

Education Scenario in Paramara Era

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Abstract:

In the Malwa of the Parmara age, education was imparted on a personal basis. The educational institutions were organized by both the state as well as the citizens. The Parmara rulers established new settlements for the Brahmans and made arrangements for their living. Such settlements were called as *agrahar-gram*. These *agrahar-grams* became the centres for elementary education. In the Parmara age, the monasteries were used as institutions where the affluent and prosperous people offered food, clothes and other things to the guru and disciples according to their affordability and capacity. At this time, there were some temples and monasteries in Malwa also which were serving as educational institutions.

Key Words: Paramara, Upendra, Monastery, Bhoja, Munja, Malwa, Mandu, Tilak Manjhari,

Introduction:

In India, the structure of education has always been well organized and well planned since ancient times. Education helps not only man, but also the society to move on the right path and develop well. The first and foremost objective of education is to uplift the religious practices of man. Following the daily routine of *agni paricharya* was a part of the religious practice and discipline of the *brahmachari* who had stayed in the ashram of the guru.¹ the religious texts state that development of human character and personality is yet another objective of education.² Accepting the necessity of the three debts (*tririn*) for the upliftment of cultural life, the Shatpath Brahman clarifies that one of main objectives of education was to educate our children and orient them towards our ancient culture.³

Starting of Education (*Upnayan Sanskar*):

Nowadays, the beginning of the familiarization with alphabets of the children is started at the age of two and half to three years, whereas in *Smriti Chandrika*, the age to begin learning has been described as five years.⁴ the prince of Kadambari, Chandraped, entered the temple of education at the age of six years.⁵ the Brahman and Sutra Sahitya have regarded the start of well organized and well plan education with the beginning of the *upnayan sanskar*.⁶ Manu has stated the age of *upnayan sanskar* for the Brahman boy for the study of Vedas and gaining knowledge as five years from birth, for acquiring skill in warfare for the Kshatriya boys as six years from birth and to earn more money and agriculture for the Vaishya boy as eight years from birth.⁷ In the Parmara age, the education of the boys started at the age of six years and it was expected that by sixteen years of age, the boy should become adept in all the texts and arts.⁸ Sindhuraj had trained his intellect through studies in his boyhood itself.⁹

Ashram System:

The *deeksha sanskar* of the child for his education on reaching a certain age was done on an auspicious day like a celebration.¹⁰ after this, the student paid his respects in the form of *namaskar* to first to Hari, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Vidya and his own choice of *sutradhar* of vidya. And then started his studies.¹¹ It is known from Manu Smriti that after the *upnayan sanskar*, the student stayed at the gurukul and received education.¹² Padmagupt also has mentioned about the *ashram* of Vangmuni.¹³ Bhoj has stated serving the guru, self study, purity, truth in conduct, etc as the duty or religion of the disciple.¹⁴ Al-Baruni, who came to India in the eleventh century, writes that the duty of the student is observing celibacy, regarding the earth as his bedding (sleeping on the floor), to study the Vedas, their grammar, Philosophy and religious texts. All this is taught to him by his guru whom he serves day and night.¹⁵ According to Shringar Manjari Katha, Vasudatt had sent his son Ratnadatt in eighth standard to Upadhyay for education.¹⁶

Educational Institutions:

In the Malwa of the Parmara age, education was imparted on a personal basis. The educational institutions were organized by both the state as well as the citizens. The Parmara rulers established new settlements for the Brahmans and made arrangements for their living. Such settlements were called as *agrahar-gram*. These *agrahar-grams* became the centres for elementary education. In the copper plate inscription of Jaivarman Dev dated 1192 AD, a mention of Raj Brahmapuri has appeared. A village was given in donation to a resident of this gram.¹⁷ Similarly, it is known from the Mandhata inscription dated V.S. 1331 of Jaisingh Jaivarman that Sadhanik Anaysingh gave villages in donation to the Brahmans in Brahmapuri along with his four sons with the permission of Jaisingh Jaivarman. In Mandapdurga, this Brahmapuri has been described as the place of residence of the Brahmans who received it as donation. There was a boundary wall on four sides of this village, a gate, a pond and sixteen temples with golden kalashas.¹⁸ Such settlements were actually regarded as *agrahar*.

Monastery Education:

In the Parmara age, the monasteries were used as institutions where the affluent and prosperous people offered food, clothes and other things to the guru and disciples according to their affordability and capacity.¹⁹ At this time, there were some temples and monasteries in Malwa also which were serving as educational institutions. Upendrapur, Mattamayurpur, Kadambaguha, Terambi, Agardhakteerth, Ranod, Siyadoni, Bildari, Sarvay, chandari and the Shaiva monasteries and temples of the Mattamayur Community were such educational institutions. The directors of such monasteries were famous for their teaching skills and scholarly expertise.²⁰ there was a vast centre of the Shivacharya of the Mattamayur Community in Upendrapur and near about areas.²¹ The Kalchuri king avantivarman was also impressed by the fame of the *acharya* of this monastery.²² The Shaiva monastery of Shergarh was also famous which was headed by Bhattarak Naagnak.²³ the ancient name of Saraswati Pattan was Survay which was a centre of study.²⁴ in Ujjain also there was a famous math called Chandikashram which was successfully headed by the following *acharyas* – Tapas, Vakalarashi, Jyeshthajarashi, Yogeshwararashi, Maunirashi, Yogeshwari, Durvarashi, Kedararashi.²⁵

Hostels:

There were hostels for students who came from outside.²⁶ Bhoj had build a hostel for hundreds of students in Mandapdurg (Mandu) and appointed Govind Bhatt as the head. In the land grant of Bhoj dated V.S 1078²⁷ the person who received the described Veeranak village must have been the same Govind Bhatt's son Dhanpati Bhatt.²⁸

Examination System:

The present examination system did not exist. The test of knowledge was taken only orally.²⁹ Assemblies or meetings were organized for these oral examinations, in which the students were asked various kinds of questions by the experts. Examination was also conducted through the medium of poetry and problem solving techniques.³⁰

Nature of Education:

To a certain extent, education was caste oriented and professional. For example, a Brahman boy has special interest in Vedic education which was necessary for him to do professional jobs like conducting yajyas and teaching. The Kshatriya child was mainly interested in the practical training of using arms and weapons and political education the Vaishya child wanted to become adept in subjects related to commerce.³¹ The Brahman child studied Vedas, Vedangas, Mimansa, Smriti and Puranas.³² Bhoj also had donated land to a Brahman called Vachchhal who was adept in the study of the Vedas. On the basis of the study of the Vedas, the Brahmans were called as Dwivedi, Trivedi aur Chaturvedi.³³ Bhoj, while describing his city Dhara, has called it as 'Brahmalok', which was surrounded by the colonies of scholarly Brahmans, as if the entire city was a world of the Brahmans. In some places, the sound of the ordinary teaching and learning of could be heard while in other places there were lectures on Shrutis, Smritis, Puranas and History.³⁴ In Tilak Manjari also, there is a description that the students invoked the deities according to the Vedas.³⁵

Special attention was paid to the education of the princes. They were taught religion, economics, archery, physical exercises, administrative and diplomatic sciences in order to make them capable statesmen, efficient administrators, scholars and warriors.³⁶ Attention was paid towards making the students adept in History and Ayurveda also.³⁷ It is clear from Navasahasank Charit that the king should be skilled and harsh in the knowledge of weapons and arms, should acquire Yog Vidya and Yogic Siddhis and his ministers should know all the aspects of Politics.³⁸ Vakpati Munj had total mastery over heroic speeches, great poetry, art of logic, and rules of shastras.³⁹ Bhoj also has studied all the political texts, learned the use of 36 weapons and master two *siddhis* on the shores of the ocean.⁴⁰

The Vaishyas were taught accounts and book keeping. But it is known from Shringar Manjari Katha that a businessman's son Ratnadutt mastered Gajshiksha and Gajayurveda, horse riding and ashva chikitsa (treatment of the diseases of the horses), commerce, gambling and game of dice, Vaishikopnishad, painting, letter writing and book writing in a short time.⁴¹ This is just a specific description and cannot be accepted as true for the entire Vaishya class. Vigyaneshwar has regarded the meaning of the word 'Kayastha' described in the Yagyavallakya Smriti as writer.⁴² The people of the Kayastha clan had special interest in preparing the design of the inscriptions. Gunadhar wrote the Harsola script of Siyak II⁴³, Kayastha Aival's son Sauhik wrote the script for the Tilwada inscription of Bhoj⁴⁴ and Shridhar prepared the charter for the feudatory lord of Wagad.⁴⁵ Asraj wrote the script of 1080.⁴⁶

Subjects of Study:

The traditional fields of education were of four types – Aavikshikii (Philosophy), Pavitra Ved (Trayi), Varta (Agriculture, animal husbandry and commerce) and Politics (Penal Code). Rajshekhar added literary knowledge also to these four traditional fields of education.⁴⁷ He has also described 18 other subjects which include the four Vedas, six Vedangas, four Shastras, Varta, Kamsutra, shilpashastra and Dandaneti.⁴⁸ Prabhachandra has mentioned thirty six arts.⁴⁹

Grammar had special importance among the subjects of study. Bhoj composed an important book called Saraswati Kanthabharan on Sanskrit Grammar. The first seven chapters of this book are related to Sanskrit Grammar, and eight chapters are related to Vedic Grammar and Swar (Phonetics).⁵⁰ Prabhachandra has described that when Jai Singh Siddharaj entered Ujjain as a conqueror, he saw that all the students were studying Bhoj's Grammar.⁵¹ Ashadhar learned Grammar from Vadiraj Pt. Mahaveer during his stay in Dhara city.⁵² Later, the Jain teacher Devendra learned Grammar from Pt. Ashadhar.⁵³ The importance of Sanskrit Grammar is further confirmed by the table of alphabets and rules of Sanskrit Grammar⁵⁴ obtained from Dhara, Oon and Ujjain.

Astrology and Astronomy had their own special place in among the subjects of study. Bhoj composed books named Rajmartand, Vidvajjanavallabh and Bhujabal Nibandh on Astrology.⁵⁵ Medicine (Vaidyak Shastra) was also a subject of study. On seeing people suffering from all types of diseases, Bhoj created a compilation of yogas called as Rajmartand.⁵⁶ Medical Science is said to be of eight types.⁵⁷ From the Ardhoona inscription of Viajyaraj, it is known that there was a Jain doctor who was the belonged to the Nagar family and his son Papak was a master of the entire science of Aryurveda.⁵⁸ Veterinary Science was also a subject of study. Ratnadutt, who was the son of a businessman, soon gained mastery in Gajayurveda and Medicine for horses.⁵⁹ Bhoj has described about the treatment of horses in 'Ashva Yukti' of Muktikalpataru, in which some parts of the treatment of horses suggested by Nakul have been included.⁶⁰ Bhoj had also written a book called Sahlhotra which dealt with the diseases of the horses and their treatment.⁶¹ In his collection Rajmartand Yog also, Bhoj has composed seventeen shlokas under the title Pashurogadhikar.⁶² The mention of 'Upvan Visheshagya' and 'Vrikshayurveda' in Parijat Manjari makes it clear that the study of Botany was also in trend.⁶³

Among the eighteen arts mentioned by Rajshekhar, sculpture and architecture was also a subject of study.⁶⁴ Bhoj had written a scholarly book on sculpture by the name Samarangan Sutraddhar.⁶⁵ In this book, he has stated sculpture (architecture) to be of four types – shastra, karma, praja and sheel.⁶⁶ The sculptor should have knowledge of the following parts of the art of sculpture

– Samudayik Shastra, Ganit, Jyotish, Chhand, Shira Gyan, Shilp and Yantra karma Vidhi.⁶⁷ It is also very important for the sculptor to gain knowledge of the following jobs – craftsmanship of alekhya, lep-karma, Daru-karma, kashtha kala, chay (masonry), stone, mercury and metal and shilpa karma.⁶⁸

Chhanda Shastra⁶⁹ and Kavya Shastra⁷⁰ also were in special trend among the subjects of study. Women were given training in music and dance. At this time, Physics was also an important subject. In Samarangan Sutra, Bhoj has written a complete chapter on YantraVidhan.⁷¹ Similarly, in Shringar Manjari Katha, there is a mention of mechanically operated puppets and ducks and a 'Yantra Dhara Griha'.⁷²

Education of Women:

In the Parmara Age, the education of women of elite families was in practice. Women studied the holy scriptures and literature along with music, dance and painting.⁷³ Malyasundari of Tilak Manjari was not only a skilled dancer, she was also an educated woman and the heroine or the leading lady of this prose poem was also adept in all those fields of knowledge necessary for a girl of an elite family.⁷⁴ the call girls were skilled in 32 arts.⁷⁵ It is clear from this description that in Malwa during the Parmara period, education of women was in trend.

Conclusion:

It is clear from the above mentioned research that the structure of education was very well organized in the Paramara period. During this time, primary education was imparted in the gurukulas and higher education was imparted in the universities. The educational institutions were organized by the state and the public. There were hostels for students who came from outside. Only oral examinations were held. Generally, there was a trend that women of only the elite class received education. Hence, it is clear that sufficient priority was given to education in the Paramara age.

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