

CHAPTER – I

Introduction

A brief discussion of Education system in the *Samhitā* Period, in the Brahmanic Period, in the Epic Period and in the Puranic Period :

India had a very rich tradition and interesting history. The glory of our ancient India was its education system. The unique features of our ancient Indian education system were religion, spiritual values and moral values. Their attitude of life was very simple. They think that the whole universe is like one unit. That is why, when the Vedic *R̥ṣis* attained highest knowledge they did not confine their knowledge for their own self. For the development of society they spread their knowledge.

During the age in a very beautiful and in a peaceful atmosphere the students used to listen and understand the mysteries and complexities of life. They live in the house of preceptor. And in very beautiful surroundings, the pupil sitting at the feet of his preceptor and understands all the experiences of life. They are not restricted on book only, because the teacher gives all the practical knowledge. They perform all the menial services or duties of his preceptor. They have to collect the fuel wood; they have to beg alms, supply water, tending the cattle of his preceptor. In this way they not only receive the instruction on education but also learn the correct lesson of the dignity of labour and service.

No doubt, our ancient education system have very unique feature. But this education system is not developed in one day. Slowly and gradually they make its path. First in the *Samhitās* period, after that the other ages were developed. That means, the evolution of the educational system in different

periods a new form of educational system is evolved and this is our subject matter of discussion here.

Education system in the *Samhitā* Period :

The *Samhitās* are the collections of *Mantras*. It is the oldest part of the *Veda*. From the very beginning (when the *Ṛṣis* attained highest knowledge) *Mantras* were collected in the form of *Samhitās*. This *Samhitā* part is divided in to four parts called – the *Ṛgveda Samhitā*, the *Sāmaveda Samhitā*, the *Yajurveda Samhitā* and the *Atharvaveda Samhitā*.

The *Ṛgveda Samhitā* reveals to us two stages and types of education and the educational method. The first stage was the visualization of hymns and the second was the preservation of these hymns through the long austerities or *Tapas*. In *Ṛgveda* X.109.4, there is a reference of seven *Ṛṣis* absorbed in *Tapas*¹. The *Tapas* as explained by *Sāyana* consisted of austerity, sacrifices and penance. *Rita* and *Satya* were regarded as being originated from of *Tapas*; even the whole creation is thought to be the result of *Tapas* of *Brahma*². The *Ṛṣis* were lived in a state of *Samādhi*. Through the *Samādhi* they realized the highest knowledge. They dwelling in the forest attained Eternal Bliss and acquired highest knowledge by virtue of *Tapas* and *Samādhi*³. When through the *Tapas*, the highest knowledge was acquired then they spread this knowledge to his pupils. Every *Ṛṣi*, would impart his knowledge, which he had personally realized. The disciples received this knowledge according to their

¹ *Devā etasyāmavandanta pūrve saptaṣayastapase ye niṣeduh|ṚV.X.109.4.*

² *Ṛtam ca satyam cābhīddhātāpasas' dyajāyata||Ibid X.190.1.*

³ *Sa idvane namasyubhirvacasyate cāru janeṣu prabruvāṇa indriyam | Ibid .1.55.4.*

individual capacity. And in this way the boundary of education becomes broad day by day.

During the age the *Tapas* or *Samādhi* was the main method of acquiring knowledge but when *Ṛsi* spread the knowledge they also maintained some rules. From the *Taittirīya Samhitā* we find the reference that during the age every morning before the sun rise, the student started recitation of the Vedic hymns⁴. Like croaking frogs⁵ the Vedic students recite the hymns. The special attention was paid to correct pronunciation and recitation of the *Vedas*. On this the *Ṛgveda* points out that the *Veda* is useless learning to him who only recites its *Ṛk* without comprehending its meaning⁶. So in that age great value was attached to the very sound of letters and syllables. The passage of the *Ṛgveda* I.164.24 gives reference that by conjunction of letters are produced seven Metres i.e., *Sapta chandamsi*⁷. These Metres were the roots of the recitation of any *mantra*. This passage again defines that *Chandas* or Metres was made of *Padas* or division and *Padas* of letters or *Akṣara*. And *Sāyaṇa* mentions that *Akṣaras* are the roots of any hymn. The slightest lapse in uttering a letter or *Akṣara* of the Vedic *Mantra* is the great disaster because slightest lapse changes the meaning of any hymn. So in the *Samhitā* period the meditation and comprehension of the *Mantra* was considered to be far more important than the mechanical recitation of the *Mantras*. It is a matter of fact that their main motto

⁴ *Tait. Saṁ. VI.4.3.1.*

⁵ *Saṁvatsaraṁ śaśayānā brāhmaṇa vratacāriṇaḥ |
vācaṁ parjanyaajinvitāṁ pra maṇḍūkā avādiṣuḥ || ṚV.VII.103.1.*

⁶ *ṛco akṣare parame vyomanyasmindevā adhi viśve niṣeduḥ |
yastanna veda kimṛcā kariṣyati||Ibid.I.164.39.*

⁷ *Gāyatreṇa prati mimīte arkamarkeṇa sāma traiṣṭubhena vākaṁ |
vākena vākaṁ dvipadā catuspadākṣareṇa mimate sapta vāṇīḥ || Ibid.I.164.24.*

was to acquiring Absolute knowledge or *Paramabrahmajñāna*⁸. That is why the special attention was paid on correct pronunciation and recitation of the *Vedas*. They also think that the knowledge which was received from the mouth of the teacher was regarded as purely Vedic. Thus the teaching method was mainly oral.

The *Ṛgveda Samhitā* also reveals that Learned Assemblies (*Brāhmaṇa Saṁgha*, as *Sāyaṇa* calls them) were also developed during the age. The Ṛgvedic hymn X.71.3 indicates that in the time of sacrifice, several learned scholars come together for the purpose of developing the truth, which they had realize in their heart and mind through the *Tapas*. They disclose and discuss the hymns, which they had themselves individually attained as the result of their long austerities. Several students join this gathering of the learned and acquired knowledge according to their individual capacities. *Brāhmaṇa Saṁgha* or Learned Assemblies created the highest type of learning during the age⁹.

During the age subjects of study were also developed. In *Ṛgveda*¹⁰ we find reference that the teacher do not teach pupils who have no knowledge in Grammar, lack of intelligence and not a regular pupil living with his preceptor. *Yāska* in *Nirukta* also mentions that for the understanding of the Vedic text the Grammar had already evolved and included in the curriculum. Like that the six

⁸ *Bṛhaspate prathamam vāco agram yatprairata nāmdheyam dadhānāḥ |
yadeṣām śreṣṭhām yadaripramāsīpreṇā tadeṣām nihitam guhāvih || RV. X.71.1.*

⁹ *Yajñena bācaḥ padavīyamāyantāmanvavindannṛṣiṣu praviṣṭām |
Tāmābhṛtya vyadadhuḥ purutrā tām sapta rebha abhi sam navante || Ibid X.71.3.*

¹⁰ *Uta tvam sakhye sthirapītamāhurnainam hinvantyaḥ |
vājineṣu |
adhenvā carati māyayaiṣa vācam śuśrūvā aḥalāmpuṣpām || Ibid.X.71.5.*

Vedāṅgas and *Gāthā*, *Nārāśamsī*, *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* were also developed in *Samhitā* period¹¹.

In those days education was not regarded as hereditary institution but an occupational one. There was one such passage of the *Ṛgveda* which gives graphic pictures of the realities of life that- in a family the father was a Physician (*Vaidya*), the son a Vedic Poet and the mother an ordinary grain grinder¹². A number of *Kṣatriya* king¹³ such as *Ambarīṣa*, *Trasadasyu*, *Sindhuvīpa*, *Māndhātā*, *Śibi* also attained to the status of *Ṛsi* only through their *Tapas*. In the *Ṛgvedic* age the word *Śūdra* is used not in the sense of caste but in the sense of one who is mentally so decrepit as to learn nothing in spite of the best efforts of Preceptor. Women too were entitled to receive education in the *Ṛgvedic* age. The Women ascetics were admitted to full religious rites and complete educational facilities. We find that the *Ṛgveda* and the *Yajurveda* suggest that a young learned maiden should be married to one who is learned like her¹⁴.

The Secular and non religious education were also popular during the age. The *Ṛgvedic* hymn IX.112, gives a clear idea that there was a provision for the masses of secular science and technical education¹⁵. The people should

¹¹ *Itihāsasya ca vai sa purāṇasya ca gāthānām ca nārāśamsīnām ca priyaṁ dhām bhavati ya evaṁ veda*|A.V.XV.6.12;

raibhyāsīdanudeyī nārāśamsī nyocanī| suryāyā bhadramīdvāso gāthayaiti pariṣkṛtam|| *ṚV.X.85.6.*

¹² *Kārurahaṁ tato bhiṣagupalaprakṣiṇī nanā| nānādhiyo vasuyavo 'nu gāiva tasthimendrāyendo pari strava*||*Ibid.IX.112.3.*

¹³ *Ibid.I.100.17; IV.42;X.9;X.134;X.179.*

¹⁴ *Ā dhenavo dhunayantamaśiśvīḥ sabardurgāḥ śaśaya apradugdhāḥ ||navyānavyā yuvatayo bhavantīrmahaddevānāmasuratvamekam* || *Ibid.III.55.16; YV.VIII.1.*

¹⁵ *nānānaṁ vā u no dhiyo vratāni janānām..... śepo romaṇvantau bhedaṁ vārinmaṇḍūka ichhatīndrāyendo pari strava*|| *ṚV.IX.112.*

receive knowledge in Agriculture, Animal husbandry, Handicrafts and many other technical training for attaining high norm of progress in society. Thus we safely conclude that the Ṛgvedic education system not only provide the religious education but also provide the Secular, Social and practical form of education.

The other *Samhitās* also reveal the same type of educational process. There was no change according to age. But when we examine together both the systems of education then we find that the *Ṛgveda Samhitā* does not give any clear reference of *Upanayana* ceremony. But the word ‘*Brahmacāri*’ is mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* in the sense of the life of religious student.¹⁶ The *Atharvaveda Samhitā* very beautifully explained the *Upanayana* ceremony¹⁷. The *Atharvaveda Samhitā* mentioned that Vedic students were called ‘*Brahmacāri*’ and the teacher ‘*Ācārya*’. The initiation of the student was regarded as spiritual birth. His first births he owes to his Parents who give him only body. But it is the spiritual birth which unfolds his mind and soul. Through this ceremony he became *Dviija* or twice born *Brāhmaṇa*. This initiation ceremony was performed in very simple way. After the initiation ceremony, the student is a new and changed person both externally and internally. The student lives in his preceptor’s house with very definite rules and regulations. He always wears the girdle (*Mekhalā*) of *Kuśa* grass, the skin of an antelope, used to keep matted hair and also used to carry sacred fuel to

¹⁶ *Brahmacāri carita veveṣādviṣaḥ sa devānaṁ bhavatyekamaṅagam | tena jāyāmanvavindad
br̥haspatiḥ somen nītaṁ juhuraṁ na devāḥ || Ibid .X.109.5; Ibid.III.8, 4-5.*

¹⁷ *Brahmacārīṣṇaṁscarati rodaṣī ubhe tasmin devāḥ saṁanaso bhvanti.....sa snāto babhruḥ
piṅgalaḥ pṛtivyāṁ bahu rocate ||A.V.XI.V.*

offer *Agni* both in the morning and in the evening. He also follows some inner discipline like he always controls his senses and emotion; he practises asceticism or *Tapas* and always leads a dedicated life. Besides this, the other *Samhitās* also mention that generally there was no provision for observing holidays. But teaching and learning was suspended on occasion of festivals and in cloudy and storm weather¹⁸.

To sum up, we observe that in the *Samhitā* period the ideal of education was very high. Everyone was entitled to receive education. Women too occupied a special status in society. The concept of a born caste had not yet evolved in this period. Ample opportunities were provided to the pupil for the development of their personality. Their main aim of education was to realize the Absolute knowledge. So, they devoted their entire life to realize the *Paramabrahmajñān*. The perfect meditation and the comprehension of the *mantra* are great value during the age. They do not like the Mechanical learning. Religious education plays a dominating rule. But to build up the proper economic life in society, secular education and technical education were also very popular. But during the age literary and scientific progress could not reach the stage of perfect solidarity and maturity. But this does not mean that the *Samhitā* period education could not really reach the destination. Through this education system our later periodic education systems were developed. The scheme of the *Samhitā* periodic education was the foundation of the ancient Indian education system.

¹⁸ A.V.VII.66.

Education in the Brahmanic Period :

The Brahmanic period also maintains the same tradition but it was more refined and developed form of education system than the *Samhitā* period. During the age the Sages or *Ṛṣis* were dwelling in solitude forests lived in a state of *Samādhi* for attaining the eternal bliss. This mystical experience manifested in the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣats*. These *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣats* are the main sources of knowledge about the education system in Brahmanic period. Since in the *Brāhmaṇa*, the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣats* the sacrificial rite, metaphysics, philosophy of the soul, theology, mysteries of creation are thoroughly discussed. In those days great importance was given in education of these philosophies. The teachers devoted themselves in imparting education to pupils on these fundamental truths. In different places of diversified environs the students were receive education. So we can say that these *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣats* introduced a more systematic and standardized education system.

Admission and Period of Studentship :

During the Brahmanic period normal period of studentship was started after the *Upanayana* ceremony. The three high born castes viz., *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya* and *Vaiśya* were eligible for the *Upanayana* ceremony. They had to go to preceptor's house after the *Upanayana* ceremony. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* beautifully explained this *Upanayana* ceremony¹⁹. Having being initiated by his preceptor the student entered upon the spiritual career. He was

¹⁹ ŚR.B.XI.5.4.

called *Brahmacāri*, up to the age of twenty five years he could continue his studies. This period of studentship was necessary for every individual. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*²⁰ we find that *Śvetaketu*'s father says to his son that in his family or his clan none has been remained without the formal pupilage. This formal pupilage or studentship was normally fixed for twelve years in general case. *Śvetaketu* and *Upakosala Kāmalāyana*²¹ had studied at his preceptor's feet for twelve years. But the students who like to continue their studies, they can extend the period of their academic career even beyond twelve years. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*²² we find such pupil (*Nābhānediṣṭha*) who remained at his preceptor's house for a very long time, so much so that his father ceased hoping for his return and distributed his property amongst his other sons. In the passage of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*²³, we find such reference that a person devoted to the pursuit of knowledge for all his life. However at the same time some evidence seem to be indicated that during the age formal pupilage was not absolutely binding for pursuit the knowledge. In the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣat*²⁴ we find that without the formal pupilage *Yājñavalkya* instructs his wife *Maitreyi* and King *Janaka*, who were not strictly his pupil.

Conditions and Duties of Studentship :

²⁰ *Somyāsmatkulīnohananūchya brahmabandhuriva bhavaṭīti ||Ch.U.VI.1.1.*

²¹ *Sa ha dvādaśavarṣa upetya|| Ibid.VI.1.2;*
tasya ha dvādaśa varṣānyagnīn paricacāra ||Ibid.IV.X.1.

²² *Nābhānediṣṭarṇ vai mānavarṇ brahmacārye vasantarṇ bhrātāro nirabhajarṇatso ōbravidetya kiṁ mahyambhātkeyetameva nistavamavavaditaramityabruvamastasmadhyapyetahim pitararṇ putrā niṣṭavo 'vavaditetyevācakṣate..... ||A.B.V.14.*

²³ *Hāsmāi varṣayati ha ya etadevarṇ vidvān ||Ch.U.II.3.*

²⁴ *Yadeva bhagavān veda tadeva me brahṭīti||B.U.II.4.3;*
namastehastu yājñavalkyānu mā śādhṭī.....||Ibid.IV.2.1.

The first condition was that the students had to live under the roof of his preceptor. The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* also mention that it was essential for pupil, to reside at the house of the preceptor²⁵. The term *ācārya kula vāsīna* and *ācārya antevāsīna* which is found in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*, clearly indicates that the student who stays under the roof of his preceptor²⁶. Further the student had to go for begging alms for his preceptor and for himself. This tradition was carried out invariably by all poor or rich, prince or peasant. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*²⁷ also mentions that the student should beg alms without feeling ashamed. These begging alms inculcated in pupil the noble spirit of humility.

Another duty of the pupils was to tending the sacred fire at his preceptor's house²⁸. The student should daily collect the sacred fuel from forest to feed the fire of preceptor's house. On the completion of his academic career he placed the last fuel and took the final bath. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*²⁹ we find that *Upakosala Kāmalāyana* tended the fire for twelve years at his preceptor's home. This divine flame of sacrificial fire was symbolic of intellectual development and spiritual illumination of the pupil.

The next duty of the student was to look after the house of his preceptor and his belongings. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*³⁰ mentions that the students

²⁵ *T.B.III.7.6.3; ŚR.B.XI.3.3.2; A.B.V.14*

²⁶ *Ch.U.II.23.1; IV.10.1.*

²⁷ *Brahmacārī ahrīrbhūtā bhikṣate || ŚR.B.XI.3.3.5.*

²⁸ *sa yadagnaye samidhamāharati || Ibid..XI.3.3.4.*

²⁹ *tasya ha dvādaśa varṣānyagnīn paricacāra || Ch.U.IV.X.1.*

³⁰ *Brahmacāriṇa ācāryaṁ gopāyanti; gṛhān paśūnnenno paharānti || ŚR.B.III.6.2.15.*

should guard their master's house and his cattle. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*³¹ also recounts that how *Satyakāma* went away with his preceptor's cattle to a distant country and during his return the number of the cattle had become thousand. The major part of the life of the student was devoted to the service of the *Guru*. These services of *Guru* made him physically and morally fit.

Along with these duties, the study was the primary duty of the student. Without the proper academic career he was not able to become a perfect member of the society and also not able to acquire the Supreme knowledge. That is why; the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*³² mentions that after the manual services of teacher, the students should prosecute his studies. But the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*³³ mentions that during the period of studentship, the student should also overcome certain passions and evil habits of mind in order to give full concentration on his studies. Such evil habits are caste, pride, fame, anger, bragging, personal beauty, excessive sleep, music, dancing, and so on. The *Upaniṣats*³⁴ also require that the *Brahmacāri* before the acquisition of highest knowledge he should overcome his habits because pupils' main motto was to receive the proper education. All these make him a perfect student and he becomes a true member of the society and also allows to receive proper education.

³¹ *Saha varṣagaṇaṁ provāsa tā yadā sahasraṁ sampeduḥ* || Ch.U.IV.4.5.

³² *Ācāryakulād vedamadhītya yathāvidhānaṁ guroḥ karmātiśeṣeṇābhisamāvṛthya* || Ibid.VIII.15.

³³ *Sa yadmṛgājinani vaste, sa yadaharāharācāryāya karma karoti, sa yat suṣupsur nidrāṁ ninayati.....noparisāyī syād na gāyno na nartanī na saraṇo na niṣṭivet*||G.B.II.2-7.

³⁴ *Tasmādevaṁvicchānto dānta uparatastitikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvātmanyevātmānaṁ paśyati sarvamātmānaṁ paśyati*|| B.U.IV.4.23.

Subjects of Study :

In Brahmanic period various types of subjects come in to existence. From the dialogue of *Nārada* and *Sanatkumāra*³⁵ we find that during the period the *R̥gveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, the *Atharvaveda*, the Epic and mythological poem as fifth *Veda*, Grammar (*Vyākaraṇa*), Necrology (*Pitrya*), Arithmetic(*Rāsi*), Divination(*Nidhi*), Chronology(*Kāl nirupan Vidyā*), Theology (*Vākovākyam*), the doctrine of prayer(*Deva Vidyā*), Necromancy (*Bhūta Vidyā*), the art of War(*Kṣhatravidyā* or *Dhanur Veda*), Astronomy(*Nakṣatra Vidyā*), Snake charming (*Sarpa Vidyā*) and the Fine Arts(*Deva-Jana-Vidyā*) formed the chief subjects of study. During the age the Vedic study was the most important. One should study the *Veda* every day. This Vedic study was called *Svādhyāya*³⁶. Besides these the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* also gives detailed syllabus of various subjects. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*³⁷ mentions that *Anuśāsana*, *Vidyā*, *Vākovākyam*, *Itihāsa- Purāṇa*, *Nārāśaṃsī*, *Gāthās*, *Ākhyāna*, *Anvākhyāna*, *Anuvyākhyāna*, and *Vyākhyāna* were the important subjects of study during the age. All these subjects form a vast curriculum of study. In spite of varied subjects *Parā Vidyā* was the most important subject of study during the period. Without the *Parā Vidyā* everything was but in words.

³⁵ *R̥gvedaṃ bhagavohadhyemi yajurvedaṃ sāmavedamāṛthavaṇaṃ caturthamitihāsapurāṇaṃ pañcamāṃ vedānāṃ vedaṃ pitryaṃ rāsiṃ daivaṃ nidhiṃ vākovākyamekāyanāṃ devavidyāṃ brahmavidyāṃ bhūtavidyāṃ kṣtravidyāṃ nakṣatravidyāṃ sarpadevajanavidyāmetad bhagavohadhyemi|| || Ch.U VII.I.1.*

³⁶ *Svādhyāyo vai brahma-yajñah || ŚR.B.XI.5.6.3.*

³⁷ *Yadānuśāsānāni vidyā vākovākyamitihāsapurāṇagāthā nārāśayaṃsaya sa ya evaṃ vidvānanuśāsānāni vidyā vākovā kyamitihāsapurāṇagāthā.....|| Ibid.XI.5.6.7.*

The *Upaniṣats* speak about this highest knowledge technically called *Parā Vidyā*³⁸.

Methods of Study :

In Brahmanic period the methods of study become more and more scientific. Doubts had to be cleared by question, cross question and answers method. These methods were explained in a very fascinating manner by employing all the available sources viz. – illustration, stories, and parables³⁹. But the *Upaniṣats* mentions that the main part of education was the work of the student and not the teacher. So the student was not merely a passive listener to his teacher. Through the *Śravaṇa*, *Manana* and *Nididyāsana* he should realize the actual truth of knowledge. This *Śravaṇa*, *Manana* and *Nididyāsana* were the basic pedagogic principle of education. Through this they can realize the ultimate truth of the knowledge⁴⁰.

Position and Duties of the Teacher :

In Brahmanic period the teacher held a great position and honour. During the period life of teacher served as a model for the society. The *Taittiriya Āraṇyaka*⁴¹ mentions that ‘*ācārya deva bhava*’ that means he was as respectful in all its respect .He leads darkness into the light. It is his sacred duty. He looks after the students and gives all his support for the proper development of students. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁴² mentions that teacher reveals everything to his pupil. It was matter of fact that without the teacher no

³⁸ *Atha parā –yayā tadakṣaramdhigamyate||Mun.U.I.I.5.*

³⁹ *Praśna.U.II;Kaṭha.U. I; Kena.U.III.*

⁴⁰ *Are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānenedaṁ sarvaṁ viditam|||B.U.II.4.5.*

⁴¹ *T.A.VII.11.2.*

⁴² *ŚR.B.XIV.II.26,27.*

one can able to clarify the doubts of the students and give all the absolute knowledge⁴³. That is why, the society paid high esteem to teacher. But during the age the teaching profession was restricted only for *Brāhmins*. But Some *Kṣatriyas* also acquire fame as teacher, whom *Brāhmaṇa* also approached for highest Knowledge. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣat*⁴⁴ we find that for the attainment of highest knowledge *Śvetaketu* and his father went to the *Pravāhaṇa Jaivalis* court and became his disciple.

Educational Institution :

To emerge the education system in Brahmanic period variety of educational institutions were developed like *Śākhā*, *Charaṇa*, *Gotra*, *Pariṣats*. But during the age, as an educational institution *Gurukula* received the actual status⁴⁵. The *Pariṣat* also received the high status because these *Pariṣats* were the association of teacher and students. These *Pariṣats* were something corresponding to modern university. The *Pāñcāla Pariṣat*⁴⁶ was one of the famous *Pariṣats* during the age.

Education of Women :

Women were highly respected and honoured in Brahmanic period. They had the fullest extent of freedom to develop their personality. It was the notable element of the Brahmanic period that women participated in sacrificial ritual. Without them no *Yajña* or Sacrifice was considered to be complete. Wives of *Rṣis* were the partner with their husbands in spiritual rituals. The *Śatapatha*

⁴³ *Gurukṛpām vihāya brahmavidyā durlabheti| Śv.U.VI.23.(Śāṅkarabhāṣya)*

⁴⁴ *Paīmyaharī bhavantamiti.....sa hopāyanakirtyovāsa||B.U.VI.2.7.*

⁴⁵ *Mookerji, R.K. Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist), Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P.133.*

⁴⁶ *B.U.VI.2.1; ŚR.B.XI.4.1.*

*Brāhmaṇa*⁴⁷ mentioned that they were the hind part of sacrifices. They enjoyed the privilege of receiving education. They were called *Brahmavādinīs* or *Ṛṣikās*. Some authorities mentioned that girls too were entitled for *Upanayana* or Sacred thread ceremony. They were participated in learned discourses. The *Upaniṣats* mention several learned women scholars. The two wives of *Yājñavalkya*, *Maitreyi* and *Kātyāyanī* were the erudite scholarly ladies of those days⁴⁸. But in the last phase of the Brahmanic age, the child marriage seems to have come in to vogue. For this reason, the ratio of women education was therefore, on a constant and steady decline. Nevertheless, Girls who were belonging to noble families were essentially receiving education on equal terms with other residential pupils.

Education of the other castes :

In Brahmanic period the outlines of the caste system having become something changed. The studentship was open for the first three classes. The *Brāhmaṇas* were received education in the *Vedas* and the other *Śāstras*. But the Vedic study came to be regarded as of secondary importance of *Kṣatriyas* and *Vaiśyas*. The *Kṣatriyas* generally studied the *Kṣatrayidyā*, the *Niti-Śāstra* or the *Dhanurveda* which they had to learn from the *Brāhmaṇas*. But *Upaniṣats* reveals many *Kṣatriyas* profound knowledge in the *Vedas*. Even many *Kṣatriyas* defeated the *Brāhmaṇas*. King *Janaka* of *Videha*, *Pravāhaṇa Jaivali* of *Pāñcālas* and *Aśvapati Kaikeya* had profound knowledge of the *Vedas* and other divine knowledge. The *Brāhmaṇa* and the *Upaniṣats* texts mentioned that

⁴⁷ *Jaghanārdho vā eṣa yajñasya yat patni. ŚR.B. V.2.1.8.*

⁴⁸ *Yājñavalkyasya dve bhārye babhūvaturmaitreyī ca kātyāyanī ca tayorha maitreyī brahmavādinī babhūva strīprajñāiva tarhi kātyāyanītha.....||B.U.IV.5.1.*

the large number of *Brāhmaṇas* who had studied the *Vedas* used to go to King *Janaka* to slake their thirst for transcendental knowledge⁴⁹. In the learned assembly commenced at *Pāñcāla*, both *Śvetaketu* and his father *Āruṇi* could not answer any question put to them by the *Kṣatriya* King *Pravāhaṇa Jaivali*. As a result of which, they had to become *Jaivalis* disciples⁵⁰. The *Vaiśyas* also had the opportunity to studied the *Vedas* but their main pursuit of knowledge was agriculture, production and distribution of corn which were their main functions. In some occasion they also took part in wars. But their chief ambition in life was to become a village headman. There was no evidence to show that they take part in intellectual life as the *Kṣatriya* did. Like the *Vaiśyas*, the *Śudras* too learnt agriculture, cattle rearing, dairy farming and handicrafts. They were not allowing to receiving education in the *Vedas*. But their main pursuit of knowledge was the *Deva-Jana Vidyā* which means music, dancing and instrument playing. The *Brāhmaṇas* imparted to the *Śudras* education in these subjects.

End of Studentship :

During the period at the completion of studentship the teacher delivers Convocational address to the students. This Convocational address to the students was called the *Samāvartana* Ceremony. Through this ceremony the teacher reminds the students of their duties in practical life. These duties embodied primarily speaking of truth, performance of duties, study of the *Veda*, maintaining good health, performance of sacrifices, service to parents

⁴⁹ *B.U.IV.1; ŚR.B.XI.6.2.1.*

⁵⁰ *paimyaham bhavantamiti | Ibid.VI.2.7;Ch.U.V.3..*

and teachers', charity and other similar deeds. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣat*⁵¹ very beautifully addressed this farewell address to the students. The *Samhitā* period does not give any reference about the convocation ceremony. It is from the Brahmanic period where we find that on the completion of academic career the students used to take their last bath in the residence of the preceptor. And the student became *Snātaka*, after the final bath. The preceptor then addressing the students gave the eternal message. This message was very important because through this message the student became aware of his responsibilities. And he became perfect member of the society.

In the resume it can be said that during the Brahmanic period *Yajña* occupied the predominant place in the system of education. The students had to spend much of their time in performing *Yajña*. The aim of education in the *Samhitā* and the Brahmanic period remained the same but the means remained different. The *Brāhmaṇas* were the real intellectual leaders controlling education system during the age. Various rituals and number of subjects in the curriculum were developed in the Brahmanic period. But the *Parā Vidyā* was insisted upon. The studentship was open for first three classes of people. The

⁵¹ *Vedamanūchyācāryohantevāsinamanuśāsti | satyaṁ vada / Dharmam cara |svādhyāyanmā pramadaḥ |ācāryāya priyaṁ dhanamāṛtya prajātantrṁ mā vyavcachetsīḥ |satyānna pramaditavyam / dharmānna pramaditavyam |kuśalānna pramaditavyam |bhūtaiya na pramaditavyam | svādhyaya pravachanābhyāṁ na pramaditavyam |devapṛkārābhyāṁ na pramaditavyam |matṛdevo bhavo |pṛdevo bhavo |ācāryadevo bhavo |athitidevo bhavo |yānyanavadyāni karmāṇi |tani sevityāni |no itarāṇi | yanyasmākaṁ sucaritāni |tāni tvayopāsyāni || no itarāṇi |ye ke chāsmacchreyārṁso brāhmaṇaḥ | teṣāṁ tvayāsanena praśvasitavyam |śraddayā deyam |aśraddyāhadeyam |śriyā deyam |hriyā deyam | bhiyā deyam |samvidā deyam |atha yadi te karmavicikitsā vā vṛttavicikitsā va syāt ||ye tatra brāhmaṇaḥ sammarśinaḥ |yuktā āyuktāḥ | alūkṣā dharmākamāḥ syuḥ | yitha te tatra varteran / tathā tatra vartethāḥ |athābhyākhyateṣu ye tatra brāhmaṇaḥ sammarśinaḥ |yuktā āyuktāḥ | alūkṣā dharmākamāḥ syuḥ |yathā te teṣu varteran |tathā teṣu vartethāḥ |eṣa ādeśaḥ | |eṣa upadeśḥ | eṣā vedopaniṣat| etadanuśānam | evamupāsitavyam |evamu caitadupāsyam | T.U.I.II.*

period of studentship was twelve years in general case. The *Upanayana* and *Samāvartana* ceremony were compulsory during the age. Variety of educational institutions was developed. But *Gurukula* occupied the supremacy. *Varṇa* system was prevalent during this period. Women and other castes also enjoyed the educational right and acquired fame for learning. Various aspects of education came in to lime light. Various methods of education were also developed. So we can say that through this education system we find the real educational structure of ancient India.

Education in the Epic Period :

The *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* were the two main epics of ancient India. The value of these two epics was considerable indeed because these two epics give us a very clear idea about the highly developed culture of ancient India. But these two epic do not contain much regard to education. These epic mainly deal with action not in the thought. So purely educational evidence of the Epics is however very meager. But when we going through the subject –matter of the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* then we find that the two epics also give us some very useful information bearing on educational ideals and institutions.

Admission and Period of Studentship :

During the age the pupils' first introduction to education was started through the *Vidyārambha* ceremony. This ceremony was known as *Upākrama* ceremony in Epic age. After the performance of this ceremony the pupil started their Vedic studies. In the *Mahābhārata* *Pāṇḍavas* started their Vedic studies

after the performance of *Upākarma* or *Vidyārambha* ceremony⁵². But the pupils' actual education was started after the performance of *Upanayana* ceremony. In the *Rāmāyana*, *Rāma* and his half brothers started their education after the *Upanayana* ceremony⁵³. In the *Śhānti parva*⁵⁴ of the *Mahābhārata* mentioned that after the performance of *Upanayana* ceremony the *Brāhmaṇa* boys started their Vedic education. *Dr̥tarāstra*, *Pāṇḍu*, *Vidura* also started their education after the performance of *Upanayana* ceremony⁵⁵.

During the age the period of studentship was also spread over the twelve years. The *Mahābhārata*⁵⁶ mentioned that up to the age of twenty five years the *Brahmacāri* could continue his studies. But the *Naiṣṭhika Brahmacāris* devoted their entire life to pursuit the knowledge. For the pursuit of knowledge the ideal student named *Utaṅka*⁵⁷ who spread his major part of life in his preceptor's house.

Conditions and Duties of studentship :

In the earlier period aforesaid that after the *Upanayana* ceremony the student used to live under the roof of his preceptor. It was their first condition of studentship. But now situation was something changed. Some students lived with his preceptor and some student under the appointed private teacher after

⁵² *Tataḥ pāṇḍuh kriyāḥ sarvāḥ pāṇḍavānāmākārayat.....kāśyapaḥ kṛtavān sarvamupākarma ca bhārata.....vaidikādhyayane sarve samapadyanta pāragāḥ* ||M.Bh.Ādi.123.32.

⁵³ *Daśa sapta varṣāṇi tava jātasya rāgava*||Rām.Ayoda.20.45;.1.20.

⁵⁴ *Kṛtopanayanastāta bhaved vedaparāyaṇaḥ*|M.Bh.Śhānti.326.14.

⁵⁵ *Dr̥tarāṣṭraśca pāṇḍuśca viuduraśca mahāmatih.....sarṅskāraiḥ sarṅskṛtāste tu vratādhyansarṅyutāḥ* ||Ibid.Ādi.108.18.

⁵⁶ *Āyūṣasta caturbhāgarṅ brahmacāryanasuyakaḥ*|Ibid. Śhānti.242.16.
vedavratopavasena catuthai cayuse gate.Ibid. Śhānti.242.28.

⁵⁷ *Śatavarṣoṣitarṅ māṅ hi na tvamabhyanjānithā*| Ibid,Asva.56.16.

the *Upanayana* ceremony. In the *Ādi parva* of the *Mahābhārata* ⁵⁸we get the following account of the education of the *Kauravas* and the *Pāṇḍavas*, *Mahātmā Bhīṣma* brought to his place the Vedic scholar *Droṇācārya* and entreated him to educate his grandsons in proper conduct and warfare. So during the age it was not mandatory account that everyone should live with his preceptor's house. But majority of the students had their schooling under the discipleship of *Gurus* residing with them in their abodes. This was the general practice. *Rāma* after the *Upanayana* lived with his preceptor and finished the education⁵⁹. *Mahātmā Bhīṣma*, *Guru Droṇācārya*, King *Draupad* also lived in the house of his preceptor for proper training⁶⁰.

As regards the duties of the students, the Epic period also mentioned that, an ideal student always served for his teacher. He observed all the rules and conduct of his teacher. He always got up early in the morning and slept in after his preceptor. Every morning and evening he had to performed the *Sandhyā* adoration. With the clean body he started his daily courses. He used to beg alms for his preceptor and look after his house and cattle. He also controlled over his senses and avoided *mado*, *moha* and *chapatatā*. He used to avoid honey, perfume, garlands. He also avoided the female company. Through the proper *prāyaśchita* he purified his soul. These were the some important

⁵⁸ *Yutrupaḥ sa hi gururityevamanucintyaca |athainamānīya tadā svayameva susatkṛtam||*
M.Bh.Ādi.130.38

⁵⁹ *caritabrahmacaryasya vidyāsnātayasya dhīmataḥ ||Rām.Ayoda..82.11.*

⁶⁰ *Brahmacārī vinūātmā jatilo vahulāḥ samāḥtenāharṁ saha sarīgamya vartayan suciram*
prabhau ||M.Bh.Ādi.13.41-43.

duties and restrictions of studentship of Epic age. Without these duties and restrictions none can able to receive the proper training or education⁶¹.

Subjects of study :

The *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* give the detailed syllabus of various subjects. During the age *Veda*, *Ānvīṣikī*, *Vārttā*, *Dandaṇīti*, were the main subjects of study. Besides these many other subjects like *Yuktiśāstra*, *Śabdaśāstra*, *Gandarvaśāstra*, *Purāṇa*, *Itihāsa*, *Ākhyāna*, and *Kalāvidyā* were included in the curriculum⁶².

During the age specialization of any subject was compulsory because all the castes groups had their special curricula appropriate to their occupations. The *Brāhmaṇas* were the priest. They studied all the subjects. But they were specially trained in the *Vedas*⁶³. The *Kṣatriyas* were the rulers. They had compulsorily to learn Military education, the art of archery, ‘*Dhanurveda*’. The *Rāmāyana* contains a reference to the military training of King *Daśarata*’s sons during their boyhood⁶⁴. Like that in the *Mahābhārata* we also find the military training of *Kauravas* and *Pāṇḍavas*. *Guru Droṇācārya* imparts education to *Kauravas* and *Pāṇḍavas* in a very short time⁶⁵. The *Vaiśyas* were studied all the

⁶¹ *Brāhme muhurte budhyet dharmārtho cānucintayet | utthāyācamya tiṣṭet pūrvaṁ saṅdhyā kṛtāñjaliḥ || M.Bh.Anu.104.16.*

tasmāt tiṣṭet sadā pūrvaṁ paścimāṁ caiva vāgyataḥ | Ibid.Anu.104.18-19;
sarvadharmānirato vidvān sarvendryato munih | guroḥ priyahito yuktaḥ satyadharmaparḥ śuciḥ ||
Ibid.Asua.46.2;

jīendriyaḥ sarvto viprayuktaḥ | Ibid.Adi.91.5;
Nāpriṣṭita cāritram vidyā deya kathaṅcan || Ibid.Shānti.327.46.

⁶² *Trayī cānvīṣikī caiva Vārttā ca bharatarṣabha | danḍaṇītiśca vipulā vidyāstatra nirdirītā ||*
Ibid.Shānti.59.33;

yuktiśāstra ca te jeṅyaṁ śavdaśāstraṁ bhārata | Ibid.Anu 104.147.

⁶³ *‘Traividyo brāhmaṇo vidvān-----eṣa smṛto dvijaḥ’ | Ibid.Anu.141.66.*

⁶⁴ *Te cāpi manujavyāgrā vaidikādhyayane ratā | piṭṛśuśrupaṇaratā dhanuRVede ca niṣṭitāḥ |*
Rām.18.35-36.

⁶⁵ *Tato droṇaḥ pāṇḍuputrānastrāṇi vividāni ca | grāhayāmāsa divyāni mānuṣāṇi ca vīryavāna ||*
M.Bh.Ādi.131.9;

*Vārttāśāstras*⁶⁶. But when we discuss about the education of princes then we find that a person is also able to qualify in diverse course of subjects.

In the *Rāmāyana* we find that *Rāma* and his brothers were well versed in all the *Śāstras*. Specially *Rāma* was well versed in the *Veda*, *Vedāṅgas*, *Dhanurveda*, *Nītiśāstra*, *Vartta*, *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa*, Military arts, Poetry, Philosophy, *Arthavivāga*, riding on horses and elephants. He was also an expert charioteer⁶⁷. He was mastered in the use of all kinds of missiles and weapons that were known as *Valā* and *Ativalā*⁶⁸. He was also profoundly proficient in Music⁶⁹.

In the *Mahābhārata*⁷⁰ we find that the *Pāṇḍavas* studied all the *Vedas*, various *Śāstras*, *Nīti*, *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa*, Archery, and different types of military arts. *Ācārya Droṇa* taught them *Dhanurveda* in all its branches⁷¹. *Arjuna* taught *Abhimanyu* and other princes on the same line⁷². So it is clear the Epic introduced the variegated curriculum of studies. But the main emphasis was laid down on the study of Military sciences.

Methods of Study :

gadāyuddheo'sicaryāyārṇ tomaraprāsaśaktiṣu | droṇaḥ saṁkīrṇayuddhe ca sikṣayāmāsa kauravān | Ibid.Ādi.131.29.

⁶⁶ *Kṛṣi gorakṣā vāṇijyam vaiśyam karma svabhāvajam | M.Bh. Bhīṣma.40.48; vaiśyasya satatam dharmah pasupalyam krsistatha | Ibid.Anu.141.54.*

⁶⁷ *Vedavedaṅgatavajño Dhanurveda ca niṣṭitaḥ | Rām.Bāla.1.14. Sarvaśāstārthatatvañjaḥ smṛtimānpratibhānavān | Ibid.Bāla.15; ārohe vinaye caiva yukto vāraṇavājinām | Ibid.Ayodha.1.28.*

⁶⁸ *Dhārayantyasurā yāni dadāmyetāni sarvaśaḥ | Ibid.Bāla.27.13; Mantragrāmaṁ grhāṇa tvaṁ valāmativalaṁ tathā | Ibid.Bāla.22.12.*

⁶⁹ *gāndharve ca bhuvī śreṣṭho vabhuva bharatāgrajaḥ | Ibid.Ayodha.2.34.*

⁷⁰ *Tato droṇaḥ paṇḍuputrānstraṇi vividhāni ca.....taṁstu sarvān samaniya sarvavidyāstrasikṣitan | M.Bh.Ādi.131.9-67.*

⁷¹ *Tato droṇaḥ pāṇḍuputrānastrāṇi vividhāni ca | grāhayāmāsa divyāni mānuṣāni ca vīryavān | Ibid. Ādi.131.9;*

gadāyuddheo'sicaryāyārṇ tomaraprāsaśaktiṣu | droṇaḥ saṁkīrṇayuddhe ca sikṣayāmāsa kauravān | Ibid.Ādi.131.29.

⁷² *arjunād veda vedajñoḥ sakalaṁ divyamānuṣam | Ibid.Ādi.221.72 ; jagṛhuḥ sarvamīśvastramarjunād divyamānuṣam | Ibid.Ādi.221.,88.*

During the age the methods of study were varied from class to class. But recitation and recapitulation were very popular during this period⁷³. Every day students' were required to spend a part of their time in the school in jointly reciting a portion of work they had committed to memory. As a result of this training the memory of average student was very highly developed. During the age *Tapasyā*, *Svādhyāya*, Debate and discussion were still popular⁷⁴. Besides this storytelling and listening the learned person was also very popular during the age. In the *Mahābhārata*⁷⁵, the learned *Ugraśravā* went to the *Naimisāranya*, the hermitage of *Śaunaka*, where he delivered the lectures in front of *Śaunaka*'s disciples about the *Brahmatattva*. Practical examination was another method which was very popular during the age. We find in the *Mahābhārata*⁷⁶ that *Droṇācarya* frequently took the practical examination, to test the students' quality of education.

Position and Duties of the teacher :

The teacher also possessed the highest moral and spiritual qualifications during the age. The teachers' were generally called the *Ācārya* and *Guru*. We find the three types of *Ācārya* during the age viz., *Chandovit Ācārya*, *Vedavit Ācārya*, and *Vedyavit Ācārya*. The *Vedavit Ācārya* was the chief among the two types of *Ācāryas*⁷⁷.

⁷³ *Ṛcho bahvrcamukyaiśca preyarmāṇāḥ padakramaiḥ* | *M.Bh.Ādi. 70.37.*

⁷⁴ *Tapāḥ svādhyāyanirataṁ tapasvī vāgvidāṁ varam* | *Ram.Bāla. 1.1;*
svādhyāyī aluvdhoniyatavrataḥ | *M.Bh.Āśwa. 46.6.*

⁷⁵ *Tamāśramamanuprāptaṁ naimiṣāranyaavāsinām* | *citrāḥ śrotāṁ kathāstatra parivabrustapasvinaḥ* || | *Ibid.Ādi.1.1.3.*

⁷⁶ *droṇaḥ praharaṇajñāne jñāsuḥ puruṣaśarbhaḥ* || | *Ibid.Ādi.131.67.*

⁷⁷ *Misra, Babulal. Mahabharatkalin siksa pranali, Prathibha Prakasan, Delhi, P.66.*

Various descriptions were met with in the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* of celebrated *Gurus* like *Vasiṣṭha*, *Viśwāmitra*, *Sandīpani*, *Droṇa*, *Parasurama* and *Kaṇva*. In the *Mahābhārata* we find some stories like – the story of *Ekalavya*, the story of *Upamanyu*, story of *Āruṇi* and *Veda*⁷⁸. From these stories we gathered that the teacher received high reverence during the age.

As regards the duties of the teachers' in the Epic also mentioned that the teacher was the guardian of the students' life. He had immense moral responsibility. He builds the life of his student. The *Mahābhārata*⁷⁹ mentioned that that the parents only create the body of his child. But the preceptor gives new birth of his student.

Educational Institution :

The educational institutions during the Epic period were mostly correspondence with earlier period. But during the age hermitage education was very popular. In the hermitage the students used to have very congenial atmosphere for learning. The Epics tell us numerous hermitages where pupils' from distant parts of the country gathered for instructions. A full-fledged hermitage had several departments, which were enumerated as follows:-

- 1) *Agnisthāna* – The place of worship.

⁷⁸ *Tato niṣādarājasya hiraṇyadhanuṣaḥ sutah|ekalavyo mārāj droṇamabhyājagāma ha.....tataḥ śaraṇ tu naiṣādiraṅgulībhīrvyakarṣata| na tathā ca sa śignro 'bhūda yathā purvaṇ narādhīpa || M.Bh.Ādi.131.31-51.*

Etasminnantre kaścīdṛṣirdhaumyo nāmāyodastasya śiṣyāstrayo babhūvurūpamanyurāruṇirvedaścita.....tatparitoṣācach śreyah sarvajñatām cāvāpa|Eṣā tasyāpi parīkṣā vedasya |Ibid.Ādi.3.21-80.

⁷⁹ *Sarīramaitau sṛjataḥ pitā mātā ca bhārata| ācārya śāstā yā jātiḥ sā satyā sājarāmarā||Ibid.Anu105.18-19.*

- 2) *Brhama sthāna* - The place of study *Veda*.
- 3) *Viṣṇu sthāna* - The place for teaching *Rājñīvidya*.
- 4) *Mehandra sthāna* - Military section.
- 5) *Vivasvata sthāna* - Astronomy section.
- 6) *Soma sthāna* – Section of Botany.
- 7) *Garuḍa sthāna* - Section dealing with Transport and conveyances.
- 8) *Kārtikeya sthāna* - Military organization⁸⁰.

Some of the famous hermitages during the Epic period were:-

1) **The hermitage of *Vālmikī*** : The famous hermitage of the *Vālmīki* was situated in *Chitrakūta* hill on the bank of the river *Tamasā*⁸¹. Many students resided in this hermitage to become proficient in *Śāstrīk* knowledge. The twins sons of *Rāma*, *Kuśa* and *Lava* were taught the *Vedas*, *Vedāṅgas* and the art of music in this hermitage⁸². The beauty of this hermitage was so admirable that many venerable guests like to come in this hermitage again and again. It was the most famous hermitage during the Epic period.

2) **The hermitage of *Bharadvāja*** : The hermitage of *Bharadvāja* was situated near the confluence of the river *Ganga* and *Yamuna*⁸³. *Ṛṣi Bharadvāja* was master in *aśtravidyās*. That is why, his hermitage was basically popular for

⁸⁰ Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P.333.

⁸¹ *Citrakutamimam paśya pravṛdvaśikharaṁ girim.....abhigamyāśram sarve vālmīkimbhivādayan||Rām.Ayodhā.56.10-16.*

⁸² *Sāngarṁ ca vedamadhyāpaya kiñcidutkrānta –śaiśavau| svikṛtiṁ gāpayāmāsa kavi-prathamapaddhatim||Raghuvamśam.XV.33.*

⁸³ *Gaṅgāvāścapī sarītāraṁ bharavājsya darśanam |Rām.Bala.3.15; Gaṅgādvaram pratimahān babhuva bhagvānṛṣiḥ|bharadvāja iti khyātaḥ||M.Bh.Ādi.129.33.*

military education. King *Drupada* and *Droṇācārya*, the son of *Ṛsi Bharadvāja* were received education in this hermitage⁸⁴.

3) The hermitage of *Agastya* : The hermitage of *Agastya* was situated in *Daṇḍakāraṇya*⁸⁵. Several students used to live here to study the various *Śāstras*. The *Mahābhārata* refers to that king *Yudhiṣṭhira* visited this hermitage⁸⁶. In this hermitage the students performed the different types of *Yajñas* and continuously study the *Vedas*, *Vedāṅgas* and different other subjects.

4) The hermitage of *Mahaṛṣi Kanva* : The hermitage of *Mahaṛṣi Kanva* was situated on the bank of the river *Mālinī*⁸⁷. There were many small hermitages situated on the bank of the river *Mālinī* but *Mahaṛṣi Kanva*'s hermitage was one of the best among them. The whole environment of the jungle tract around the *Mālinī* used to be odorous with the blazes of the sacrificial altar and resonant with the chanting of the *Veda mantras*⁸⁸. In this hermitage there lived eminent scholars of *Veda*, Jurisprudence, Philosophy, *Smṛti* and so on.

5) The hermitage of *Śaunak* : The hermitage of *Śaunak* was situated in *Naimiṣa* forest⁸⁹. Thousand of disciples lived with *Saunak*. The presiding personality of *Śaunak* was called *Kulapati*. It was his designation because thousand of disciples used to study under the roof of sage *Śaunak*. The wide

⁸⁴*Sa nityāśramam gtvā droṇena saha pārthivaḥ | cikīdadāhyayanam caiva cakāra kṣatriyaṣabhaḥ || M.Bh.129.42.*

⁸⁵ *Rāma.Bāla.1.41.*

⁸⁶ *agastyāśramamāsādya durjāyāmuvasa ha || M.Bh.Bāna.96.1.*

⁸⁷ *Mālinīmbhito rājana nadīrṁ puṅyārṁ sukhodakām tasyātire bhagavataḥ kāśyapasya mahātmanaḥ || Ibid.Ādi.21.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.Ādi.70.19-26.*

⁸⁹ *Namiṣāranye śaunakasya kulapatedvādaśavārsīke śatre || Ibid.Ādi.1.1.1.*

ranges of subjects were studied in this hermitage. This hermitage was also the holy spot of pilgrimage.

Besides these hermitages many other hermitages like the hermitage of *Vyāsa*, *Vaiśiṣṭha*, *Viśwāmitra*, *Paraśurāma*, *Dhaumya* and *Kāśyapa* also were held in high esteem during the age.

Education of Women :

The education of women was still extensive but we find divergent views regarding the education of Women. Some authorities expressed that women were not found adequate opportunity during those days. But when we discuss the overall status of women then we find some changes. But with regard to the educational status of women in the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, we find the name of several erudite scholars. This throws light that during the age women also received education. Parents were eager to educate their daughters so that they might emerge as learned scholars. *Sitā*, the wife of *Rāma* was an erudite scholar. After the marriage she continued to have her lessons on *Śruti* from famous *Brāhmaṇas*. During her exile period she could pride herself on being *Paṇḍitā*⁹⁰. Like that many other women were highly qualified during the age. They were *Kauśalyā*, *Tārā*, *Śakuntala*, *Draupadi*, *Kuṅṭī*, *Gāndārī*, *Sāvitrī*, *Śhivā*, *Vidulā*, *Sulavā*, *Gautami*, *Arundati*, *Śāndilī*, *Damayantī*, *Śikandī*, *Gaṅgā*, *Satyavati*, *Gāndhārī*, *Mādhavi*, *Subadrā*, *Chitrāṅgadā*, *Śabarī* and so on. Some women like *Yogiṇī Sula*, *Sidhi Shiva*, *Tapasviṇī Śāndilyaduhitā* observed

⁹⁰ Sarkar, S.C. *Educational Ideals and institutions in Ancient India*, Janaki Parakashan, Patna, 1979. P.65.

permanent celibacy. They were the *Naiṣṭhika Brahmācārinis* throughout their lives⁹¹.

During the age parents generally appoints private teachers for their daughters. In the *Mahābhārata*⁹² we find that *Draupadi* along with her brothers received his education from the private teacher. In the *Virāṭa parva* of the *Mahābhārata*⁹³, we find that as a private teacher *Vṛhannalā Arjuna*, taught dancing and singing to *Uttarā*.

Education of other Castes :

In the epic period, the three upper classes, such as, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya* and *Vaiśya* were entitled to Vedic studies. But there is divergent opinion regarding *Śūdra*'s right to education. *Śūdras* had no right to be invested with the sacred thread and therefore, they were debarred from prosecuting the Vedic studies. But in the *Mahābhārata* we find that *Lomahaṛṣan Sauti* and *Sanjay* belonging to charioteer class were very proficient in knowledge⁹⁴. They did not study the *Vedas*, nevertheless they were acquainted with the essence of the *Vedas* by means of going through the *Purāṇas*. We find that *Yudhiṣṭhira* appointed *Yuyutsa* to safe guard *Hastinapura*. None would appoint an ignorant person in such a strategic position. Certainly *Yuyutsa* was an intelligent and learned man. In the *Rajasuya* sacrifice *Yudhiṣṭhira* addressed *Śūdra* as

⁹¹ *Atraiva brāhmaṇī siddhā kaumārabrahmacārinī|yogayuktā divaṁ yātā tapaḥ siddhā tapasvinī|*
M.Bh.Salya.54.6-8.

Atra siddā Śivā nāma brāhmaṇī vedapāragā |adhītya sākḥilān vedān lebhe svarṁ
dehamakṣyam||Ibid.Udyog.109.19.

⁹² *Brāhmaṇaṁ me pitā pūrvaṁ vāsayāmāsa paṇḍitam|so 'pi sarvāmitro prāha pitre me*
bharatarṣabha||nītiṁ bṛhaspatiproktāṁ bhrātṛṇ meo 'grāhayat purā|teṣāṁ sakāśāda
śrauṣamahametāṁ tadā grhe|| Ibid.Ban.32.60-61.

⁹³ *Sa śikṣāyāmāsa ca gītṛvāditam ||Ibid.Virāṭ.11.12-13.*

⁹⁴ *Lomahaṛṣaṇputra ugraśravāḥ sautiḥ paurāṇiko.....vinayāvanato bhūtvā*
kadācit sūtnandanah||Ibid.Ādi.1.1-2.

‘Venerable’. From the term ‘Venerable’ it may be presumed that during those days Śūdras were held in the eye of high esteem⁹⁵. Besides, in the cabinet of ministers there were three persons belonging to Śūdra class. We may also point out the case of high-minded Vidura. He was born from the womb of Śūdrā woman. But by means of his paternal introduction Vidura was entitled to the Vedas. Nevertheless, he introduced himself as Śūdra⁹⁶. From the aforesaid references it may be said that during those days there were many doubts regarding Śūdra’s right to education in the society. Almost in all cases Śūdras were engaged in the service of the upper three classes. Hence there were many obstacles and restrictions regarding Śūdras right to education during those days.

End of Studentship :

The studentship terminated with the performance of *Samāvartana* ceremony. There were no extra innovations and alterations. All the students, offering the proper *gurudakṣiṇā* performed *Samāvartana* ceremony and thereafter started their family life. But in the *Mahābhārata*⁹⁷ we find an interesting thing that sometime the teachers were satisfied with the unalloyed (pure) devotion of their students, they offered their own daughters in marriage with the students after the *Samāvartana* ceremony and thereby made the teacher-student relationship more closer. For example, the sage *Uddālaka* and

⁹⁵ *Manyāna śūdraṁśca* | *M.Bh Sabhā.33.41*;

trīṁśca śūdran vinītaṁśca śucīn karmaṇi pūrvake || *Ibid.Śhānti.85.8.*

⁹⁶ *Śūdrayonāvahaṁ jāto* || *Ibid.Udyog.41.5.*

⁹⁷ *Tasmai prādāta sadya eva śrutñca, bhāryāyañca vai duhitarāṁ svāṁ sujātām* || *Ibid.Van.132.9*;

dadāni patnīṁ kanyāñca svāṁ te duhitarāṁ dvija *tatastāṁ pratijagrāha yubā bhūtāvā yasisvaniīm* || *Ibid.Aśwa.56.23.*

the sage *Gautama* offered their daughters to *Kahoda* and *Uttanka* respectively in marriage.

To sum up the system of education in Epic age, we find that during the age *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya* and *Vaiśya* received actual education. Military education received special emphasis. The method of learning was also varied from pupil to pupil. The students' finished their education at the age of twenty-five. The status of teachers was also high. We find three types of teachers during the age. The Hermitage education was very popular during the age. Some hermitages were very popular where thousands of students flocked there to study the *Vedas* and the other *Śāstras*. But regarding the education of women and *Śūdra* there were divergent views in society. It was a matter of fact that *Śūdra* status in epic age was much misunderstood. So we find that variegated development of education was the contribution of the Epic age.

Puranic period :

The word *Purāṇa* means old narrative i.e., what is very old. The Vedic and Buddhist literature mentioned that it was the fifth *Veda*. It denotes the history of the world. From the *Atharvaveda*, for the first time we find the word *Purāṇa*. It indicates that it was a class of work. But when we go through the details of the *Purāṇas*, we find that it was designed for those who had no access to Vedic literature. Mass people were not entitled to study the *Vedas* and to perform its sacrificial rite, because the Vedic rites were very sacred. That is why, in ancient period the *Purāṇas* were developed to give the proper education and knowledge among those who were debarred from the *Vedas*.

There are eighteen major *Purāṇas*, such as, *Brahma Purāṇa*, *Padma Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, *Śiva Purāṇa* or *Vāyu Purāṇa*, *Bhāgavta Purāṇa*, *Nārada Purāṇa*, *Mārkeṇḍeya Purāṇa*, *Agni Purāṇa*, *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa*, *Liṅga Purāṇa*, *Varāha Purāṇa*, *Skanda Purāṇa*, *Vāmana Purāṇa*, *Kūrma Purāṇa*, *Matsya Purāṇa*, *Garuḍa Purāṇa* and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*. But besides these *Purāṇas* there are also eighteen minor *purāṇas* such as, *Sanatkumāra*, *Naraśimha*, *Vāyu*, *Śivadharmā*, *Āścarya*, *Nārada*, *the two Nandikeśvaras*, *Uśanas*, *Kapila*, *Varuna*, *Śāmba*, *Kālikā*, *Maheśvara*, *Kalki*, *Devī*, *Parāśara*, *Marīci* and *Bhāskara* or *Sūrya*⁹⁸. All these *Purāṇas* contain the history of that age. All the historical, political, cultural and educational records are existed in the *Purāṇas*. They describe the history of ancient period.

Admission and Period of Studentship :

Like the Vedic age, during the age through the initiation ceremony the student also started their educational career. The students performed the *Upanayana* ceremony at the very early age. In the *Purāṇa*⁹⁹ we find that *Kṛṣṇa* and *Balarāma* also performed the *Upanayana* ceremony. After the *Upanayana* ceremony these two *Yadu* youths went to *Sāndīpanī* who resided in *Avantī*. *Śivadatta* who was expert in all the sacred lores performed this *Upanayana* ceremony at the very early age¹⁰⁰. But during the age the child could start his education at home. Occasional references shows that Home education was

⁹⁸ *Vāhyaṁ pūrāṇaṁ prathamam pādyaṁ vaiṣṇāvameva ca.....aṣṭādaśa pūrāṇāni śrutvā saṁkṣepato dvijāḥ|| Kūrma Purāṇa, Pūrvabhāga.1.13-156.*

⁹⁹ *Tatasāndīpani kāśyamavanti puravāsinam| vidyārthaṁ jagmaturbālau kṛtopanyanakṛmau|| Viṣṇu Purāṇa.V.21.19.*

¹⁰⁰ *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa.II.3.35.*

popularized during the period. But actual education was started after the initiation ceremony. At that time he used to live in the preceptor's house¹⁰¹. In the house of the Preceptor *Prahlāda* was being taught by many preceptors¹⁰². The *Naiṣṭhika Brahmācārī* lived throughout his life in the preceptor's house. But if the *Naiṣṭhika Brahmācārī* wished to become a house holder then after the death of his preceptor he could be a regular house holder. Like the other ages during the age the student should follow some rules and regulations and also perform some duties for his preceptor¹⁰³. The students should always put on *Mekhalā*, wear matted hair and carry a *Daṇḍa* or staff in his hand. They had to engage in what is pleasing and beneficial to his preceptor. He would follow the path of purity and *ācāra* as prescribed in the *Dharmaśāstra*¹⁰⁴. He would read the text from his preceptor and should follow his instructions. He would salute his preceptor and other elderly persons. He would take care in doing welfare to others. He would do the morning and evening adoration, worship the deities and should learn the *Vedas*¹⁰⁵. He would not roam here and there unnecessarily. He would take rest when instructed by his preceptor. He would daily beg alms for his preceptor and go to the forest, fetch the fruits, water,

¹⁰¹ *Bālaḥ kṛtopanayano vedāharanataparāḥ|gurugrhe vasedbhupa brahmācārī samāhita||*
Viṣṇu Purāṇa.III.9.1.

¹⁰² *Ituktho 'sau tadā daityairnīto gurugrhaṁ punaḥ|Jagrāha vidyāmaniśaṁ*
guruśruśruśaṇḍyataḥ||Ibid.XVII.28.

¹⁰³ *Śaucācāravrataṁ tatra kāryaṁ śuśrusaṇaṁ guroḥ|Ibid.III.9.2*
Upanīya guruḥ śiṣyam śikṣāyecchaucamāditāḥ|ācāramagnikāryam ca sandhyopāsanameva
ca|Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa .III.228.1.
daṇḍi ca mekhalī caiva hyadhaḥśyāyī tathā jati| guruśruśruśaṇam bhaikṣyam Vidyā vai
brahmācārīṇaḥ||Brahmāṇḍa.. Purāṇa I.8.176.

¹⁰⁴ *śrauta-smārto hi dharmo jñāndharmaḥ sa ucyate|divyānāṁ sādhanāt sādhubrahmacārī*
gurorhitaḥ|| Matsya Purāṇa.CXLIV.10-5.

¹⁰⁵ *Ubhe sandhye ravi bhuvā tathāivāgniṁ samāhitaḥ.....tenevoktaṁ patdedvedarṁ*
nānyacitaḥ purasthitaḥ| Viṣṇu. Purāṇa III.9.3-5.

sacrificial twigs and *kuśa grass*¹⁰⁶. After collecting begging alms he should hand over these to his preceptor and therefore should start his study. He should look after the house of his preceptor and his cattle. Even in the absence of his preceptor he was also entrusted with various duties. He was called *Sadhū* because he worked for the welfare of his preceptor¹⁰⁷. Besides these the *Purāṇa* also mentioned that the student should control over his senses and should totally abstain from the sexual acts¹⁰⁸. Without the control over the senses, the student could not able to attain the true knowledge. During the age the disciplined life was most important thing, to attain success in life. We find that during the age if any student would disobey the order of the preceptor and do irreligious works then the preceptor would give him severe punishments. We find that *Yājñavalkya* was reported to have been punished by *Vaiśampāyana*¹⁰⁹.

Subjects of Study :

During the age was some changes were made in the subjects of studies. The Students were not always confined with limited subjects and the traditional subjects. They had to study the divergent subjects. During the period subjects of study were categorized into two heads viz., (1) Primary course and (2) secondary course. The Primary courses comprises reading, writing, and arithmetic, storytelling, drawing, singing, dancing and swing for girls particularly. The students were not troubled with long table of arithmetic result

¹⁰⁶ *Avagāhedapa purvamācāryeṇāvagāhitāḥ/samiḥladikarṁ cāsya kalyarṁ kalyamupānayate || Viṣṇu. Purāṇa. III.9.6.*

¹⁰⁷ *Vidyāyaḥ sādhanāt sādhur brahmacāri gurorhitāḥ | Brahmāṇḍa. Purāṇa 1.2.32.24.*

¹⁰⁸ *Maithunasyāsamacaro na cinta namjalpanam| Ibid. 1.2.32.51.*

¹⁰⁹ *Tataḥ kruddho guruḥ prāha Yājñavalkyarṁ mahāmatih | mucyatārṁ yat tvayādhītamatto viprāvamanaka || Viṣṇu Purāṇa.V.8.*

and abstract lessons. The teacher used to explain all these things with the help of books. The secondary courses comprise numerous subjects. Basically the fourteen *Vidyās* were recommended by the *Purāṇas*. These fourteen *Vidyās* were – four *Vedas*, six *Vedāṅgas*, *Purāṇas*, *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā*, and *Dharmaśāstra*. These fourteen *Vidyās* were again added with other four *Vidyās* viz., *Āyurveda*, *Dhanurveda*, *Gāndarvaveda* and *Arthaśāstra*. Besides these *Vidyās* the *Veda*, *Vyākaraṇa* and *Rājñīti Vidyā* received special attention during the age.¹¹⁰

Methods of Study :

As regard the Methods of study of the *Purāṇas*, there were no perceptible changes. The old intensive study of the text was still in the general rule. Even in the case of memorizing oral transmission of education was also insisted on. But without understanding of anything, learning was still prohibited. That is why, during the age the knowledge was received very slowly. Regular self study was also prevalent during the age¹¹¹. Besides these, debate, discussion, observing, illustrating, travelling and questioning were still very popular. But during the age Verbal products was very popular. *Purāṇa* mentioned that Verbal product was greater than all other objects¹¹².

Position and Duties of the teacher :

¹¹⁰ aṅgāni vedaścatvāro mīmāṃsā nyāyavistarahaarthaśāstra caturtha tu Vidyā hyastādaśaitvataḥ|| || Viṣṇu Purāṇa .III.VI.28-29.

¹¹¹ Svadhyayerapantyaena prajapatim|| Ibid.III.9.9.

¹¹² sarvebhyo'pi padārthebhyah śābdarṇ vastu mahattaram||Brahmāṇḍa. Purāṇa .II.38.3.

During the age the teachers position was also very high. Society payed high respect and honour to the learned teachers¹¹³. They were called the *Ācārya*, *Guru* and *Upādhyāya*. But by this time two types of teachers were recognized by the society viz. 1) *Dikṣā Guru* and 2) *Sikṣā Guru*. The *Dikṣā Guru* was the family priest, who guided the boy through the initiation ceremony and taught him the first easy lesson from religious texts. The *Sikṣā Guru* who undertook the real education of the pupil after taking the charge of the student. Both the teachers received high reverence from the society. They were self imposed, non arrogant, well disciplined and straight forward persons. They spread the real education in society. They established the good code of conduct in society. They guided the students what is right or wrong. They were the guardian of students' health, habit and behaviour. They were the real creator of society. They choose the students according to their capacity and tendered real education. We find that by this time one teacher had thousand of disciples. The students from different parts of the country used to gather to these teachers and receive the highest knowledge.

Women Education and Education of other caste :

The Women and *Śūdras* received special attention during the age. From the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*¹¹⁴ we find that during the time of *Purāṇas* the Women and *Śūdras* can able to receive proper education. In the *Mahābhārata* we find that *Lomoharṣan*, *Sanjay*, and *Sauti* received higher education from the

¹¹³ *Pūrvam datvā tu gurave śeṣānapyarcayed budhaḥ/
uktānantatṛṭiyaiṣā sadānantaphalapradaḥ ||Matsy. Purāṇa.LXII.33.*

¹¹⁴ *Bhāgavta .Purāṇa.I.10.21-30.*

*Purāṇas*¹¹⁵. The *Purāṇa* also mentions that women received special attention. They were called *Brahmavādinīs* and *Sadyavadus*. Even married women can be able to become *Brahmavādinī* during the age. It is stated that *Vṛhaspati*'s sister was an excellent woman, who had taken the vow of celibacy and become a *Brahmavādinī*¹¹⁶.

So it is clear that *Purāṇa* was developed for the propagation of learning of those mass people who were deprived from the society. But they did not neglect the Vedic religion. They would always follow the *Vedas*. That is why, it was said that '*Purāṇam Vedasammatam*'.

¹¹⁵ *Adhithya ca purāṇam ca vinīto Lomharṣaṇḥ/ṛṣina ca tvayā pṣṭaḥ kṛtprajñḥ sudhārmikaḥ*||
Brahmāṇḍa. Purāṇa.I.15

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.II.33.*