



# The system of education during the Vedic era

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## Abstract:

During the Vedic age, the teacher-taught connection was particularly amicable, similar to the father-son relationship. The educational history of India is split into various eras, each with its unique educational system. These eras cover ancient, medieval, and modern Indian history, including the post-independence era. The Vedas served as the foundation for ancient Indian education and philosophy. Veda denotes knowledge. During this age, education was split into two types of knowledge: worldly and otherworldly.

This worldly education focused on social aspects, while the other emphasized intellectual efforts for salvation. Vedic education aimed to enhance physical, moral, and intellectual qualities, emphasizing the importance of attention, focus, and Yoga for salvation. The Vedic system of education provided pupils with a free education and excellent living standards.

**Keywords:** Chronological restrictions, worldly education, salvation, exemplary life, etc.

## I.INTRODUCTION:

The educational system during the Vedic era. The Vedic education system originated in ancient India. The Vedic Educational System refers to an old system of education that was passed down via the Vedas. Vedas have a significant role in Indian life. The Vedas, which are four in number (Rig-Veda, Samveda, Yajurveda, and Athareveda), serve as the foundation for Indian civilization. Scholars have split the Vedic education era into Rigveda, Brahmin, Upanishada, Sutra (Hymn), and Smriti periods. However, the purposes and values of education remained consistent throughout. For this reason, the Vedic period is used to study the education of these eras. "Vidwan Sarvatra, Pujyate, Swadesh Pujyate Raja" The importance of education in India is demonstrated by this verse, which is frequently used there. The Vedic era's educational system contains distinctive features and attributes that are not present in any other nation's ancient educational system.



According to Dr. F.E. Key, in order to accomplish their goal, Brahmins not only created an educational system that endured throughout the fall of empires and societal shifts, but they also maintained the flame of higher learning for thousands of years. According to Dr. P.N. Prabhu, "Education in ancient India was free from any external control like that of the state and government or any party politics." It was the king's responsibility to ensure that erudite pundits continued their education and carried out their job of disseminating knowledge free from any kind of interference.

The education system that prevailed during the Vedic times has some unique characteristics.

Education was confined to the upper castes, and to those who were BRAHMACHARIS. In Indian tradition, a person's life cycle is divided into four stages of which BRAHMACHARI is the second phase. This is the time set aside for learning and acquiring skills. During Vedic period, most of the upper castes, which were either Brahmins or Kshatriyas had their education in a unique system called GURUKULAM, students had their education by living with their preceptors in forests far removed from cities, towns or villages. The life of students who were called SHISYAS was very rigorous and demanding. Those who failed to live up to these high standards would simply fall by the wayside. There were legendary acharyas like Sanandepani and Dronacharya who taught epic heroes like Krishna and Arjuna martial skills, but what makes the Vedic period unique is the existence of gurus like Gautama and Jaimini who were founders of different schools of Indian philosophy like Nyaya and Purva Mimamsa. This was a period of intense intellectual activity and speculation, which we hardly find even now. There were two types of Brahmacharis who attended such Gurukulams they were; Upakurvana Brahmachari who remains a student for a limited time period after which he marries and becomes a household and Naishtika Brahmachari who remains a student and celibate throughout life dedicated to the pursuit of learning.

## II. SYSTEM OF EDUCATION:

The public's desire for education was not as strong in the beginning. The dominant educational system was very different from what it is now. Somewhere in the distant past, a group of selfless, committed people turned their woodland houses into schools, away from the distractions and haunts of the material world, and worked only with single-minded devotees. These establishments were located in the tranquil setting of the forest and hills. Traditions and folklore were initially passed down to the next generation by priests or members of the Brahmanic elite. In the early Vedic schools instruction was confined to young Brahmanic and was regarded mainly as a preparation for their future vocation as priests. Learning was almost

monopolized by the Brahmins. They formed a very small section of the society. As time passed on, the other two castes, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, were also entitled to knowledge. In the initial stage of the Vedic Education Caste system had not assumed strict rigidity. Even they the Sutas in general were denied the privileges of studying the Holy Scriptures, with the passage of time, the aptitude or fitness of an individual to receive a particular kind of education was kept above all considerations of caste and status. But to give instruction was the exclusive privilege of the Brahmins. This marked the growing influence of the priesthood. During the period most of the

vocations that people in general followed did not require any learning, as such except the informal training that they received at home through observation and imitations. Therefore, the demand for education came from a limited section of the society. So there was no necessity of an elaborate organization of education.



## II. CURRICULUM:

The beginning of education was marked by the 'Upanayana' a ceremony which was generally performed at a prescribed age level. The age limit was varying from caste to caste. It was eight year, eleventh year and twelfth year, respectively for Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The studentship lasted usually for twelve Years. The then prevalent system of educations was not merely theoretical. It was related to the realities of life. Various branches of learning were incorporated in the curriculum. The subjects of teachings were Philosophy, Grammar, Astrology and Logic. In the teaching of languages, emphasis was laid on proper pronunciation and grammar. Along with theoretical aspect of the Curriculum, the practical aspects of education was given due importance. There was proper Co-ordination between the timed practical aspects of the curriculum. Through different subjects and attempt was made to make the student capable of experiencing the supreme truth himself and to would the society accordingly. The pupil's residence in teacher's house helped them to develop social contacts. It was considered as sacred duty on the part of the pupils to collect fuel-wood, supply water and do other household odd jobs for the teacher in this way the pupils were receiving instructions related to domestic life and also learning the concrete lesson of the dignity of labour and social service. Besides, the pupils of ancient Indian were receiving valuable training in the occupations of animal husbandry, agriculture, dairy farming etc. by grazing the Cows of the Guru and serving him in various ways. The students' life was considered as the laboratory for the educational experimentation. As the pupils were residing in the house of the Gurus. They were begging alms for their own subsistence and also for the preceptor. This practice of begging alms by the pupils was to inculcate in them noble sentiment of humanitarian virtues. The motive behind this system was to sublimate the unruly passions and ego in the pupils, which enabled them to face the realities of life and helped in social integrations. It was considered a concrete lesson in the cultivation of virtues of self help and the sense of gratitude and duty towards the society. In the curriculum religious instruction was given much importance and religion permeated the whole scene of educations. Though the curriculum in vogue was essentially spiritual and religious in character, yet it did not ignore the material aspect.

## IV. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:

It was a student-centered curriculum. Although there wasn't a single teaching strategy used, students would often recite something and then the teacher would explain it. In addition to debate, discussion, and question-and-answer sessions, storytelling was also used as necessary.

Although there was no classroom instruction, older students were assigned to instruct junior students under a monitorial system. Travel was regarded as necessary to giving finishing touch to education so the methods of teaching generally practiced during Vedic period were mainly

Mankik (oral) and other method was passed on Chinton/thinking and reflection. In the oral method the students were to memorize the mantras (Vedic Hymns) and Richayas (Versus of Rigveda) in order that there might not be changed wrongly and they might remain preserved in their original forms. Under the oral methods these prosodic were thoroughly taught on which Richayas happened to be based. Special emphasis was laid on the various lines of a particular verse, their pronunciation and meanings. In this oral method correct pronunciation was specially emphasized. For this instruction in grammar and pronunciation was compulsory for all. Thinking method was another part of the teaching method. Through this an attempt was made to preserve the Veda mantras (Vedic Hymns) and Richayas (Vedic Verses). Manan was higher method of teaching than thinking. Through Manan the meaning of Vedic mantras the meanings of Vedic Mantras were developed and preserved in one's own mind. This method



was used to encourage the highly intelligent students by guiding them to make research, similarly in ancient days, Manan (Reflection) was a method specially adopted for highly intelligent students.

## V. PUPIL-TEACHER RELATIONS:

There were teacher-run small schools. The students were living in the Gurus' home. The primary requirements for admittance to the Gurus' domestic schools were the students' unquestionable behaviour and moral fitness. The established disciplinary guidelines tightly governed their way of life. A relatively small number of students were being accepted by the teacher. The students were very polite and submissive in their behavior and held in high esteem. To obey the teacher was their duty the teacher had also tremendous sympathy and love for the students. The chief aim of the teacher was all round development of the personality of the students. The teacher was also commanding great respect in the society. He was honored and respect at all places. Starting from the kings and emperors to the most primitive tribes in the hills, all were paying great tribute to the teacher. Therefore, in the past the teacher-taught relationship was very cordial and intimate. The teacher was regarded as the main source of inspiration for the student. He was a model before the students. He was the symbol of purity. The teacher was also under obligation to fulfill his duty towards the pupil. Not only he loved the pupils as his own children but also he was giving full attention on the teaching. The teachers were discharging their duties and responsibilities exclusively with selfless and single-minded devotion.

## VI. CONCLUSION:

Education had a significant role in society throughout the Vedic age. It was seen as religious and significant to society. Everyone needed education in order to become civilised. During the Vedic and post-Vedic periods, the relationship between the Guru and the students was exceedingly friendly. Efforts were made to instill Sundaram and Satyam Shivan in the kids through schooling.

During that time, self-study Swadhyaya was valued more than the Veda in the educational system. Women's education was encouraged throughout the Vedic era. Even without the aid of writing skills, the traditional Indian educational system was effective in maintaining and disseminating its culture and literature. The literature was lost only as a result of invaders destroying monasteries and temples. The effective preservation and dissemination of culture is what has allowed the huge subcontinent to maintain its cultural coherence to this day. Social ideals and a sense of responsibility were ingrained in the educational system. The goals of the antiquated educational system were fully realised.

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