CHAPTER - II

HISTORY OF EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT IN INDIA

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HISTORY OF EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT IN INDIA

Historical review in a particular area shows the continuity of thought as well as the ancient origin of various ideas. This is particularly true in Indian context, since contemporary Indian philosophers of Education have presented ancient wisdom in the form which is suitable to present conditions. They openly swear by the ancient scriptures and develop their ideas on its foundations. Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Dayananda, M.K.Gandhi, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radha krishnan have presented their ideas of education on the foundation of ancient Indian education thought. But the roots of the philosophy of Education of Jawaharlal Nehru and M.N.Roy may be traced to modern educational thought of the west. To understand Modern Indian educational thought it is necessary to understand the historical background of Indian educational system.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

The pivot of the whole educational system of ancient India was the teacher. He is called as acharya, guru, upadhyaya on the basis of their functions. According to manusmriti, the father (Janaka) and the teacher are called father (pita), but the father who imparts the sacred Vedas is superior to the father that gave birth, since the birth in spiritual learning is for a brahmana of eternal benefit, here and hereafter\textsuperscript{46}.

Manu says that acharya is ten times superior to an upadhyaya, the father is superior to a hundred acharyas, while the mother is thousand fold superior to the

\textsuperscript{46} Manu Smriti (M.S) ii. 146
father. According to Gautama, the Acharya is the highest among all gurus while according to some philosophy the mother is the highest.

According to Yajnavalkya Smriti, the mother is higher than the Acharya. The Dharma sastras define the acharya as one who performs the upanayana of the student and imparts the whole veda to him.

According to Manu smriti, the teacher, after performing Upanayana, teaches his pupil the rules about Sauca (bodily purity) acharya (rules of conduct in everyday life) the offering (of fuel stick) infire and Sandhya adoration.

Though the words Acharya, Guru, Upadhayaya are very often used as synonyms, ancient writers made a distinction between them. According to Manu Smriti, an Upadhaya is one who teaches to a student a portion of the Veda or the Vedangas (subsidiary lores of the veda) as ameans of his own livelihood and a Guru is one who performs the Samskaras and who maintains the child.

The word Guru is often used in the sense of any elderly person, male or female, who is entitled to respect. According to Vishnu Dharma Sastra the father, the mother and the acharya are the three highest Gurus of a person.

According to Manu Smriti, whoever confer on another the benefit of knowledge, whether great or small is the latters’ guru.

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47 Ibid ii 145
48 Gautama ii. 56
49 Yajnavalkya Smriti (Y.S) I. 35
50 Gautama I. 10, 11, Vasista Dhamo Sutra (V.D.S) III. 21 Manu Smriti ii. 140.
51 Ibid ii. 141
52 Vishnu Dharma Sutra (vis D.S) 32-1-2
53 Manu Smriti ii. 149
All these praises of the Guru by the Dharma sastras show that they held knowledge as the highest value and insisted upon the sense of gratitude in everyone who acquired knowledge.

Modern western philosophy of Education, makes the Educand, rather the Educator the pivot of Education and it has its advantages. In fact both these extremes are unjust. In a just system of Education both the Educator and Educand should be given due importance.

**The Educator**

The Dharma sastras have insisted upon very high qualifications for being a teacher. They have warned about the dangers of entrusting the job of a teacher to persons not worthy of it.

According to Apastamba dharma sastra be whom a teacher, devoid of learning, initiates or enters from darkness into darkness and he also (An acarya) who is himself unlearned enters into darkness\(^{54}\).

The teacher had to be a brahmana, learned in Vedas, knowing Dharma, pure, coming from good family and having an ideal character.

In Education system also the Dharma Sastras have insisted upon the varna hierarchy. It has been generally maintained that Brahmana should be the teacher.

According to Vayupurana, as to the acharya in upanayana must be a brahmana. As to the study of Veda one should ordinarily learn the Veda from a Brahmana teacher.

\(^{54}\) Apastamba Dharma Sutra I 1.1.11
When a Brahmana is not available one may learn the Veda from Kshatriya or Vaisya teacher. The Mitakshara on Yajnavalkya smriti remarks that a Kshatriya or Vaisya should teach a Brahmana only when urged by him and not at his sweet will. Manu allowed only teaching to a Kshatriya, but did not allow him to make it a means of his livelihood. The early Indian Law-makers and social thinkers prescribed a social structure with definite division of labour and permitted only exceptions in certain cases. This rigidity had obviously resulted in so many disadvantages, but it also facilitate continuity, regularity and order in the social system.

**The student**

The method of teaching was generally oral. The boy was taught pranava, Vyartis and the Gayathri. Then the boy was to be taught other parts of the veda.

According to Manu Smriti, the student should sip water (achamana), before beginning vedic study. He should face the North, should fold both hands together and place them on his knee should wear light clothes, should at the beginning and end of vedic study clasp the feet of the teacher with crossed hands and should touch the right foot of the teacher with his own right hand and left foot with the left hand, should repeat “Om” at the beginning of the Vedic study.

The study of the veda was the first duty of every twice born person (Dwija). According to Manu Smriti, all the vedas, together with upanishads, were to be learnt by every dwija.

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55 Manu Smriti-ii, 165
According to Yajnavalkya Smriti, it is veda alone that confers the highest bless upon Dwizas by enabling them to understand and perform sacrifices, austerities and auspicious acts (Samskaras).

In view of the vastness of the vedic knowledge and the limitations of human life, it was prescribed that one should study the Sakha of the veda, which his ancestors studied and should perform religious rites according to it.

According to chandogya upanishad the student had to serve the teacher by tending his cattle and have to beg for food and announce it to the teacher and to look after his sacred fires and to learn the veda only in the time that would be left after doing work for the guru.  

Both Manu Smriti and Yajnavalkya Smriti along with some other notable Dharma sastras, lay down the following rules for Brahmacharins. The student should speak the truth, bathe everyday, should not look at the Sun, should avoid honey, flesh perfumes, the wearing of flowers, sleeping by day, rubbing oil on the body, putting collyrium in the eyes, going in a cart, wearing shoes and holding an umbrella, love affairs, anger, covetousness, infatuation, vain discussions, playing on musical instruments, hot water baths, dancing, surging, gazing at woman or touching young woman, gambling, injury to animals, obscene or harsh talk and wine.

The Apasthamba Dharma Sutra contains similar rules of conduct. It says, the student should not bathe in water in a sportive manner, but should bathe in it motionless like a stick. It also says, the student was not to laugh, but if he could not help laughing he should do so covering his face with his hands.

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56 Chandogya IV 4.5 3.5 VII 15.1
57 A.D.S. I, 1.3.11 – 23:1, 1.2.28-30, I 2.5.26
According to Gautama and Baudhayana Dharma Sutra, the student is to serve his teacher by following after him when he goes anywhere. He should help the teacher in his bath and should shampoo his body and take food left by him (vecista). He was not to clear loudly his throat nor to laugh, yawn or crack the knuckles. He should always occupy a seat lower than that of his teacher and should go to sleep after his teacher and rise before him. Similar rules have been prescribed by other Dharma Sastras.\(^{58}\) According to Manu Smrithi a pupil should not mimic the gait, the manner of speech and the actions of the teacher\(^{59}\). It calls upon the pupil to close his hands or fingers or to have the place where somebody indulges in calumnies about the teacher or points out the faults in him and states that if the pupil himself finds with his teacher or calumniates him, the pupil in the next life is born as an ass or a dog\(^{60}\).

One of the rules for the student was that he was not to pronounce the name of his teacher even when the teacher was not present without prefixing or affixing an honorific addition such as Sri Bhatta, acharya etc. The student should not speak of his teacher, the teachers son or wife or of a man who has been initiated for Sranta sacrifice by their bare names. According to Apasthamba Dharma sutra, even after returning home a snataka should avoid touching his former teacher with his fingers to call his attention.

We also find very detailed rules about rising from one’s seat to receive a person, abhivadana or saluting a man, upasamgrahana or saluting by clasping the feet of the teacher or another, with one’s hands; pratyahhivandana or returning a salutation and namaskara or bowing with the word namah.

\(^{58}\) M.S. 11, 194-198, ADS.I 2.6.26, Gautama ii – 20-21

\(^{59}\) M.S ii 200-201

\(^{60}\) Ibid
**Teacher and the taught**

The Educational relationship was a two way relationship. It was reciprocal. According to Apasthamba Dharma Sutra, “Loving him like his own son and full of attention, he shall teach him the sacred science, without hiding anything in the whole law. And he shall not use him for his own purposes to the detriment of his studies; except in times of distress. A teacher, who neglects the instruction (of his pupil) does no (longer) remain a teacher”.

The purport of Education was the moral and intellectual growth of the students. Moral culture not only preceded intellectual culture, but was the weightier of the two; A Brahmana, who completely governs himself though he knows the Savitri only is better than he who knows the three vedas (but) does not control himself.

It seems education is limited to certain section of society. The varnas other than the Brahmins and women were not having proper access to education. About education of these sections, proper material is not available. The entire education system was entrusted to Brahmanas. Summing up the state of Education in the Dharma Sastras. P.V.Kana writes. “The salient features of the educational system outlined in the Dharma Sastra works are the high and honourable position assigned to the teacher, the close personal contact of the pupil with the teacher and individual attention, the pupil’s stay with the teacher as a member of his family oral instruction and the absence of books, stern discipline and control of emotions and the will, cheapness as no fees were stipulated for.”

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61 A.D.S I, 2.8.25-28
62 M.S.II 118
63 Kana P.V. History of Dharma Sastras (Pune Bhandarkar) Oriental Research Institute 1941
Educational system of ancient India can be favourably compared with any other system of the west, ancient or modern. The importance given to character and scholarship of the teacher is noteworthy and admirable. At the same time it has certain drawbacks. P.V.Kana admitted.

“The defects of the Indian system were that it was too literary, there was too much memorizing, boys under it had hardly any instruction in useful manual arts and crafts, the studies were not brought in contact with practical life. The discipline was rigorous and joyless. Many of these defects were due to the exigencies of the caste system which assigned particular avocations to particular castes”.  

Further he rightly adds, “we cannot and should not compare the system with the systems of education, prevalent in the 20th century, when several subjects such as literature, music and fine arts, handicrafts, mathematics, science, history and geography are taught in the schools to all boys and when it has been recognized that education is a prime concern of the state”.

MEDIEVAL INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

During the Medieval period large parts of India, were ruled by Muslims. Its influence was comparatively more in the North than the South. The scheme of Muslim Education, flourished for a period of five hundred years till the British introduced their own system.

Muslim rulers took interest in the propagation of education, suice it is appreciated in the Muslim scriptures. The rulers provided aid to schools called as
Maktabs and Madarassas. The small schools (Maktabs) were regularly given financial aid. For bigger institutions Madarassas were granted landed property. For permanent financial provision most of the schools were connected with Mosques. Therefore, the institutions were mainly meant for Muslim students.

**The Media**

The media of education was Arabic and Persian, urdu as medium developed slowly later. It developed first in courts and then later in educational institutions. In the territories which are ruled by Muslims, the Hindus also used to learn Persian and Arabic to secure employment in the government.

Like the education in ancient period, the education in the Muslim period was also influenced by religion. The concept of secular education came to India only after the advent of the British. Till then in the Hindu Kingdoms the education based on Hindu scriptures was taught. In the Muslim kingdoms education was based on Khuran.

In Maktabs the first aim of education was to instill the basic tenets of Islam among the students. The students were required to memorize Khuran. The Maktabs and Madarssas were instrumental for the propagation of Islamic ideas and Islamic way of life.

**Two aims of Education**

The Medieval philosophy of Education has two aims. One of propagation of the fundamental tenets and teachings of religion and the other to make the students practically successful indifferent vocations. The Educational institutions, therefore, used
to teach various arts and skills, such as sculptures, Agriculture, medicine, painting house building and various types of crafts.

Military Science was also an important part of curriculum everywhere since wars were usual phenomena. Thus education prepared for earning livelihood. Followers of different religions were instructed in the teachings of their own religion.

We also find religious tolerance. While some muslim kings did try to propagate only Islamic teachings, through education, some Muslim kings gave generous grants to Hindu pathasalas also. Thus in line with ancient Indian philosophy of Education, medieval Indian philosophy of Education exhibited trends of humanism, pragmatism, pluralism and democratic values.  

In medieval times thousands of Madarassas provided education in literature, mathematics, philosophy and medicine. The bigger institutions had huge libraries attached to them. Such institutions were established by Mahmood Gawan of Bidar. During the reign of Feroz, Jaunpur was prominent centre of Muslim Education. Similarly Delhi also had the famous Nasaris Madarassa.

**The Syllabi and method of teaching**

The syllabi in these institutions included literature grammar, logic, philosophy, mathematics, law astrology, history, geography, agriculture, medicine etc. The medium of instruction was either Sanskrit or in regional language in the Hindu institutions and Arabic and Parasi in muslim institutions. Religious scriptures formed an important part of syllabi in the institutions of both Hindus and Muslims.

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66 Indian Philosophy of Education. P.27
The Method of Teaching

The method of teaching placed special emphasis on memorization, in addition to reading and writing. The students respected their teachers and had absolute faith in them. The teachers had a paternal attitude towards their wards. This was particularly important and necessary because many of the institutions were residential. The salary was not high. To some extent it was supplemented by gifts. There used to be high discipline, through the implementation of method of reward and punishment. The scholars were highly respected in both the Hindu and Muslim Schools.

Thus the medieval Indian philosophy of education was built by both the communities, Hindus and Muslims. Sarojini Naidu rightly observed “The impact of the Muslims and the Hindus has evolved the present Indian culture. We cannot even if we are foolish ever to try untwist this closely inter-twisted and inter turn unity of culture that makes modern India.”

MODERN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Modern Indian philosophy of Education started under the British rule. After firmly establishing themselves as rulers of India the British recruited Indians, who are trained in the Educational pattern of their model.

As the Indians Educated in Hindu or Muslim institutions were not useful for working in the offices of the British government, Lord Macaulay drew up a plan of Western oriented Education in India. The policy developed on the basis of Macaulays’ educational views gave primacy to the propagation of European literature and science,

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67 Dr Sarojini Naidu – The Bombay Chronicle quoted from K.S.Vakil and S.Natarajan's Education in India 1966. P. 42
suspension of scholarships for students, neglect of publication of Eastern literature and encouragement to propagation of English literature. Lord Benting accepted this policy.

When Lord Auckland succeeded Macanlay as India’s Governor general, some critics of Macanlay’s policy presented a memorandum to him. Lord Auckland increased the educational grant for the orientalists, increased scholarships and made arrangements for the publication of oriental works.

However, East India Company, employed only those who received English Education. A significant change in the field of Education was its intimate link with livelihood. Domestic hand crafts were neglected and many artisans and craftsmen sought employment in British Factories.

Professional and vocational institutions were started to provide education in medicine, Engineering, law and other specialized areas. In 1853 the British parliament reviewed company’s charter and the select Committee, declared that English Education in India was useful. Charles wood published his declaration regarding education on 19th July, 1853. This declaration considered providing education as the foremost duty of the government. However along with the study of Western language and literature, the study of oriental literature was also given due place in the new curriculum. Both English and Indian languages were accepted as the medium of instruction.

**Education During 1857-1947**

After the war of Independence in 1857 the reigns of India’s administration passed in to the hands of British parliament. Woods dispatch had removed the monopoly of Christian missionaries over Education in India. Lord Rippon, the Vice Roy appointed Hunter Commission to survey Education in India. The commission –
surveyed primary, secondary, higher, religious and women Education in India and made important recommendations. Some of its recommendations were as follows:

1. Provision in Education must be made for Muslims Harijans, tribals, hill people and members of Royal families.
2. Indian Institutions should be provided aid.
3. Scholarships must be provided to local institutions.
4. The responsibility for higher education should be entrusted to local people and the government should provide aid.
5. The Education department should run institutions of higher learning in the country.
6. There should be complete freedom for religious education.

**UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION 1902**

Besides Hunters Commission, another important Land Mark in the history of Modern Indian –Education, was universities commission. Some of its important recommendations are:

1. New Universities should not be established.
2. The Constitution of Universities should be changed to make provisions for teaching in the universities.
3. Under graduate and post graduate colleges should be introduced.
4. Conditions for recognising colleges should be stern.
5. The Syndicates should have from 9 to 15 members.
6. The standard of Metric Examination should be improved.
THE INDIAN UNIVERSITIES ACT 1904

The Indian Universities Act of 1904 was formulated on the basis of these recommendations. Lord Curzon made significant efforts for the progress of higher education in India. However, in the Calcutta session of Indian National Congress in 1906, a demand was raised for a nationalist policy of Education. It asked for Indian control of the Educational system. It asked for more Vocational Education. It denounced imitation of the west, though it appreciated Western knowledge and science. The government did not give much importance to these demands.

This denial gave scope for emergence of National spirit and starting of Institutions like Santiniketan, Gurukul, Kangri, Jamia Milia Islamia, Guzarat Vidyapith, Kashi Vidyapith, the women’s university (SNDT) etc. These institutions had a distinctly national character.

In 1912 the government announced its Educational policy. It proposed, making primary education village oriented. Government aided institutions were replaced by institutions managed by local bodies. The School Education was separated from Higher Education.

SADLER COMMISSION

After the First World War, the government appointed Calcutta University Commission. It is also known as Sadler Commission. Its report was formulated on the basis of Halden’s report on London University. On the basis of this report, universities were opened in Mysore, Patna, Banaras, Aligarh, Dacca, Lucknow, Hyderabad and Calcutta.
SOME OTHER COMMITTEES

In 1929 Hertog Committee reviewed Education in India. It analysed the problem of failing candidates in Secondary Education. It also made recommendations for the betterment of female education in India. In 1934 Sapru Committee reviewed the problem of unemployment in U.P and suggested introduction of vocational subjects at the Secondary level. In 1936-37 Abbotwood presented their recommendations for polytechnic institutions in the country.

On October 2, 1937 M.K.Gandhi presented his 7 years basic primary Education Scheme. It was formulated by Wardha Committee under the Chairmanship of Zakir Hussain and it was organized and implemented by Hindustani Talimi Sangh.

Sargent Commission, 1944 recommended for distinction between academic and technical institutions, though both should aim at integral education.

Indian Education after Independence

The British control over Education ended with the attainment of Freedom of India. On 15th August, 1947 with it also ended the period of modern Indian Education as distinguished from contemporary period.

The British system of Education initiated Western Influence of Education in India. India is exposed to modern political and Social ideas and to Western Science. It gave scope for the rise of eminent Scientists from India also who contributed much to world science. J.C.Bose, Ramanujan, C.V.Raman is some such examples.

It inspired literary and cultural consciousness and developed National spirit though the aim of the British was to see that it serves their colonial interests and the
spread of their cultural and religious ideas. So it was felt that inspite of all the enquiries and commissions and their recommendations, their educational philosophy were aimed at serving their imperial interests.

**Contemporary philosophy of Education**

Due to the above mentioned defects in the Educational policy of the British, Indian thinkers and educationists criticized it. All the thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo Swami Dayananda, M.K.Gandhi, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Dr. S.Radhakrishnan, Jawaharlal Nehru, M.N.Roy criticized the policy. Both the traditionalists and modernists were equally critical of this policy. They felt it was against the National Interests of India. They could visualize that its aims and means were against national interest. So even before Independence these thinkers criticized the British policy in Education and its underlying philosophy and presented different and alternative philosophies. The reformist thinkers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Anniebesant, M.G.Ranade and others asked for reforms in Education. They wanted a new National policy in Education.

**The Traditional and Western Oriented Thinkers**

We find mainly two types of approaches in Modern Indian philosophy of Education. While Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Dayananda M.K.Gandhi, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Dr. S.Radhakrishnan drew inspiration from ancient Indian philosophy of Education, J.L.Nehru and M.N.Roy were inspired by the Western philosophy of Education. Excluding Nehru and M.N.Roy, other thinkers whom we may consider as traditional group can be identified with the following characteristics.
1) **Neo-Vedanta**

Like ancient philosophers they drew inspiration from Vedanta philosophy. They interpreted vedanta in the light of new knowledge. It is generally called as Neo-vedanta. It synthesizes religion and science, ancient Indian wisdom and modern western thought.

According to Neo-Vedanto, the vedas Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita are the true representatives of Indian culture and wisdom. It accepts the educational thought found in these scriptures, suggesting modifications, suitable to present conditions. Thus, it is not revivalist but reformist in approach. It shows a return to self analysis and self-evaluation by Indian’s foremost thinkers.

These thinkers were inspired by Nationalism and the ideal of Swadesi and Swadharma on the one hand and world brotherhood and Internationalism on the other. We cannot consider their thinking as conservative, narrow or reactionary. “They presented philosophy of Education founded upon man’s status in the cosmos and human nature. All of them visualized a religion of humanity to form the basis of National Scheme of Education”.  

2) **Integral approach**

We find integral approach in almost every field of Education, the aims, the means, the curriculum, the Teacher-student relationship, teaching methods, school administration etc. Integral approach, insists upon including every element with in the whole, serving welfare of every constituent of the group.

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68 Indian Philosophy of Education. P.34
3) **Integral Psychology**

In Indian tradition, Human nature has always been explained interims of the higher and not in terms of the lower urges, as it has been in the west. Indian psychology has been idealistic in natured and it is closely linked with religion and metaphysics. However they never neglected the needs of the physical world and laid emphasis on all types of Education.

4) **Synthesis of Idealism and pragmatism**

The contemporary Indian philosophy of education is a harmonious blend of Vedanta philosophy and pragmatism. They wanted Educational system should be diversified serving all sections of society.

They suggested, there is need for Art Education, Technical education, Vocational Education, Education in liberal arts, oriental Education etc. The common points in their thought is:-

1) Mother tongue as the medium for primary education.

2) Development of Hindi as the Lingua Franca.

3) English also as a medium at Higher stages as it is a window to Western technology and values.

4) Need for National system of Education.

These are some of the Ideas where they had a common view point. But all of them presented original ideas in many fields of Education, which we see in the subsequent chapters. Their ideas are summed up in the concluding chapter.
Besides these thinkers we have another group of thinkers like Jawaharlal Nehru and M.N.Roy. These two thinkers, who are well versed in Western, scientific, analytical, thought, founded their theories on naturalistic Humanism, which is different from Religious Humanism. Their Educational ideas form a part of their general, social and political theory. Their ideas also constitute an important segment and a stream, which also constitute an equally, influential and decisive theory in the broad spectrum of modern Indian Educational Policy. All the different approaches and ideas, have enriched the Indian Educational system, which is now considered as one of the best systems of the world and it has made India (Inspite of some evident draw backs) a knowledge society.