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# Higher Education in India : The Glory of Past, The Challenges of Today and The Road for Tomorrow

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Universal education of all children in literacy has been a recent development, not occurring in many countries until after 1850 CE. Even today, in some parts of the world, literacy rates are below 60 per cent (for example, in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh). Schools, colleges and universities have not been the only methods of formal education and training. Many professions have additional training requirements, and in Europe, from the Middle Ages until recent times, the skills of a trade were not generally learnt in a classroom, but rather by serving an apprenticeship.

Each generation, since the beginning of human existence, has sought to pass on cultural and social values, traditions, morality, religion and skills to the next generation. The passing on of culture is also known as enculturation and the learning of social values and behaviours is socialization. The history of the curricula of such education reflects human history itself, the history of knowledge, beliefs, skills and cultures of humanity. In pre-literate societies, education was achieved orally and through observation and imitation. The young learned informally from their parents, extended family and grand parents. At later stages of their lives, they received instruction of a more structured and formal nature, imparted by people not necessarily related, in the context of initiation, religion or ritual.

A single feature of ancient Indian or Hindu civilization is that it has been molded and shaped in the course of its history more by religious than by political, or economic, influences. The fundamental principles of social, political, and economic life were welded into a comprehensive theory which is called Religion in Hindu thought. The total configuration of ideals, practices, and conduct is called Dharma (Religion, Virtue or Duty) in this ancient tradition

Learning in India through the ages had been prized and pursued not for its own sake, if we may so put it, but for the sake, and as a part, of religion. (It was sought as the means of self-realization, as the means to the highest end of life. viz. Mukti or Emancipation. Ancient Indian education is also to be understood as being ultimately the outcome of the Indian theory of knowledge as part of the corresponding scheme of life and values. The scheme takes full account of the fact that Life includes Death and the two form the whole truth. This gives a particular angle of vision, a sense of perspective and proportion in which the material and the moral, the physical and spiritual, the perishable and permanent interests and values of life are clearly defined and strictly differentiated.