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## Education in Ancient Bharat: Unveiling the Wisdom of the Past

**Dr. Dharmendra A. Buntaria**

Assistant Professor (Class-2)

Government B.Ed. College, Meghraj

Mo.-9408555594

E-mail- [dharmendrabuntaria@gmail.com](mailto:dharmendrabuntaria@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*Education is a systematic attempt toward learning basic facts about humanity. In ancient Bharat, value education played a vital role in cultivating essential values in students. Values are virtues, ideals, and qualities on which actions and beliefs are based. The whole life of a person in ancient Bharat was governed by values, and every human being followed rules defined by Dharma. Values are the base of our existence and make us realize that who we are is more important than what we have. The education system of ancient Bharat emphasis on character building, holistic growth, and the pursuit of knowledge resonates with our contemporary aspirations for education. Ancient Bharatiya education serves as a testament to the transformative power of knowledge and the profound impact it can have on individuals and society.*

*As we navigate the complexities of modern education, let us draw inspiration from the rich traditions and philosophies of ancient Bharat. By embracing the values and principles that guided education in the past, we can create a brighter future for generations to come. Let us honor the wisdom of our ancestors by nurturing minds, fostering character, and imparting knowledge that transcend boundaries and enrich lives. This article explores the importance and role of value education in ancient Bharat, highlighting the significance of values in shaping individuals and society.*

### Key words

*Education in Ancient Bharat, Gurukul system, Vedic period.*

## Introduction:

Education has always been a cornerstone of society, shaping individuals and civilizations alike. In ancient Bharat, education held a profound significance and was considered a vital aspect of personal and societal development. The education system of ancient Bharat was rich and diverse, with a strong emphasis on knowledge, character building, and holistic growth.

Value education is the guiding principle of life that contributes to the all-round development of an individual. It gives a direction to life and brings joy, satisfaction, and peace. In ancient Bharat, the educational system focused on the all-round development of students, including their mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual planes. The aim was to nurture character and instill essential values in students.

## Unearthing the Roots: History of Education in Ancient Bharat

The origins of education in ancient Bharat can be traced back to the Vedic period, which dates back to around 1200 B.C. During this time, the teaching of the four Vedas, the hymns and ritual practices, formed the core of education. The Vedas, written in the Sanskrit language, became

the foundation of classical learning and encompassed not only the pronunciation and implications of the hymns but also phonology, metrics, elementary grammar, and etymology.

Education during this period was primarily imparted through the Gurukul system, a residential school where students, known as Shishyas, lived with their Guru or teacher. The Gurukul system fostered a close student-teacher relationship, disregarding social standing. Moreover, temples and community centers also served as educational institutions, further expanding access to knowledge.

## The Vedic Period

During the Vedic period in ancient Bharat, the educational system emphasized self-realization and the realization of the Brahman. The Vedic education aimed at the removal of ignorance through religious preaching and the development of moral and spiritual values. The main objectives and ideals of Vedic education included the infusion of religious piety, the formation of character, the spiritual goal of education, and the all-round development of students. Subjects taught in Vedic education included the learning of the three Vedas and practical sciences relevant to the student's caste and gotra.

## The Gurukul System: Nurturing Minds and Souls

In the Gurukul system, students lived in proximity to their teacher, imbibing knowledge through a rigorous curriculum. The education system emphasized self-discipline, self-control, and the avoidance of pleasures and luxuries. The day would typically begin with the students offering their Guru a field, cow, horse, or elements of daily needs, according to their financial position. This practice symbolized the student's gratitude and respect for the teacher.

The curriculum in the Gurukul system encompassed various subjects, including the study of the Vedas, hymns, ritual practices, and associated literature. Teachers paid close attention to the psychological makeup of their students, tailoring their teachings based on individual interests and tendencies. The education system lasted for approximately 7 to 8 hours a day, with classes held under the shade of trees or thatched roofs, depending on the weather.

## Objectives and Values: Foundations of Ancient Bharatiya Education

Education in ancient Bharat was not solely focused on the acquisition of knowledge; it encompassed a broader set of objectives

and values. These included self-control, the development of character, the generation of social awareness, the integral development of personality, the propagation of purity, and the preservation of knowledge and culture. Students were encouraged to cultivate virtues and uphold moral values, which formed the bedrock of a well-rounded education.

The role of teachers in ancient Bharatiya education was of paramount importance. Teachers were divided into two categories: Acharya and Upadhyaya. The Acharya performed the Upanayana ceremony, imparted Vedic knowledge, and taught the Upanishads. The Upadhyaya, on the other hand, taught Vedic literature for livelihood. While teachers held authority over their students, they were bound by ethical guidelines and prohibited from exploiting their students for personal gain.

## Approaches towards Character Development

The ancient Bharatiya educational system employed various approaches to develop character in students. These approaches included daily religious worship or prayer, serving the Guru as one's own father, listening to Vedic mantras transmitted orally by the Guru, and meditating on their inner meaning. Through these practices,

students imbibed moral values and developed a sense of discipline, respect, and self-control.

### Role of Values in Ancient Bharatiya Society

Values played a significant role in ancient Bharatiya society. The society abided by certain moral values accepted as 'Global values.' These values were upheld by teachers, priests, and Vedic Rishis who served as moral guides. Ancient Bharatiya education aimed at promoting understanding of moral values, such as truth, non-violence, beauty, and goodness. The goal was to develop individuals with strong moral character, capable of contributing to the welfare of society.

### Evolution of Value Education in Bharat

Over time, Bharat has undergone various transformations, influenced by foreign invasions and cultural subgroups. These historical changes have impacted the way of living, thought, and values in Bharat. In the present era, there is an urgent need to inculcate values among individuals and promote them in the educational system and society. Value education helps individuals realize the true goal of learning and knowledge, leading to personal and societal development.

### The Enduring Legacy: Contributions of Ancient Bharatiya Education

The legacy of ancient Bharatiya education extends far beyond its historical context. The emphasis on holistic growth, character development, and moral values continues to resonate in modern educational philosophies. The Gurukul system, with its focus on personalized instruction and close student-teacher relationships, has inspired alternative educational models worldwide.

The Vedas, the foundational texts of ancient Bharatiya education, have left an indelible mark on the intellectual and cultural landscape of Bharat. Their profound insights into life, spirituality, and human existence continue to shape the collective consciousness of the Bharatiya people. The principles of self-discipline, moral integrity, and the pursuit of knowledge remain relevant and timeless.

### Conclusion

Value education played a crucial role in ancient Bharatiya education, focusing on the all-round development of students and the cultivation of essential values. The ancient Bharatiya educational system aimed at man-making and character-building, nurturing the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual planes of individuals. Values were deeply ingrained

in society, guiding principles that shaped the world outlook, attitudes, and conduct of individuals. In the present era, the importance of value education remains, as it contributes to personal growth, societal well-being, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

As we navigate the complexities of modern education, let us draw inspiration from the rich traditions and philosophies of ancient Bharat. By embracing the values and principles that guided education in the past, we can create a brighter future for generations to come. Let us honor the wisdom of our ancestors by nurturing minds, fostering character, and imparting knowledge that transcend boundaries and enrich lives.

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