**The Vedic Education System**

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**Introduction:-**

The education system which was evolved first in ancient India is known as the Vedic System of education. In other words, the ancient system of education where based on the vedas and there for it was the given name of Vedic education system. Some scholars have subdivided vedic educational period into rigveda period, brahman period, upanishada period, sutra(hymn)period, smriti period,etc. but all these period due to pre-dominance of the vedas, there was no change in the aims and an ideals for education. The education system of Vedic period has unique characteristics and qualities which were not found in the ancients education system of any other country of the world. In the words of Dr.P.N. Prabha, “ Education in ancient India was free from any external control like that of the state and government or any party polities. It was the king‟s duties to see that learned pundits, pursued their studies and performed their duty of imparting knowledge without interference from any source what show ever”

**Concept of Vedic Education System:-**

Man is the most intellectual being in the creation. He is endowed with the power to receive knowledge, to think, to imaging, reflect and speculate about his past as well as his future. In this hierarchy of education, the Vedas are the first to revealed, the other being evolved from them. Vedic education is the mirror of all the education of culture of India lies in the number (1) Rigveda (2) Samveda (3) Yajurveda (4) Athervaveda.

**Salient Feature of Vedic Education:-**

1. Source Of Light:- In Vedic period education was considered as a source of illumination which enlightens an individual in all walks of life. It was only education that truth could be perceived & wisdom could be attained.
2. Knowledge The Third Eye:- According to Vedas education is knowledge opens inner eye, flooding him with spiritual and divine life.
3. Agency Of Improvement:- The illumination as described will bring a complete change the person & this change is for the better education makes us civilized, refined, polished and cultured.
4. Not Merely Books learning:- Illumination is them cultural concept of education. It does come mean that it has always to come from books. Thus education is not merely book learning.

**AIMS OF VEDIC EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Let us discuss the aims of Vedic education:

Vedic Education was taught to students to achieve high ideals of life. The Vedic period sees education as a source of light and salvation. The aims of Vedic Education of [ancient India](https://oureducare.com/history/sources-of-ancient-indian-history/) were as follows:

**Self-realization**

One of the most vital aims of Vedic Education is self-realization. Realization means knowledge and experience. It starts with knowing the self. Self does not mean only an individual self. Instead, it is the supreme self.

**Development of Healthy Physique**

The Vedic education system also aims to develop a healthy physique. It gives importance to health because only a healthy student could control his senses and preserve sex-energy.

**Education for Character Building**

Character building was another aim of Vedic Education. Student life was considered as a life of Tapasya or [Meditation](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/meditation). A student, being a Brahmacharya has to develop virtues like morality, brahmacharya (celibacy) sacrifice, simplicity, honesty, service, dutifulness, modesty, freedom from conceit. Also, a student should give up bad habits like an indulgence, selfishness, luxury, enjoyment, pleasure, etc. He had to develop purity of character.

**All Round Development of Personality**

One of the chief aims of Vedic education was all-round development of personality. Also, it aims to develop the physical, mental, emotional, social, moral and spiritual aspects of humans.

**Fulfillment of Social Responsibility**

Another major aim of Vedic Education was to fulfill social duties.

**Emphasis on Co-operation**

Vedic education also gave importance to co-operation. Education in the Vedic age did not only take a note on the body, mind, and soul of the student. Also, it incorporates activities that bind him to his fellows to constitute society.

**Emphasis upon Knowledge and Experience**

Vedic Education in Gurukulas gives importance to knowledge and to obtain experience.

**Sublimation of Instinct**

Another aim of Vedic education is to change the students thinking from material knowledge and make the students focus on the spiritual world.

Some scholars say that the aims of Vedic education are Religious Preaching, Knowledge of Literature, Removal of Ignorance, Brahman Realisation, and Spiritual Knowledge, etc.

**AIMS AND FUNCTIONS OF VEDIC EDUCATION**

The aims and functions of Vedic Education System are as follows:

**Infusion of Spirit of Piety and Religiousness**

Another aim of Vedic education was to recognize Vedic religion and to [infuse](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/infuse) piety to others through various instincts. The prime aim of human life is to achieve spiritual values, i.e. truth, beauty, and goodness. The realization of these values is the realization of self.

In this way, man rises higher and higher in the mortal plane until he attains Divinity. Hence, education aims to develop the capacities of knowing, feeling and willing in man to the full extent so that he can achieve the highest spiritual values and thus he can receive true and ultimate self.

**Release from Illusion**

Since this material world is unreal, illusory and full of fetters, according to Vedanta philosophers the highest wisdom lay in the release from the unreality, illusion, and fetters. They could run away from this material world, so preparing for a living was one of the aims of education.

**Development of Perfect Personality**

Vedic education greatly gives importance to the personality of students. Various traits of personality were developed through the following methods:

1. Self-Respect: A feeling of self-respect should be developed in the students through education. The student feels that he was the torch-bearer of the culture of the race. A well-educated youth was to be honored to develop a sense of self-respect in students.
2. Self-Confidence: Self-confidence was instilled into the mind of students right from the start of education when the Unpanayan ritual was observed to admit them in Gurukuls.
3. Self-Restraint: The very simple life of a student at the Ashrams created self-restraint in them. Self-restrain helps to improve their personality.
4. Discrimination and Judgement: Vedic education developed the power of discrimination and judgment in the students to enrich their personality.

**Inculcation of Civic and Social Duties**

The aim of education during the Vedic age was to make the students realize their civic and social duties. Thus, students were trained to lead a social life and not to be self-centered. Also, they were taught to co-operate with others and to perform their duties as a son, as a husband, father, neighbor, as a friend, and as other relatives and citizens of the state efficiently and consciously was a must for the students. Also, the teacher teaches the students about their duties towards their family, their village, their [society](https://oureducare.com/sociology/what-do-you-mean-by-society/), and their country. Teachers teach the students to serve the guests, the poor, the suffering and the down-trodden.

**Promotion of Social Efficiency and Welfare**

The Promotion of Social Efficiency and welfare was also one of the aims of education during the Vedic period. The teacher teaches the students not only to improve the mental, cultural, physical, and spiritual aspects of life. But teaches them vocational training. The students were expected to adopt their parental vocations for earning their livelihood. There was the provision in the education of that time that when students leave the Gurukulas after the students complete their education they should be able to earn to support their families. Thus, each family trained its children in the vocation which the family follows generation after generation. The purpose was to make each individual socially efficient.

**Character Formation**

The Vedic period views Education as a means to impart moral values. So, the teachers teach the students moral values like respecting elders, to be honest, loyal, worthy, etc. The very atmosphere of Ashrams and Gurukulas where students stay under the direct guidance of gurus was full of high morality. Students strictly follow the rules and regulations. In everyday life, students have to follow the rules of etiquette and good manners towards their seniors, equals and juniors, their teacher and other members of Gurukulas and Ashrams. The rituals and daily prayers helped in forming their character.

**Preservation and Spread of Culture**

Last but not the least important aim of education of the Vedic Age was to preserve and spread of national culture and heritage. The students have to memorize the Vedic literature so that they can preserve and spread it on to the next generation.

**METHODS OF TEACHING DURING VEDIC PERIOD**

**Oral Teaching**

Due to a lack of printing and writing material, especially paper, the books were handwritten. During the Vedic period, there were very fewer books, so teaching was mainly on oral. The teacher teaches the lessons to the students by word of mouth. The students listened to the teacher with attention and devotion and committed the texts by heart. This oral teaching method takes place at three stages:

1. Shravan or listening to the teacher
2. Manan or Meditation and
3. Nididdyasan or realization through meditation.

**The Question-Answer Method**

During the Vedic period, the questions-answer method and discussion were common. The Pupil asked questions and Guru then explains. Through this method, the students have to learn their subjects.

**Agra-Shishya or Pupil-Teacher System**

It was normal practice in Ashrams and Gurukulas that intelligent senior pupil was deputed by the Gurus to teach junior students. This system helped both the pupil-teacher and the students and also gave relief to Guru.

**Use of Illustration, Examples, Sutras, Stories, Maxims, etc.**

This system was based on psychological principles. To explain things better, the Guru uses illustrations, examples, stories, maxims, etc. He proceeded from known to unknown and from unknown to known. He also explained things through figures of speech like similes, metaphors, etc.

**CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF VEDIC EDUCATION**

The chief characteristics of Vedic Education are:

1. The study of Vedas was the main aim of Vedic education. Thus, the Rig Veda forms the most vital aspect of Vedic education.
2. The students spend most of their time in self-study, thinking, and meditation. More than worldly materials, knowledge and intellectual plays an integral aspect.
3. Religion plays a vital role in Vedic Education. Every student needs to study the course of religion. Thus, Vedic Education gives importance to religion.
4. The main aim of Vedic education was to attain salvation through education.
5. The teacher teaches the student in Gurukulas and Ashrams. The students and teachers follow the principle of simple living but high thinking.
6. Education helped in observance of celibacy, control over sense and purity of life.
7. Admission was based on good behavior and education was free for everyone.
8. Students had great respect and devotion for their teachers and the teacher-student relationship was cordial and conducive. Teachers were held in high esteem.
9. The main focus of education was on practical knowledge and other vocations learning.
10. Education was based on one on one teaching. Every teacher teaches one student. The teacher gives importance to the all-round development of the students.
11. The method of teaching was psychological.
12. Women were given a high place in society. Also, attention was given to their education.
13. There was no bias of students on grounds of caste, creed, color, etc.
14. Students remain busy in thinking and meditation. Thus, this led to the development of originality among them.

**PROCESS OF VEDIC SYSTEM OF EDUCATION**

The process of the Vedic System of Education was fixed and standardized based on certain universally admitted and established ideas and practices of the Vedic society. Though the subjects and courses of study vary in different periods, and systems of education, but its methods of training and discipline remain the same under all conditions.

The admission of a student starts with Upanayana. After the admission, when the student chooses the teacher, it is called Acharya. Gurukula is the center of learning. The Upanayana ceremony was performed for 3 days.

After this ceremony, the student emerges as a Brahmacharya. It is new and changed individual both externally and internally. The home of the teacher was the center of learning in the Vedic period. It was located in natural surroundings.

The teacher teaches each individual with their differences. The Guru acts as the super-ego or conscience and inculcates in the minds of the students the high ideals of [morality](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/morality) and spirituality.

It was the usual rule for the Brahmachari to go about begging alms for his teacher and the Gurukula. Begging had certain educative value. It produced in the pupils a spirit of humanity and renunciation. Till the attainment of knowledge, the student had to live in the Gurukula. During his stay in the Gurukul, the students need to perform all the duties necessary for its maintenance. For example, cleaning, caring for animals, fetching water, building houses, etc.

These trainings provide the students with an opportunity for outdoor life and physical exercise, which was more fruitful in every way than modern barren games of football, hockey, and cricket. Thus education was not only based on theory and academics but was related to work experience as well.

In the process of education in the Gurukula, the student has to go to the forest, cut and collect fuel and fetch it to the Gurukula for tending the sacred fire. Worship Agni by the offering of choice objects had spiritual and cultural significance. The Agnihotra ceremony was performed in the Gurukula to enable the pupils to understand the reality of [**religion**](https://oureducare.com/sociology/role-of-religion-in-indian-society/) in the form of sacrifice.

The students follow rules such as early rising, prayer, bath, dress, food, sleep, celibacy, etc. The age at which a student begins his education varied from time to time.

The Vedic period considers the age from the time of birth to 5 years as a playtime. Hereafter, students study Vedic education.

**THE CURRICULUM OF VEDIC EDUCATION**

The curriculum of the Vedic education system can be discussed as the lower stage and upper stage of education.

At the lower stage, the children after learning the letters of the alphabet at home they were sent at school to Shabda-Vidya (learning of words). It means phonology and implies mainly grammar. Then the children learn elementary philosophy, elementary grammar, elementary arithmetic, and elementary prosody. Besides the study of language, literature, and grammar, the students had to study the Hetuvidya or Logic, which develops the reasoning faculty and Shilpa Vidya or Science of Arts, and crafts.

At the upper stage, the subjects taught fell into two categories:

**Para-Vidya or Spiritual Learning.**

Into this category, it falls the essential study of the four Vedas viz. Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda, and Atharvaveda. Also, this category includes the study of Vedangas, Upanishad, Puran, Pitrya (the rules for the sacrifices for the ancestors) Vakovakya (logic), Ekayana (ethics), the Devavidya (etymology), the Brahmavidya (pronunciation) Siksha (the ceremonial), etc. To achieve salvation restriction of mental disposition was essential. So the training of Yoga was also introduced.

**Apara-Vidya or Worldly Learning**

This included subjects like History, Ayurveda, Economics, Astrology, Physics, Zoology, Geology, Chemistry, Serpent Science, Surgery, Kalpa Vidya. Also, it includes the Rashi (the science of number), Bhut Vidya (the science of Demons). Along with the theoretical aspect of the curriculum, the practical also holds a due place and importance.

**ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATION**

The organization of Vedic Education System are below:

**Courses of Study**

In the Vedic Education System, the course does not only concentrate on religion. Disciples are also taught as subjects that enable the realization of self.

**Brahman Sangh**

Brahman Sangh provides chances to meritorious students to seek higher knowledge. These Sanghas are similar to the seminars of modern times because they had all the traits of modern seminars.

**Education of Other Castes**

Vedic education was free to everyone. Every caste and creed can join Vedic education.

**Women Education**

The main center of education for women was home. Also, women partake in various rituals practices with her husband. Plus, women learn to spin, weaving, etc.

**CONCLUSION**

In Vedic era education had the prominent place in society. It was considered as pious and important for society. Education was must for everybody for becoming cultured. Relationship between Guru and pupils were very cordial during vedic and post- vedic period. By means of education efforts were being made to infuse ―Satyam Shivam and Sundaram‖ inside the students. A great importance was attached to veda in education system, self study Swadhyaya was considered more important during that period. The vedic period favoured women education.

The ancient Indian education system was successful in preserving end spreading its culture and literature even without the help of art of writing. It was only because of the destruction of temples and monasteries by invaders that the literature was lost. The cultural unity that exists even today in the vast sub-continent is due to successful preservation & spread of culture. The education system infused a sense of responsibilities and social values. The ancient education system achieved its aims to the fullest extent.

Ancient education emerged from Vedas. The basis of Indian culture lies in the Vedas.