

**A STUDY ON THE FORMAL EDUCATION
SYSTEM IN ANCIENT INDIA WITH REFERENCE TO
VEDIC AND BUDDHIST PERIOD AND ITS
RELEVANCE TODAY**

ABSTRACT

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE ASSAM UNIVERSITY IN
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The present dissertation paper consists of seven chapters. The first chapter is the introductory chapter and it is divided into four parts. The first part is entitled as 'A brief discussion of Education System in the *Samhitā* Period'. This part gives us the general idea about the education system in the *Samhitās* period. The *Samhitā* reveals us the two types of educational methods. The first was the age of creation when the *Rṣis* produced the hymns. The second was the stage of preservation in the form of the *Samhitās*. The first age presented the *Rṣis* who were seers of truth. It is believed that these Sages, by virtue of their '*Tapas*' knew about the past present and future. They acquired knowledge through '*Samādhi*'. The Saints dwelling in the forests attained Eternal Bliss and acquired spiritual knowledge by virtue of *Tapas*.

When through the *Tapas*, the highest knowledge was acquired then they spread this knowledge to his pupils. Every *Rṣi*, would impart his knowledge, which he had personally acquired. Every pupil acquired this knowledge according to his individual capacity. So we find that *Samhitā* does not deal with the ordinary secular knowledge. They did not like to acquire knowledge of physical science, arts and crafts etc. Their main aim was the realization of '*Parambrahmajñāna*' the ultimate truth.

The second part of the first chapter is prepared on the discussion about the education system in Brahmanic period. The education of the Brahmanic period was more systematic than the *Samhitā* period. During the period several *Śākhās*, *Charaṇas*, *Pariṣats*, *kulas* and *Gotras* were developed for the propagation of education. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* refers that during that age *Svādhyāya* as a method of studying the *Vedas* was developed for attaining *Brahmavarchas*. Yet the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the *Aitareya Upaniṣat*, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat* and the *Bṛhadārānyaka Upaniṣat* insist upon *Upanayana* as a mark of formal pupilage in that period. But instruction without the formal pupilage was also in vogue.

Normally the studentship was started after the *Upanayana* ceremony. The period of studentship was twelve

years in general case. Tending fire, cattle and studying at fixed hours were duties of pupils. But the acquisition of higher education did not end with the termination of formal pupilage. Pursuit of knowledge was a lifelong process. A student can continue his education throughout his life time.

During the age the teacher's duties were more specified. From the heart and soul the teacher teaches his student. The studentship was open for the first three higher castes. But teaching was no more a prerogative of the *Brāhmin*. Some *Ḳsatriyas* King also acquired fame as teachers, whom *Brāhmin* also approached for the highest knowledge. Women also enjoyed educational right and acquired fame for learning.

As regard the courses of study the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* mentions that the courses of study were more numerous than they had been in *Samhitā* period. The Vedic literature comprising the *mantra*, the *Brāhmaṇa*, the *Āraṇyaka*, the *Upaniṣats* and the *Vedāṅgas* formed the chief subjects of instruction and essential part of education. Besides this, the other subjects like *Anuśāsana*, *Vidyā*, *Vākovākyam*, *Itihāsa- Purāṇa*, *Nārāśamsī*, *Gāthās*, *Ākhyāna*, *Anvākhyāna*, *Anuvyākhyāna*, and *Vyākhyāna* were also included in the curriculum. In spite of varied subjects, the supremacy of *Parā Vidyā* was insisted upon. The methods of study now become more scientific. Doubts had to be cleared by question, cross question and answer. The three stages of *Śravaṇa*, *Manan*, *Nididhyāsana* were the basic pedagogic principles.

During this age three types of educational institution were firmly developed - 1) the home of the teacher. 2) Debating circles or *Parīṣats*

c) Conferences of learned men (very often convened and patronized by kings). But besides these, the *Kuru-Pāñcāla*, *Kosala*, *Videha* also became famous Centres of learning in that period. Sylvan schools also began to develop in this era.

No doubt in the Brahmanic period, the *Parā Vidyā* was held supreme and the *Brāhmin* got preference but the education of other castes began in right earnest. Their education was determined mainly by occupation. So we find that Brahmanic education was more comprehensive than that of *Samhitā* period because it was closely connected with the every aspect of life.

In the third part of the first chapter we have the discussion about the educational system in Epic age. In ancient India, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* were the two main epics. These two epics have mainly interested in the realm of action not in the thought. But the study of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* gives us very clear idea of the highly developed education system of that age. For instance, there are references to principles underlying different *Varṇas* and *Āśramas*, definition of ideal studentship and hermitage as well as Centres of learning and education of the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Kṣatriya* youths and Princes.

During the age, Vocational and Professional educations received special emphasis. Each caste had its separate vocation or occupation. But the education of the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Kṣatriyas* was highly organised. The hermitage education system was popular during those days. In one hermitage there were several departments. This departmental education system shows that during the

age the courses of study were become numerous and variegated. Eligibility for education was now according to strict condition. But now situation was something changed. Some students lived with his preceptor and some student under the appointed private teacher after the *Upanayana* ceremony. During the age the methods of study were varied from class to class. But recitation and recapitulation were still very popular. The education of women was still extensive but we find divergent views regarding the education of Women. *Śudras* had no right to be invested with the sacred thread. So there were many doubts regarding *Śudra's* right to education in the society. There were many obstacles and restrictions regarding *Śudras* right to education during those days. Thus, variegated development of education was the contribution of the Epic age.

In the fourth part of the first chapter we have the discussion about the education in Puranic age. In the Puranic period all the educational rules and regulations as same as the above mentioned period. Through the initiation ceremony, the student started his educational career. When the student is initiated with the sacred thread, he must reside in the house of his preceptor and study the *Vedas* with a concentrated mind. He must be possessed of pure mind and with the performance of religious rites acquire the knowledge of the *Vedas*.

The disciple used to obey all the order of the preceptor. If he disobeys the order of the preceptor then he may be punished. The student accepted the punishment without any hesitation. Society paid high respect and honour to the

learned teachers. By this time two types of teachers were recognized by the society viz. 1) *Dikṣā Guru* and 2) *Śikṣā Guru*.

While narrating the courses of the various subjects, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* gives us detailed syllabus of various subjects. The four *Vedas*, the six *angas* of the *Vedas*, *Dharmaśāstra*, *Āyurveda*, *Dhanurveda*, *Gandharvaveda*, *Arthaśāstra* are the main courses of studies. Besides this reading, writing, counting, storytelling, drawing, and singing are also included in the curriculum. As regard the Methods of study of the *Purāṇas*, there were no perceptible changes. The old intensive rule was still in the general rule. But during the age Verbal products was also popular. People used *Bojapatra*, the bark of trees in writing purposes.

The Women and *Śūdras* received special attention during the age. Women were called *Brahmavādinīs* and *Sadyavadus*. Even married women can able to become *Brahmavādinī* during the age.

The second chapter prepared on the detailed account of the educational rituals of Vedic and Buddhist period. The rituals were nothing additional to education. The process of education was a process of well defined rituals one after another. So in ancient period some educational *Samskāras* were developed. The first educational *Samskāra* of pupil's life was the *Vidyārambha Samskāra*. From this *Samskāra*, a child started to receive education. In the fifth or seventh year of a Child, the *Vidyārambha Samskāra* was performed. The auspicious day of *Uttarāyana* (*Mārgaśīrsa* to *Jyeṣṭha*) was selected for the performance of this *Samskāra*. All the *Vedas*, the *Gṛhyasūtras*, the

Dharmasūtras and the early *Smṛtis* do not mention this *Samśkāra*. But in the *Mārkeṇḍeya Purāna* and the later *Smṛtis* mention *Vidyārambha Samśkāra*. P.V.Kane wrote that in *Kalidasa's Raghuvaṃśa*, *Kautilya's Arthaśāstra* and the *Bhavabhuti's Uttararāmacarita* give little bit information about the *Vidyārambha Samśkāra*.

Upanayana was the second educational *saṃskāra* in ancient period. The *Upanayana Samśkāra* marks the beginning of Secondary education. Its origin was pre historic. All the *Śāstras* describe the *Upanayana Samśkāra* in their own way. In the *Ṛgveda*, we do not find any explicit reference of *Upanayana*. But the significance of *Upanayana* ceremony was most beautifully set forth in the *Atharvaveda*. The whole *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* also gives a graphic picture of the initiated students. The *Sūtras* also gives us exhaustive information about the rite of the *Upanayana Samśkāra*. *Gṛhyasūtra* minutely describe all the rules and regulations of the *Upanayana Samśkāra*.

Samāvartana was the third educational *saṃskāra* in ancient period. This ceremony marked the termination of the formal education life. Like the *Upanayana* ceremony, the *Samāvartana* ceremony is also go back hoary antiquity. All the authorities basically the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Upaniṣats*, the *Sūtras* and the *Smṛtis* elaborately describe the Convocation ceremony. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Taittirīya Upaniṣat* describe the teacher's farewell addressed to the Students. In most of the case *Samāvartana* ceremony was performed to the age of twenty-four but upper age limit was forty-eight years. Three upper *varṇas* of student viz. the *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya* and *Vaiśyas*

were eligible for the *Samāvartana* ceremony. The *Samāvartana* ceremony was performed in a very simple way. After the permission of his teacher, a student was allowed to perform the *Samāvartana* ceremony. On the Scheduled date, the *Snātaka* had to confine himself indoors till midday. Then the student renounced his girdle and dress and bathed in scented water. Richly dressed, the student offered *Guru-Dakṣinā* and prayed that they might be liked by all. The teacher made a speech, the essence of which was “Speak the truth. Do not neglect duty. Do not neglect what is good. And above all repay the three debts”.

After this the teacher defined the responsibilities of the student. Then he verbally certified the proficiency of the student and presented him before the learned *Pandits*.

Besides this the student were also performed some other rituals, like *Upākarma* or *Śrāvaṇī* ritual and *Utsarjana* ritual during the *Brahmacarya* period.

The Buddhist period was also characterized by some educational rituals. The Buddhist educational rituals are *Pabbaja* (initial ordination) and *Upasampadā* (final ordination). These were the main educational rituals in Buddhist period. The *Pravrajyā* or going forth were the pre-paratory ordination for education in Buddhist system of education. It was equivalent to *Upanayana* ceremony. The candidates, those who performed the *Pabbaja* ceremony, had to leave all the visible marks of his previous life when he was admitted in to the order. It was the first step of “going forth” for the ultimate

“going out of his Worldliness”. Caste distinction did not come in the way of Buddhist Order. All the *Varnas* equally perform the *Pabbaja* ceremony and enter in to the Order. In the eighth year, a child was performed the *Pabbaja* ceremony.

After the *Pabbaja* a Monk was performed the *Upasampadā* ceremony. It was equivalent to *Samāvartana* ceremony. But the philosophies behind the *Samāvartana* and *Upasampadā* were however different. The former was termination of formal education for entry in to the second cycle of *Chatūrāsram* i.e. family life, while the later was the termination of formal education for admission in to the Order as a full fledged Monk. The Brahmanical education adduces the example of lifelong *Brahmacāri* (*Nasiṭhiksa*); but they are few and far between. A person between fifteen and twenty years of age could perform the final ordination or *Upasampadā*. The Buddhist Monastery was open to all courses and not merely to the three twice born. The *Upasampadā* was performed before the entire *Samgha*. An individual teacher presented the student before the house and prayed for *Upasampadā*. The student himself announced absolute submission to the Order. He had to face a volley of questions. The house gave a verdict and the eligible candidate was declared a graduate. In this way the Buddhist *Upasampadā* or final ordination was completed.

The third chapter is an attempt to know about the educational centres in ancient India. In this chapter we discuss how gradually the educational centres were developed during the Vedic and Buddhist Period.

In the Vedic age *Gurukula* was the basic institution of learning. Each *Gurukula* was self sufficient and independent. These *Gurukula* were existed in forest and some of them in the villages. During the Vedic period some *Śākhā*, *Charaṇa*, *Gotras*, *Pariṣats* were also developed for the propagation of learning.

The *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣat* mentions that the *Pariṣats* is a very important seat of learning in that period. *Pāñcāla Pariṣat* is one of the famous *Pariṣat* in the ancient India. King *Janaka* developed this *Pariṣat* for the propagation of learning.

The *Pariṣats* were the association of teachers and students. The famous teacher attracted the students. Many advanced students regularly attend the *Pariṣats* like *Śvetaketu*. Slowly these *Pariṣats* were developed in to institution but not able to take any steps to organished public educational institution. The Buddhist first developed organished educational institution. But in the first half of the Buddhism, they do not have any ideal educational institutions. But gradually some *Vihāras* and Monasteries were established for *Bhikṣus*. At first these *Vihāras* or Monasteries were used during the rainy season. In the rainy season, it was difficult for mendicants to travel out. But gradually these *Vihāras* become established as a centre of meditation. The primary purposes of these *Vihāras* were that, they should be placed of meditation for Buddhist monks. But after some centuries or after the death of *Buddha*, these Monasteries became transformed in to educational institution. Name of the some organished Buddhist monastic educational institutions are *Takṣaśilā*, *Nālandā Vihāra*, *Valabhī*, *Vikramśilā Mahāvihāra*, *Odantapuri Mahāvihāra*

and Jagaddala Mahāvihāra. Like that in ancient period the big sacred places like temples, hermitages began to function as an educational institution. The Epics gave full description of forest hermitages. Besides these, there were certain other educational Centres also developed in ancient age like *Chatuspathi* or *Tol*, *Agrahāra* (special colonies of learned *Brāhmaṇas*). Many of the Copperplate grants also show that capitals of prosperous kingdom used to attract men of learning and would thus naturally become a centre of education. So, the *Benares*, *Ujjayini*, *Mithilā* in India owes to a great extent their educational fame for their being its capitals.

The fourth chapter is an effort to examine the aims and objective of education in Vedic and Buddhist period. The aims and objectives of education in Vedic and Buddhist period were comprehensive or extensive. During those days the attention was focused for all round development for human being. That is why, it may be said that the importance was given all the more on religious education, acquisition of proper or absolute knowledge, development of personality and above all formation of character are the main aims of education in that period. But besides this, many other proximate aims like religious education, inculcation of civic and social duties, promotion of social efficiency and preservation of culture and heritage were also desired to be attained through education in ancient age.

The ancient Indian education is indicative of ancient culture and civilization. The Vedic teacher had long ago realized the importance of education. That is why, they passed the remark that ‘human beings without

knowledge are like an animal. With the attainment of proper knowledge a person becomes illuminated. The Vedic *R̥sis* imparted proper knowledge or education to their *Śiṣya*. There are many examples which point out that the acquisition of proper or absolute knowledge is the highest knowledge of mankind. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣat* mentions that, a *Brāhmaṇa*, after completion of education, wishes to stand with real strength but not with the knowledge of the books only.

This tradition continued till the Buddhist period. After getting the admission, every novice tries to pursue the proper knowledge or Absolute knowledge. In the first half of his student life, he becomes the master of all arts and sciences, but after that he used to live apart from his teacher. He used to live in forests because his ultimate aim was the attainment of ultimate wisdom. So in ancient period, people believe that without the real knowledge everything is like dry wood or ashes.

Character building was the main objective of education in ancient India. Ancient teachers were aware of the natural tendency and wanted to point out that character was more important than learning. Without the formation of character learning is not possible. A man is judged by his character because the character of a person reveals whether he is noble or ignoble, brave or coward, pious or sinful. That is why, in ancient period the teacher imposed all the rules and regulations to his student life. He watches all the intellectual and moral progress of his student life. Under his supervision every day, the students get up early in the morning. Daily the students should beg alms for his teacher.

It was the most important part of student life. All these rules made the student very high in conduct and respectful in behaviour. Both Vedic and Buddhist education system maintained the same tradition.

Personality development is another most important aim of education in ancient period. Because depressed personality is not able to receive the actual truths of life. Both the Vedic and Buddhist system of education encouraged that the student's personality must be developed to receive proper education in his life. That is why they know that fostering of self respect, self reliance and self restraint developed the student's personality. These Self respect, self reliance and self restraint are the mother of all education. The early Vedic and Buddhist system of education fostered these basic principles.

The most potent influence of ancient Indian education was that of the religious tradition and customs. Religious ceremonies are there way of life. It has deeply saturated ancient peoples life. Some religious customs are so important for the people of ancient period that they sacrifice their life for them. Both the Vedic and Buddhist system of education are virtually influenced by the religion ceremonies.

In ancient India we find that teachers gradually belonged to Priestly class. They follow their religious traditions and customs. These teachers were very virtuous and religious. That is why, in the beginning of the educational career, a child had to perform religious ceremonies. Without the performance of religious ceremonies, the child was unable to receive education. The students had to perform all the religious ceremonies. After all the ceremonies

the student became a perfect member of the community. The Vedic and the Buddhist education system deeply influenced by the religious traditions and customs. Because they believe that by performance of religious ceremonies a man obtains happiness in the next world.

Knowledge of Social accountability is another most important aim of education in ancient India. Both the systems of education give stress that pupil must know his social duties and responsibilities. They suggest that after the completion of education, a student should not lead a self-Centered life. His education and wealth is not for his own self. As a responsible member of the society he constantly and efficiently do all his social services. This process continues from one generation to another .As a Son, a Husband and a Father; he had to perform his duties scrupulously and thoroughly. His wealth is not for his family but he must use his wealth in charitable works. In the time of Convocation ceremony the teacher also declares this specially. So the ancient education system promotes the social duties and responsibilities for the welfare of the society.

Another important aim of ancient Indian education was the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. Being a citizen every student should be aware of his culture and heritage. It is well recognized that the education is the chief mean of social and cultural continuity. The Vedic seers had special attention in this respect. That is why, in ancient period the teacher always teaches the new generation to preserve the culture and heritage.

From the aforesaid discussion, we may deduce that the aim and objectives of ancient India was very extensive. The attention was focused for all round development for human being. But the importance was also given all the more on religious education, since religious education illumines the path of salvation.

The fifth chapter is to proceed to discuss about the subjects or curriculum of studies in Vedic and Buddhist period. In this chapter we highlight some common features which are popular in both the systems of education.

Subjects of study in the Vedic and the Buddhist period were variegated. At the initial stage of education, there was no text book in vogue. The Preceptor used to impart knowledge to disciple through recitation and the recitation was the medium of education, the pronunciation was regulated by means of pause, metrical measure and metre. Consequently seven metres were originated. So, it can be said that during those days grammar and phonetic were not unknown to disciples. Like that the six *Vedāṅgas- Śikṣā, Kalpa, Vyākaraṇa, Nirukta, Chanda and Jyotiṣa* were also developed and included in the Vedic curriculum. In the Vedic period, we find references of *Gāthā, Nārāśamsī, Itihāsa and Purāṇa*. So these subjects were the part of Vedic curriculum. There was also arrangement for secular and vocational education for the people in Vedic age. For the development of economic life, people in those days received vocational training. So during the age, the following subjects such as Composing of verse, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal

husbandry, Science of Medicine, Science of Building, Hand crafting subjects such as Carpentering, making Carts, Chariots and draught and wagons were developed and included in the Vedic curriculum.

During the Brahmanic period, the subjects of study were more numerous than they had been in the early Vedic period. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* give detailed syllabus of various subjects. The *Vedas* including *Brāhmaṇa*, *Āraṇyaka*, *Upaniṣat* and *Vedāṅgas* formed the chief subjects of study. Through the oral transmission, the knowledge was handed down from generation to generation. One should study the *Vedas* every day. The study of the *Vedas* was called *Svādhyāya*. Apart from Vedic study, the *Brāhmaṇa* literature also mentioned other subjects or instruction of study. These were the *Anuśāsana*, *Vidyā*, *Vākovākyam*, *Itihāsa- Purāṇa*, *Nārāśamsī*, *Gāthās*, *Ākhyāna*, *Anvākhyāna*, *Anuvyākhyāna*, and *Vyākhyāna*. But these subjects were gradually swelled and became bulky with the inclusion of new subjects. This fact is proved by the dialogue between *Nārada* and *Sanat Kumāra* in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*, we find that the *Ṛgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, the *Atharvaveda*, the Epic and mythological poem as fifth *Veda*, Grammar (*Vyākaraṇa*), Necrology(*Pitrya*), Arithmetic(*Rāsi*), Diviation(*Nidhi*), Chronology (*Kāl nirupan Vidyā*), Theology (*Vākovākyam*), the doctrine of prayer(*Deva Vidyā*), Necromancy (*Bhūta Vidyā*), the art of War (*Kṣatravidyā* or *Dhanur Veda*), Astronomy (*Nakṣatra Vidyā*), Snake charming (*Sarpa Vidyā*) and the Fine Arts (*Deva-Jana-Vidyā*) were very popular subjects of those days.

Students studied all these subjects. But in spite of varied subjects the supremacy of the *Parā Vidyā* was declared during the age.

In *Sūtra* period the subjects of study were comparatively large than the other periods. During the age all the subjects were expanded. To acquaint the reader, the variety of subjects came in to existence. *Śrauta Sūtras*, *Grihya Sūtras*, *Dharmasūtras* and the *Śulvasūtras* was special contribution of this period. The traditional subjects like the *Vedas*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, *Rahasyavidyā* (the transcendental knowledge of *Upaniṣats* and *Āraṇyakas*), *Itihāsa*, and *Purāṇa* were the indispensable part of education during the age. Secular studies were simultaneously formalised as *Upavedas*. Specialised subjects like Geometry and Algebra, Astronomy and Astrology, Science of Anatomy, Grammar and Philology reached the highest points in this age.

The Epic also introduced the variegated curriculum of studies. All the *Veda*, *Vedāṅgas*, *Dhanurveda*, *Nītiśāstra*, *Vārttā*, *Daṇḍanīti*, *Ānvīkṣikī*, Music, Poetry, *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa*, the lore of elephant and chariots, *Laṅghana* (Jumping), *Plavana* (Swimming), *Lekhya* (Writing), *Ālekhyā* (Painting), *Śabdaśāstra*, *Yuktiśāstra*, *Gāndharvaśāstra* and *Astaṅga Āyurveda* were the main subjects of study. Industrial, Vocational and Professional education received the special emphasis in the Epic period. Education of the *Ṛsatriyas* was also a prominent feature of this period. The educational attainments of the *Ṛsatriyas* mentioned Military education was the special contribution of the epic age.

The Buddhist education was spiritual in essence. Their chief ideal was the attainment of *Nirvana* or Salvation. Buddhist monks mainly studied

religious books. The chief subjects of their study were the *Sutta Pitaka*, *Vinaya Pitaka* and *Abhidhamma Pitaka*.

Buddhist education was divided into Primary course and Secondary course. Primary education aimed at teaching, reading, writing and arithmetic. Higher education comprises teaching in Religion, Philosophy, Medicine, Military science and the like.

Besides these, from the *Jātaka* stories and from the evidence of *Milinda Pañha* we get the idea about the subjects of studies in Buddhist education system. The *Jātaka* stories and the *Milinda Pañha* mention that the *Vedas* and the *Sippas* or liberal arts were the principal subjects of study in Buddhist period. The *Vedas* were the most popular subjects in the Buddhist period. The theoretical and practical education were equally emphasised in Buddhist period. It is evident from the story of *Jīvaka's* education that he had received practical training in surgery. Besides these, nature study, Law and Military science formed essential ingredients of the curriculum.

The *Milinda Pañha* also indicates that the Brahmanical subjects like the *Vedas*, *Vedāṅgas*, *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa*, *Sāṃkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyāya*, and *Vaiśiṣika* were the main subjects of study during the age. These subjects of study were gradually included in Buddhist curriculum. The Buddhist scholar had to defend their faith in public debates against Brahmanic challenges. That is why, they required to know much of Brahmanic learning matter.

During the age *Mahāyāna* and *Hīnāyāna* the two schools of Buddhist thought were very popular. Many universities provided one branch of learning.

Nālandā University provided *Mahāyāna* school of thought where as *Valabhī* was specialised in *Hīnāyāna* Buddhism. Besides this, from reference of Tibetan works of *Nālandā*, it is evident that *Tantra* was very popular among the students as well as the teachers of *Nālandā*. *Nālandā* also provided the ordinary subjects of study like *Hetuvidyā*, *Śabdavidyā*, *Chikitsāvidyā* and the works on Magic. But they thoroughly investigated the miscellaneous works.

Although both the education systems started with their scriptures, the Buddhist education system incorporated the Brahmanical subjects too. They required to know more about the Brahmanical subjects and Buddhist teachers also encouraged their students to study the Brahmanical subjects. But Buddhist and Brahmanic systems did not remain antagonistic to each other. Both the systems were complimentary to each other. The Brahmanic scholars respected the Buddhist society. They also imparted education to Buddhist scholars. Brahmanic scholar also went to Buddhist University to gain the knowledge on Buddhistic subjects.

The sixth chapter focuses on the importance of the Methods of teaching in ancient age and also depicts the cordial relationship of the teacher- students during the ancient period.

In this chapter first we discussed about the Methods of teaching in Vedic period and Buddhist period. And then we discuss the teacher- student (*Guru-Śiṣya*) relationship.

The recitation or oral method of teaching was the fundamental method of teaching in ancient age. But recitation did not simple rote. *Ṛṣis* placed

special emphasis upon recitation with the proper understanding of the inner meaning of the *mantra*. For this reason they developed different methods to avoid the error or mistake in teaching and learning process. At first stage *mantras* are memorized using simple methods in the form of *Samhitā* and *Pada* or *Krama pāṭhas* with various *svara* patterns. After this the recitation is classified as complex recitation styles or *vikṛiti pāṭhas*. This *vikṛiti pāṭhas* are of eight kind's viz., *Jaṭā*, *Mālā*, *Śikhā*, *Rekhā*, *Dhvaja*, *Daṇḍa*, *Ratha* and *Ghana*. Like that three ways of reciting the *mantras* like *Pratīṅṇa*, *Nirbhujā* and *Ubhayamantriṅṇa* were also developed of the proper recitation of any *mantra*. All the ages gave equal stress on the oral method of teaching.

In *Sūtra* period we find that the art of writing was developed but it was not used in teaching learning process. People used the oral or verbal method of teaching. They think that it was irreligious to use the art of writing in teaching learning process. The *Mahābhārata* condemns a person for incurring sin for writing down the Vedic text. Like that in the *Mahāvāgga* the writing was described as means of livelihood or an occupation. That is why, in ancient period, education or knowledge was handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation.

Svādhyāya or self study was one of the most important methods of teaching in ancient period. The term *Svādhyāya* was explained in number of ways in the scriptures. Some authorities mentioned that only reciting, repeating and rehearsing of Vedic text was the *Svādhyāya*. But the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* pointed out the efficacy of *Svādhyāya*. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* mentions that

it was the *Brahmayajña*. Through the *Svādhyāya* of *Vedas* a person can achieve eternal or imperishable fame. That is why, the *Mahābhārata* states that ‘*vedam ca nityaśah*’ that means one should study the *Vedas* daily.

For this *Svādhyāya* or self study, the *Upaniṣats* give three steps of learning i.e., *Śravaṇa*, *Manana* and *Nididhyāsana*. The Buddhist scriptures also mention three steps of learning viz., *Śruta*, *Cintā* and *Bhāvanā*. These steps signify that the students first read the portion of the scriptures, then understand the instruction and ultimately absorb the meaning of the text through their own experience. During the age the teachers always encouraged their students that they had to daily practice their instruction for the realization of ultimate knowledge of the truth.

Debate and discussion was another method of teaching in early days. The Vedic and the Buddhistic education systems mentioned that for the literary training of students this method of teaching was necessary. In this method the learned persons assembled at some places and dramatically discussed the different metaphysical, theological and other problems among themselves. These types of discussions were called the *Brahmavāda* or *Brahmodya*. In the Classical Sanskrit literature it was called the *Vidyā vivāda* or *Vidyā vicāra* because in this discussion the learned men gathered together and logically discussed the various questions on religious treatise and philosophy.

The Buddhistic education system gave equal stress upon the efficacy of this debate and discussion method. At the beginning of the academic career the Buddhist monk was trained in the art of debate and discussion. *Buddha* himself

spent whole of his religious life in debate and discussion. These debates and discussions were regularly held in the Buddhist monasteries. *Nālandā* and *Vikramśilā* were the most outstanding Centres in this respect.

The question- answer method was also very popular method of teaching in ancient period. This teaching method was basically developed in Brahmanic period. It was a very scientific method of teaching. Through this method the doubts had to be cleared through question, cross question and answer method. In this method metaphysical and spiritual facts were explained in a very fascinating manner by employing all the available materials viz., Illustration, Stories, and Parables. The *Upaniṣats* also fall in to the form of dialogue which shows that method of teaching in those days was catechetical.

This teaching method also played great role in Buddhist education system. During those days the student would approach the teacher with question and the teacher gives all the answers with sufficient attention. The teachers also appealed to each and every student that they asked question about their doubts freely. That is why Hiuen Tsang mentioned that in Buddhist teaching, the question answer method was so common that the day was not sufficient for asking and answering profound question.

Tours or travelling was one of the methods of teaching in early days. The wandering scholars used to travel in foreign countries in search for better knowledge or education. They undertook long trips and went to the distant places for practical knowledge. During those days teachers encouraged their students that they had to travel out in distant places for better knowledge.

Generally Students and teachers, used to travel to far off countries for attaining higher learning. There were many examples regarding the travelling or tours, which show that during those days, it was one of the most important methods of teaching. The students generally at the end of their education undertook travelling for developing their knowledge or education.

The Buddhist education system also encouraged their students that they had to undertake long trips to gain the practical knowledge or education. The *Jātaka* stories mainly describe these types of wandering scholars, who wandered in various countries, attended Royal courts, studied the *Śāstras* and made friendship with learned scholars. They visited distant Universities, towns like *Takṣasilā*, Benaras etc to receive education.

Both the education systems preferred travelling as method of teaching. Through this travelling, the students visited various palaces, villages, towns, and universities. For this they were able to know the environmental condition and situation of the society. Their mental horizon was developed and they could able to change the narrow minded condition of the society.

In ancient education system Oral and Practical Examination was one of the methods of teaching. In *Gurukulas* and *Samghas* there was no written examination but the teachers frequently took oral and practical examination of their students. The Vedic teachers and Buddhist teachers took oral test before they started new instruction. Moreover at the end of education some oral examinations were also arranged.

Both the Vedic and the Buddhist education systems almost follow the similar method of teaching. But in Buddhist education we find that some time the teacher also used the story telling method.

The relation between teacher and student in ancient period was very cordial and courteous. Both the Vedic and Buddhist education systems mention that the teacher was the guardian of the students in all respects. He occupied a very dignified place in society.

This reverence or honour was natural, because—(a) teaching was oral and direct, (b) for spiritual salvation the pupil had to depend absolutely upon the path-finding teacher, (c) education was imparted under personal guidance, and d) pupil's practical apprenticeship was widely in vogue.

During the age the teacher's duties would be very long indeed. Without the teacher no one can able to clarify the doubts of the students. Being the pupil's spiritual father, he had immense moral responsibility. The society paid high esteem to him because he illuminated the students' life. We find many examples from the ancient period that during the age teachers were the men of high reverence because they knew all the knowledge. They decorated the students' life. The teacher used to take all the responsibilities of the students. Particularly he was the guardian of the student's health, habit and conduct.

On the Pupil's side, there were corresponding duties. He had to observe the decorum and rule and conduct. The student could not progress in knowledge without rendering service. Personal service of the teacher was compulsory. The student could not back-bite the teacher although he could

correct the teacher if the later was in fault. Only extreme cases could be revolt and leave the teacher. The duties however, did not hamper studies, because the relation was cordial and intimate. The relation continued in after-life.

In Buddhist education the cordial relationship was still continued. During the period the students totally dedicated themselves to the teacher for the acquisition of knowledge. He also rendered services to the preceptor because it was the essential part of his education. He was totally under the control of his preceptor. Without the permission of his teacher he could not serve any other person. The teacher in his turn also helps the pupil intellectually and spiritually.

But from the *Jātaka* stories we find that some changes occurred to the pluralistic element in Buddhist education. This changes were actually far and few between. Because in Buddhist period we find that after the education the students maintained their relationship and used to keep touch with their preceptor. On the whole, Teacher-pupil relation, in both the system was direct, cordial and intimate. It served the scheme and system of education admirably.

In the last chapter of this research work we have major findings and concluding observations.

After the observation, it is found that ancient Indian system of education is the oldest system in the world. During the age education was not confined to intellect only but it was actual realization. That is why, many regulations, code of conduct were to be observed by the students during the age of their studentship.

In ancient period the religious *Saṃskāras* receive high importance in Society. In the Vedic period *Upanayana* and *Samāvartana Saṃskāras* and in the Buddhist period *Pabbaja* and *Upasampadā* were the main educational *Saṃskāras*. The Student performed all these *Saṃskāras* in the beginning and at the end of their educational career.

In the course of our study we have noticed that the basic centre of learning in ancient period was the *Gurukula*. It is the residence of the teacher and the most important centre of learning in ancient period.

Like that in the Buddhist period various *Samghas* or Monasteries were developed which afterwards grew up as the biggest institutions like *Takṣaśilā*, *Nālandā Vihāra*, *Valabhī*, *Vikramśilā Mahāvihāra*, *Odantapuri Mahāvihāra* and *Jagaddala Mahāvihāra* and many more. These educational Centres were renowned in the world. The educational activities of these institutions are very high standard. Pupil from different parts of the country used to flock these educational Centres for proper education.

During the ancient period aims and objectives of education are very high standard. Both the education systems try to make their students of sound mind with developed personality. That means, the student should be well-behaved, self dependent, respectful towards their parents, teachers and above all the students should know duties and responsibilities. Besides, they should respect the culture and heritage and try to preserve the same.

Moreover, we find that subjects of study in Vedic and Buddhist education systems are multidimensional. They provide all types of knowledge

to their students. Because they know that one kind of knowledge is not fruitful for any education system. They also know that different students have different urge or requirements. So to fulfill their requirements the subjects of study must be variegated.

To enhance the education system in ancient period different types of teaching methods were developed viz., Oral method, Self study, Debate and Discussion, Question Answer and many other methods. These methods of teaching were very popular during the age of the *Vedas* and the Buddhist. These methods of teaching were actually developed in Vedic period. Buddhist education systems realized that these methods of teaching were very scientific in nature. Vedic *R̥ṣis* developed these teaching methods according to their own experiences.

During the age of the *Vedas* and the Buddhist there was very smooth and pleasant relationship between the teachers and the students. The preceptor loved his pupil as his son and the students also respected their teachers as their father. Personal relationship between the teacher and the student was very good in that age. But in the Buddhist period, some changes in relationship occurred. But on the whole the teacher student relationship was direct, cordial and intimate in ancient age.

The thesis entitled a study on the formal education system in ancient India with reference to Vedic and Buddhist period and its relevance resumes to its concluding observation that the ancient Indian system of education is still relevant of course partially in the modern education system. The basic

principles of ancient Indian education system need to be incorporated in the present curriculum. The Ancient Indian education systems have been a source of inspiration to all education system of the world. It is the mirror of all the education. A student who wants to achieve the goal he has to follow the ideals of ancient Indian education. Ancient Indian education was emphatic on moral education. Moral education makes a man civilized and cultured. Without moral education a man can not be able to differentiate good and bad. So in order to make life healthy and smooth one should have to realize the importance of ancient education. According to *Vedas*, the important aspect of education is to train the mind of the soul to be truthful because the noble soul who pursues the path of truth is never defeated.

(Sushmita Nath)