

A study of Indian education system and it's correlation to religion

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Abstract

As we all know India is the land of religions and religious activities. It is a land where God concept is followed by many people and in very large amount. If you go in the history of this land, you will be exposed to the education system of Indian at that time. In India, our ancestors followed the unique tradition while educating their young ones. They had adopted the "Gurukul" system for the education purpose which is much more related to modern day boarding schools. In the ancient period our educational organizations, as well as our teachers, were believed in the only thing that religious education is the only way to gather supreme. That is why they used to teach Vedas to their students so that their students could learn and can educate themselves with the divine knowledge. Education and Religion, two of humankind's most ancient endeavors, have long had a close relationship. Social scientists and Historians have written about this relationship and about how the two may influence each other. This research paper presents a broad overview of scholarly research into the ways religion can affect educational achievement. It is not an exhaustive survey of the academic literature, but instead, a brief summary of some explanations proposed to account for attainment differences among religious groups. Religion is undoubtedly not the only reason for this variance; many other factors may play equal role, including economic, geographic, cultural factors and political conditions within a country or region.

Their annual portion also, the researcher can say that, made in such way so that all the ways of gaining knowledge would have consisted into their total portion. Like, they had added the learning of Vedas in their portion with the learning of different weapons and powers. They have added both for the only reason that they wanted their students to be learned in an entire manner not only with the books and not only with the weapons as well. The researcher wants our education system to adopt the concept of religious education but in a different manner. We can give our student a detailed knowledge of our ancient scriptures and about the history of religions, we can also start to teach our great scriptures to our students, like Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Vedas and other ancient scriptures.

Keywords:- Religion, education, ancient scriptures, academic literature, powers

Introduction

There are certain necessities without which a man cannot live a life of his own. One of these is education. The Greek philosopher Aristotle has said that man is social animal by nature and by necessity. If good is the aim man's life, then its pursuit and achievement involves fulfillment of certain conditions. In India, the most

learned men and women of ancient times were residents of Buddhist and Hindu monasteries. In the Middle East and Europe, Christian monks built libraries and, in the days before printing presses, preserved important earlier writings produced in Latin, Greek and Arabic. In many cases, these religious Scholars of Buddhism note that Siddhartha Gautama, the religion's founder, often is called "teacher" because of his emphasis on "the miracle of instruction." He considered learning essential for attaining the Buddhist goal of enlightenment. This paper presents a broad overview of scholarly research into the ways religion can affect Indian educational achievement. It is not an exhaustive survey of the academic literature, but instead a brief summary of some explanations proposed to account for attainment differences among religious groups. The paper begins with an historical look at ways in which scholars suggest that various religions have influenced Indian education, especially the spread of literacy among lay people. This section also explores how historical patterns sometimes help explain contemporary patterns in educational attainment. Next, this paper considers hypotheses about how the cultural norms and doctrines of a religious group may affect Indian educational attainment. The following four major religions have influenced Indian education system:-

1. Hinduism
2. Buddhism
3. Islam
4. Christianity

Hinduism

i) Development of Education in Vedic Period

It was particularly observed in one of the Upanishads "He, who is possessed of supreme knowledge by concentration of mind, must have his senses under control, like spirited steeds controlled by a charioteer. 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 thinker, is the third eye of man, which gives him insight

Into all affairs and teaches him how to act". To attain salvation by realizing the truth has been the aim of education, during this period. Only that education was regarded true which helped one to realize the supreme truth. According to the Upanishads 'truth' alone is the knowledge and other worldly knowledge is untruth. The worldly knowledge was regarded as ignorance. Upanishads maintain that one cannot attain salvation through worldly knowledge because through this one becomes involved in illusion (Maya).

In Hinduism adopted the "Gurukul" system for the education purpose which is much more related to modern day boarding schools. The students from the top three Varnas of that time Indian society which are Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya are allowed to educate themselves by this Gurukul system. Usually, Vedas were the common books for the Gurus (teachers) in that Gurukuls while teaching to their Shishyas (students). in ancient period our educational organizations as well as our teachers were believed in only

thing that religious education is the only way to gather supreme. That is why they used to teach Vedas to their students so that their students could learn and can educate themselves with the divine knowledge.

ii) Curriculum during the Post-Vedic Period:

During this period the curriculum included more subjects than during the Vedic age. During the Post-Vedic period the curriculum consisted of Vedas, History, Puranas, Grammar, Mathematics, Brahma-Vidya, Nirukti (etymological interpretation of words), Astronomy, dance, Music etc. Veda mantras (Vedic hymns and verses) were principally thought in the Vedic Period. The Upanayan ceremony became so important during the Post-Vedic period that it was usually regarded as second birth of the individual.

Question-Answer System in Upanishad Literature:

The entire Upanishad literature is on the question – answer system. Through this system difficult and abstract ideas were made simple. The terse-spiritual elements were explained through this method. This method is successfully used by Socrates in Greece to explain abstract ideas.

For Hindus, education vanquishes a fundamental source of human suffering, which is ignorance. As a result, education has been highly valued in Hinduism since the religion's inception in ancient times. Hindu scriptures urge adherents to seek knowledge through dialogue and questioning, and to respect their teachers. "Learning is the foundational stage in the Hindu scheme of what constitutes a good and a meaningful life," Since ignorance is regarded as a source of human suffering, he adds, "the solution to the problem of ignorance is knowledge or learning."

Hindu scriptures are the Vedas, a word that comes from the Sanskrit root word *vd*, which means knowledge. Hindus regard two types of knowledge as necessary and worthwhile. The first, *vidya*, is everyday knowledge that equips one to earn a decent and dignified life. The second, *jnana*, is knowledge or wisdom that brings awareness of the divine. This is achieved by reading and meditating on Hindu scriptures. Historically, the caste system in India was a huge barrier to the spread of mass literacy and education. Formal education was reserved for elite populations. But in the seventh and eighth centuries, the vernacular language of Tamil began to be used for religious devotion in southern India, which led to greater access to all kinds of knowledge for a wider group of people. "That is when you start having men and women of different castes composing poems of praise for God, poems that are still recited in temple liturgy today.

Buddhism

"In many ways, Buddhism is particularly dedicated to education because unlike many other religions it contends that a human being can attain his or her own enlightenment ('salvation') without divine intervention," writes Stephen T. Asma, a professor of philosophy at Columbia College Chicago. Buddhism is "also extremely empirical in its approach, suggesting that followers try the experiment of dharma (i.e., Buddha's Four Noble Truths) for themselves to see if it improves their inner freedom," Asma notes, adding:

“Because the philosophy of Buddhism takes this pragmatic approach favoring education and experiment, Buddhism has little to no formal disagreement with science (as evidenced by the Dalai Lama’s ongoing collaboration with neuroscientists).”

This theoretical openness to scientific knowledge, however, did not always play out at the practical level within Buddhist communities, Asma contends. “Powerful Buddhist monasteries, especially in China and Tibet, frequently resisted modernization (including science) for fear of foreign influence and threats to entrenched Buddhist power structures,” he writes.

Despite this tension between theory and practice, Buddhism has been a major influence on the educational systems of many places, especially India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Tibet. From around the fifth century onward, Buddhist monasteries emerged as centers of education, not just for monks but also for laymen. Several monasteries became so large and complex that they are considered prototypes of today’s universities. In India, the most famous of these educational centers – Nalanda, in what is now Bihar state – is said to have had 10,000 students from many different countries, and offered courses in what then constituted philosophy, politics, economics, law, agriculture, astronomy, medicine and literature.

In India, monastic schools located in Buddhist temples were the main source of education for male children for many centuries, though they offered primarily religious education. When the Thai government introduced Western-style, secular education around the beginning of the 20th century, it used monastic schools as the vehicle for reaching the wider population.

Islam

There is considerable debate among scholars over the degree to which Islam has encouraged or discouraged secular education over the centuries. Some experts note that the first word of the Quran as it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad is “Iqra!” which means “Read!” or “Recite!”; they say Muslims are urged to pursue knowledge in order to better understand God’s revealed word. Early Muslims made innovative intellectual contributions in such fields as mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, medicine and poetry. They established schools, often at mosques, known as *katatib* and *madrasas*. Islamic religious leaders and religious schools still have great influence on education in some Muslim-majority area in India.

Education in Muslim period

Since the establishment of Muslim rule in India (around 1204-1206), Bengal was ruled as a province of Delhi empire and sometimes it was an independent state. The Subahdars, the independent rulers and Nawabs established maktabas and Madrasahs as educational institutions. Maktabas provided primary education and madrasahs were seats of secondary education and higher learning. The madrasahs of Bengal were in a flourishing condition during Muslim rule. These were run with state funds. The nobility and the private individuals were also found to set up and run madrasahs at their own initiative. Many illustrious scholars, administrators and officials were graduates of madrasahs in Muslim Bengal. In the school of Shah Mubarak his sons Faizi and Abul Fazal, historian Badauni and other scholars studied. In the madrasah run

by Sharafuddin Abu Taoama in Sonargaon students studied both secular and religious subjects. During the rule of emperor Shahjahan the madrasahs of Jahangirnagar specialized in teaching science, theology, philosophy and mathematics. Madrasah education was free. The teacher enjoyed high status in the society. The courses of madrasah generally included other Islamic studies. Secular subjects such as history, logic, geography, algebra, astronomy, medical science,

Chemistry and other technical, vocational, professional subjects were more cultivated in some centers. The medium of instruction was Persian but Arabic was compulsory for Muslims students. Teaching of history was one special feature of madrasah education during Muslim period. As a result, there learning centers could produce some illustrious historians in the subcontinent. Generally Muslim students studied in madrasah. Akbar adopted a policy so that Hindu youths can study at madrasah.

In Islam 'mazhab' is a way of imparting education for virtuous conduct. According to the philosophy of this religion, 'namaz', 'Riha' and 'Hajj' are considered, a method for creating universal love and feeling of neighborhood. To give some benefit to the society or social service are considered as a part of this religion. Some narrow minded people evince necessary opposition by equaling religion with sects.

Christianity

Education in British Period

European trading companies began their commercial activities in India from 1600 AD. Gradually, the Portuguese, the French, the Dutch and the English settled in some important parts and commercial centers. Among them the English East India Company was ultimately able to establish their rule in India. Till the early 19th century, they did not evolve any definite educational policy. It was only in the Charter Act of 1813 that education of the Indian people

was included within the duties of the East India Company and an annual sum of 10,000 pounds was provided for their educational activities. However, the company mainly spent the money for oriental learning. The progressive reformers of Bengal such as Ram Mohan Roy protested against this and demanded western education for the people of this country. But the company

did not pay any attention to this. However, as per the Charter, missionaries were allowed to work in the country. This had great impact upon the development of modern type of English schools at primary and secondary levels. One of the important events of this period was the endorsement of

Macaulay's Minute in Lord Bentinck's Dispatch of 7 March 1835, which provided that western learning should be spread through the medium of English language. Use of English as medium of instruction in public education was announced as a formal policy. As a result, a good network of English high schools and colleges were established in Bengal, mostly due to government initiative and support. The new high schools demonstrated fairly high standard of instruction in language and literature, but their standard was low in practical subjects. The syllabus was mainly bookish. Secondary education received a new orientation in Wood's Education Dispatch of 1854. It provided that the government would give grant-in-aid to high

schools on fulfillment of some conditions. Specifically, schools should provide secular education. This policy ultimately enabled the government.

Religion and Education

We should clearly understand the meaning which means spiritual development of human society through the welfare of mankind. In other words; religion means human religion which every society is prepared to accept. A sect (belief) is a specific religious view point of a group of persons. That is the individual belief of the persons of that group, based on the wider values of religion. It is not necessary for other sects to accept that belief. Hindu religion accepts the opinion of Vedas, Islam that of the Quran and Christians of Bible. Hindu Dharm has been divided into Buddha sect, Jains, Sikh, Vedic (Sanatan and Arya Samaj) according to the different methods to philosophers of Hindu Dharm. Some agitators and diplomats propagated it as different religions in order to create faction in Hindu Dharm. The idea behind this propaganda was to cut of the organization and unity of Hindu Dharm. It is amazing that some Hindus also accepted the sects as different religions. Islam Dharm has its original form the word 'Salm'. 'Salm' means peace which has been interpreted as knowing God peacefully and surrendering the self before Him. This is the true nature of Islam. Whenever someone seeks the shelter of God, forgetting his vanity and pride, he attains all-round development and divinity is radiated from his personality. In Christian religion, Christianity was formed from the word 'christos' which means 'bathed in Divine wisdom'. Thus Christian religion extends that divine wisdom which creates brotherhood, love, sympathy and tolerance in the human society. Vedic religion, is based on Vedas, 'Ved' means knowledge. Hence Vedic Dharm means that scientific knowledge which by recognizing the existence of 'Inner self' and 'Supreme self' i.e. 'Antaratma' and 'Paramatma', develops human qualities like, non-violence, truth, humanism, love and compassion, etc. Thus religion is a source of morality. Science can be of great help in this direction, but science devoid of religion is meaningless. Religion is all –pervading and Universal. So it should be included in education. Due to ignorance and super situations some universe followers of religions have strangled humanity and have committed great atrocities. The reason for such violent attitude is misinterpretation of religion. These religions hypocrisies of violent nature committed so many atrocities on humanity that man began to hate religion. These committing oppressions in the name of religion were non- Vedic (unwise) and selfish. Religious reformers born from time to time led the people to the right path and presented the true nature of religion like Buddha, Mohair, Shankaracharya, Dayanand, etc., were such great personalities. In the Western countries Rousseau and Locke suggested to save education from wrongly interpreted religion. Corrupt practice, in various religious bodies in the name of religion created hatred for religion.

Relation between Religion and Education

Religion and Education are closely associated with each other both are of spiritual tendencies. Spiritual, material or physical urge are dealt with by religion as well as by the education. "Both seek to emancipate

man, not from contract with his environment, but from slavery to it.” As has already been discussed education creates certain values of life and help in the modification of behavior. It gives certain moldings to the life, while religion beautifies the life by cultivation

Of truthful heart with the moral and spiritual values. In this way religion and education have different ways but the same aim of achieving God through cultivating three absolutes truth, religion and goodness. Religion must be given suitable places in the curriculum because it is the core of our culture and ‘heritage’. Gentle given a fine statement in regard to the place of

Religion in the curriculum. Gentle says: “National cultures have never been more conscious than now of the higher needs of the mind, needs that are not only aesthetic and abstractly intellectual but also ethical and religious. For a school without an ethical and religious constant is an absurdity.” Thus, religion should find a suitable and proper place in the sphere of education. Education, according to Pestalozzi, is aimed at “natural harmonious and progressive development of man’s innate powers.” Wider education means an education which broadens the outlook, awakens the inner powers and teaches us to respect all the religions. In this manner, a teacher should enable the pupils to cultivate religious attitude and mentality through education. Religion in this sense does not mean merely a bundle of rites and of dogmas followed by symbols and emotions with these collective and mutual efforts lead a person towards self-realization and self understanding. Rousseau and Wordsworth believed in nature and education on the lane; of nature. The essence of their philosophy was to worship nature in practical way.

Truly speaking, religious education does not mean something separable but pure, honest and beneficial. Education is nothing but religion, because both the religion and the education aim at harmonizing the person to the ultimate truth. Religion is the pure form of education. Realization and to in spire virtuous conduct. It is necessary to make efforts in this direction. Self-realization and virtuous conduct are inner-impulses. They cannot be imposed on anyone. Sermons and instructions alone will not achieve religious aims. Moral development and virtuous conduct through religion is possible only when opportunities are provided for such behavior. A religious atmosphere in schools can make it possible. The incidents are greatly influenced by the ideal behavior of teachers. So the teachers themselves should present examples of ideal behavior by leading a religious, moral and virtuous life. The teacher alone cannot create a religious atmosphere in schools. All teachers should co-operate in this process.

Religious education should be kept away from narrow mindedness. It will be better to give religious education based on logic, analysis and criticism; otherwise it may lead to superstitions fanatics, jealousy and narrow-mentality.

In schools, religion should not be taken as an end in itself. It is simply a means for all-round development of the individual. The schools are not to be made temples, mosques, or churches by titling religious education to a particular sect. Schools are not to fulfill the functions of religious institutions other the religious institutions should work as schools. If religious institutions make an attempt for the all-round development

of children through spiritual development; they will certainly lessen the burden of schools. It is, therefore, necessary for the religious bodies to take the form of educational obligations to the extent possible.

Educational Functions of Religion

A man is attracted towards religion only when he is mentally, healthy and a sound mind besides in a sound body. So it is the function of religion to cooperate in the physical development of children. In Vedic religions behaviors the ideal of celibacy is for the sake of physical development. The child who observes restraint up to maturity and takes physical exercises for the development of body makes him sturdy. This restorative power prepares him for household life and his regulated behavior keeps him healthy till death. Some religious people think that good physical health creates a liking or worldly pleasures and happiness. So a person desirous of religious knowledge should not pay any attention to physical development. This is their fanaticize. Religion should first of all educate the individual for his physical and mental development. Body, mind and senses are means of inhibiting religion.

Religion should always mean performing of duties. To think only of the next world (Parlok) through religious knowledge and to forget this world (Ih-lok) is not fair. The first field of performing duties is this world karma-kshetra (the field of action) is another name of Dharma-kshetra (fields of religious). The man who succeeds in the karma-kshetra of this world is entitled to reach the otherworld (Parlok). Therefore, religion should prepare man for the karma-kshetra (the field of action). The field of action of the individual is determined on the basis of his aptitudes. So religion should inculcate in the child the ability to choose his field according to his interest, aptitude and to get success engaging him in it. The basis of religion is knowledge. An ignorant person cannot be religious.

A person may be familiar with religion and religious behavior after he has attained knowledge. The bases of religion are logic, analysis, observation, contemplation and freedom of thought. So the child should be provided opportunities for independent thinking, logic, meditation, analysis and observation with an open mind. The doubt of some persons that the child does not believe in religious facts on the basis of arguments, analysis, observation etc is baseless. The permanent religious feeling is always based on perception. To have faith in religion without independent thinking, logic and analysis will be blind-faith and fanaticism. Some people consider aesthetic sense and artistic sense as hindrance to religion. But this is not true. Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram

(Truth, Bliss and Beautiful) are the bases for artistic and aesthetic sense. Satyam and Shivam are the bases of religion. A thing which is not true or for happiness cannot be beautiful. The carving of Jain idols in Ellora caves and Jatak stories connected with the life of Lord Buddha and their carving in Ajanta, the poetry of Sur, Tulsi and Mira and all considered unique for propagation of religious feelings.

So religion should diffuse an aesthetic sense also, Although it is true function of schools to develop the moral and character of the child, but religious institutions can bring about better moral and character

development, if they pay attention in this direction. The very meaning of religion is to inspire virtuous conduct and virtuous conduct develops moral and ethical qualities. Today the country needs able and noble citizens. The religious institutions can fulfill their national duties by giving education virtuous conduct.

Conclusion:-

Education plays a central role in conserving, modifying and transforming identities. Keeping in mind the heterogeneous character of Indian society, the national policy on education envisages harmonious development of all groups i.e. promoting development and maintaining group identities in an integrated manner. The balancing act of education is well reflected in the constitutional provision. As a country, India has major religions - Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism-living side by side. India is the world's most complex and comprehensively pluralistic society, home to a vast variety of castes, tribes, communities, religions, languages, customs and living styles.

Religion is universal, omnipresent and eternal. It is necessary to present its universal form. The percentage of literary people in India was more than that at present. At least up to the 7th century A.D. this system worked most satisfactory. People showed brilliancy in all departments. E.g. Mathematics, Astronomy, Medicine, Chemistry, Poetry, Drama, Grammar, and Philosophy. No nation could excel these people at that time. From the 4th century B.C. to the 11th century A.D. all foreigners who came in contact with India and studied her civilization critically were very much impressed by it. They spoke highly of Indian character specially their truthfulness, honesty, and sense of justice. The Hindus were conscious about their ideal. Though spirituality is their goal they never neglected the material affairs. They were in the words of Wordsworth, "true to the kindred points of heaven and home" and knew fully that matter and spirit are interrelated, one cannot be conceived without the other. This ideal maintained by the system of education which is based on a sound method. A picture of the educational system of ancient India can be derived and also come idea of the high standard of civilization then prevailing in the society.

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