

AREA IV

DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

"Even though there has cedtainly been vast quantitative progress in terms of the number of pupils and the number of variety of educational institutions, education continues to be equated with literacy and learning. There is hardly any room for practical and productive work. There is little life-giving contact between the school and the society or between the curriculum and the vital activities which sustain life outside the school. On the top of it, our present educational system, instead of giving dignity to manual work, draws a visible distinction between work and study. Work is for servants of the institution and study is for the students with the result that every educational institution must have a number of Class IV employees who will work by hand, rather, on behalf of the learner, and the students use only the mind and not hand. Thus work involvement activity being marginal, there is hardly any link between what is taught and the environment

or the life outside the school.-

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CHAPTER I

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL INDIA

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It is well-known fact that in early days, vocational education was provided to the sons by their fathers. According to the tradition of the 'Caste System', each caste had its separate vocation or occupation. This caste system has played a very important role in providing vocational education in ancient India. The Brahmin youth received training for his future vocation as a priest and a teacher. In the education of the young Kshtriyas greater importance was attached to the knowledge of science of war. Even the royal princes were expected to be proficient in the art of war and science of politics. In the same way the Vaishya youth received training in his particular calling in life. Trade, rearing of cattle and agriculture were the special pursuits of the Vaishyas. The young Vaishya was also required to have knowledge of commercial geography, arithmetic and practical details of the trade. Even the

Shudras had some training for their work. At times even some women also received military training and the women-guards of the kings were skilled in the art of arms. Yet it is worthy to note that 'the ordinances of the caste system were not so rigid and inflexible as never to be violated.' Even the Brahmins took up the arms when the circumstances demanded. The 'Arthashtra' of Kautilya gives a vivid account of the education of the young princes. It was the sacred duty of the kings and the nobles to rule justly and wisely and also to protect the weak. For this they had to receive proper education and training.

There is no doubt that some form of systematic vocational education was provided in ancient India for a long time, otherwise the Indian society of the old times would not have attained so much vocational efficiency and economic prosperity. The people were familiar with the sea routes and there was a great demand of Indian goods in the foreign markets. This successful trading gave good impetus to the cottage or home industries. The artisans earned a respectable name in the society. The competent artisans received State protection and patronage. It is said that in the time of Ashok, there was a provision for the

Chaube, S.P. 'A History of Education in India', Ram Narain Lal Beni Madho, Allahabad-2, 1965, p. 69.

punishment of those who tried to harm the artisan.

Even during the Buddhist period, vocational education was never neglected. Even the monks had to know sewing, spinning, knitting etc. They were also required to be acquainted with the science of house-building. Those Buddhists who had a household life were given education in other useful vocations and crafts which helped them to earn their livelihood.

In ancient India there were many industrial guilds. The local industrial guilds were known as 'Srenis'. In the Jatakas eighteen such guilds are mentioned. There were also associations like 'Dyers' association', 'Carpenters' association', 'Blacksmiths' association', 'Coblers' or Tanners' association.' These associations and guilds have been mentioned by Kautilya in his Arthashastra also. In the ancient Indian literature, there are also many references to trade-guilds and it is likely that these trade guilds had made some arrangements for training in the required subjects under a teacher. There were Mahajani Schools in market towns where the Mahajans or traders might be paying for the teacher.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Chaube, S.P. 'A History of Education in India.' Ram Narainlal Beni Madho, Allahabad-2,1965,p.135.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Keay, F.E. ' Indian Education in Ancient and Later Times', Oxford University Press, London, E.C.4, 1938, p.71.

Though vocational education was imparted for various occupations useful to the society in ancient India, education provided for Military Art, Industry and Medicine had attracted the attention of many.

## Military Education

Manu had regarded education in the Vedas, Varta

(knowledge of commerce, animal husbandry, agriculture etc.)

and Politics as essential for royal princess. Training in

the use of arms was a must for them. The study of 'Arthashastra'

written by Kautilya was essential for the knowledge of the

ethics of government and politics. Manu had forbidden the

Kshatriyas from taking to teaching work, hence the Brahmin

priests used to give education. Generally the teachers were

able and were men of character and instilled into the

Kshatriyas the spirit of dutifulness and social service.

Industrial Education

In ancient India, industrial education was given in traditional family-school manner. The old experienced men in the family imparted instructions to the pupils who were treated as members of the family. The planning of industries, the construction, production, distribution, etc. was generally managed by industrial guilds.

## Medical Education

Medical education had an important place in the vocational

education of India. The University of Takshasila was famous for medical studies. Charak, the father of Indian medicine and Sushrut had written books in medicine and surgery. A Greek writer, Strabo, praised the efficiency of the Indian practitioners. The medical courses included practical training in pharmacy as well as in surgery. Special attention was given to antidots for snake bite. Veterinary science was also well-developed. Several veterinary surgeons worked in the State veterinary hospitals in the times of Ashok. Kautilya has also referred to competent veterinary surgeons in his Arthashastra. India was famous for her medical skill down to about 9th century A.D. The Caliph of Baghdad, Harun, sent scholars to study medicine in India and induced Indian doctors to come to his capital. He got many Sanskrit books on medicine translated into Arabic.

India is a land of villages. Each Indian village is more or less a self-contained unit. The agriculturalists and the artisans form an important part of the village. These villages were the strongholds of the traditional arts and crafts of India, though many proficient artisans left villages for towns and cities. The artisan education was generally open to family members, but members of other families could also take lesson. The teacher and the taught relation was founded on

affection and respect and both were to abide by certain rules. Usually co-operative societies used to run these family institutions. Those employed in the same occupations formed their craft guilds. The membership of the guild was hereditory. The guilds controlled the standard of quality. It was like a 'kind of mutual assurance society.' The proficient artisans and craftsmen received encouragement from kings and great nobles. Sometimes they were in the service of a temple or a monastery. In short, ancient India had an important place in the world in the fields of industry, medicine, art and crafts.

## Vocational Education During the Muslim Period

Many of the Mohammedan rulers continued the tradition of patronising able craftsmen. One of the developments during the Muslim period was the establishment of a number of institutions for training in arts and crafts. Also, some form of apprenticeship was not altogether unknown. <sup>2</sup>

The Sultans in Delhi had to maintain a number of work-shops (Karkhanas) to supply the needs of the royal household and the government departments. Firozshah Tuglak maintained a regular department of industries under his personal supervision and took keen interest in the technical training

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Keay F.E. 'Indian Education in Ancient and Later Times.' Oxford University Press, London, E.C.4,1938,p.69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>h.Kabir Humayun, 'Indian Philosophy of Education', Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1961, p. 190.

of his slaves. During his times (ruled 1351-1388), some of the workshops were converted into institutions of vocational training. The production of war goods also helped in the development of handicrafts. The manufacture of boats, ships, and chariots was done on a very large scale. Art did not exist for art's sake but also for providing a means of livelihood and the training in such art and handicrafts was given to the youths in the traditional family institutions. At times the youths had no choice for their trade because they were brought up in the same trade as their fathers. Thus, the young craftsman was from the beginning, trained in the actual workshop.

Though this type of education in ancient India was often too narrow, yet as a vocational education, it was not lacking in elements that made it really valuable. 'The affectionate family relationship between teacher and pupil, the absence of artificiality in the instruction, and the opportunity and encouragement to produce really good work, with the protection of the guild or caste - these were not without their influence in helping to build up a spirit of good craftsmanship, which was responsible for the production of really fine work. '1

<sup>1</sup> Keay, F.E. 'Indian Education in Ancient and Later Times,' Oxford University Press, London, 1938, E.C.4, p.71.