

CHAPTER – IV

Aims and objectives of formal education in Vedic and Buddhist Period

Aims and objectives of formal education in Vedic and Buddhist Period :

In the Vedic literature we find three words viz. *Śikṣā*, *Adhyayaṇa* and *Vinaya*, which conjointly, correspond to modern word education. The word *Śikṣā* comes from the root *Śikṣa*, which means to learn. The word *Śikṣā* almost fifty times appears in Ṛgvedic hymns. In the *Vedas* it means ‘to learn’, ‘to practise’ and ‘to recite’. In the *Upaniṣat* it means the science of pronunciation of letters, accents and the like¹. In the *Upaniṣat* we find the word *Śikṣā* but not *Śikṣā*. The *Śankarabhāṣya* of *Taittirīya Upaniṣat* mentions that ‘*Śikṣaiva Śikṣā*’, that means the word *Śikṣā* and *Śikṣā* are the same². To this point the Ṛgvedic hymn VIII.103.5 gives the expression that ‘*Yadeṣāmanyō anyasya vācam śāktasyeva vadati śikṣamāṇaḥ*’. Here the word *śāktasyeva = śikṣamāṇaḥ* refers to the teacher, who has the ability to teach his knowledge by uttering and pronouncing the Vedic text and his pupils recite this Vedic text from his lips³. The word *Adhyayaṇa* is the substitute of the word *Śikṣā*. It comes from the *Brāhmaṇa*, *Upaniṣat* and *Sūtra* literatures; it means ‘to go near’ and also it expresses the idea of pupils’ going to some teacher for education. The *Bālamānoraṃā* commentary on *Bhattoji-diksita’s Siddāntakumudī*⁴ defines this technical term in the sense of repetition by the pupil of the syllables in the order in which they issue from the lips of his teacher. The word *Vinaya* which

¹ *Śikṣāṃ vyākhyāsyām | varṇaḥ svarāḥ | mātrā valam | sāma santānaḥ | T.U.I.I.*

² *Śankarabhāṣya, Ibid.II.I.*

³ *ṚV. VIII.103.5.*

⁴ *Gurumukhadhsarānupurvīgrahaṇamadyayanam | śabdārthajñānaṃ vedanam | (Bālamānoraṃā-a commentary on Bhattoji-diksita’s Siddāntakumudī).*

means 'to lead out' in a particular way. Thus it literary means 'an action in which (inborn faculties) are led out (i.e. trained) in a particular manner', or 'an action in which (one) leads (oneself) in a particular manner'. The first and the second meaning are identical with that of 'education' and the third word expresses the idea of formation of character; and these three words really make up the whole idea of education in ancient period⁵.

Acquisition of proper or absolute knowledge, development of personality and above all formation of character are the main aims of education in ancient 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. It is a fact that in ancient age religion played a vital role. All the teachers are usually priests. At the time of Convocation ceremony, the teacher addresses his students and takes oath that they must do and follow their civic duties and responsibilities and preserve the culture and heritage which remains as the objective of education in ancient period.

1. Acquisition of Absolute knowledge:

The ancient Indian education is indicative of ancient culture and civilization. The main motto of our ancient Indian education was to attain Salvation. The Vedic teacher had long ago realized the importance of education. That is why, they passed the remark that 'human beings without

⁵ Bokil, V.P. *The History of Education in India, Part I, Bombay, 1925, P.242.*

knowledge are like an animal⁶. With the attainment of proper knowledge a person becomes illuminated. That is why the Ṛgvedic hymn X.71.7 mentions that ‘*akṣaṅvantaḥ karṇavantaḥ sakhāyo manojaveṣu asamāyabhūvuh*’, that means a person is superior to another not because he possesses an extra hand or eye, but because his mind and intellect are sharpened and rendered by proper education⁷. A person, who does not possess the real light of education, may be described as blind⁸.

The Vedic Ṛṣis imparted proper knowledge or education to their *Śisya*. Through the *Tapas* they attained this proper knowledge or Supreme knowledge technically called *Parā-Vidyā*. In the *Ṛgveda*, we find that seven Ṛṣis absorbed in *Tapas* to realize the lowest to the highest knowledge⁹. They know that it is the ultimate reality. From this knowledge a person can attain Salvation or *Mokṣa*. The *Vedas* and *Upaniṣat*, explain the importance of this highest knowledge. They mention that it is distinguished from all other knowledge. Because it is the *sarva-vidyā-pratiṣṭha*¹⁰. Through the *Tapas*, *Yoga* or *dhyāna* a person can attain this highest knowledge.

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*¹¹, we find that *Nārada* approached *Śanat Kumar* and stated that – he had mastered the four *Vedas*, the fifth Veda (i.e.

⁶ *Vidyā vihīnaḥ paśuḥ* | *Nitiśatakam* .16.

⁷ *ṚV.X.71.7*.

⁸ *Anekaśaṁśayocachodi paroḁṣārthasya darśakam | sarvasya locanaṁ śāstraṁ yasya nāstyandha eva saḥ* | *Subhāshita Ratna Bhānder.P 30.V.2*.

⁹ *devā etasyāmavadanta purve saptaṛṣayastapase ye niṣeduh* | *ṚV.10.109.4*.

¹⁰ *sa brahmavidyāṁ sarvavidyā pratiṣṭhāṁ* | *Mun.U.1.1.1*.

¹¹ *adhīhi bhgava iti hopasasāda sanatkumārāṁ nāradaśtaṁ hovāca yadvethe tena mopasīda tatasta urdvaṁ vakṣyamīti sa hovāca* | *Ṛgvedaṁ bhagavohadhyemi yajurvedaṁ sāmavedamārthavaṇaṁ caturthamīti hāsapurāṇaṁ pañcamāṁ vedānāṁ vedaṁ pitryaṁ rāṣiṁ daivaṁ nidhirṁ vākovākya mekāyanāṁ devavidyāṁ brahmavidyāṁ bhūtavidyāṁ kṣtravidyāṁ nakṣatravidyāṁ sarpadevajana vidyāmetad bhagavohadhyemi* | *sohahaṁ bhagavo mantravidevāsmi nātmvicachrat*

Itihāsa, Purāṇa), Grammar, Mathematics, the *Vedāṅgas*, Social sciences, Military Sciences, Magic, the Arts, Logic, Ethics, Astronomy, Fine arts, Crafts and many other branches of knowledge. He had become a master of *mantra* i.e. learned man. Yet he could not know his self. *Śanat Kumāra*¹² then replied that his knowledge is not real. His knowledge consisted of some symbols of objects and not complete knowledge.

Like that in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*¹³, we also find that *Śvetaketu* after twelve years of his education, returned home from the house of his *Guru* but his father realized that his son's education was incomplete. He studied all the *Vedas, Vedāṅgas* without knowing the real meaning. As the education in those days was the acquisition of real meaning but not the acquisition of mere objective of knowledge. One has to go through daily one's own *Veda* along with real meaning also. Then his father himself undertook the further education of his son at home. There are many other examples which clearly point out that self realization or self fulfillment is the highest knowledge of mankind. The *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣat*¹⁴ mentions that, a *Brāhmaṇa*, after completion of education, wishes to stand with real strength but not with the knowledge of the books only. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat* we find another such case *Upakosala Kamalayana*, after twelve years of his education was not considered by his

taṛṇ..... || *Ch.U.VII.1.1-3*.

¹² *Tarṇ hovāca yadvai kiñcaitadadhygiṣṭā nāmaivaitat*||*Ich.U. VII.1.3*;
sarpadevajanaavidyā nāmaivaitannāmopāssveti|| *Ibid. VII.1.4*.

¹³ *Sa ha dvādaśavarṣa upetya caturviṃśativarṣaḥ sarvān vedānadhītya mahāmanā anūcānamānī stabdha eyāya*.....*bhagavāṛṇstheva me tad bravītviti tathā somyeti hovāca* ||*Ibid. VI.1*.

¹⁴ *Tasmād brāhmaṇah pāṇḍityarṇ nirvidya bālyena tiṣṭāset* || *B.U.III.5.1*.

teacher for the highest knowledge¹⁵. So in ancient period, people believe that without the real knowledge everything is like dry wood or ashes.

Upaniṣat divided all knowledge in to two categories viz., *Parā Vidyā* and *Aparā Vidyā*. The *Aparā Vidyā* is regarded as the knowledge of *Veda*, *Vedāṅgas*, *Dhanurveda* and so on. Whereas *Parā Vidyā* or *Brahma Vidyā* is Absolute knowledge. Without the *Aparā Vidyā*, a man cannot attain *Parā Vidyā*. For self realization both *Parā* and *Aparā Vidyā* are necessary. Through the *Tapas* a person can attain the highest knowledge. But these *Tapas* are very long and hard austerities. Any person is not able to receive this highest knowledge. A person who is physically and mentally strong is able to attain this highest knowledge. For this reason, the ancient *Ṛṣis* divided the life of an individual into four stages. In the first half of the Vedic period we do not find this type of division. But *Atharvaveda* mentions two stages of life i.e. *Brahmacarya* and *Gārhastya*. Later on when the complexity of life is increased the ancient *Ṛṣis* divided the life of an individual in to four stages¹⁶. The first stage is the stage of *Brahmacarya* or the life of education and preparation. The second stage is the *Gārhastya* or life of the house holder when he is to perform his social duties and to act as the real member of the community. The third is the stage of *Vānaprastha* or the life of retirement and meditation, when he gradually withdraws from the role of an active member of society. The fourth stage is *Sannyasa* when he is entered into a life of renunciation and cuts off all social and family ties in order to attain his salvation. They mention that each

¹⁵ Ch.U.IV.10.

¹⁶ *Brahmacārī gr̥hasthaśca vānaprastho yatistathā* ||M.S.VI.87.

stages of life is assigned in such a way that the performance in any stage prepare the individual for next higher stage. So if anyone is unable to receive Absolute knowledge, yet he is able to live happy life because he receives the *Aparā Vidyā* and performs the three stages of life properly. But *R̥gveda*¹⁷ clearly mentions that ideal learning is the realization of truths and not the mastery of the recitation of text. Pupil who realizes the proper meaning of *R̥k* becomes the master of all knowledge.

This tradition continued till the Buddhist period. After getting the admission, every novice tries to pursuit 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 or *Nirvāna*. *Buddha* himself mentions that everyone has the potential to realize the ultimate wisdom. With the wisdom a person can solve all problems of life. According to *Mahāyāna* teaching person who is on this way to attainment of Absolute knowledge has to go through certain stages. Hence he called upon man to accept some injunction and practice some *śilās*¹⁸. Like he has to live in a lonely place or in forest and thereafter he must try to purify his mind of five hindrances (*Pañcaśilās*) viz.,

- To refrain from destroying living creatures.
- To refrain from taking that which is not given.

¹⁷ ॠco akṣare paramē vyomanyasmindevā adhi viśve niśeduh / yastanna veda kimcā kariṣyati//RV.I.164.39.

¹⁸ Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpādanī samadiyemi | abinñadāna veramaṇī sikkhāpādanī samadiyemi | kemesu micchacera veramaṇī sikkhāpādanī samadiyemi | musāvāda veramaṇī sikkhāpādanī samadiyemi | surāmerayamajjapamādatthāna Veramaṇī sikkhāpādanī samadiyemi |Mahāvagga.I.56.

- To refrain from sexual misconduct.
- To refrain from incorrect speech.
- To refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which leads to carelessness.

Habitual practice of these *śilās* would remove the veil and expose the inner spirit. He will be able to pursue proper knowledge and attain *Nirvāna*, which is the ultimate aim of Buddhist education system¹⁹.

2) **Formation of Character:**

Character building was the main objective of education in ancient India. Because neither the sex nor age matters; a person is respected for his qualities and his good action²⁰. For this *Manu*²¹ clearly declares that “Neither the study of the *Veda* nor liberality nor sacrifices nor any self imposed restraint nor austerities can even procure the attainment of rewards to a man whose heart is contaminated by sensuality”. Ancient teachers were aware of the natural tendency and wanted to point out that character was more important than learning.

It is a fact that 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. In order to achieve the high ideal, the strict discipline is prescribed for the students. Under the direct supervision of teacher, a student started his

¹⁹ *Ārogyaparamā lābhā, nivvānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ|atṭhaṅgiko ca maggānaṃ, khemaṃ amatgāmināṃ 'ti||Majjhimnikāya 2.201.*

²⁰ *Guṇāḥ puṣṭhānaṃ guṇiṣu na ca linghaṃ na ca vayah ||Uttarāmacarita IV.11.*

²¹ *Vedāstyagaśca yajñaśca niyamāśca tapāṃsi ca | na vipraduṣṭabhāvasya siddiṃ gacchanti karhicit || M.S.II.97.*

educational life. 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. The *Atharvaveda* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*²² clearly mention that begging is prescribed for the student to produce in him a proper spirit and humility. It was the most important part of student life. The students should daily collect food and whatever is given to him he has to hand over the same to his master. He also daily tends the fire and cattle of the house of the teacher. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*²³ it is clearly mentioned that the students should guard the teacher's house and his cattle. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*²⁴ we find that *Satyakāma Jābāla* went on tending upon the cows of his preceptor till the number increased from four hundred to thousand. In the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*²⁵, we find that *Tāruksya* guards his teacher house for a whole year. Likewise in the *Mahābhārata*,²⁶ we find *Upamanyu*'s grazing the cattle of his teacher.

The Buddhist period also maintained the same tradition. After morning penance or studies the student should go round the village for begging²⁷. The Buddhist text²⁸ also mentioned that the student made all the arrangements for the *Guru*. Daily he cooked the food for his teacher. After the teacher meal of the teacher the student washed his utensils. The student also looked to the

²² *Bramacāri ahrīrbhūtvā bhikṣate* || ŚR.B. XI.3.3.5;A.V.VI.133.3.

²³ *Brahmacāriṇa ācāryaṁ gopāyanti | gṛhān paśūnno paharāniti* || *Ibid*.III.6.2.15.

²⁴ *Kṛśānāmabalānām catuṣsathā gā.....sahasraṁ sampeduḥ* || *Ch.U. IV.4.5.*

²⁵ *A.A.III.1.6.3-4.*

²⁶ *Upādhyāyaḥ preṣayāmāsa vatsopamanyo gā rakṣasveti* || *M.Bh.Ādi.3.34.*

²⁷ *piṇḍcārikena bhikkhave bhikkhunā idāni gāmaṁ pavisissāmit*||*Cullavagga.VIII. 5.2; Milindapañha.IV.5.31.*

²⁸ *Mahāvagga.I.25.7.*

cleanliness of the preceptor's residence, arrangements of things and the management of the kitchen. The student was completely under the control of the preceptor, he could not go out without the latter's permission. These look like menial services. It makes a student self independent and the behaviour of the student was always very nice. *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*²⁹ mentioned that the observance of those rules was for the interests of the students own welfare. This rule made the student very high in conduct and respectful in behaviour.

The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*³⁰ also suggest that before the student was taught the highest knowledge, they should develop their inner discipline. The student should have to control over the senses. They should over come such attitude like anger, greed, fear, hatred, falsehood, pride, idleness, *mada*, *moha*, *chapatatā*, wickedness, envy, useless conversation, loud talk, sleep, ignorance, abusive and harsh language, detracting other people, looking at woman, conversing with woman, injuring other people, hurtful feeling and many more. They should avoid intoxicants, flesh, scented substances, highly spiced seasoned food, messaging with oil, cosmetics, beauty products and above all music and dancing. All these things are destructive. So the student was always to avoid all this destructive things. The same tradition is continued till the Buddhist period. In the *Jātaka* stories we find that two *Cāndālas* came to *Takṣaśilā* to study law but betrayed themselves by their

²⁹ *guru prasādanīyāni karmāṇi svastyayanam adhyayana sarṁvṛttir iti ||Āp.D.S.I.2.5.9.*

³⁰ *Sa yadmṛgājīnani vaste, sa yadaharaharācāryāya karma karoti, sa yat suṣupsur nidrām ninayati.....tāsām(oṣadhīnām) punyārṁ gandharṁ pracchidya nopajighret. Adhaḥ śayīta, adhaṣṭisthedadho vrajet. noparisāyī syād na gāyno na nartanī na saraṇo na niṣṭivet ||G.B.II.1.2.1-9; Āp.D.S.I.3.2.*

coarse language and manner³¹. That is why, at the beginning of education career or at the time of *Pabbaja* ceremony the students should follow the ten commandments³² viz.,

- Don't destroy life.
- Refrain from bad conduct.
- Never speak lie.
- Don't eat at an inappropriate time.
- Don't use intoxicants.
- Don't speak ill of any one.
- Don't use cosmetics.
- Avoid music and dance shows.
- Don't take anything unless it is offered to you.
- Don't accept costly things of Gold and Silver.

These Ten Commandments were called *Dasasikkhāpadān*. The students were bound to add here these Ten Commandments. We also find that for the attainment of highest knowledge, they also follow the five *Śilās*, which are commonly known as *Pañcaśilās*. To develop the pure and inner spirit, *Buddha* himself suggests that the Monk should specially practice these *Pañcaśilās*. Habitual practice of these *Śilās* would remove the veil and expose the inner spirit.

³¹ *jātim paṭicchadetvā brahmaṇamāṇavaṇṇana Takkasilaraṃ gantvā sippaṃ ugghanhissām || Citta- Sambhūta Jātaka.498.*

³² *Anujānāmi bhikkhave sāmaṇerā naṃdasasikkhāpadani.....imāni dasa sikkhāpadani imesu ca sāmaṇerehi sikkhitun ti ||Mahāvagga.I.56.*

All these rules and restrictions seem to be very severe to us now. But such restrictions helped in the formation of character. They made student highly moral in conduct and respectful in behaviour. In doing physical labour at the teacher's house, the student developed their limbs and muscles in the fresh air and sunlight. The moral side received direct training in the morning and evening prayers. The intellectual side was developed in hearing explanation of *mantras*. Memory and imagination received greatest attention, in fact these made the marvellous development in character. *Bhatṛhari* in his *Nītiśāstra*³³ emphasizes that pure and noble character is the greatest ornament. Education helps man to acquire wealth, learning, prosperity, name and fame. All those achievements have no value without character. If character is lost everything is lost.

For this the foreign travelers pay a high compliment to the Indian character. They think that truth and virtue hold in high esteem in Indian mind. These show that character of Indian is very pure and they always practice truth and virtue. Actually ancient *Ṛsis* think that a man with a questionable character was unable to receive education. That is why; they mentioned that character and moral feeling formation were necessary to achieve the high esteem of life.

3) Development of Personality:

Like the other aim of education, personality development is another most important aim of education in ancient period. Because depressed

³³ *Eiśvaryasya vibhuṣaṇaṁ sujanatā śaurayasya vāksarṇyamo jāñasyopaśamaḥ śrutasya vinayo vittasya pātre vyayah| akrodgatapasah kṣamā prabhavitudharmasya nirvyājatā sarveṣāmapī sarvakāraṇamidam śīlaṁ param bhuṣaṇam||Nītiśatakam,83.*

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. During the age there was a free choice of education. All the castes were entitled to receive proper education. The second hymn of twenty-sixth chapter of the *Yajurveda* bears ample testimony to this³⁴. All the available historical records pertaining to the fact that in early Vedic and Buddhist period every individual who had the mental capacity and mature in his behaviour and personality was entitled to receive proper education. In that age education was not regarded as a hereditary institution but as an occupational one. In the *Rgveda*³⁵, we find a family in which father³⁵ was a *Vaidya*, the son a Poet and mother an ordinary grain grinder. Later when the caste system became rigid then everybody follows the hereditary profession. In that age birth not occupation came to be regarded as the basis of the caste system. The rights of the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Kṣatriyas* increased tremendously. *Vaiśyas* and *Śūdras* rights go downwards. But the system of education was not totally bound to be affected by the above mentioned changed condition. Ample references are there that if any one likes to study the subjects of the other castes then there

³⁴ *Yathemārṇ bācam kalyāṇī mābadāni janebhyaḥbhūyāsamyarṇ me kāmaḥ .
samṛdhyatamupa mado namatu ||Y.V.26.2.*

³⁵ *Kārurahaṇ tato bhiṣagupalaprakṣiṇī nanā |
nānādhiyo vasuyavo 'nu gāiva tasthimendrayendo pari straba || RV.9.112.3.*

was no objection at all. Anyone can get free education from any teacher. For this the student's self respect is developed and he believed that he was not a member of deprived class. It was a matter of fact that *Vaidik Ṛsis* were aware of this mental tendency of people. That is why, in the time of *Brahmacāri* period, the teacher treats every student equally. There was no discrimination; the teacher tries to develop this tendency equally to his pupils. So the teacher imposed some restrictions or rules and regulations to his pupil. And the student must follow this restriction without any hesitation. With this restriction the student's self confidence is developed and he became a perfect member of the community. In the ancient period, when students stay in the teacher house, then the teacher created such an atmosphere that the student's personality is automatically developed. There was no rule that the *Brāhmaṇa* and *Kṣatriya* student do not follow the teacher's rules and regulations. All students' equally follow the teachers rules and regulations. The *Vaidik Ṛsis* think that a person does not become a *Brāhmaṇa* by birth; he becomes a *Brāhmaṇa* by virtue and his work. The ancient *Ṛsis* knew of this truth. That is why, in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*³⁶ we find that *Kavasha*, a son of *Illusha*, a low caste woman was admitted as a *Ṛsi* for his purity, learning and wisdom. We also find that *Jābāla* was the founder of one school of *Yajurveda*. Like that in the *Mahābhārata*³⁷, *Lomahaṛṣan*, *Sauti* and *Sanjoy* belonging to charioteer class were very proficient in learning.

³⁶ A.B.II.3.19.

³⁷ *Lomharṣanaputra ugraśravāḥ sautih paurāṇiko.....bhutvā kadācit sutanandanah*||M.Bh.Ādi.1.1-2.

The teacher also insisted the student on the simplicity of life and habits. This self disciplined life makes him perfect individual. After the preceptor house the student became a perfect house holder and a perfect member of the community.

4) **Religious Education :**

The most potent influence of ancient Indian education was that of the religion. Religion ceremonies are there way of life. Religion customs 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. R.K.Mookerji in his book ‘Ancient Indian Education’ mentions that one unique feature of ancient Indian civilization is that it has been shaped and molded in course of its history more by religious influence than by political or economic consideration³⁸.

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. First a child had to perform the *Vidyārambha* ceremony. In that ceremony the child should worship the *Saraswati*, *Hari*, *Lakṣmi*, *Vināyaka* and tutelary deities. After that when the child was ready for higher education he had to perform *Upanayana*

³⁸ Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, Prologue I.

ceremony. In this time he also performed *Sāvitrī Vrata*, *Medhajana Vrata* and many more *vratas*. These were the religious observances. Every student had to observe all these ceremonies during his educational career. Another important thing is that during the educational career, the student had to perform morning and evening oblation or homage³⁹. This adoration must be done with a concentrated mind in a pure place outside in the village, and in standing posture, and in silence. The *Vedas* give references about this⁴⁰. The *Manusmṛiti* and *Mahābhārata*⁴¹ also give reference that the student prays to the *Surya* in the morning and to *Agni* in the evening. All this performances train up the boy in right moral conduct and also stimulate his preconscious thought. His moral side received direct training by performing the morning and evening prayer and the performance of sacrifice. During the academic session, the students also perform some other rituals. When the session began in the month of *Śrāvaṇa* or *Bhādrapada*, the student had to perform special ceremony called the *Upākrama* ritual and when the annual education session closed in the month of *Pauṣa* or *Māgha*, they had to perform *Utsarjana* ceremony⁴². In these ceremonies, the student used to offer their tribute of respect to the *Saraswati*, *Hari*, *Lakṣmi*, *Vināyaka* and tutelary deities. These ceremonies make a person very humble and they always try to maintain this humbleness in his life. At the end of the

³⁹ *Pūṛvām sandhyāṁ japaṁstistet sāvitrīmārkadarśanāt |paścimāṁ tu samāsīnaḥ
samyagrksavibhāvanāt ||M.S.II.101.
ācamya prayato nityamubhe sandhye samāhitah |
śucau deśe japaṁ japayamupāsīta yathāvidi ||Ibid.II.222.*

⁴⁰ *Trirā divaḥ savitarvāryāṇi divedive ā suva trirṇo ahanḥ | RV.III.56.6.*

⁴¹ *Brāhmomuhurte budhyeta dharmārthau cānucintayetevamevāmarāṁ sarṁdhyām
samupāsīt vāgytaḥ ||M.Bh.Anu.104.16-17. M.S.II.101.222.*

⁴² *Śrāvaṇyāṁ praustapadyāṁ vāhapyupākṛtya yathāvidhi | yuktśchandārṁsyadhīyita māsān
viprohardva pañcamān ||Ibid.IV.95; puṣye tu chndasāṁ kuryādvahirutsarjanaṁ dvijaḥ |
māghaśuklasya vā prāpte pūrvahne prathmehahani||Ibid.IV.96.*

educational career the student had to perform the *Samāvartana* ceremony. An auspicious day was selected for the performance of this religious ceremony. In this day a student become a *Snātaka*. But before taking the title *Snātaka*, he had to perform some other rituals. He had to perform *Homa* and give the *gurudakṣinā* to his preceptor⁴³. After all these sacrifices he became a perfect member of the community. The students had to perform all these religious ceremonies during his educational career.

From the *Vedas* we find that during the age people were very much aware of the religious ceremonies. The religion rite had a great hold over the public mind. The prayer, worship and sacrifice were the beginning as well as the conclusion of all training. People spend most of their time in pondering the religious works. It is a matter of fact they think that through the religious ceremonies they can achieve all efficacious things or can attain all the desire⁴⁴. For this reason the each system education in ancient India has grown out of religious instruction. Each system tries to explain in own way the inter relation of men, nature and God. Religious instructions or rites were carefully imparted by both theory and practice. The teacher always tried to nourish the child's mind from within by religious exercise and moral tales and to prepare it for work in worldly life.

The Buddhist education system also deeply influenced by the religious traditions and customs. Preaching on religious topic was their chief duty. For all the monks performing of religious instruction was compulsory. They

⁴³ *Vidyānte gurumarthena nimantrayam kṛtvānujñātasya vā snānam* | A.G.S.III.9.4.

⁴⁴ *Vratā niyamadharmāśca sarve sankalpajāḥ smṛtāḥ*||M.S.II.3.

proclaimed that all the subjects should be received religious instruction. It is a fact that they believe that the performance of religious ceremonies a man obtains happiness in the next world. That is why they think that there was no wrong time for religious ritual⁴⁵. In beginning of their educational career or at the time of *Pabbaja* ceremony they take oath like – I take Refuge with the *Buddha*. I take Refuge with the Religion. I take Refuge with the Order⁴⁶. In this oath they mentioned that they always follow the religious tradition and customs.

During the age people always worship and perform sacrifices. That is why; the life of the pupil was full of ritual acts. Every pupil were required to perform all the religious ceremonies dully. They had to participate all the religious festivals. They think that education without religious instruction was no education at all. It is a matter of fact that religious rite is a force which unites man with a man. It helps to stimulate and up hold the right moral conduct. It is a total configuration implying morality, virtue and duty. That is why both the education have the same opinion about religious education. But Buddhists education systems do not believe the concept of God. They are the opinion the real thing is true not imaginary. That is why in Buddhist period secular object of education also received equal importance. They mentioned that both the religious and secular object of education is very important. Through the secular education people understand the realities of society. As a

⁴⁵ *Dharmaṇa cāpnoti sukhaṃ paratra| Buddhacarita. VII.26.*

Nāsti dharmasya jīvite| Ibid.VI.21.

⁴⁶ *Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, saṃghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi||Mahāvagga.I.12.3-4.*

matter of fact, after several years Buddhists education system developed a new phase of Indian religious thought.

5) Social accountability of the ancient education system :

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-Centred life. His education and wealth is not for his own self. That is why, as a responsible member of the society he constantly and efficiently do all his social services.

During the age ascetic life was also not against the social services. The learned persons are honoured everywhere. Each and every person respects them. They have the ability to inspire each and every persons of society. Society gives special privilege to them⁴⁷. So, it is the duty of learned person that they should contribute to the progress of the society. It is the principle of both the Vedic and Buddhist education systems. When *Ṛsis* attained highest knowledge, they tried to spread the education to the other members for the development of society. From the very early period of *Vedas* people were aware about their social duties and responsibilities. They did not confine their knowledge and wisdom to themselves but were anxious to impart it to their fellows in society. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*⁴⁸ mentions that those who perform the social duties and responsibilities in meditated way lead their life happily and after the life they gain *Brahmaloka*. But by the progress of society,

⁴⁷ *Bhūtikarmāṇi kūrṇāṇaṁ taṁ janāḥ kurvate priyaṁ || M.Bh.Anu.104.10 .*

⁴⁸ *Sarvabhūtānyanyatra tirthebhyaḥ sa kholvevaṁ vartayan yāvadāyusaṁ brahmalokamabhisamapdyate ||Ch.U.VIII.15.1.*

when caste system originated, then different duties are allotted to for different castes. Everyone must do their allotted services.

The aim of the three types of debt and the five *Mahāvratas* which were conceived during those days was to make aware the individual for his social duties and responsibilities. The *Taittiriya Samhitā* and the *Śatapatha*⁴⁹ *Brāhmaṇa* give reference about these three debts. They stated that a man owes three debts which he must repay in three prescribed ways, viz. (I) *Rṣiṛna*-debt due to saints by the acquisition of and imparting knowledge. (II) *Devaṛna*-debt due to God by performing religious sacrifices. (III) *Pitriṛna*-debt due to parents by becoming a householder and maintaining the continuity of the family institution and tradition by getting children. At the time of the *Upanayana* ceremony we also get the hints of these three types of debt. The five *Mahāvratas* also insisted upon to remain aware about the social services. *Devayajña*, *Pitryajña*, *Brahmayajña*, *Manuṣyayajña* and *Bhutayajña* as included within the purview of *Pañca Mahayajñas* were to be performed by every human being⁵⁰. But when the ancient social system became very complicated; it was difficult to perform equally by every individual of course, it was desirable to perform one's own duty. In the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*⁵¹ *Srikrṣṇa* advised *Arjuna* –that even death is better while performing one's own duty, the imitation of other's duty leads to disaster. So from this it may be

⁴⁹ *Jāyamāno vai brāhmaṇstr̥bhīṛṇair̥ṇavāñjāyate | yajñena devebhyo brahmacaryeṇa ṛsibhyaḥ prajayā pitṛbhyaḥ || Tait.Saṁ.III.10.5; ŚR.B.I.5.5.*

⁵⁰ *Pañcaiva mahāyajñā | tatveva mahāsatrāṇi bhūtyajña manuṣyayajñāḥ pitryajña devayajña brahmayajña iti || ŚR.B.XI.5.6.1; T.A.II.10; M.S.IV.21.*

⁵¹ *Śreyān, svadharmah, biguṇah, paradharmāt, svanuṣṭitāt | svadharme, nidhanarṇ, śreyah, paradharmah, bhayāvah || Śrīmatbhagavadgītā, III.35.*

deduced that during those days people remained conscious about the society and used to perform the social services. As a son, a husband, a father, he scrupulously and thoroughly performs his duties. His wealth is not for his family but for charitable works. That is why in the time of Convocation ceremony the preceptor gives instructions that –

“O dear Son, always speak the truth. Discharge the duties laid down by the *Śāstras*. Always remain busy in self-study, make offerings to the Guru according to his wishes, there after enters in to the life of the house holder. Try to preserve the sanctity of lineage. Never desert the path of truth; never desert the path of religion. Never turn your face from noble deeds. Do not show contempt for your own thing, always remain inclined towards religious ceremonies”.

“Treat your parents, preceptor and guests like gods. Do what is good and avoid evil deeds. You should imitate only the good things in your elders and not others. You should reverentially offer a seat, shelter and alms to any *Brāhmaṇa* who may be superior to you as well as to other respectable and revered person who may come to your house. Charity should be given in all humility, that is, you should say to yourself. ‘All wealth is God’s. I have committed a wrong in regarding it as mine being led away by avarice’. You should give alms saying to yourself ‘whatever I am giving is not much’. You should do charity feelings all the time afraid lest it should be refused. You should do charity thoughtfully not promiscuously”.

“While doing all this, if you are ever in doubt in regard to your duty and moral conduct, you should follow the example and conduct and behaviour of those *Brahmanas* who are living there and are soft-natured, lofty-minded, high-principled, strict adherents to religion and efficient in counseling. Apart from this, if you are ever in suspense as to how you should bear yourself towards an inculcated person, you should follow the department of the thoughtful, upright, virtuous and pious *Brāhmaṇas*”.

This is the instruction of *Vedas* and *Upaniṣats*⁵². Pupil used to practise all these instructions in reality. So from this we find that during the age people believe that for a healthy and prosperous society people must know their social duties and responsibilities. And the ancient people realized that mutual give and take was essential to preserve the integrity of social ties.

6) Preservation of Culture and Heritage :

Another important aim of ancient Indian education was the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. To this point we may say that right from the Vedic age when the sages visualized the *mantras*, they tried to preserve the visualized *mantras*. For the first time they spread their knowledge to the other members of the society. Then there were constituted many *Sākha*, *Charaṇa*,

⁵² *Vedamanūcayācāryaōntevāsinamanuśāsti | satyaṁ vada | Dharmam cara |svādhyāyanmā pramadaḥ | ācāryāya priyaṁ dhanamāhṛtya prajātantuṁ mā vyavcechetsiḥ |satyānna pramaditavyam | dharmānana pramaditavyam |kuśalānna pramaditavyam |bhutaiya na pramaditavyam | svādhāyaya pravacanābhyāṁ na pramaditavyam |devapitrkāryārbbhyāṁ na pramaditavyam |matṛdevo bhavo |pitrdevo bhavo | ācārya devo bhavo |athitidevo bhavo |yānyanavadyāni karmāṇi tāni sevītavayāni |no itarāṇi | yanyasmākarṁ sucaritāni | tāni tvayopāsyāni no itarāṇi |ye ke cāsmachṛeyāṁso brāhmaṇaḥ teṣāṁ tvayāo'sanena praśvasitavyam |śraddayā deyam |āsrddyahdeyam |śriyā deyam |hriyā deyam | bhiya deyam |sarṁvidā deyam |atha yadi te karmavicikitsā va vṛttavicikitsā vā syāt ||ye tatra brāhmaṇaḥ sarṁamrśinaḥ |yuktā āyuktāḥ | alūkṣā dharmākāmāḥ syuḥ | ythā te teṣu varteran / tatha teṣu vartethāḥ |athabhyākhyateṣu ye tatra brhāmaṇaḥ sammrśinaḥ |yukta āyuktaḥ | alūkṣā dharmakāmāḥ syuḥ |yatha te teṣu varteran |tathā teṣu vartethāḥ |eṣa ādeśaḥ | eṣa upadeśḥ | eṣā vedopaniṣat| etadanuśāsnam | evamupāsitavyam |evamu caitadupāsyam | T.U.I.11*

Gotra, Pariṣat, for the preservation of the visualized *mantras*. Thereafter we find that there was a practice for the preservation of *mantras* by memorizing the same since in those days there was lack of art of writing. That is why, the seers tried to preserve the *mantras* in their brain by chanting. In the *Ṛgveda* we gather that the celibates praised the Vedic *mantras* imitating the sound of accents from one another like frogs⁵³.

In this way, the Vedic knowledge par excellence was preserved to us. It is said if literature is preserved, the culture is also preserved. For that reason, the Vedic seers had special attention in this respect. Besides, by means of the sacrificial rites, the cultural heritage was also preserved. In those days the sacrificial rites also contributed a great deal for the preservation of cultural heritage. In fact, we see that the social works pertaining to release from debt to deities and debt to ancestors also contributes for the preservation of culture and heritage.

In the Post Vedic period when the social good manners and social values were somewhat changed, a new literature was developed. In this process of creation *Dharmasūtra*, *Smṛtiśāstra* and Pauranic literature were written, since *Vedas* were difficult for some people. Besides, subsequent new literature was much easier for the common people. Later on, for the preservation of our culture and heritage, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* were composed. The *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* became acceptable and educative to mass people. The wandering scholar used to go round in the

⁵³ *ṚV.VII.103.5*.

country-sides and recited and explained the epics the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* and also the different *Purāṇas* before the public and thereby they roused the cultural values of the common run of people.

On the other hand, when the Buddhistic religion awoke, Buddha himself and his supporters spread their system of education (in keeping with their philosophy) among their followers⁵⁴. Monasteries were the Centres of their thoughts and philosophies. In course of time, these monasteries were developed as their Centres of education. These monasteries became famous for the preservation of their many fold heritages. In these monasteries there were also facilities for the study of Vedic scriptures, medicinal science, astronomy, astrology, grammar and so on over and above their religious scriptures. Among these monasteries *Nālandā* and *Vikramśilā* were all the more worthy to be mentioned. These two monasteries contributed a great deal for the preservation of ancient culture and heritage. These educational institutions gave more stress on Buddhistic education but these institutions also preserved the other religions culture and heritage⁵⁵.

From the aforesaid discussion, we may deduce that the aim of ancient Indian education was comprehensive or extensive. During those days the attention was focused for all round development for human being. Though in the system of Indian education the attention was more focused on mundane and spiritual development, nevertheless it may be said that the importance was given all the more on religious education, since religious education illumines

⁵⁴ *Tena kho pana samayena bhikku nānādisa nānājanapada..... || Mahāvagga.I.12-15.*

⁵⁵ *Radhakrishnan,S, Religion and society, Nabu Press, 2011,P.105-106.*

the path of salvation⁵⁶. In this respect, the dialogue between *Yājñavalkya* and *Maitreyi* as found in the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣat*⁵⁷ merits mention. *Maitreyi* says ‘*yenāhaṁ nāmṛtā syām tenāhaṁ kiṁ kuryām* i.e. what shall I do with the wealth which does not illumine for me the path of emancipation.

⁵⁶ *Vidayā amṛta śnute* || *YV.40.11*.

⁵⁷ *B.U.2.4; 4.5*.