

**“HIGHER EDUCATION: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE”**

**SUBMITTED TO**

**International Journal of Maktabah Jafariyah**

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**Abstract:**

This paper is an attempt to show the status of education in past, present and future. Education in ancient India was Gurukul based where a child handed over to the Guruji at the age of about eight years and he was imparted knowledge for developing ideal character and behaviour. In the ancient India students were given the life oriented education and therefore we got the greatest characters like Swami Vivekananda and Aadhya Shankaracharya. The present education system is only bread oriented and not life oriented. Education today is oriented to promote values of an urban society for its utilitarian end. The present education system does not encourage a person to think. A student is taught a set syllabus which he is expected to reproduce during the examinations. We have to build their character. Our society is moving towards an unknown future. Our country has to face new problems. To meet the challenges of his future we will need an ideal character, knowledge and skill. We have to compel students to take learning more seriously. Then this paper will analyse the status of education in past, present and future and will try to find the best education system.

**Key Words:** Education, ancient, character, Gurukul, Maulvis, etc.

 **Introduction:**

Education is the most important thing in the life all human being. Education made a good character, a good citizen. Therefore our government gives more important to the education. If a person has a good education he can live his life very easily. Through the education the development of the students is possible. Now a day a person is considered as civilized on the basis of education. If a person educated he will be considered as civilized man and if he is not educated, he will be considered as uncivilized man. Therefore this paper is an attempt to analyse the status of education in the past, present and future.

 **Education in the Ancient period:**

From the latter point of view, in the Vedic period, schools were boarding schools where a child was handed over to the teacher at the age of about eight years, and he was imparted

knowledge for developing ideal behaviour and not for its utilitarian end. Knowledge, it was felt, was something that lent meaning, glory, and lustier to life. The teacher took personal interest in the life of his students. In the ancient India Guruji knew all the students very closely therefore he knew the qualities of all the students very accurately. Then he tried to develop the qualities of the students that students did not know the qualities they had. All the students got the platform to develop their abilities. Guruji had provided them all kinds of platform therefore the students prepared very well. Education was all comprehensive. School education began with phonology, including study of grammar. After that, study of logic was taken up which dealt with the laws of reasoning and art of thinking. Then, came science of Arts and Crafts. Lastly, came the discipline of life which was concerned with chastity in thought and action, emphasis on equality, fraternity and independence, and respect for the teacher. Thus, language, logic, craft, discipline and building up character formed the basics of education in early India. In the Brahmanical period, the Vedic literature formed the chief subject of instruction. The main aim of education was the learning of the Vedas. Sanskrit and Arabic or Persian was the mediums of instruction. The financial position of the schools was not very strong. They did not have special buildings of their own. In many cases, schools were held in local temples or mosques or teachers' houses.

The schools were conducted almost exclusively by Maulvis (priests) for the Muslim students and by Brahmins for the Hindu students. Vocational training was provided by father, brother, etc. to the child. Thus, the caste system provided vocational training and transmitted skills from generation to generation and also provided gainful employment. Education was student- centered rather than teacher-centered. Unlike today, education in this period never aimed at freedom of individual, excellence of individual, equality amongst all people, individual and group self-reliance, and national cohesion. Education in schools and colleges was not productive which could break down the social, regional and linguistic barriers.

### ➤ **Education in the Present Period:**

Education today is oriented to promoting values of an urban, competitive consumer society. Now a day we see that students are given only 'Bread Oriented' education. Through the existing education system, India has produced in the last five decades number of scientists, professionals and technocrats who have excelled in their fields and made a mark at the national and international levels. The top scientists, doctors, engineers, researchers, professors, etc., are

not those who were educated abroad but had got their entire education in India. Thus, while we cannot totally criticize our present education, there are some issues which need our urgent attention, if we are really concerned with a better future. The question relates not to the past or to the present but rather to the future. How are we going to prepare the experts in various fields to meet the challenges of the newest and latest technology of the twenty-first century? It is not a question of the extent to which education provides or fails to provide employment to people but it is a question of education providing modern technology for the benefit of the poor and deprived people. It is a question of the quality of education. Instead of merely viewing the growing population as a liability, we should change the population into an asset and strength along with trying to control its growth. This can be done only by education and human development. Merely giving a degree and a certificate to a young person that he is qualified for appointment is not enough. We have to make our younger generation think. The present education system does not encourage a person to think. He is taught a set syllabus which he is expected to reproduce during the examinations. Students can't get time and platform because of their syllabus. They all are busy with their syllabus and teachers also not find extra time to give the platform that the students need. And therefore the teacher becomes helpless. They can't provide any kind of platform to their students. Therefore there is a lack of development of the students. In the ancient India when a student asked about any star then Guruji taught them the whole Galaxy. But in the present period the teacher does not have enough time because of a set syllabus. A teacher must have to complete the syllabus which is decided by the board or university. This is deficient system. The youngsters have to be provoked to ask more and more questions which will not only help them to think but will also compel teachers to read and learn more. We have, thus, to change the examination system. We have to compel students to take learning more seriously. We have to wean them away from cutting classes, indulging in strikes, participating in students' politics, seeking admission only for contesting elections and offering courses only as a part-time study course. We have to build their character. Though it is true that the number of educational institutions and students at all levels has increased but it cannot be contented that the quality of education, the interest of students, and dedication of teachers has also increased simultaneously. However, weaknesses and deficiencies in education have been pointed out by almost all Commissions and Committees. The three main deficiencies in the present education system may be described as follows:

- 1) The present education does not generate or fortify the type of knowledge that is relevant to our changed society.
- 2) Technology associated with a particular body of knowledge is inappropriate to our stage of development in terms of its employment potential or investment demands.
- 3) Education has failed to provide value framework which may prepare committed politicians, bureaucrats, technocrats, and professionals on whom our nation can depend for sophisticated system of support services to be useful in taking the country to the highest level.

### ➤ **Education for the Future:**

Our society is moving towards an unknown future. The crises that the contemporary society is encountering are likely to increase in their frequency and intensity. With rising population and dwindling resources, our country has to face new problems. To meet the challenges of this future, we will need a good character, knowledge and skills that may contribute to problem-solving capacity not only in the fields of science and technology but also in the fields of human relations and management. Unfortunately, the education system today is decaying more and more instead of responding creatively to the challenges of contemporary predicament. We need to reset our priorities.

First, we accept the philosophy of ‘education for self-reliance’. The emphasis must shift from higher secondary and higher education to primary and adult education.

Second, the content of education at higher secondary and college/ university levels needs serious consideration.

Third, the problem is of management of education. At present, bureaucratic styles persist. Bureaucrats are not sensitive and responsive to the changes in the environment of education. Low budgets, high indiscipline, administrative lapses and interference and political pressures make decision-making in the field of education hazardous. As such, management of education should be made free from bureaucrats’ and politicians’ interference.

Fourth, the problem is of accountability of teachers, particularly in higher education. Many cases are reported where teachers fail to take classes for months and even years together. They rarely take interest in regularly going to libraries and reading journals and latest books. We have to restore purpose to education and determine suitable techniques of teaching. Then we

have to regulate the factors that debase and vulgarize it. Control on teachers is the most important requisite in the educational system.

Fifth, the problem is that we have to create greater seriousness regarding studies among students, for whom acquiring knowledge is the most vital question. Education is believed to be mobility multiplier. It works for the perpetuation of status and privileges. But should higher education be open to all students? Many students seek admission to Law, Arts and Commerce courses only because they have to 'kill time' till they settle in life. Should they not be directed to technical and professional courses? Should education be not brought round to sub serving their interest?

Sixth, the issue is that we have to give a push to vocational/professional education which has considerable demand in the open market. We have to assume that every educated person cannot become a specialist or an expert but has to equip himself with a skill which can help him earn his livelihood. We have to think of the coming two or three decades and pay attention to the type of agriculture, type of developing industry, trade and commerce and new fields of service and employment that the future decades will throw up. This will help us in building education system which will give us better cultivators, better skilled workers, better mechanics, or whatever.

Seventh, the issue is of linkages between various departments like Agriculture, Industry, Labour, Electronics, Law, Science and so forth so that universities, IITs and colleges know the type of skilled people required. What is needed is full education in each field which will prepare the individual to find employment of his choice and enable the employer to get a candidate of his liking.

Eighth, the issue is of making all illiterate people literate. According to the available estimated figures for the year 1998, assuming that the literacy rate in India has gone up from 52.21 per cent in 1991 to 60 per cent in 1998, there are about 400 million people to be educated. This is a tremendous task. While it is a well-known fact that all state governments have schemes of raising literacy level, it needs to be emphatically stated that we require more than 25 years to achieve the set goal. Perhaps policies like compelling students to teach the illiterate during two months' vacation period will help in reducing the target period.

Ninth, the point is of reducing the number of drop-outs at the primary level. Measures can be adopted to contain this problem. It is not good enough to keep treading the same path. If

we know that we are not making progress, we must change our models and policies and programmes and try new ones.

Tenth, the issue is of the present examination system. In a way, they are becoming more and more a farce. In the present set-up, students consider it easier to read guides and cheap books and pass examinations. They view attending classes a waste of time. Teachers take least pains in preparing lectures, in reading books and journals, and equipping themselves with latest research results. They have little time to read through all the pages in the examination answer-book. Their concern is to get more and more examination scripts from different universities and earn more remuneration. Should we continue to live with the system as it is today? It has to be made flexible and open which lays emphasis on creative thinking.

Lastly, there is the question of regulating higher education. Why should every student who wants admission be admitted? Why should higher education be cheap? Why should 100 to 150 students be admitted to one class? To what extent education should be subsidized? Should we give subsidies only the professional education or the Arts and Commerce education also? These are questions which need to be linked with reorganizing and restructuring of graduate and postgraduate programmes, better performance of students, more accountability of teachers, and functional use of summer vacations. We have to remove deficiencies and shortcomings in teaching and examination system, if we logically want to plan education for the future.

### **Conclusion:**

We have discussed the status of education in the past, present and future. But according to me the ancient education system is the best system because in the ancient India there were great characters. They got life oriented education therefore they could tackle any difficult situation. They were mentally strong therefore they could face all the difficult circumstances very easily. Now a day, we can see that the ratio of committing suicide of the students is increasing day by day because of life oriented education. If a student can't get the admission in his/her favorite field, he/she commits suicide. They do not mentally prepare for the difficult situation. And the future is unknown to all the students. The students of the present period have not powerful thoughts to live a life very easily in any difficult circumstances. How will they face the unknown challenges? How will they live their life in the challenging era? How will they tackle the situation which is totally unknown to them? There is a common saying if wealth is lost, nothing is lost. If health is lost, something is lost. But, if character is lost, everything is lost.

We can learn about the real value of character from this saying. Character is of utmost to every human being. So, by considering the challenges of the future, the knowledge must be imparted to the students in such a way so that the future students become life oriented as well as they can be ready to face future challenges.

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