the way to learning. The learning was primarily based on religious discipline and moral values and consisted of social and political theory, filial and family obligations, recondite philosophical and scriptural lore, physical sciences and practical arts. During their stint as scholars the young men and women had strictly to observe the rule of Brahmacharya or abstention from sexual indulgence. They had also to undertake household task assigned to them. All this inculcated the virtues
of self-discipline, self-help, self-reliance, selfless service, and spotless character. But the rules of the ashrams were not enforced in a harsh regimental manner; they were, through gentle persuasion and loving care, made a part of the general character of the learners. The routine activities of the ashrams included farming, gardening, poultry and cattle rearing, prayer and other acts of piety, alms begging, physical exercises and the common chores of a large household. The subjects taught included logic, languages, mathematics, philosophy, biology, astronomy, medicine and the martial arts. Truth nonviolence and temperance were the cardinal virtues taught as part of moral instruction. The medium of instruction was Sanskrit.

It can be plainly deduced from the foregoing description of the educational system in ancient India that it was most felicitous for the full all-round development of the learner. It was a natural outgrowth of the Aryan cultural values and produced a type of character that was healthy and homogenous in all respects. The ethical, aesthetic, emotional and intellectual sides of human nature were given equal attention and importance. Learning developed individual talent, but at the same time the common objective was to prepare the learner for a fruitful avocation in life. Accordingly, instruction was given to suit the learner's particular station in life. Learning was accorded great respect in the society of the time, and man of
great learning received great homage everywhere.

2.09 The Statue of Women in Ancient India

Woman in ancient India were assigned a high honourable position in the social set-up of the time. The status of woman was in no way inferior to that of men; on the other hand Manu had declared that the gods forever bless the land where women are venerated. We have the illustrious examples of learned women like Gargi and Maitreyi, Anasuya and Devayani. There were no restrictions then in the way of mental development, social activity and religious performance. Women could freely participate in all the various spheres of social and religious life of the day. We even have instances of queens going to war together with their consorts. When Rama performed the Ashwamedha sacrifice, he had to install a gold replica of Site for the ceremony. That alone speaks for the consideration that was shown to women in those days. We find that women then enjoyed greater freedom than many of them do even today; however, this freedom was not devoid of duties and responsibilities. The law-makers of the time had realised that these duties and responsibilities could be properly discharged only if women received right grooming and guidance through education. So, in those halcyon days of the Vedas and the Upanishads the education of women was looked upon as a social necessity, and this view percolated through the ages up to the medieval era.
2.10 The Decline of the Ancient System of Education

The ancient Indian culture and educational philosophy which had survived for centuries irrespective of changing vicissitudes began to lose influence and authority with the coming of the Arabs in the seventh century A.D. The followers of Islam in the Arab countries launched a crusade to establish the new religion as state religion in Europe and Asia, and as part of this campaign Muslim hordes began to raid the outlying kingdoms of the north west in India. Soon there followed the invasion of Sindhudesh by Mir Kasim of Iraq. The foremost motives of the invaders were plunder and pillage, but at the same time they also entertained the hope of making India an Islamic nation. The famous seats of learning like Nalanda and Taxila were disorganized and destroyed, magnificent shrines were desecrated, monuments were razed to the ground, manuscripts were either burnt or carried away to the Arab lands, learned scholars were made captive or put to the sword, and the populace was forced to disavow the faith of their forefathers. All this led to political instability, social disorder and cultural regression. The minds of men everywhere in the country were filled with fear and hatred. The greatest casualty in the changed circumstances was the status of women. It now became common for them to lead a sheltered and secluded life. Female infanticide, early marriage, sati, jauhar, purdah and
many other evil practices crept into the Hindu social ethos. Another great casualty of the tumultuous conditions of the time was learning. With the destruction of ancient schools and the loss of ancient manuscripts the sources of learning had dried up, but even if the schools and the books had been spared they would not have attracted many people in these uncertain times. Ignorance then produced its brood of superstition, intolerance, ritualism and moral degeneration. With the establishment of Muslim hegemony in the subcontinent, Hindus were harassed by heavy taxation and discriminatory legislation; a tax called jajhia was levied on Hindu pilgrimages, places of Hindu worship were turned into mosques, official positions and honours all went to the Muslims. In their own country the Hindu lived as second class citizens. This bias and bigotry brought about moral debasement and demotion of cultural values. Educational activities had come to a standstill. Only in some remote sequestered village a Brahmin would set up a school called 'pathshala' where he would undertake to teach the three Rs with some smattering of Sanskrit. Rudiments of religion came to be taught in this way by Brahmin priests with half-baked knowledge and insufficient means of livelihood. Indeed, they earned their daily bread through the performance of priestly duties rather than through their work as teachers. In spite of their limitations and the general indifference to learning these humble teachers of the medieval interregnum rendered yeoman service
to the cause of preservation of religion and culture.

2.11 The Conservation of Ancient Culture and Education after its Decline

As a direct consequence of Aurangzeb’s bigoted policies there was a ferment of popular resentment in many parts of the country, and the Hindu saints and chieftains availed of the unrest to revive ancient religious faith and cultural values. The devotional strain in the teachings of the saints made it possible for the meanest of men to rise to sublime heights of piety and spiritual enlightenment and in this way religion reached the widest commonalty. At the same time attempts were made — particularly during the regime of Shivaji and the Pashwas — to re-establish the secular values of ancient Indian culture. As new life pulsed through the inert body of Hindu society, there arose the awareness of social iniquities and evils and the desire for reformation. As an initial step in this direction education began to receive greater attention. In this way during the eighteenth century the foundations were laid for the great reformist movements that were launched a hundred years later.

The nineteenth century is regarded as a century of reform in India and elsewhere. During the time of Lord William Bentinck Rajah Rammohan Roy waged an unrelenting war against social evils such as Sati and brought together the intelligentsia of
the day under the banner of Brahmo Samaj. He strongly pleaded for the Western pattern of education which would bring to his countrymen the benefits of science. It was then a herculean task to awaken a nation that was inured to a state of sloth and servitude, and for this singular achievement he has been rightly designated as the architect of modern India. It was his pioneering work and proud spirit that inspired the reformist movements which followed.

During the last decades of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth several Hindu organisations launched their schemes for social reform, and together these movements took on the semblance of a national upsurge. The Arya Samaj advocated reversion to the old Vedic ideals and the removal of all corrupt practices of later times, and with this end in view established new centres of learning which encouraged study of ancient cultural traditions. It also tried to bring back into the Hindu fold all those who had been forced to embrace Islam. The most salutary effect of the missionary work of the Arya Samaj was the realization by the Hindus of their rich and glorious past. This work was further advanced by the fiery admonitions of Vivekananda. Here we give a few specimen of the spirited utterances which shook Indian society out of its centuries old inertia and indifference:

'O my countrymen! Remember that your ideal of womanhood
is none other than Sita and Savitri'

'O my countryman! Remember that the lowly, ignorant, illiterate and oppressed Indian cobbler is flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone.'

'Religion is the life force of this nation, and so long as this glorious religious inheritance remains with us, no power upon earth can vanquish this nation. Therefore, the more our people turn their eyes to the past the more splendid and fruitful their future will be. The cause of the wretched condition of India today is not that the ideals of our forefathers were wrong-headed or erroneous but that these were not carried to their logical and proper end.'

'In our present age it is all too common to pull up and pass censure on someone who is constantly looking backward to the past, and it is held that this preoccupation with the past is the sole cause of all our misfortunes in India. But the truth appears to me to be the reverse of this generally held opinion. So long as the Indian people disregarded their past they languished in a state of torpor, but no sooner were their eyes turned to the glories of the past than a new life and vigour entered their thoughts and actions. Indeed, the future of India will eventually be shaped by her past. And so I have always said that the more our people study the past the more glorious
Several circumstances have combined to make the history of this country from the seventh century onwards a tale of woe. The unsettled conditions of life that followed every invasion, the plunder and pillage, the long periods of foreign domination, the systematic expropriation and exploitation by the British, and a succession of natural calamities have not only drained away the rich resources of this country but they have also torn asunder the moral fibre of our people. Long periods of subjection to the will of others have bred in us the habits of sloth and sluggishness, lack of intellectual curiosity and lack of enterprise, self-pity and self-mortification. It is most urgent and imperative to change these habits of mind if we are to take back the nation to its earlier state of peace, prosperity and power. The great instrument of change is education, and in the early years of the twentieth century assiduous and enlightened efforts were made in that direction by Rabindranath Tagore, Maharshi Karve and Mahatma Gandhi. Tagore had a distinctive philosophy of education and sought its practical application in his school Shantiniketan which later developed into Visvabharti University. Karve did seminal work for the education and uplift of women and founded schools and colleges for women in the western part of the country. These educational activities brought about a

revolutionary change in the modes of living and thought in the country.


Mahatma Gandhi, while evolving his philosophy of education, had in mind the present conditions of life in the countryside, and it was this that led him to formulate his system of basic education which would be intimately related to the life of the masses and provide the people with proper equipment for useful employment and help in the development of village crafts. The spinning wheel thus became a symbol of India's political freedom, economic development and educational planning under the all-pervading influence of Gandhian ideology. The primary objective of the basic education system was to make the villages self-sufficient units, and to that extent it was an ideal system for village reconstruction. It was Gandhi's firm belief that as the vast majority of his countrymen lived in villages, progress of the country depended in a large measure upon the uplift of villages. Much of the instruction imparted in the new system would be of a practical nature and the medium of instruction would of course be the mother tongue, but moral development would not be neglected. It is however pertinent to note here that Gandhi's ideas about
morality were not theoretical abstractions but had an outright practical character—His educational philosophy sought to refurnish the moral fibre of the people which had been torn asunder by centuries of submission to the will of others. But at the same time it was his conviction that people could not be morally sound unless they were able to stand on their own feet. And for this it was necessary to introduce a type of education that would prepare the learner for his particular avocation in life.

In the remote, out of the way corner of Saurashtra, at a place called Sanosara an educational complex, Lok Bharati, has been set up by Shri Darshak which has for many years striven hard to translate into actual practice Gandhiji's educational philosophy by relating the educational regime and curricula to actual life experiences, expectations and exigencies. This experiment in education is of great moment to a nation which cannot at present, or in the near future, lay out vast amounts of money required for educating the teeming millions in the villages. But that is not its sole value for us. The kind of education that is imparted there not only equips the learner to follow his particular calling with ease and assurance, but also inculcates the cardinal virtues of self-discipline and self-reliance in the alumni. Moreover, the teachers and the taught reside at the same place as they were wont to do in ancient times, and the exemplary lives and industry of the
teachers go a long way in shaping the mental outlook of the learners. This educational complex is the very epitome of the gurukul system with this difference that its work and ideology are in full conformity with the conditions of present day life in the country. Therefore, the present study—'A study of Darshak’s Philosophy of Education'—has been undertaken with the object of examining and evaluating the educational programme and procedure, the work and the methods of work, in this noble and noteworthy enterprise by personal interviews and a close scrutiny of the material supplied to the researcher. It is also intended to assess the changes brought about in social consciousness and social development by the educational postulates and processes of Lok Bharati.

After stating the principal objectives of the present study, we now proceed to append here a glossary of the terms used therein:

1. Study:

   (i) An investigation of a particular subject, or the published findings of such an investigation.

   (ii) A branch of learning.

   (iii) Application of the mind to a problem or subject.²

   (iv) An intensive analysis of any or all phases of the characteristics or activities of the students and employees of an educational institution.³
2. Study:

(i) Acquiring of knowledge esp. from books.
(ii) Pursuit of some branch of knowledge.
(iii) Meditation.
(iv) To give time and thought to getting knowledge.

3. Study:

(i) Devotion of time and thought to acquiring information esp. from books; pursuit of some branch of knowledge.
(ii) Fit for musing, reverie; too intent on his thoughts to observe what is passing.
(iii) Things to be secured by pains or attention.
(iv) Sketch made for practice in technique.
(v) Room used for literary occupation or business.

4. Study:

(i) Make a study of; take pains to investigate or acquire knowledge of (subject) to assure (result sought); scrutinize or earnestly contemplate (visible object); succeed in finding out, by hard thinking, others' convenience, one's own interests, person's face or character.

4. Dr. K.R. Munshi, Gala's Advanced Dictionary, p.1075
(ii) Apply oneself to study esp. reading for the bar.
(iii) Meditate, muse.
(iv) Be on the watch, try constantly to manage.
(v) Deliberate, intentional, effected.6

5. Education:

(i) Philosophy of Education:

A careful, critical and systematic endeavour to see education as a whole and as an integral part of man's culture, the more precise meaning of the term varying with the systematic point of view of the stipulator; any philosophy dealing with or applied to the process of public or private education and used as a basis for the general determination, interpretation and evaluation of educational problems having to do with objectives, practices, outcomes, child and social needs, materials of study and all other aspects of the field.7

(ii) Education:

(a) The aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of positive value in the society in which he lives.

(b) The social process by which people are subjected to the influence of a selected and controlled environment (especially that of the school) so that they may attain social competence and optimum individual development.

(c) Ordinarily, a general term for the so-called technical or more specifically classified professional courses offered in higher institutions for the preparation of teachers and relating directly to educational psychology, philosophy and history of education, curriculum, special and general methods, instruction, administration, supervision etc; broadly, the total pattern of preparation, formal and informal, that results in the professional growth of teachers.

(d) The art of making available to each generation the organised knowledge of the past.

(iii) Education:

Education means bringing up (for the young) or systematic instruction, or development of character or mental powers.

6. Philosophy:

Means love of wisdom or knowledge, esp. that which deals with ultimate reality, or with the most general causes and principles of things; Study of natural objects and phenomena or study of principles of human action or conduct. 10

7. Philosophy:

(i) An integrated personal view that serves to guide the individuals conduct or thinking.

(ii) The science that seeks to organize and systematize all fields of knowledge as a means of understanding and interpreting the totality of reality; usually regarded as comprising logic, ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, and epistemology.

(iii) A habit of mind in the exercise of which one tends not to take the conventional and customary for granted, but always to see possible alternatives. 11


Educational philosophy has different shades of meaning for different people, and every individual educationist or philosopher has a distinctive way of looking at educational problems. For instance, Tagore approached education with a poet's sensibility and insight. For him, the sine qua non for a child's development was a free and friendly environment together with close intimacy with Nature. He believed that parental and social influences do not always conduce to a happy and harmonious growth of a child's character and for this reason they should be held back as far as possible and the child should be allowed to feel, think and act in an unencumbered way. He also believed that imagination plays a vital role in the development of intellectual and moral faculties; it should therefore be given sufficient importance while forming an educational curriculum.

Darshek (Manubhai Pancholi) of Lok Bharati is a staunch opponent of rigid regulations and peremptory constraints in education. Although his basic philosophy of education is mainly derived from Gandhian ideology, it is finely blended with the Tagorean view of natural conditioning of a child's character. For, he is not only a philosopher and social activist but also a creative writer of great repute. His intensive study of historical and religious literature has also added a new dimension to his concept of education. All
this makes his educational philosophy a clear, consistent and comprehensive approach to the education of the poor rural masses in our time.

2.13 The Scope and Significance of Research in Education

Education is a continuous and co-ordinated activity, and the field of education is not limited to elementary, secondary and higher education, but is co-extensive with the central spirit and structure of human life. It influences and governs an individual's outlook and actions, gives scope to his abilities and aptitudes, and leads to advancement in life. The progress achieved in modern times by the Western nations has been largely owing to the spread of education, and the present underdeveloped status of many countries of the world is similarly accounted for by the lack of educational facilities.

There was a time when India stood at the very apex of learning and culture, and that was also the time when India was powerful and prosperous. Unfortunately, the educational processes were disrupted by political upheavals and social disharmony for more than a thousand years resulting in a total disarray of cultural traditions and restraints on progressive thought. It was then that the nation suffered a set-back. At the present time we are reverting to our ancient view of education as the supreme value in life, and we have already started receiving the benefits that an enlightened state policy of education...
can bring us. Educational activities have not only gained great momentum in our times but they have been diversified as never before. We now have institutions in the country imparting instruction in different systems of medicine, engineering, physical and bio-sciences, practical arts and crafts, and commerce. There are centres for advanced study in practically all branches of knowledge, laboratories are carrying on original research work that is acknowledged and acclaimed all over the world. This renewed interest in learning has not only led to some measure economic development but it has also brought about a change in social values and outlook. Thus we see that the scope and reach of education is wider and higher than the edification of the individual: it is a great instrument of social change.

The Significance of the Present Study:

' Culture is basically man's understanding of his three-fold relationship in this world— with himself, with the social group, and with Nature,'

' With the passing of time the contexts of life are changed, and the values of social life also change with time. In every period of history it is the new values that govern every kind of creative effort and vision— in politics, in social observances, in the arts and in education. But the essence of culture rests upon certain fundamental preconceptions and

12 Raghuvir Chaudhari, Darshakna dashma, p. 168
postulates that are of an enduring character which do not fluctuate with the flux of time. Shri Darahek has pin-pointed some of these basic values of Indian culture: according to him these are the quest for truth or reality, the perception of unity in diversity, the habit of mind that forever seeks a synthesis of views, the respect shown to women, the caste system in its immaculate and impregnable form, the practice of logical reasoning and the predisposition to unremitting work. All the vicissitudes of history have not been able to change in a substantial way this basic substratum of Indian cultural consciousness. The reason for this way be that these pristine values were not intellectual formulations of philosophic minds but were perceived as a part and percondition of the life of man. Shri Darahek has applied himself most assiduously and earnestly to the task of weaving these stands of the enduring Indian culture into the fabric of modern life.'13

Darshak has shown us how the Aryan and the pre-Aryan cultures were amalgamated under the aegis of far-seeing sages and poets in ancient times:

' The fusion of cultures that took place then in spite of the different modes of living and language was the handiwork

13. Raghuvir Chaudhari, Darshak na dashma, p. 169
of men of piety endowed with prophetic vision, of men whom we call rishis, and so the ensuing composite great culture has persisted to this day notwithstanding the political upheavals and social disorganization in the ages that followed. 14

This ancient cultural tradition that was blessed in its inception by the prophets of old found further sustenance during the Middle Ages in the work of the saint poets. The central propositions and admonitions of these saint poets were: (a) insistence on one's own personal experience in the place of external authority, (b) faith in the efficacy of intense devotion in the place of formulism and vitalism, (c) the equality of all men in the eyes of God, (d) the rejection of occultism and other forms of hocus-pocus which gain currency and credit among simple religious folk, (e) the desirability of social harmony and religious tolerance (f) the practice of employing the common and familiar speech and idiom of the people in devotional compositions, (g) the indifference to show and ceremony while performing religious austerities. These beliefs strengthened the ancient faith and saved it from corrupting influences of time. It also brought about in an imperceptible way a fusion of the social ethics

14 Darshak, Apno Varaso ana Vaibhav, p. 33.
of the Hindu and Muslim communities and promoted the feeling of common brotherhood.

Darakh has also subtracted from the ancient inheritance of the quintessence of wisdom, that the beautiful is always concomitant and coeval with the good and the true; apart from the good and the true, the beautiful can have no separate existence.

When Vivekananda attained to the state of samadhi or profound meditation, the last stage of yoga, he was told by Sri Ramakrishna that all religious austerities are undertaken and all religious beatitude attained not for personal salvation but for the well-being and edification of humanity in general. This is the basic approach of religion in India.

Vivekananda discerned the truth of the admonition and resolved to carry out his Master's wishes. At the conference in Chicago he expounded the basic tenets of the Hindu religion, and said, 'My religion not only bids me tolerate and respect other creeds, but it affirms that all religions are based on truth realised by the spirit of man. It is a matter of pride for me that I belong to a nation that has given anchorage to several different religious faith.' He created in the West an awareness of and enthusiasm for the glorious heritage of Indian

15 Darakh, Triveni Tirth, p. 83
religious culture, but at the same time he was unremitting and tirelessly striving for the cleansing of the religious tradition in India and for the removal of superstition and ignorance. To his friends and followers in America he used to say that he had undertaken the long voyage to the West not so much to preach and propagate his religion as to bring succour and solace to the millions of poor and oppressed countrymen of his.16

About the emergence and spread of Gandhian ideology in the country there is difference of opinion among educationists and social activists. Some serious thinkers like Nanabhai Bhatt regarded Gandhism as a wholly natural outgrowth of the Indian ethos, and he believed that it was a sure panacea for the myriads of ills that afflict Indian society in our times. Some other critics denounced the ideals of socialism and equality as offshoots of a materialistic civilization which had no bearing upon social codes and conditions in India. It is often forgotten that socialism is an emotional attitude of mind rather than a political creed or economic doctrine. Nanabhai Bhatt observes that Gandhism is the most comprehensive approach to social problems in India because it includes the best elements of almost all systems of thought in the world,

16 Darshak, Trivani Tirtha, p. 109
and it is this catholicity of mind which characterizes the work and the views of Shri Darshak of Lok Bharati.

Some Limitations of the present work on the Educational Philosophy of Shri Darshak may now be set forth in order to avoid possible misconception regarding the aims and the scope of the research. At the outset it must be pointed out that the study is based upon personal interviews with Shri Darshak and with the staff and alumni of the Lok Bharati, and upon an analytical examination of his books and his writings in periodicals and other valuable literature, and finally upon personal observation of the educational activities carried on from day to day at the centre. The present study is limited to a critical examination of Darshak's philosophy of education as it is applied in the institutions founded by him at Sanasara and several other centres in the district. It is, however, intended in the body of the present research project to make apt suggestions and recommendations for a wider application of his philosophy of education in different parts of India. As such, the suitability or otherwise of a wider application has been considered in some detail with reference to the present social conditions and the prevalent modes of educational administration.

It must be admitted that the subject of the present thesis—The Educational Philosophy of Shri Darshak—encompasses many different disciplines and fields of activity. But the research
work is undertaken with the hope that the vision, the views and the work of this great man, this creative writer of great repute, this critic of our mores and mode of living, this innovative thinker and man of action, should be suitably acknowledged in the educational annals of the country.