

CHAPTER - III

EDUCATION

Reading and writing was not the sole object of education. What the Hindu educationists emphasised in their theories of education were the three qualities of (i) sharpening the intellect (ii) formation of character and (iii) attainment of social efficiency, for they helped in the attainment of trivarga samanvaya i.e. the balance of Dharma, Artha and Kāma. Formation of character, however, was the chief objective throughout. During the period of studentship a life of strict discipline and morality has been prescribed in the socio-religious literature of India. The fact that true learning comes through discipline has been stressed by Bāna. In Kadambarī Sukanāsa warns Candrapīda against the passion of
¹
senses.

Period of Education :

According to our writers the dvija's education seems to begin at the age of ²six marked by a special ceremony (Samskāra) called Upanayana³. The education of a dvija's generally ended between the sixteenth and twenty-four years of the age. The parents would send their children to some great teacher in his hermitage for the purpose of learning.

1. Cp. Kād.- Sukanasopadesa also Puṇḍrik's sermon; Cp. TM.
2. Candrapīda, the hero was admitted to school at the age of six, similar is the instance of prince Harivahan in TM; p.64.
3. See the Chapter on Rights Rites.

The teacher was respected highly by all section of society. He was respectfully called Ācāryaji or Gurujī. A teacher who was generally the head of his institution or establishment was called Ācārya. The students called sisya had to lead a life of strict celibacy till the completion of the courses of his study. He would touch the feet of teacher as a mark of obeisance at the hermitage.

There the education was conceived as a means of bringing out and developing fully the qualities with which every child is endowed at his birth. It was the function of education to encourage certain tendencies and to give perfect discipline to body and mind. In short, to advance a human being towards perfection by bringing out the best in him and to make him upto the mark. In his Arthāśāstra, Kautilya, for instance while suggesting various means for the ideal ruler's discipline declares that discipline did not mean that one should shun all enjoyments. One should not be without pleasure; let him enjoy himself without going against his requirements of Dharma, Artha, Kāma or let him have all the three Dharma, Artha, Kāma. ⁴ Dharmapala, in his Tilakamanjari gives the similar remarks.

Education of Brahmana :

In the earlier part of the period Brahmanas were especially devoted to the study of the Vedas and allied literature. Bana for instance, studied the Vedas and the Vedāngas

4. Artha. Book I, Ch. vii; T.M., p. 16.

alongwith the other ⁵śāstra and as to what these śāstras were we can have some idea from the description of his four cousins who were said to have studied and taught not only the four Vedas but also ⁶Nāyaya, Vyākarna, Mahābhārata, Itihāsa, Kāvya and Karmakānda. The Vedas continued to be studied to the end of the period, but not always intelligently. Brāhmanas who entered the royal service studied other subjects too. In the ⁶Dasakumāracarita we find a Brāhmana youth fit for the king's service because besides having the traditional knowledge of Vedic literature logic, Purānas Itihāsa, Mīmāṃsā, poetry, dramas and tales he was an adept in the sixty four kalās, had specialised in the art of controlling elephants, chariot-driving and horse-riding. He was highly efficient in fighting and in the use of various weanons. ⁷King's ministers who were generally Brāhmanas were expected to be well-versed in the science of politics. ⁸

Education for the Prince :

The education of a prince was a subject which demanded the attention of every political thinker of ancient India. Both Kautilya and ⁹Sukra, required their ideal rulers to be taught all the four traditional sciences, though special stress in their case was to be on the science of politics (Dandaniti). He was to be proficient in the use of different

5. HC, Ch. II, p. 79.

6. Ibid, Ch. III, pp. 86-87.

7. Das. p. 147-148.

8. Kād. p. 26, where Kumārāpāla, a Brāhmana, a minister of Śūdraka is compared with Vrhaspati as far as his knowledge of Dandaniti was concerned. The knowledge of Sukanasa is said to be mature; Kād. p. 113.

9. Kād. p. 107; King Tarāpīda of Ujjaini was well versed in both Nītiśāstra.

weapons of war like bow¹⁰, discuss, sword, sakti, etc.
 and in certain kalās¹¹ such as chariot driving, horse riding,
 elephant-riding, swimming,¹² and climbing etc. Hunting was a
 ruler's favourite sport.¹³ In his long and graphic description
 of Candrānīda's education Bāna perhaps presented his own
 ideals of prince's education.¹⁴

Education for Vaisas and Śūdras :

Medadhatithi on Manu¹⁵ points out that a Vaiśya
 should know in what time of the year and in what part of the
 country an article of trade fetched a higher price than in
 another. Thus, the education which might help in accumulating
 wealth through trade, agriculture and cattle-breeding was
 naturally desirable for a Vaiśya. Śukra on the other hand,
 advises a merchant never to transact any business without
 document.¹⁶ Therefore the keeping of account was also to be
 learnt by every trader.

Information regarding the education of Śūdras
 is rather scanty. Yājñavalkya had stated that a śūdra with the
 qualities of Vidya (education) Karma (action) and dharma (wealth)
 etc. was entitled to respect in his old age.¹⁷ The writers of the
 prose kāvyā have given us some information about their education.¹⁸

10. HC, Ch. II, p. 76. Harsa was more interested in the bow than Drana
 and more unerring with the arrow than Asvasthana also Ch. IV, p. 138.
 11. Kād. p. 12-13. King Śūdraka of Vidisā was a master of all śāstras.
 12. See the description of Dandin. Das. p. 83 pfn.
 13. Kād. p. 189.
 14. Ibid. pp. 149-150.
 15. On Manu IX. 320-31.
 16. SNS III. 181-182.
 17. Yaj. S. I. 116.
 18. Cn. Vas. 32 Kād. 24 Ask 62 Das. 12 VBC 62 and GC 12, 32, 92.

Education of Women :

In spite of their confinement within the four walls of the house, women were not without education. All the literary evidences that we have at our disposal tend to prove that in urban areas they were trained in fine arts. Singing, dancing and playing on musical instruments were subjects befitting a noble damsel. Kādambarī and Mahāśvetā¹⁹ had this training. The instances of acquaintance with musical minutiae like the different modes of playing in the ten forms, the three fold-timings can be quoted from many works like Tilakamañjarī of Dharmā²⁰. Some girls received religious and literary education. In the Kādambarī, Bāna speaks of Mahāśvetā as performing the Sañdhya daily and muttering the Aghamārsana²¹ mantra. In the Tilakamañjarī we find Malayasundarī represented not only as an expert dancer but also as a well-read-girl and the heroine Tilakamañjarī practically knows everything that a princess or a girl of aristocratic family was expected to know.²² Parivrājikas or female ascetics were generally well educated. Going into harem they told ancient tales, read out histories, imparted religious instructions and narrated sacred tales.²³

All these evidences go to prove that in the age under survey, some women must have attained proficiency in the science of philosophy. All these literary evidences are

19. HC. Ch. IV, Kad. p. 324.

20. TM; p. 138.

21. Kad. p. 327.

22. TM pp. 137, 215.

23. Kad. p. 181.

corroborated in important details with historical instances. Rājyasrī who was distinguished for the knowledge of the Sannatiyā school of Buddhists, attended the General Council²⁴ of Harsa, where scholars debated subtle questions of philosophy.

Institutions of Education :

It is obvious from the descriptions of Bāna and many other prose writers of the period that education was mainly provided by Brahmanas in schools or in their houses, the hermitages or the mathas and the educational assemblies also provided education. Speaking about his own educational career, Bāna states that he attained the intellectual standard befitting his family by paying due respect to the schools of wise, by attending the assemblies of learned and by joining²⁵ the circle of the people proficient in their own lines. This was the course that he enjoined others also to follow is clear from the questions he asked his brothers after his return from Harsa's court. He enquired whether the students were regularly taught the Vedas and they had their usual discussion²⁶ on grammar, logic, Mīmāṃsā and other authoritative books. Private Brahmanical schools like those of Bāna were encouraged also by ruling monarchs and private individuals by granting lands. Bāna for instance, resided in a village of learned Brahmanas colonists, called Pritikūta.²⁷

24. Beal- Life of Yuan Chwang ,p.176.

25. HC, Ch. I; pp. 42-43. also Vas. Kad. GC and TM for similar conception.

26. Ibid; Ch. III, p. 84.

27. HC, Ch. I, p. 43.

The forest hermitages of sages were not of less educational value. Bana's Kādambarī refers to the hermitage of Jabāli.²⁸ The assistance and existence of Buddhist hermitages as parallel to Brahmanical ones is attested by Harṣacarita. The Buddhist teacher Jayasena was highly learned in Hetuvidyā (logic), Śabdavidyā (grammar) and Yogasāstra and had studied thoroughly the vedas, astronomy, geography, medicine, magic and arithmetic. Divakamitra's hermitage was attended not only by Buddhists, but also by the people of many other faiths and countries who assembled there to have a better idea of their own talents into various discussions.²⁹

Schools in temples or maths may have been a copy of Buddhist schools attached to Buddhist Virāharas. According to Dharmapala^a such schools were in existence in his period.³⁰

The teacher was esteemed high by all the classes in the society. He had high status and ability. Even the king would approach him to seek his advice in complicated problems.³¹ The teacher who would live in his own hermitage was commonly called Gurus or Ācāryas. In a hermitage there were several teachers. The head of the hermitage was called the Kulapati.³² The teachers at the hermitage do not seem to receive any pay or salary, but only a Dakṣiṇā^a at the time of the completion of the studies from the students.³³

28. Kād.p.79.

29. HC, Ch.vii

30. TM, p.55.

31. HC, Ch.viii.

32. Kād. also TM & GC

33. Ibid.

At the hermitage which was also a resident of the students, a student would lead a simple life, Putting on the skin of a deer and sleeping in the penance grove. There developed a very cordial and intimate relationship between the teacher and the taught. Subandhu, Banabhatta, Lhanpāla and Vadibha Simha received their education sitting at the feet of such great gurus. The hermitages or Āsarmas were in a way great centres of learning. The great masters of high learning infused in their students the secrets of the Āryan culture.

Gosthis :

Gosthis were groups of friends, all experts in any subject like poetry/music and fine arts, meeting and discussing their subject in a formal manner. Bana speaks of the Vidya-gosthis in Harsha's court in which discussions were held on various subjects and which were attended by the several scholars of high learning. ³⁴ Great Assembly at Kannauj, convened by Harsha was attended by the kings of ³⁵ eighteen countries of five Indies. Yuan Chwang who presided over the meeting expounded the teachings of the great Vehicle and is said to have declared that if there was any one who could find a single word in proposition contrary to reason, than at the request of ³⁶ the opponents he was ready to offer his head as a recompense.

Harsha felt delighted in the Viragosthis in which the heroic deeds of some great hero or warrior were ³⁷ narrated. In the Kadambari, king Sudraka's assembly of nandits

34. HC, Ch. I, p. 7; Ch. II, p. 56.

35. Beal, p. 177; Kad. p. 14.

36. Ibid.

37. HC, Ch. VI, p. 71.

and friends composed poems in diverse metres, talked about scriptures, read out stories, histories and Purānas and solved razzles.³⁸

38. Cp. Kād. ; p. 14.