

VEDIC EDUCATION IN INDIA

BY-

LIPIKA BORUAH

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

- › The Vedas are considered as the earliest literary record of the India-Aryan civilization
- › “Vedas” means wisdom, knowledge or vision
- › The original scriptures of the Hindu teachings and contain spiritual knowledge encompassing all aspects of life.
- › Vedic hymns were either taught by Gods to the sages or that they were revealed themselves to the sages
- › Vedas were compiled by Vyasa, Krishna, Swaipayana around the time of Lord Krishna.

DIVISION OF VEDIC PERIOD



**Early Vedic Period (1500
– 1200 BCE)**

**Later Vedic Period (1100
– 500 BCE)**

CLASSIFICATION OF THE VEDAS

The Rig Veda

- The Book of Mantras
- Consists of 1017 hymns or ‘suktas’

The Sama Veda

- The Book of Song/ Melodies
- Almost drawn from the Rig Veda

The Yajur Veda

- The Book of Ritual
- guide book for the priests who executes sacrificial acts/ Yagja

The Atharva Veda

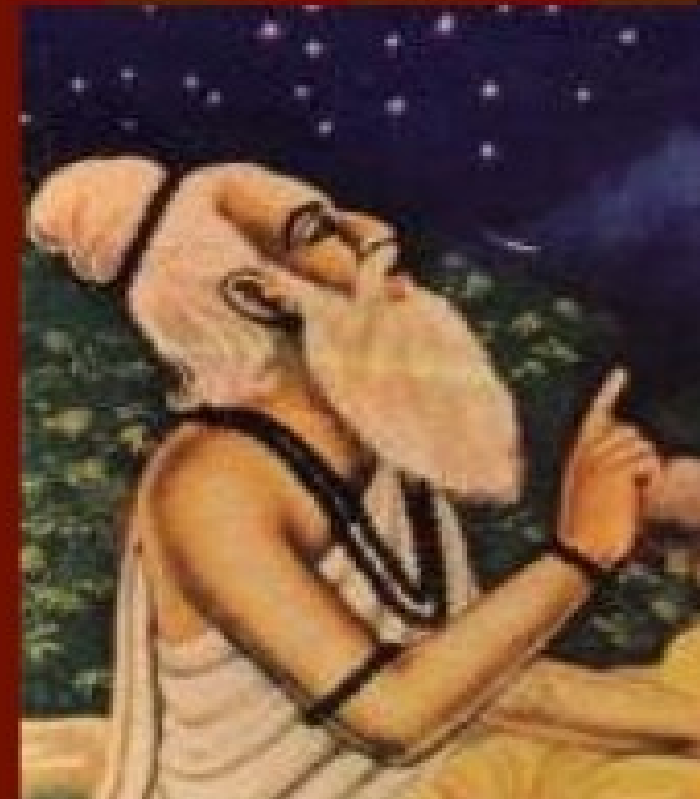
- The Book of Speed
- Consists of spells and charms prevalent at its time

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE VEDIC PERIOD

Sources of the Vedic education:

The Vedic literature represents the most important and intrinsic part of life of the India people. The Vedic literature consists of the following

1. Four Vedas
2. Six Vedangas
3. Four Upvedas
4. Four Brahmanas
5. One hundred and eighty Upanishads



Main features of the Vedic Education

Free education in Ancient India:- In ancient India, teaching was considered to be a holy duty which a Brahmin was bound to discharge irrespective of consideration of time or place. Teachers were expected to devote their lives to the cause of teaching in the missionary spirit of self-sacrifice, and the society laid down the principle that both the public and the state should help the learned teachers & educational institutions very liberally.

No state control on education:- Rulers of the country did not exercise any control over education.

High status of Teachers:- Teachers were a high honoured class-honoured by even by kings. Kings rose from their thrones to receive great teachers such as Narada, Valmiki and Vishwamitra.

Teachers as Parents: - Teachers behaved as parents to their pupils and pupils behaved as members of the teacher's family. The attitude of the pupil was to be one of complete submission.

Residential Schools:- Teachers and pupils lived together in residential schools and so identified themselves with one another.

AIMS OF VEDIC EDUCATION

- › **Physical and Intellectual Development:** Education was imparted in the open air and 'Pranayam' and 'Surya Namaskar' were its regular features. 'Brahmachari' up to the age of twenty-five, lead a very regular, hard and disciplined life.
- › **Religious and Spiritual Development:** Religion had always played a dominant role in the life of Indian people. Development of moral and spiritual faculties.
- › **Emphasis upon knowledge and experiences:** through discourses and discussions
- › Preservation and spread of culture

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- › **Promotion of social efficiency:** trained for a vocation and become a socially efficient and useful person.
- › Development of character and personality
- › **Ultimate Aim:** Realization of the Absolute (Brahma), Self realization

CURRICULUM

- › Vedic education was student centered i.e. according to the vocational needs, interests and aptitude of the students
- › **Brahmanas: Vedas** (1 Rig Veda 2 Yajur Veda 3 Sam Veda 4 Atharva Veda) and **Vedangas:** i. Siksha ii. Kalpa iii. Nirukta iv. Chandas v. Jyotisha vi. Vyakarna (grammar)
- › **Kshatriyas:** The art of warfare, riding, wrestling, hunting, swimming, running, jumping, etc.
- › **Vaishyas:** Agriculture and trade, arts & crafts
- › Besides this, **Dharma, Meditation, Logic**, etc.

METHODS OF TEACHING

- › Verbal education was imparted.
- › The hymns were memorized
- › Pronunciation of the verses
- › Mistakes were corrected by repetition
- › There were mainly three steps of learning according to Vedic system:
 - ❖ **Sravana** (Listening)
 - ❖ **Manana** (Reflection)
 - ❖ **Nididhyasana** (Meditation)

UPANAYAN SANSKAR

- › Considered important both in the Vedic and Post-Vedic periods
- › ‘Upanayan’ means ‘to come near.’: to the teacher
- › ceremony lasted for three days
- › Regarded as second birth of the individual: Dwija (the twice born or born again).
- › The pupil entered into a state of ‘Brahmacharya’
- › Performed at the age of eight years for Brahmans, eleven for the Kshatriyas and twelve for the Vaishyas. Shudras were generally deprived from education.

SAMAVARTANA CEREMONY

- › Meaning ‘graduation’ or ‘Convocation’.
- › Considered a Vidya-snataka (literally, bathed in knowledge)
- › Completion of at least 12 years of school, that is either about age 21 or later.
- › The teacher used to tell them how to lead a life of householder (Grihastha), how to take care of the society and the nation and how to serve the humanity as a whole.
- › The teacher used to tell all these in a ceremony which was known as samavartan.
- › The student asked the teacher for any gift (guru-dakshina) he desired.

Education in the Post-Vedic Period

- **Upanayan Sanskar**
- › **The Important Place of the Teacher**
- › **Curriculum during Post-Vedic Period:** included more subjects in post-Vedic period. It consisted of Vedas, History, Puranas, Grammar, Mathematics,, astronomy, dance, music etc.
- › **Daily Routines of Students**
- › **Duration of Education**
- › **Convocation Address**

CONTD....

- › **Women Education:** During the vedic age the women enjoyed equal educational right. Lopamudra, Apalla, Ghosh, and Vishwavara were some of the great women sages who were held in high esteem. During post vedic period they did not enjoy the same status as before.
- › **Varna system and Education in Society :** The Varna system in the vedic age was based on one's work or duty (karma). But during the post vedic period varna came to be determined by birth. Consequently the whole society was divided into four varnas – Brahman, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, & Shudra.

MERITS

- › Vedic period paid attention to the formation of character and development of personality of child.
- › Social skills developed through training in the fulfillment of duties.
- › Efforts were made for preservation of culture.
- › Education was free. Its expenses borne by society and the king .
- › Begging for alms developed humility and tolerance in students.

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- › Treated their students as their own children.
- › Education on women also received proper attention during vedic period. Music and dancing were also taught to girls.
- › Arts and handicrafts were highly respected.
- › The teacher enjoyed the highest social status.

DEMERITS

- The Vedic education laid undue stress on spiritual matters.
- Education was religion dominated
- Education was not considered as the birth right of a person.