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# EDUCATION TODAY HARDSHIP TO HAPPINESS

## Education- Purpose & Perspectives:

Education has always been a powerful tool towards the socialization of community, especially its younger generation; socialization is nothing but the process of learning of beliefs, values, patterns and societal role and culture. Education forms the foundation on which any great nation be built. The future of any country in the world can be predicted on the basis of the vitality and vision of its education system. Plato, an eminent Greek philosopher rightly said,

‘The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life’

But education in the 21st century seems to have become a drudgery-rather too complex a phenomenon, creating doubt about the true purpose of education. Should education symbolize hardship and human suffering or be new hope or a quest for human happiness? In order to understand education and its far reaching significance, we need to delve deeper and have a historical perspective. It would be interesting to

find out how education in India has been a force to reckon with since the Vedic Age. Two contradictory situations exist today. On the one hand, we have the influence of the moneyed class and on the other we have a small group of people, who selflessly work towards promoting the larger goals of education, having the focus on creating a conducive environment, where the innate talent or potential of an individual finds natural manifestation.

It is true, however, that education today goes beyond reading, writing & arithmetic, the proverbial three R’s! Given the democratization of education and globalization of society, education has emerged as a unifying force- a force that transcends all boundaries both physical and mental. It has become a bliss to be educated; it paves the way for new opportunities and possibilities. Education can be described as the most effective change agent transforming society the world over. Nelson Mandela was apt in his observation:

*‘Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.’*

## Vedic System of Education (circa 1500-1200 BCE)

It is heartening to note that Vedic system of Education was holistic and inclusive. There was no discrimination on the basis of gender as is evident from the fact that many ladies such as Ghosha, Lopamudra, Sulabha Maitreyi & Gargi had attained great heights and were held in high esteem for their intellect and learning.

It is important to highlight that Vedic education was more than just an education- it was a way of life. It put emphasis on all round development of the personality of the learners. One of the prime objectives of education was to help build character among the pupils. Intellect alone was not considered that significant. On the contrary, morality was viewed as the part and parcel of education. Education during the Vedic period was dedicated to the promotion and preservation of culture and tradition. It created among the learners strong sense towards civic responsibilities and social values. Thus, education went beyond books and hands on experience was imparted, preparing the learners to meet various vocational challenges as well.

## Education in Medieval Era: (10 century AD to Middle of 18th century)

There is no denying the fact that education has played a pivotal role in the modernization of Indian society. But education during the medieval India was influenced by myriads of factors, depending on who ruled the country and what their political and cultural beliefs and ideologies were. There were plethora of challenges facing society and the institution called education. There were multiple rulers ruling over different parts of the country, including present Pakistan, Bangladesh and some parts of Afghanistan and Nepal. India at no point of time was one nation, having one ruler. Further, our society was divided on the basis of castes, creed, languages and religious beliefs. There existed a system for imparting education to the young generation throughout the history. However, there was lack of any uniform system of education that could be applicable to all at pan India level as there was hardly any concept of the country being a unified whole.

It would be quite interesting to revisit some of the characteristics of Muslim Education system during medieval



India. Muslim rulers were quite liberal and promoted urban education. They founded primary schools (Maktabas) in which students would learn reading, writing and basic Islamic prayers but secondary school madrasa put more stress on advanced language skills.

There was a patronage of the rulers in the spread of education. In fact, several madrasas were set up by Sultans, nobles and many of their influential ladies. But there was little state interference in education. The relationship between the teacher and pupils was as cordial as during the Vedic and Buddhist time. It is true that it was religion dominated education. To quote **Prof. S. N. Mukerji**,

*'The whole education system was saturated with the religious ideals, which influenced the aim, the contents of*



*'A class of people Indian in blood and colour but English in morals and in the intellect'*

Sir Charles Wood's Despatch on Education (1854) is called the Magna Carta of Modern English Education in India. It clearly spelt out that the aim of the Government's educational policy was the teaching of western education. Thereafter, three important universities of Kolkata, Madras and Bombay respectively came into existence in the year 1857. We may also recall the contributions made by various commissions like the Hunter Education Commission (1882-83), the Indian Universities Act, 1904, the Sadler University Commission 1917-19.

It is gratifying to mention here that English forms the bedrock of modern education system in India. The acceptance of this language has proved instrumental in India's rise as a unified nation, notwithstanding the glaring diversity relating to language, customs, culture, ethos and values.

### **Education- Hardship to Happiness**

It is evident from the analysis of the facts above that education has always been an integral part of society, though its objective has never been the same. Education today is beset with many challenges, the most serious one being the tendency to use it as a tool for indoctrination. As a result, education becomes a liability and a threat to humanity. Education must be liberated from the clutches of the ethnocentric

people across the world. It must promote noble thoughts and ideas that can champion the universal ideals and global outlook. Education must be seen as a liberating force. It is a quest for human happiness; an anecdote to all our hardship. Once, happiness becomes the coveted goal of education, many issues confronting education like unemployment, want of skill force, lack of motivation will all these be taken care of. The true purpose of Education finds a beautiful expression in the immortal lines of **Brihadaranyaka- Upanishad:**

*Lead me from the unreal to the real!*

*Lead me from darkness to light!*

*Lead me from death to immortality! ■*

*study and even the daily life of the pupils.'*

However, though education was religion oriented, it allowed many other disciplines to flourish like Mathematics, Astronomy, Grammar, Art, Polity and Politics.

### **Modern English Education System**

It may be noted here that the foundation for modern English education was laid with the arrival of Thomas Babington Macaulay in the year 1835, who was of the firm belief that the oriental learning being imparted in India was inferior to the Western English learning and so he introduced English Education Act. Fortunately, Education in India has come a long way from **Macaulay's Historic Minutes** that had a deliberate design to create in India: