



## RELEVANCE OF BUDDHIST EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

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### Abstract

*The history of education in India and its aim are very interesting. The aim of education is to understand the ideals of society. The main objective of education in any society requires those prevalent characteristics and ideals, which in turn shape the very process of education. The most important contribution of ancient India not only for India but also for the world is in the field of education. In India during the time of Buddha, there was a racial discrimination in the society. This discrimination was according to profession of man, and according to birth. Buddhist education aims at a personality transformation into a highest form of humanity through ethical, intellectual and spiritual perfection.*



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### Introduction

The history of education in India and its aims are very interesting. The aim of education is to understand the ideals of society. The main objective of education in any society requires those prevalent characteristics and ideals, which in turn shape the very process of education. The development of the society is based on the fair system of the education which is free from all the discriminations. The history of Indian education system is extremely fascinating. But the education system of India was based on the discrimination of caste and gender. The cultural and the traditional education were started from the beginning of the human civilization. We can understand the roots of Indian education system by analysing the history of Ancient education system of India. Every aspect of life including education in ancient India was influenced by different philosophies. The main sources of teaching in the ancient education were Vedic literature. Teacher (Guru in the ancient education system) occupied a vital position in the Vedic system of education. In ancient India the whole system of education ran on the specific system of institution called Gurukul System Of Education.

The most important contribution of ancient India not only for India; but also for the world; is in the field of education. It may also be remembered that education is not an abstract term. It is manifested in the cultural economic, individual, philosophical, scientific, social and

spiritual advancement. In other words, education is the means for developing the mind for the betterment of the individual and society.

**Albert Einstein:** “We owe a lot to the Indians who taught us how to count without which no worthwhile scientific discovery could have made.”

**Mark Twain, an American Writer:** “India is the cradle of the human race. Most valuable and the most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only.”

In India during the time of Buddha, there was a racial discrimination in the society. This discrimination was according to profession of man, and according to birth. In the society there were four division of man of whom Brahman was superior. Brahmanism dominated the society and established their supremacy in the country. Bhraman, krishtriya and vaishiya enjoyed rights for religious training and education. Fourth category of people deprived of their religious and educational rights. They were called of Sudhras and untouchable. In this background a religious revolution started in ancient India in 600 B.C. and a new doctrine or system developed which is called Buddhist doctrine or Buddhist philosophy. It is to be said that on the foundation of Buddhism a new and special Education System originated in ancient India. Buddhism made a tremendous movement which played a valuable role in the development of Education System in ancient India or ancient Buddhist world. It is well-known that with the rise of Buddhism in India there dawned the golden age of India’s culture and civilisation. There was progress in all aspects of Indian civilisation under the impact of Buddhism.

As we all know the most affective and effective way to convey the message of the Buddha to the world is the method of education. According to the canonical reference, “it is the miracle of instruction” (anusāsani pātihāriya), which the Buddha adopted to propagate his teachings. The Buddha is known as the great teacher (Sathhādevamanussānam), as his method of education was so effective, that the people almost all over India became his followers within the forty-five years of his teaching career. Education of the Dhamma, started by the Buddha for over two and a half millennium ago, has been successfully carried out by his disciples until today; inspiring millions of people, especially in the eastern part of the world, in their religious, cultural, social, political, economical, and intellectual activities.

On the contrary, the Buddha immediately after his enlightenment figured out the way to share his spiritual experience with the world. Ariyapariyesana sutta, which reveals the noble quest of the Buddha, tells us how he thought to impart his doctrine to the world for the welfare of many. There, the Buddha adopted a very powerful method of education known as gradual

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method (pariyāya desanā), as he understood the different inclinations of the people. The teaching method introduced by the Buddha to the field of education is still highly utilized in the system of modern education. The Buddha first started his teaching career wandering from house to house, village to village and street to street. Then he founded his centers of education in the monasteries such as Veluvanārāma in Rājagaha, Jetavanārāma, and Pubbārāma in Savatthi. It was the starting point of monastic education in the history of education. While the Buddha was the master in all these monastic institutions, his great disciples such as Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Anuruddha, MahāKaccāna and so on immensely contributed to bring forth his teaching in many different ways with their unsurpassed knowledge of the Dhamma.

Sometimes, when the Buddha left half through his lessons, for some reason, one of his disciples came forward to complete the remaining part of the lesson. The Madhupindika sutta of Majjhima nikāya is a collaborated lesson of the Buddha and the Venerable Maha Kaccāna. There were many disciples of the Buddha who developed different skills in the fields of Dhamma due to the monastic education during the time of the Buddha. We can find canonical references to such competent monks, such as Dhamma-dharās, Vinaya-dharās, Mātikā-dharās, Dhamma-kathikās, Vicita-bhānakās, and so on. These monks, who were competent in the different fields of the Dhamma, continued to preserve and propagate the teaching of the Buddha by way of monastic education, even after the passing away of the Buddha. Teaching of the Dhamma became a traditional heritage of the monks. Teacher-pupil lineage of the monks has contributed much for the development of Buddhist literature in different directions. Thanks to their efforts, today we are fortunate enough to possess a wide range of Buddhist literature comprising the canon, pre-commentarial literature, commentaries, sub-commentaries, manuals etc. The history of Buddhism records a wide variety of Buddhist schools, which presented different interpretations of the teachings of the Buddha.

### **Buddhist Education System**

Buddhist education aims at a personality transformation into a highest form of humanity through ethical, intellectual and spiritual perfection. These three faculties of perfection of human life undoubtedly lead a man through mundane happiness to supra mundane happiness, which is the highest achievement we all are equally looking for. Therefore, the Buddhist education is grounded on the primary psychological need of all living beings, that is to say as the Buddha pointed out “sukhakāmāhi sattādukkha patikkūlā”. All living beings like happiness and they dislike unhappiness. Education is seen or expected to shape the character

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of a society. And yet, it finds itself in a situation where it tries to respond to or adapting the changes that take place in the society.

The educational philosophy of Gautam Buddha occupies the foremost position. He is the beacon light. Although the mind of a pupil has great powers, it blossoms with the help of a real teacher. Buddha started to give the education to those people who didn't have the right to get the education. The main aim of Buddha was to make the society aware. Education was the only way at that time to make the society aware and inculcate the feeling of brotherhood. Without the attainment of self-realization and enlightenment, education is incomplete.

It is worthwhile to notice on which bases the Brahmins held the creation of the caste system. The following verse explains that it was the birth which divided the society. "Brahmins were born from mouth of Bhramas, kings (ksatriyas) were born from his shoulders, vaisyas were born from his thighs, and low caste (sudras) was born from his feet." (Rgveda, 10 mandala, 90 sukta). The Brahmins thought that it was because of the birth from the Mahabrahma they occupied high place in the society. It was through this belief they dominated the society.

Among these four castes, Shudras had the least privileges. They had to work for their masters. Of course, there were other groups called the pancamas. They were all ill-treated. They were not allowed to join any ceremonial function conducted by the Brahmins. So, Brahmanism was only reserved for the high class.

When the Brahmins held the view that by birth one is pure, the Buddha explained with his wisdom and compassion that we must eradicate the misconception and disharmony against humankind. "By birth one is not an outcast, by birth one is not a Brahmin; by action one is an outcast, and by deeds one is a Brahmin". The Buddha realized that it is not by birth one becomes a high caste or low caste, but by deeds. The Buddha also explained in many other suttas that whether a person is born to Brahmana or kahatriya it does not mean he is pure; moral. The judgments of his actions will be judged according to his behaviors and deeds. In the Vasala sutta of Anguttara Nikaya the Buddha said that if a person is a murder; thief and etc to know him as an outcast.

According to Assalayana Sutta of Majjhima Nikaya, the Brahmins thought themselves to be superior because of the following allegation:

"Brahmins are the highest caste; those of any other castes are inferior; Brahmins are the fairest caste; those of any other castes are dark; only Brahmins are purified, not the non-Brahmins; Brahmins alone are the sons of Brahma, the offspring of Brahma, born of his mouth, born of Brahma, created by Brahma, heirs of Brahma"

Buddha also rejected the caste system using the biological argument. The Buddha also described that among the humans, there are no differences in terms of body, marks, hair, etc. But among other species, trees, animals and insects etc, they are different from each other. The Vasetta Sutta of Majjhima Nikaya and Suttanipata have the detailed accounts of the differences that the Buddha pointed out.

Buddha opened the door to liberation for all human beings irrespective of any caste. According to the Brahmins, only they can attain salvations. The Buddha not only said it; he also proved it by giving opportunities to get ordained by any caste into the dispensations. For instance, Ven. Upali, who was from the barber family and the lowest status of the society, attained arahantship. Later, he became the chief among the disciplinary monks and could remember the vinaya very well. Furthermore, the Buddha gave liberation to women by giving them equal rights as men. The Buddha also clarified to King Kosala that the quality of liberation achieved is the same no matter you are from any caste.

In Agganna Sutta of the Digha Nikaya, the Buddha brought out the detailed explanations to explain the development of the society and the development of the caste system in terms of occupations. It means whatever a person does for his earnings, he will be known as such, i.e., a person whose job is to look after the cow should be known as cow-boy.

All people from different cast are equal to him. Furthermore, in the sutta although the Buddha said that one is born to rich family because of his previous actions. The Buddha did not mean by being born in high class he is pure as the Brahmins thought so. The Buddha understood that when living in a society one will be named according to his profession. Therefore, he mentioned in the Assalayana sutta of Majjhima Nikaya that the country of Yonas & Kambojas had two divisions other than the four castes, the masters and the slaves but they are interchangeable. The slaves can become the masters by his acquisition of wealth. A person becomes outcast only when he engages himself to be murder and does not support his parents when he is capable. Mahatma Buddha wanted to aware the people of the society so he took the way to educate the people. Specially he educated the women and depressed class of the society. His main aim of education was liberation, equality, justice. His ultimate aim of education was wisdom.

### **Education of women**

At the time of Buddha the status of women was pathetic but Buddha had the positive and sympathetic attitude towards the women. So he started the movement to uplift the status of the women in the society.

One of the best ways to understand the spirit of civilization and to appreciate its excellences and realize its limitations is to study the history of the position of women in it. The position of women in a society is the true index of its cultural, religious and spiritual levels. The position of women is the best criteria for estimating with precision the degree of civilization attained by a particular society during various periods of its history. In the pre-Buddhist period the position of women in India was considerably lowered down. In ancient times in all patriarchal societies the birth of a girl was generally a not welcome event. Almost everywhere the son was valued more than the daughter. In the *Brahmana* literature there is one passage observing that while the son is the hope of the family, the Daughter is a source of trouble to it. Naturally the sentiments towards women was low. Altekar mention that, "in his early history man is seen excluding woman from religious service almost everywhere because he regarded her as unclean, mainly on account of her periodical menstruation....The Aryans also regarded the women as untouchable during her monthly period... The attitude of Hindu society towards women is unsympathetic; if a woman has the misfortune of falling into captivity even for a short time, she finds it impossible to get readmission into her family and society. Another mention that "women deserved independence was not literally interpreted even by those who neglected the protection aspect of the doctrine. It was she who was to control its expenditure and supervise the general arrangements of the kitchen furniture. Altekar mention that the history of the most of the known civilizations shows that the further back we go into antiquity, the more unsatisfactory is found to be the general position of women. Through the study of literature pertaining to the position of women, we come to a conclusion that the general position and status of women were changing from time to time, and so naturally the attitude of society towards them could not remain the same in different periods. In one side women play an important role in the religious activity and on the other side he is restricted to take part in religious activities.

In the sixth century B.C. when the Buddha was born at that time the position of women was not good, like in the early *Vedic* period. In all cultures and during all times, women have never been considered mere entities or totally ignored. However, they have never been accorded the same kind of universal respect conferred upon men. But the course of history also shows that however much men were regarded as superior, women frequently challenged this conception and sometimes won a more honoured standing both in life and

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literature. It is generally believed that the Buddha was a great social reformer, a believer in the equality of all human beings, a democrat and that his efforts for the emancipation of women and lower caste created a sort of social revolution in society. Before Buddhism, women were also participating in religious activities, but their participation was not so independent like Buddhism. In the *Sad dharma pundarik am* the Buddha appears on his holy mountain surrounded by multitude of disciples, and among the more six thousand female saints. According to I.B. Horner, in the pre Buddhist days the situation of women in India was on the whole low and without honour. During the Buddhist epoch there was change. Women came to enjoy more equality and greater respect and authority than ever hitherto accorded to them. Horner gives the credit for this supposed change to the Buddha for he "gave the Dhamma to both (men and women)". According to Ambedkar also the Buddha was an upholder of the doctrine of the equality of sexes. P. Lakshmi Narasimhan mentions that, "man and woman are placed by the Buddha on the same footing of equality. The attitude of the Buddha is all the more sympathetic to women than the attitude of other contemporary leaders and thinkers. But now here in any of the utterances of the Buddha we do not find anything to show that he made any differences between men and women. If he honoured Maudgalyana and Sariputra who were held in high esteem, Khema, the wife of the king Bimbisara, and Dhamma dinna, the chief among the *Bhikshunis* that preached the *Dhamma*. Unlike the nuns of Christendom the *Bhikshunis* were allowed as much freedom to preach the *Dhamma* as the *Bhikshus*. It is said that no religion woman has played such a prominent part as Visakha has done in Buddhism. P. Lakshmi Narasimhan mentioned that the Buddha, admitted women into the *Sangha* with the following reply: "Are the Buddha born only for the benefit of men? Have not Visakha and many others entered the paths? The entrance is open to women as well as men. Thus did the Buddha give woman an independent status and place her on a footing of equality with man. According to Ambedkar, "no caste, no inequality, no superiority: all are equal. That is the Buddha stood for. The Buddha gave the *Dhamma* to both; he also gave talks to the householders and their wives. Buddhism is a religion of humanity and is a religion of welfare of human beings (*Bahujana hitaya* and *bahujana sukhaya*). Buddha talks about the welfare of all living beings then how can he have a negative attitude towards women. He gave his teachings to human beings so that their suffering can be removed. The main motto of his teachings was to bring happiness for human beings and make them free

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from sufferings. The word human beings includes both men and women then how he is again  
st women?

Many scholars are of the opinion that the Buddha was more a social reformer than a philosopher. His attitude towards women was therefore more enlightened and considerate. Ancient Indian history revealed that women enjoyed more freedom in the Buddhist period than in any other period of Ancient India. When the eight rules were imposed on the women to be admitted in the *Sangha* that time mahaprajapati was confident that women would gradually reach the respectable position in the *Sangha*. Altekarmentioned the admission of women to the Buddhist order gave a great impetus to the cause of female education among the ladies in commercial and aristocratic families. He also mentioned that among the famous ladies in Buddhism are of them like Sanghamita who went to foreign countries like Ceylon and became famous there as teacher of the Holy scriptures. Buddhism declared that womanhood was no bar to salvation. Buddhism raised a new and respectable career before them. The career of preaching and evangelizing that was thus opened before women by Buddhism attracted a large number of talented ladies, who distinguished themselves as teachers and preachers. Such for instance, was the case of Gutta, Anopama and Sumedha, who eventually became very famous preachers. Similar was the case of Sanghamita, the daughter of Asoka, who went to far off Ceylon, to spread the teachings of the Buddha. The eventual permission, which the Buddha accorded to the admission of women to his order, gave an impetus to the spread of education and philosophy among the women. Many women used to lead a life of celibacy, with the aim of understanding and following the eternal truths of religion and philosophy. By this it is but natural that the general average of intelligence and education among women must have been fairly high. A.S. Altekarmentioned that in the early period the Buddhist movement gave an indirect impetus to female education and produced a number of nun-poetesses.

With the rise of Buddhism the Indian women found new dimensions of life which made her to stand boldly in the society. She became more assertive and conscious of her individuality. According to Horner the association of the large number of educated women with early Buddhism proved what Buddha had done for the emancipation of the weaker sex. It was a period, which seemed to have revived the memories of ancient *Risikas* like Gargi, Ghosa, Apala etc, who had contributed to *Rigvedic* society. A period  
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from the sixth century to second century B.C. was the one where women enjoyed a fair amount of social freedom. Mahrajapati Gotamiasanun she was always alert about injustices being inflicted on women. In the Buddha's perception he did not make any difference between men and women. After her ordination Mahaprajapati came to Buddha and the Buddha preached to her and gave her a subject for meditation, with this topic she developed insight and soon after won *Arahatship*, while her five hundred companions attained to the same after listening to the *Nandakovada Sutta*. The act of Gotamadevini contributed to enhancing the social status of women in the society. She must have proved an angel of mercy to many women, especially widows. She was therefore very popular and after his death she was given an unique honour which was impossible for any ancient Indian women to receive.

Another famous Buddhist lady was Sanghamitta, daughter of the King Ashoka, who became a very successful nun and according to commentators, she was a well-wisher of all the people and cared for their benefit and happiness. She was the first women missionary of India who went abroad to propagate Buddhist teachings to Sri Lanka. In the early history of Buddhism, however, the permission given to women to enter the order gave a fairly good impetus to the cause of female education, a large number of ladies joined the order and became lifelong students of religion and philosophy. Their example must have given an indirect encouragement to the spread of education among lay women as well. During the Buddhist epoch there was a change. Women came to enjoy more equality, and greater respect and authority than ever hitherto accorded them. Although their activities were confined within certain spheres principally the domestic social and religious—their position generally began to improve. The exclusive supremacy of man began to give way before the increasing emancipation of women. In India for a long time education was imparted by individual teachers on their own house and responsibility. With the development of Buddhism as an organized public educational institution came into existence. Buddhism threw its doors open to all, irrespective of any considerations of caste or country. It raised the international status of India by the efficiency of its higher education, which attracted students from distant countries.

During the Buddhist period, the women of India attained remarkable success and achieved glory in the sphere of education, culture and spiritual potentialities. The Buddha spread his message for the good of the many (*Bahujana hitaya, bahujana sukhaya*). The detailed discussion shows the position of women in the Buddha's time high comparatively to the later

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Vedic period. Buddha never made any differences between men and women and his main motto was to remove suffering so human beings, then they can attained *Nirvana*. Buddha was the first teacher who had given women equal and unfettered opportunities in the field of spiritual development.

### **The goal of Buddha's teaching**

The goal of Buddhist education is to attain wisdom. The Buddha taught us that the main objective of our practice or cultivation was to achieve this ultimate wisdom. The Buddha further taught us that everyone has the potential to realize this state of ultimate wisdom, as it is an intrinsic part of our nature, not something one obtains externally. The chief aim of Buddhist education was all round development of child's personality. This included his physical, mental, moral and intellectual development. The aim of Buddhist Education is to make a free man, a wise, intelligent, moral, non-violent & secular man. Students became judicious, humanist, logical and free from superstitious. Students became free from greed, lust and ignorance. Buddhist Education was wide open and available to the people of all walks of life. The principal goal of the Buddhist Education is to change an unwise to wise, beast to priest. The Buddhist education system aimed at regaining our intrinsic nature. It also teaches absolute equality which stemmed from Buddha's recognition that all sentient beings possess this innate wisdom and nature. Buddha's teaching help us to realize that innate, perfect, ultimate wisdom. With wisdom, we can then solve all our problems and turn suffering into happiness. In the Buddhist era, religion was given top priority and education was imparted through it. The chief aim of education was propagation of religion and inculcation of religious feelings and education served as a mean to achieve salvation or nirvana. Preparation for life, there was a provision for imparting worldly and practical knowledge along with religious education so that when the students entered normal life they may be able to earn their livelihood.

Buddhist Education made revolutionary change in the society. The Buddhists in the world first made Education open to all. Students irrespective of caste, creed, religion got opportunity to have education which was denied by the superior class in the society. In India also, in Vedic Educational schools students from lower classes were refused to get admission. The teachers were highly qualified. The aim of Buddhist Education is to make a free man, a wise, intelligent, moral, non-violent & secular man. Students became judicious, humanist, logical and free from superstitious. Students became free from greed, lust and ignorance. Buddhist Education was wide open and available to the people of all walks of life. The  
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principal goal of the Buddhist Education is to change an unwise to wise, beast to priest. The teachers were the guardian of the students. They were responsible for physical, mental, spiritual and moral development of the students. Since Educational Institution (Monasteries) was residential therefore the relationship between the teachers and the students were very cordial. Sangha (Monastic) life was residential; therefore a cordial relationship between the teachers and the students grew up. Their relationship can be compared with the relationship of a father and a son. The teachers were the guardians and sincere for their mutual relationship, happiness, development and responsibilities.

The students had to follow monastic rules along with their syllabus and they were classified according to merit. The period of Education was 12 years. They had to follow the advice of the teachers and obey them. In this way they had to pass twelve years in learning. Students put questions to the teachers; teachers answered the question and discussed matters related to their Education. Students had to perform daily routine works beyond learning. The teacher of a Buddhist monastery were empowered to expel any student on charge of misconduct or any type of serious disobedience.

There was the dominance of Brahmins on education and the system was extremely rigid. So the rigidity and complexity of the Hindu philosophy on the matter of education gave birth to new protestant creed in India, namely Buddhism.

Buddhism was introduced when Brahmins formed the society in their own beliefs and systems. The caste system was one of the social problems among others. Brahmins had full authority over the functioning of the ceremonies. They divided the society into four major groups, the Brahmana, Khattiya, Vessa and Sudda. The Brahmins occupy the highest position according to the stratification of the society. Buddha not only preached the Dhamma, but also pointed out the social injustice among fellow human beings.

### **Education of downtrodden**

At the time of Buddha, the system of society was not good due to which Buddha raised the voice in favour of backward class. Buddha thought of educating the people for this work, which is why education has been given great importance at the time of Buddha. On one hand, Buddha gave a similar education to everyone on the other side, Buddha talked about the right to equality. By education Buddha awakened the originality in the surroundings and simultaneously inspired people to think something new. Understanding Buddha's education system is as much as understanding his thoughts. Education is the only way that takes away human beings from roasting. Buddha adopted the same way to get the people out

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ofroasting. Buddha talked about the liberation of the education system in which everyone is equal to get the education. There was no discrimination between men and women according to Buddha.

After getting education in the Buddhist schools, colleges and universities one can not do any injustice, tell a lie, commit theft, can not kill, can not be addicted in wine and make himself free from moral turpitude. In this way students become free from greed, lust, enmity and ignorance. Buddhism encompasses the entire collection of works by Buddha Shakyamuni and is called the Tripitaka. This can be classified into three categories sutra, Vinaya (precepts or rules) Sastra (Commentaries) which emphasize meditation, discipline and wisdom respectively. The monk and the students in Buddhist period were following the simple living and high thinking principle. Their lives were full of purity, nobelness, dutifulness and humanity and are suppose to follow the Astang Marg- the word Samma means 'proper', 'whole', 'thorough', 'integral', 'complete', and 'perfect' - 1. Samma-Ditthi — Complete or Perfect Vision. 2. Samma-Sankappa — Perfected Emotion or Aspiration, 3. Samma-Vaca — Perfected or whole Speech. 4. Samma-Kammanta — Integral Action. 5. Samma-Ajiva — Proper Livelihood. . 6. Samma-Vayama — Complete or Full Effort, Energy or Vitality. 7. Samma-Sati — Complete or Thorough Awareness. 8. Samma-Samadhi — Full, Integral or Holistic Samadhi.

### **Principles of Buddhist education**

Buddhist Education system developed on the basis of some basic principles. This education gave emphasis on the moral, mental and physical development and also to divert the students towards the Sangha rules and guide them to follow it. The main stress was given to have a clear idea of Tripitaka which consists of Sutta Pitaka, Binoy Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka. The entire Tripitaka consists of Buddhas teachings, message, philosophy and rules for the Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunies. The curriculum was chiefly spiritual in nature. It was because the chief aim of education was to attain salvation. So the study of the religious books was most important. This type of curriculum was meant only for the monks. Besides these spinning, weaving, printing of the clothes, tailoring, sketching, accountancy, medicines, surgery and coinage were the other subjects of Buddhist education. At the initial stage medium of education was mother tongue, later it included Pali and Prakrit. In later period according to the demand of the society and professional education, art, sculpture, architecture, medicine also included in the syllabus. Buddhist Education came out from the religious arena and went out for the benefit of the mankind. There were two types of education primary and higher

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education. In primary education reading, writing and arithmetic were taught and in higher education religion philosophy Ayurveda, military training was included. Everyone was free to choose his subject without any restriction. Vocation education was not ignored during the Buddhist system of education. The monks of Vihar were taught spinning, weaving and sewing in order that they meet their clothing requirement. They were taught architecture as well. Education in architecture enabled them to build up new Vihars or repair the old ones. Similarly the householders following Buddhism living outside Vihar were given training in different type of and also earn their livelihood. It is to be mentioned that Buddhist Educational Syllabus included Vedic subjects also. In this way difference of Buddhist & Vedic Education wiped out and united. This was a historic development in the history of Education in India.

### **Books**

Buddha put the great emphasis on the types of books also. He used the scientific, logical and true methods to teach the students. Especially he used the oral method to give his teachings so it is clear that Buddhism emphasised the scientific books which were helpful to give the right and clear clarification of each topic to the students. As discussed above about the methods of teaching of the Gautam Buddha, from those methods, it is clear that Buddha emphasised to the curriculum which consisted science, physiology, philosophy, history, research, logic, right education, freedom of speech, freedom of thought, experiment, visualization, active learning etc. physical and mental development is the main objective of the Buddhist education through which the individual enjoy the concept of nibbhana.

At first there was private and group teachings. Later it developed into class room. In due course Sangharamas developed into residential college and universities. In the history of Education those universities played major role in the propagation of Buddhism, Buddhist history, Art & Culture. In those universities world famous scholars like Atisa Dipankar, Silabrada, Santarakshit were the teachers. Many valuable books were written. We still remember the glory of the universities like Nalanda, Vikramsila, Sompuri, Salban, Jagaddal, Pandit Vihar, Taxila. The supremacy of those universities were unparallel. Students from China, Myanmar, Thailand, Gandhara and all parts of ancient India came to have their education in those universities. Buddhist Education is a combination between individual and classroom education. Sutta, Vinaya and Dhamma Pitak were the main subjects prescribed for study. Buddhist education aimed at purity of character. Like Vedic education it was training for moral character rather than psychological development of the students. One has to attain

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the stage of Bodhisattva. Mental and moral development was emphasized. Following were the methods:-

Through the art of writing had been well developed up to Buddhist period yet, due to shortage and no availability of writing materials, verbal education was prevalent as it was in Vedic age. The teacher used to give lessons to the novices who learnt them by heart. The teacher used to put questions on the learning the lesson by heart. In order to win discussion or Shastrartha and impress the general public, it was necessary to improve the power of discussion. This was also needed to satisfy the critics and opposing groups and establish one's own cult. Thus, rules were framed for discussion. The importance of discussion encouraged the logic in the Buddhist period. The controversial matters could not be decided without logical argument. Logic was also useful in the development of the mental power and knowledge. The main aim of the Buddhist monks was to propagate Buddhism. Hence some Acharyas like Sariputta, Mahayaggalva, Aniruddha, Rahula, etc gave the importance to tours for educating people. Conferences were arranged on every full moon and 1st day of month in the Buddhist sangha. The monks of different sangha assembled and put forward their doubts freely. The attendance of every monk was compulsory in such conference.

### **Methods of teaching**

The techniques used by the Buddha were very relevant. He adopted a number of varied teaching methods – the analytical method, the psychotherapeutic method, the scientific method, the client – centred method, the discovery method, the question and answer method. His entire missionary enterprise was launched on three specific methods of Dhamma desana – the direct lecture method. When delivering a lecture the direct instructional function of learning is involved. Then comes Dhamma Savana – Attentive listening. This suggests the role of listening in the learner. Another is Dhamma Sakaccha – Discussion, the learning exercised through discussion. He adopted a different methodology for every different developmental stage.

When the Buddha spoke about human sufferings, it was not because of pessimism, but due to realization of one's suffering to be the result of one's wrong attitude and thoughts. It is for this reason that Buddhist education takes the controlling and taming of mind as its main purpose. Today's education everywhere tends to put the emphasis on science and technology, aiming to produce mainly scientists and technicians. Such an educational system, which largely neglects the cultivation of the mind, produces subservient people who are mechanical and thoughtless living a life of non-virtuous deeds.

The function of Buddhist education is to help individuals to understand that although each individual is always unique and irreplaceable, human beings live in terms of the entire universe of things. In other words, being aware that the organic operation of each existence always corresponds with the laws of the universe is what the Buddha teaches. Without such awareness, people become what N. P. Jacobsson calls 'captives of their own self-serving and self-isolating strategies.' This is the unique feature in Buddhist educational system in so far as it explains that the whole world, including humans and other beings as well as nature, is a vast net of interrelations. For survival, an individual depends on nature and other members in society for food, clothing, shelter, medicine and other needs.

### **Self realization**

The path of Buddhist education is that of self-realization and self-effort in order to rid oneself of ignorance and defilement. "I have directed you towards deliverance. The Dhamma, the truth is to be realized by the wise for themselves." It is significant to note here that the wise person in Buddhism is not one who knows many things, but one who has an open mind to learn any fresh knowledge and is always ready to expand that knowledge. The *Vammika Sutta* gives a method the wise resorts to expand her/his knowledge. The emergence of Buddhist education marks an important event in the history of Indian thought. The Buddha claimed that although a person's psychological past, heredity and the social environment may condition one's actions, all this does not determine one's destiny. On the contrary, one can change one's behavior and make one's own future life by one's effort.

### **Nibbana is the final goal**

According to the Canonical texts, *Nibbāna* is the final goal of Buddhist education. All of Buddhist's actions are aimed at the ultimate attainment of *Nibbāna*. Without *Nibbāna*, Buddhism is directionless. The Buddha teaches only about suffering and the cessation of suffering. The cessation of suffering, here, means *Nibbāna*; this is the central ideal of the Buddha's teachings. The *Ānguttara Nikāya* saying, "Just as the great ocean is of one taste, the taste of salt, even so this Doctrine and Discipline (*Dhamma-vinaya*) is one of taste, the taste of emancipation (*Vimutti*)," signifies the aim of Buddhist education. Both the *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Saṃyutta Nikāya* state that the Buddha's main task of forty-five years teaching was to point out human suffering and a way out of it. Hence, *Nibbāna* is the only aim for which the practitioner of Buddhism hopes. Whichever step the person is practicing, it is only for reaching one aim: *Nibbāna*.

## **Eight fold path**

Dr. Walpola Rahula comments about the Noble Eightfold path in his work: Practically, the whole teaching of the Buddha, to which he devoted himself during 45 years, deals in some way or other with this Path. He explained it in different ways and in different words to different people, according to the stage of their development and their capacity to understand and follow him. But the essence of those many thousand discourses scattered in the Buddhist scriptures is found in the Noble Eightfold Path. The Noble Eightfold Path, therefore, is the most perfect doctrine concerning with the Code of Ethics in Buddhism. Every aspect of the ethical code ranging from the subtlest to the most profound is available in this Noble Eightfold Path. By following this path, the man can reach the end of suffering. This is the only way that leads to the highest aim of life. They are: I Right View (*Sammā-diṭṭhi*),

II Right Thought (*Sammā-saṅkappa*),

III Right Speech (*Sammā-vācā*),

IV Right Action (*Sammā-kammanta*),

V Right Livelihood (*Sammā-ājīva*),

VI Right Effort (*Sammā-vāyāma*),

VII Right Mindfulness (*Sammā-sati*), and

VIII Right Concentration (*Sammā-samādhi*).

The Noble-Eightfold Path, we see that it embodies the entire system of Buddhist education. The Noble Eightfold Path is not only for the monks or Arahantas but is for people from all walk of life because it is a step movement toward ethical- living. The inclusion of morality, concentration, and wisdom in the Noble Eightfold Path makes it the nexus of Buddhist education. This structure differentiates Buddhist education from others, in the sense that Buddhist education includes the goal of conduct and morality, liberation as well. According to Buddhism, it preaches the Middle Way of education or development. It offers teachings, which enable man to develop both body and mind. Ideal persons are those who achieve four kinds of developments, i.e., physical, social, mental, and intellectual developments. They are stated as follows: *Kāya-bhāvanā* or physical development, *Sīla-bhāvanā* or social development, *Citta-bhāvanā* or mental development, *Paññā-bhāvanā* or Intellectual development.



### **Chief Aim**

The chief aim of education was the spread of Buddhist Dhamma and attainment of Nirvana through it. Education was imparted in Mathas, Viharas and Monasteries and monks were responsible for its organisation and management. Monastic life of the Shramanas and monks had always been exemplary for the Indians so much so that the educational institutions attracted students from distant parts of the world. All differences of caste and social status which had taken deep-roots under the Brahmanical education had been removed. The attitude of society towards education was broad and positive. Not only the sacred portals of the institutions were opened to all but also all the students were provided equal opportunities for the development of their character according to their capacity and aptitude. Along with Dhamma and philosophical aspects of education secular education formed an essential part of it. Besides, rituals were in vogue while imparting education. There existed harmonious relationship between teacher and the taught. Students had great respect for the teachers and the teachers had tremendous love and affection for the students. They led very disciplined life. Though educational system was dominated by religion yet there was provision for imparting practical knowledge in Spinning, Weaving, Drawing, and Medicine etc. The medium of instruction was folk language—Pali. Lecture, questioning and discussion were the main methods of teaching. The system of education was purely Indian having been evolved by the Indian educationists. So education was closely wedded to the various problems of life and it aimed at finding out concrete solutions thereof. So it is clear that the Buddhist education system was totally liberal in which everyone was equal and free to get the education. There was no discrimination on any basis among the people at the time of Gautaum Buddha.

### **Overall development**

Buddha talked about the overall development of the individual's personality. He explained that the human being should not be developed physically only, he should be developed mentally also. Buddha has identified the five shapes of the human personality. This is not a final division of personality. These groups are explained further through some verbs in the Khajjaniasutta. The Buddhist explanation of personality was the full and perfect clarification of personality. Buddhism classifies the person by means of their physical and spiritual progressive level, knowledge and comprehension, capacity of memory, responsibility, social activities and so on. Varieties of personality can be revealed from the Buddhist texts. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs speaks these: Need for self-actualization, Esteem needs, *Copyright © 2017, Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*

Belongingness and Love needs, Safety needs, Physiological needs are categorized types of personality in accordance with the Buddhist teachings. His theory is mostly parallel with the Buddhist teachings. Buddhist personality development is straightly connected with the path of the Stream-Enterer, Once Returner, Non-Returner and the Arahantas well. Thus, we can understand the uniqueness of personality varieties in Buddhism.

The Dhamma of Lord Buddha is an excellent expression of humanism and humanitarianism. That is why it has attracted a large mass of people to tread the path as shown by the Enlightened. One who had always promoted the ideals of love, harmony and goodwill for enriching the human life without intolerance, injustice and exploitation. His philosophy is mainly concerned with the liberation of man from sufferings. The Buddhist philosophy is based on the ethical insight of man and at the same time is rooted in individuality oriented social system, which persists and endures on its own principles of compassion and brotherhood. The Buddhist philosophy as a theory of humanism has no god, no immortal soul, no creation, no last judgement like other theistic religions. The Buddha as a teacher and more especially, an exemplar of freedom. Buddhist philosophy therefore has attracted the downtrodden. This has brought the process of conversion. Conversion has been viewed as a social political breakthrough after which the scheduled castes can make a business like beginning for their career as citizens of a free and secular India. It is this quality that led Babasaheb Ambedkar to adopt it in preferred to Islam, Sikhism or Christianity. All these principles of humanism of Buddhism have made the scheduled caste people with their leader Dr. B.R. Ambedkar decided to embrace Buddhism. Ambedkar was confident that conversion was the only means to redeem the untouchables. The conversion was as important to him as the Swaraj. There was possibility of the facilities to the untouchables being affected by the conversion. But Ambedkar also knew that the facilities were not of a permanent character. The real strength of the untouchables was in their social organization. While announcing the conversion programme Ambedkar was aware of his own responsibility and the good of the untouchables. For the removal of untouchability religious conversion was extremely necessary. Ambedkar was bent upon freeing the untouchability. Ambedkar was bent upon freeing the untouchables from the iron social frame work of Hinduism. But he did not want to cut relations with the Indian culture. He desired to raise their spiritual and economic status. He was to retain the facilities, which the untouchables were to gain.

Educational foundations in India are also found in the metaphysical, epistemological and axiological outlook of the philosophers. The Indian philosophy of education is distinct about aims, curriculum, methodology and other aspects of education. It is not so inarticulate form to the application of the speculative view. But the exercise of philosophy of education as a systematic study plays a role of restrictive paradigm for the growth of the field. The analytical movement also seems to have had little or no influence on this area of study. In all aspects, as a subject of academic study, as an area of scholarly research and as a perspective for intellectual dialogue and debate, philosophy of education has suffered neglect in Indian philosophy.

In India the medieval history is witnessed the period of Buddhism. Buddhism accepted non-violence as the aim of education. Buddha emphasized on liberation as the ultimate goal and knowledge and law of Karma as the means of liberation. It is the liberation from the cycle of birth and death which is emancipation. Therefore knowledge of the four supreme truths leads to emancipation. These truths (aryasatyas), known as four noble truths are-

1. This world is full of miseries (dukha)
2. Ignorance is the cause of miseries (dOkhasamudaya)
3. There are cessation of miseries (dukhanirodha) and
4. There are ways to get rid of miseries (dukha-nirodh-marg)

### **Conclusion**

Like Buddha, many such great people time to time have led their movements. Rastripita Jyoti Rao Phule who was the first person in India to raise his voice for the equal rights. Specifically he raised his voice to give the equal education to women and downtrodden of India, who were treated as depressed class of the society. He was influenced by the ideology of Buddha. Like Buddha he led the movement against the prevailing caste-restrictions in India. He revolted against the domination of the Brahmins and struggled for the rights of peasants and other low-caste people. Jyotiba Phule was also a pioneer of women education in India and fought for education of girls throughout his life. He was the follower of Buddhist philosophy so he was also talking for justice, equality, freedom, liberation etc. he also raised his voice against the caste discrimination in the society. Mata Savitri Bai Phule, wife of Jyoti Rao Phule, also working for the education of women and downtrodden. She was the first trained teacher of India. She faced various problems while teaching the women and downtrodden. But with the support of her brave husband, she was successful in her mission. Sant kabir ji was also influenced by Buddhist philosophy. Kabir ji has become a great revolutionary and

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social reformer. His words, which are said to be of wisdom, correspond well, as the Buddha contradicted casteism, discrimination, exploitation of downtrodden, social discrimination. Taking the same direction, he contradicted casteism, superstition, caste bias, etc. By studying Kabir Ji's hymn, it proves that equality is found in Buddhism and Kabir's ideas. Kabir Ji was keen to wipe out the waste of society's inherent virtues and wrong values of society, due to such views he became a great social reformer. Satguru Ravidass ji who also fought for the equal status of everyone in the society. Satguru Ravidas ji was one of the brilliant beaches of medieval India. Ravidas ji kept reverential with his anti-monist forces. Ravidas Ji put Karam at the top. His views and Buddhist views are similar. Just as Buddha denounced racism, superstitiousness, casteism, discrimination, exploitation of Dalits, in the same way, Guru Ravidas ji gave a new direction to the masses by exposing the folly of Hinduism, anti-racism and superstition. According to Gautam Buddha, no person is born Bhraman or Sudra from birth, but good or bad deeds make someone a Bhraman or Shudra. We also heard about the great social reformer, Guru Nanak Dev Ji. According to his opinion, the true values are higher than everything else. There is much similarity between the views of Guru Nanak and Buddha. Just as Buddha contradicted casteism, racism and discrimination. Similarly, thoughts of Guru Nanak were also influenced by Buddha. As Guru Nanak advocated truth in his creation and stressed on living a true life. He also advocated equality, justice, liberty and freedom. Shahuji Maharaj was one of the great philosopher, thinker, social reformer who was influenced by the ideology of Buddha. He did deep study of the Indian social system. He was also influenced by the philosophy of Buddhism. Like Buddha, he was of the view that all the people on this earth are born equal and they have every right to have equal opportunities in every field. Every discrimination and inequality is man made and therefore is not the will of God. Among them all, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the father of the Indian constitution was influenced by the philosophy of Buddha. Everyone raised his or her voice against the social system of India. Babasaheb Ambedkar not only raised his voice but he spent his entire life for the welfare of the society. He fulfilled his mission with the help of law in India. As he was an opportunity contender, political pioneer, logician, mastermind, financial expert, editor, social reformer, Pentecostal of Buddhism and pioneer of education of backward classes. Dr. Ambedkar is one of the greatest personality of 20th century India. Like Buddha, He was the determined fighter and a deep scholar who has made significant efforts to lead the society on the path of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Ambedkar's principal aim was to build up a society based on social justice. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was influenced by the ideology of Buddha.

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His struggle shows us that he followed the philosophy of Buddha and he also wanted to make the Indian society free from all the discrimination, casteism, inequality. Like Buddha, his main aim was to give the equal education to women and down-trodden also. He believed that by giving the equal opportunities to all, we can make the society free from discrimination.

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