



## The Indian Concept of Education : A Review

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**Abstract :** The ideal of education has been very grand, noble and high in ancient India. Its aim, according to Herbert Spencer is the ‘training for completeness of life’ and the molding of character of men and women for the battle of life. The history of the educational institutions in ancient India shows how old is her cultural history. It points to a long history. In the early stage it is rural, not urban. British Sanskrit scholar Arthur Anthony MacDonnell (1854-1930) author of A History of Sanskrit Literature says, “Some hundreds of years must have been needed for all that is found” in her culture. The aim of education was at the manifestation of the divinity in men, it touches the highest point of knowledge. In order to attain the goal the whole educational method is based on plain living and high thinking pursued thought eternity.

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As the individual is the chief concern and centre of this Education, education also is necessarily individual. It is an intimate relationship between the teacher and the pupil. The relationship is inaugurated by a religious ceremony called Upanayana. It is not like the admission of a pupil to the register of a school on his payment of the prescribed fee. The spiritual meaning of Upanayana, and its details inspired by that meaning, are elaborated, in many texts and explained below in the proper place. By Upanayana, the teacher, “holding the pupil within his as in a womb, impregnated him with his spirit, and delivers him in a new birth.” The pupil is then known as Dvija, “born afresh” in a new existence, “twice born” (Satapatha Brahmana). The education that is thus begun is called by; the significant term Brahmacharya, indication that it is a mode of life, a system of practices.

*“India was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit the mother of Europe’s languages: she was the mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; mother, through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all”.*

– Will Durant, American historian

This conception of education moulds its external form. The pupil must find the teacher. He must live with him as in member of his family and is treated by him in every way as his son. The school is a natural formation, not artificial constituted. It is the home of their teacher. It is a hermitage, amid surrounding, beyond the distractions of urban life, functioning in solitude and silence. The constant and intimate association between teacher and taught is vital to education as conceived in this system. The pupil is imbibing the inward method of the teacher, the secrets of his efficiency, the spit of his life and work, and these things are too subtle to be taught.

It seems in the early Vedic or Upanishad times education was esoteric. The word Upanishad itself suggests that it is learning got by sitting at the feet of the master. The knowledge was to be got, as the Bhagvad Gita says, by obeisance, by questioning and serving the teacher.



India has believed in the domestic system in both Industry and Education, and not in the mechanical methods of lager production in institutions and factories truing out standardized articles.

“A most wonderful things was notice in India is that here the forest, not the town, is the fountain head of all its civilization. Wherever in India its earliest and most wonderful manifestations are noticed we find that mean have not come into such close contact as to be rolled or fused into a compact mass. There, trees and plants, rivers and lakes, had ample opportunity to live in close relationship with men. In these forests, though there was human society, there was enough of open space, of aloofness; there was no jostling. Still it rendered it all the brighter. It is the forest that nurtured the two great ancient ages of India, the Vedic and the Buddhist. As did the Vedic Rishis, Buddha also showered his teaching in the many woods of India.

“The very word ‘Aranyaka’ affixed to some of the ancient treatises, indicates that they either originated in, or were intended to be studies in, forests.”

” He who is possessed of supreme knowledge by concentration or mind, must have his senses under control, like spirited steeds controlled by a charioteer. “says the Kaath Upanishad from the Vedic age downwards the central conception of education of the Indians has been that it is a source of illumination giving us a correct lead in the ‘various spheres of life.’ Knowledge, says one all affairs and teaches him how to act.

It may be said that India was the only country where knowledge was systematized and where provision was made for its imparting at the highest level in ancient times. Whatever the discipline for its imparting at the highest level in ancient times. Whatever the discipline for learning, whether it was astronomy chemistry, medicine, surgery, the art of painting or sculpture, or dramatics or principles of literary criticism or mechanics or even dancing everything was reduced to a systematic whole for passing it on to the future generations in a brief and yet detailed manner. University education run almost in modern lines existed in India as early as 800 B.C. or even earlier.

A single feature of ancient Indian or Hindu civilization is that it has been moulded and shaped in the course of its history more by religious than by political, or economic, influence. The fundamental principles of social, political, and economic life were welded into a comprehensive theory which is called Religion in Hindu Thought. The total configuration of ideals, practices, and conduct is called Dharma (Religion, Virtue or Duty ) in this ancient tradition. From the very start, they came, under the influence of their religious idea, to conceive of their country as less a geographical and material than a cultural or a spiritual possession, and to identify, broadly speaking the country with their culture. The Country was their Culture and the Culture their Country the true Country of the Spirit, the ‘invisible church of culture’ not confirmed within physical bounds. India thus was the first country to rise to the conception of an extra-territorial nationality and naturally became the happy home of different races, each with its own ethno-psychic endowment, and each carrying its social reality for Hindus is not geographical, not ethnic, but a culture-pattern. Country and patriotism expand, as ideals and ways of lie receive acquiescence. Thus, from the very dawn of its history has this Country of this Spirit ever expanded in extending circles,



Brahmarshidesa, Brahmavarta, Aryavarta , Bharatvarsha, or Jambudvipa, Suvarnabhumi and even a Greater India beyond its geographical boundaries.

Learning in India through the ages had been prized and pursued not for its own sake, if we may so put it, but for the sake, and as a part, of religion. It was sought as the means of self-realization, as the means to the highest ends of life viz. Mukti or Emancipation. Ancient Indian education is also to be understood as being ultimately the outcome of the Indian theory of knowledge as part of the corresponding scheme of life and values. The scheme takes full account of the fact that Life includes Death and the two form the whole truth. This gives a particular Angle of vision, a sense of perspective and proportion in which the material and the moral, the physical and spiritual, the perishable and permanent interests and values of life are clearly defined and strictly differentiated. Of all the people of the world the Indians is the most impressed and affected by the fact of death as the central fact of life. The individual's supreme duty is thus to achieve his expansion into the Absolute, his self-fulfilment, for he is a potential God, a spark of the Divine. Education must aid in this self-fulfilment, and not in the acquisition of mere objective knowledge.

### **Modern Concept Of Education**

MK Gandhi “ By education I mean an all around drawing out of best in child and man- mind body and spirit”

#### 1. All Round Development

In our national perception education is essentially for all. This is fundamental to our all round development material and spiritual.

#### 2. Acculturating Role { process of cultural and psychological change :

Education has an acculturating role. It refines sensitivities and perceptions that contribute to national cohesion, a scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit – thus furthering the goal of socialism, secularism and democracy enshrined in our Constitution.

#### 3. Development of Manpower

Education develops manpower for different levels of the economy. It is also a substrate on which research and development flourish, being the ultimate guarantee of national self-reliance.

#### 4. Unique Investment

Education is a unique investment in the present and the future. This cardinal principle is the key to the National Policy of Education.

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