

CHAPTER - II

INFORMAL EDUCATION: DEFINITIONS AND AGENCIES

Introduction

A human being is molded by the education he receives. The civilized societies of the world had recognized this truth from the ancient times onwards and therefore designed teaching and learning methods which was intended to produce, store and transmit knowledge in the society from generations to generations in an uninterrupted manner. The history of education shows that several institutions of education, both long lived and those existed for a short period, appeared and disappeared in its long course. Education was given for the children in order to make them efficient in various arts and crafts and enable them to achieve a good livelihood. This required some meticulous planning by the society in deciding the content and form of education. At the same time education could not be restricted to a certain period in human's life. One studies not only from his teachers, but also from the experiences he achieves throughout his life which are informal and accidental in nature. Based on this view there are three important ways of education - the formal, informal and also the non-formal, which carries the tendencies of the informal in a large manner but negotiates between the formal and informal. This chapter makes an attempt to describe the main concepts related to the

above three categories of education. Since informal education is the main area of the present research, especially the current state of informal education in Sanskrit, that part is discussed, giving due consideration the agencies of informal education associated with Sanskrit.

Since Sanskrit is an ancient language with a very long tradition that is still present and relevant in Indian education the search for the informal agencies in Sanskrit education could not be limited to the contemporary agencies of education only but it should be extended into the means and methods of education of the past also. In ancient India we had the great Gurukula system of education which was considered at that time as a standard or formal method of education that institutionalized the intense teaching and learning under a preceptor for a specific period, but at the same time, the informal agencies like family and community which functioned under the laws of varṇa and āśrama had also a decisive role in deciding the kind and quality of education. Therefore an attempt is made to find out in which ways the society in the ancient and medieval times was able to provide education to its members. This inquiry is relevant also as we see that the ancient traditions still exist in various parts of India which stand detached from the mainstream education and operate like informal centers education in the modern times.

So the ancient Sanskrit tradition says about the process of education:

Ācāryāt pādamādatte

Pādam śisyaḥ svamedhayā

Pādam sabrahmacāribhyah

Pādam kālakrameṇa ca

'A quarter of education is from the teacher, another quarter is gained by one's own intelligence and the third quarter is obtained from the friends and classmates, and finally the last quarter is acquired by the passage of time'.

The human child is a helpless being highly dependent on its parents. It has neither friends nor enemies, and completely unaware of the social customs and traditions. Governed by natural instincts and impulses it tries to communicate with its environs. Gradually by the little language it learns from mother, father and the other family members the communicative skills develop. But as the child grows older it is influenced by the informal and formal agencies of education. Education mixes up the individual and helps to fulfill the individual desires and needs. Education develops the individual like a blooming flower, which gives out its fragrance all over the surroundings. Thus education is essential for the

growth and development of individual as well as for the unobstructed functions of the society. In a greater sense, education is a life long process and could not be confined to the program of giving knowledge to children in schools or other institutions. So far as the life of Individual is concerned, educating goes on from birth till the last breath. Every one learns something new day by day throughout life by going through various experiences and activities. So the ancient tradition says that a student acquires only one fourth of education from his guru and the remaining part of education by his own intelligence, and from his classmates and by the passage of time.

In the wider sense the aim of education is not the mere passing of information by the teacher or the acquisition of knowledge by the child but the total development of one's personality. Thus it has been stated that education consists of all those experiences that promotes the individual's over all development. And education is that cultural process by which an individual frees his self from the fetters of ignorance. The Seers of the Upaniṣads believed that education must endeavor at developing that moral character and powers of intellect which ultimately leads to the state of liberation from all miseries.

Satyam vada, dharmam cara, svadhyāyānma pramadah

'Tell the truth, do the dharma, do not neglect learning'

Sā vidyā yā vimuktaye

'That education is for liberation'

By education, Mahatma Gandhi meant 'the drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and soul. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the end of education nor even the beginning. It is one of the means where by men and women can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education'.¹

Formal Education

Let us examine what the term informal education means and how it is different from the informal and the non-formal in the context of modern views on education. Society has developed certain institutions and systems for educating the younger generation in subjects like craft and arts, science and technology etc. By going through this education which has a specific form and content approved by the society, it is expected that the students could acquire certain satisfactory standards in the knowledge of particular subjects. Society can make use of the educated youth by engaging in various professions in its service. They are given certificates and awards after the examination and tests conducted by the

academic bodies instituted or supported by the governments. This type of education is given to the students for a fixed span of time by qualified teachers. Unlike the formal education the informal education is a lifelong process. It is a fact that one acquires knowledge as he lives on and gives special attention to the topics of his interest. What one cannot get by the formal education imparted by the institutions of education becomes available from the informal methods of education.

According to Sir Godfry Thompson 'The whole of the environment is the instrument of man's education in the widest sense. But in that environment certain actors are distinguishable as being more particularly concerned; the home, the church, the press, the vocation, public life, amusement and hobbies'.² All these means are the source of education. These sources are classified into three: formal, non-formal and informal agencies.

The formal comprehends education as it is provided in educational institutions according to a particular pattern. In the school, the educator teaches the educants according to a specific program ensuring at a particular goal. He teaches a pre-determined syllabus, according to a time-table with fixed curriculum and locations. In this formal kind of education the time and place of teaching are fixed and the educant has to

arrive at that place and at that specific time to receive education. The length of such education is also fixed in terms of years.

In formal education everything is definite and specific about the objectives, learning experience, desired behavioral changes together with measuring and evaluation techniques, time limit, prescribed levels to effective planning, organizations, leveling and controlling. John Dewey has remarked, 'Formal education easily becomes remote and dead-abstract and bookish' and without formal education it is not possible to transmit all the resources and achievements of a complex society. It also opens a way to a kind of experience which would not be accessible to the young, if they were left to pick up their training informal association with others, since books and the symbols of knowledge are mastered'.³ In such institutions discipline and administration is created by the application of set rules. At least specific education cannot be provided in the absence of these institutions but it must be realized that education provided through these agencies is rather lifeless and theoretical or bookish. It sometimes takes the educant far away from the realities of life. School is the best example of formal agency in addition to school libraries, lecture-theaters, recreation centers, museums, organizations etc are also enumerated among the formal agencies of education.

By 'formal education' is meant the deliberated and systematic transmission of knowledge skills and attitudes (with the stress on knowledge) within an explicit defined and structured format for space, time and material with set qualifications for teachers and learners, such as is typified in the technology of schooling.⁴

Informal Education

Education is a life long process. But in the case of Formal education, as we have noted earlier, it has a fixed entry and exit. The child learns many habits, manners and patterns while living with others or moving in different spheres like tradition or tribe, home, social groups, mass media etc. It is called informal education. Informal education is a process, by which people learn more as they live on.

In other words, informal education is the process by which a person imbibes attitudes, develops skills, cultivates values and acquires knowledge, without there being any organization or system about it. This would include the deliberate attempts of parents and elders in the family and community to help the young ones grow-and adapt themselves to the environment. Informal education would also include all incidental learning that take place while at work or at play and during travels as well as spontaneous learning through films radio and television'.⁵ Informal

education happens outside the class room, after school program like community basis organizations, museums, libraries or at home.

The after school education provides more chances for learning by experience. Teaching techniques, content, expertise and group management are important at studies. On the other hand, Informal education can be more flexible with their content and offer a different kind of environment.

An additional benefit of developing materials for informal educational settings is that they may be useful to parents at home with their children or to adult learners who are looking to expand their knowledge or to increase their career options.

Some of the scholars view informal education as the learning that comes as part of being involved in youth and community organizations. In these settings there are specialist educators whose job it is to encourage people to think about experiences and situations. Like friends or parents they may respond to what is going on at the work places but as professionals, these educators are able to bring special insights and ways of working.

Informal education works through and is driven by, conversation, involves exploring and enlarging experience, and it could take place in any setting.

Purpose of informal education is no different to any other form of education John Dewey once described. 'This is educating so that people may share in a common life. Those working as informal educators have a special contribution to make here'.⁶ Though the informal education one can acquire some special qualities like work for the well being of all, respect the unique value and dignity of each human beings, dialogue equality and justice, democracy and the active involvement of people in the issues that affect their lives etc. Informal education has been around as long as people have grouped together. One way of thinking about it is as the education of daily living. Family, community, religion, state and various mass media are the active agencies of informal education. Informal education is, the incidental transmission of attitudes knowledge and skills (with the stress on attitudes) with highly diverse and culturally relative patterns for the organizations of time space and relationships, such are implicit in varying configurations of the family household and community.⁷

Non- Formal Education

Non- formal education has emerged as one of the alternatives of the formal system of education in the contemporary society. It envisages

need-based education in a free atmosphere. Non-formal education may be differentiated from the conceptual framework of formal education and informal education. The Non-formal education is the life long and with flexible and limited to a period meant for teaching and learning, with fixed point of entry and exit. In formal education acquisition of knowledge is the goal; In non-formal education, the goals are understanding one's needs, environment and social relationship. It is a process of sharing exploring analyzing and judging together. This is maximum participation of the learner. Non formal education is the life long process in which people learn as organized education activity outside formal system. The distinction made is largely administrative; formal education is linked with schools and training institution. Non-formal with community groups and other organizations; and formal covers what is left. Eg: interactions with friend family and work colleagues.⁸

Non-formal education is any organized systematic educational activity carried outside the frame work of the established formal system, whether operating separately or is an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning.⁹

Non formal education is like formal education in the deliberate and systematic transmission of knowledge attitudes and skills, but here the stress is on skills. In terms of process it avoids the technology of formal

schooling, permitting more diverse and flexible deployment of space, time and material and accepting a relaxation of personal qualification in response to the structure of the workplace.¹⁰

Coombs and Ahmed define three type of education as follows.

- a) Informal education is the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge skills attitudes and insight from daily experiences and exposure to the environment.
- b) Non formal education is any organized systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children and
- c) Formal education is the institutionalized chronologically graded and hierarchically structured educational system, spanning lower primary school and the upper reaches of the university.¹¹

According to Thomas. J. Labelle and Christopher Ward, the teaching and learning in informal education is habitual, participatory and geared towards pragmatic survival. Not especially efficient but seemingly very effective over the long term, informal teaching and learning seems to be achieved more by osmosis than by design. Non-formal and formal education, however, draw on various teaching and learning strategies from

didactic and face to face mentioning and tutoring to large group lecturing and the use of wide variety of education technology.¹² It suggests that peer group participation and daily experience provide informal education situation. Certainly they provide the basis of informal learning, but the extent to which this is education is debatable. Certainly it is sometimes claimed that the mass media provide another form of ideological control and so there have been a number of papers advocating that critical reflection is an important part of the learning process.¹³

The most fundamental postulate of the philosophy of non formal /informal education is the pivoted recognition that the word education has a wide connotation and as such embraces all influences, contacts impacts and interactions.¹⁴ We learn the most from our friends and from other people who share our interest. The mass-media of communication disseminates substantial educative information. The whole men emerge from lifelong learning experience mostly in settings outside the formal institutions. Non-formal/informal education system could produce more knowledge and better mentally equipped citizens to play their perceived role more efficiently.

Formal system with in-built resistance and love for the status-quo cannot meet the needs demands and aspirations of resurgent societies. Only the philosophy of the non-formal and the informal can serve as the

bonanza for creating learning societies. These two methods of education aimed at the process of remaking man through concentration, create a new set of social relations and offer a structure and a situation more open to radical social influence that does the formal system.¹⁵ When the results of education are identifiable in the individual through the agencies or institutions, that is called non-formal/ informal education. This includes mass media of communications extended curricular educational campaigns and programmes, SITE, INSAT programs, sports club, social welfare organization programmers etc. According to Schofthaler. Informal education is a heuristic concept and acquires its meaning with the context of wide conception of education, which embraces the whole of all possible educational processes. Informal education functions as a residual category.¹⁶

The residual belongs to the informal domain which requires low level organization as compared to the formal and the non-formal. Modes of delivering education - formal non-formal and informal are conceived today not as alternatives but as complementary activities within a single system. Informal education the unorganized lifelong process by which everyone acquires knowledge skills and attitudes through experience and through contact with others provides an important foundation, but it cannot function as a substitute for formal and non-formal education and

training. The objectives of informal education are the intergenerational transfer of values and skills and the teaching of cultural norms. The instructional process is in the nature of a symbiosis between the learner and the environment and the learner is seldom aware of being a student engaged in the integration of new values and skills.¹⁷

Finally viewed within the broader framework of human resource development the following features are important.

1. Formal informal and non-formal education are structurally unique, the components of each may be distinguished in terms of content medium and methodology. While they share the critical structural elements of space, time, material and people, they are uniquely differentiated by their techniques for organizing these elements.
2. Formal transmission is more effective when the education function is cognitive abstract and evaluative as best represented in the technology of schooling. Informal transmission is more effective when the educational function is affective related to values and beliefs as best illustrated in the socio cultural techniques of family, peer group, and community. Non-formal transmission is more effective when the educational function is psychomotor, concrete and skill oriented as best exemplified in the technologies of the workplace.

3. Although different in structure and priority of educational function, the formal, informal and non-formal modes are not found in isolation or serving only a single educational function. If transmission is recognized as a life process, then formal, informal and non-formal may get preference or priority according to changing individual and social developmental strategies of the life cycle, informal childhood, family; Formal-adolescence, school; Non-formal - adulthood, work. Thus informal, formal and non-formal education interfere in such a way that each can support the other.¹⁸

Since Sanskrit is a language which has a history of thousands of years of the informal agencies existed in Indian society for knowledge acquisition should be examined briefly. The traditional agencies were not equipped with the modern facilities and worked in an atmosphere quite different from ours. An attempt is made here to trace out this problem briefly.

The Traditional Agencies of Informal Education

Society gives rise to various agencies of formal and informal education during its course of development. In India, as we have seen earlier in the previous chapter education has a long history. It is an interesting fact that the traditional mode of education exists here along with the modern forms of education even today. However the changes in

social life have altered many educational agencies and some of them have disappeared altogether. A study of informal agency in Sanskrit education has to consider these matters.

The informal agencies of education consists of family, work place, community, religion and state etc. In the past, in addition to these, occasions of social gatherings like religious rites, festivals, were sources of informal education. A person knew about the world outside through pilgrimage, trade, market, migration and so on. All these agencies are relevant even in this modern age though the roles they play have been changing when we consider their educational importance.

It has been already stated that there is no clear cut dividing line in classifying educational agencies into formal, non-formal and informal agencies. Even a school can take the form of a Non-formal agency of education when it organizes adult education classes and programmes. Students in the school acquire a good deal of education through informal contacts with the peers and the teachers. The press, radio and the television are normally termed as informal agencies of education. When they take up occasional programmes of formal education, they assume the form of non-formal agencies of education.

The entire programs of correspondence /distance/open education may be classified both formal as well as non-formal depending upon the

type and mode of educational activity. Recreational programme of an adult school may be placed under the category of informal education and therefore this comes under the category of informal agency of education. With the increasing use of new educational technology and instructions through the electronic media, it has become very difficult to divide educational agencies into formal and informal. However the family, community, religious ceremonies, social gatherings, and newspapers, radio, and television are some of the important informal agencies of education today.

Family

Family is a powerful and active informal agency of education. The infant begins its life under the fostering affection and care of his parents and other near and dear ones who are associated with his family. As the child grows it receives the first lessons of life from the family and tries to imbibe the habit, ideals and patterns of behaviour of the family members. In this way the family continues to influence the child through out its life.

The child gets three important kinds of help from the family: They are affection, protection and socialization. For the upbringing of the child, there is no better institution than the family. Each members of the family has an important role to influence the personality of the child. The foundation of child's future life is laid in the family and in later life, it

becomes very difficult, if not impossible, for the child to demolish or reconstruct these foundations. In the words of Swamy Dayanand 'Blessed is the family, fortunate is the child whose parent be godly and learned.'¹⁹ Jagadish Chandra Bose got an insight into his scientific ingenuity from his mother's conversation during the childhood. So Rousseau the famous naturalist states that 'Education begins at birth and the proper nurse is the mother'.²⁰ According to Froebel - Mothers are the ideal teachers and informal education given by home is most effective and natural. The family looks after the child's physical development, lays the foundation of character, gives religious education acquaints with the relatives of life and provides the right kind of environment for the development of interest, tendencies, motivations, intelligence and other processes.²¹

The family is the oldest basic and fundamental unit of human society. It consists of the husband, wife and children together with all the young and old dependents. A family consists of inter related persons who interact with one another in different ways. Each family has its own distinct habits of clothing, eating, thinking, talking and living. These are the items of that family's culture. This culture has to be preserved and transmitted by each family from generation to generation. According to Aileen Ross family is - A group of people usually related as some particular type of

kindred, who may live in one household and whose unity resides in patterning of rights and duties, sentiments and authority.²²

Scholars have talked about different forms of Indian family. K.P.Chatopadhyay has given three types of family: simple, compound and composite.²³

According to Irawati Karve, the traditional ancient Indian family (vedic and epic periods) was joint in terms of residence, property and functions.²⁴ She has given five characteristics of joint family: common residence, common kitchen, common property, common family worship and common kinship relationship. On this basis she defines joint family as a group of people who generally live under one roof, eat food cooked at one hearth, hold property in common, participate in common family worship, and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred.²⁵ Joint family system was the chief characteristic of Indian family. With the active co-operation, love and sympathy of father, mother, uncle, aunt, grandfather and grandmother together with other close relations, the children imitated the habits and thoughts of his elders in a natural way.

In olden days the head of the family had power and control over the family members. But today family discipline and control are gradually decreasing on account of democratic process and economic progress, urge for freedom and initiative by the young ones. In the past family

traditions and social customs held their sway over the lives of all the members of the family. Each member was conscious and sensitive about the hierarchy of relationships and values prevalent in his family. In the joint family individual's interests are subordinated to the interests of the family as a whole and the status of members is determined by their age and relationship. The authority in the family was determined on the principle of seniority.

The status of family had been high in the Indian Society from the Vedic times onwards. The advice and guidance of the elder members were considered valuable for leading a flawless family life. Among the four āśramas brahmacharya, gārhastya, vānaprastha and sanyāsa, the gr̥hasthāśrama or the period of household life was considered as central for the well being of the whole society. At that time family was the basic source of the conduct, career and education of a child.

One of the important characteristics of the ancient family was that several families lived together as a single group. This system had its own advantages and disadvantages. The family owned common property and worked together for the whole family. Since the members were related by blood they had a high level of unity and integrity. The children of the joint family lived together and their chances of working learning and playing collectively were abundant.

But today the picture of the child in a nuclear family is just the reverse. A small modern family cannot satisfy the diverse needs of the child within the limited family circle. The child's physical, mental, emotional and vocational development go beyond the powers and capacities of the small individual or nuclear family. In order to provide for the diverse developmental needs of the children, new institutions like childcare centers Kindergartens etc. are being established either by the community or by the state. In spite of all this development the importance of the family as a powerful informal agency of education has not become less because each member of the family plays a role of his/her own to influence the growing personality of the child. During the initial period of language acquisition the family activities and necessities of inter communications make the child fit to equip himself with a working vocabulary. The child receives the first lesson of speech in the family and learns the mother tongue in a natural way. Gradually this learning and use of language increases as the child grows and gets more and more education in the mother tongue the education of which is perfectly informal in all aspects.

A child learns the tongue of its parents very fast. In a joint family since the family circle is very wide the chances for using language in various contexts and emotional states are many. Hence the range and

scope of the language efficiency of the child from the joint family is much better when compared to the child of the nuclear family. If the parents or family members use more than one language the child learns those languages also. For example if the mother or father is a Sanskrit scholar child is given opportunity to listen and imitate the words and verses uttered by them. Similarly the presence of uncles and other close relatives who are Sanskrit scholars also creates a family atmosphere conducive to the learning of Sanskrit. Often children of the joint family were given their early education by the family members like grand fathers, uncles and elder brothers. This is reflected in many traditional stories. If the parents were short of time to take care of the education of the children, this responsibility was taken over by the relatives. The child gets the first lesson of vocation in the family informally from those who are engaged in the family vocation. The child becomes a sort of apprentice under them until he learns the profession. Like this, children learn the first lessons of living together, working together and helping each other.

Community

The eminent Sociologist Browns defines community as 'By a community mean a small diversified group of people-young and old, male and female, with different skills and abilities, living together as kin

neighbours. It is a face-to-face primary group in which many of the major functions of life are carried on cooperatively within the group itself.²⁶

Each community influences the education of the child formally as well as informally community tries to mould education according to its social, economic and political needs or aspirations. This is an ongoing and continuing process. Community modifies the behaviour of child through social contacts group activities and group dynamics in such a way that he begins to participate in all the desirable activities of the community of which he is an integral part. The environment of the community moulds and modifies the behaviour of the child according to its ideas, ideals and goals. Community environment influence on the physical development of a child. Community organizes local bodies and these bodies build park, gardens, hospitals and provide gymnasiums. Children of that community make use of these facilities. Community organizes reading rooms and libraries for use by the children and adults. Some communities organize exhibitions, symposium and classes and conferences on various subjects.

The community organizes fairs, festivals and religious functions. All these activities stimulate children to develop social ideas, idea of social service, social customs, traditions and beliefs in a natural way and also impart socially desirable values. Each community has its own culture. Children learn to respect this culture through imitation. Rural and urban

communities imprint their contrasting cultures upon the minds of the children by the peculiar use of pronunciation manners and behaviour. Community also influence the formation of character, morality and political ideas of children directly and indirectly. Children observe the vocations the members of their community and choose some of them for their future life. Finally the community provides many informal devices and materials like radio, television, newspapers, magazines libraries and reading rooms to children to enhance their education.

The above concepts of community and its activities are relevant in the India only after some necessary modifications and changes. Majority of people of India are living in villages. Life in the village is mostly directed by the concerns of caste or *jāti*. Therefore when we define the community life in the Indian villages, we cannot avoid the element of caste, which is the major component of the village community. A person's caste is determined by birth. A child belongs to the *jāti* of his parents. He cannot opt out of the *jāti*. *Jāti* is the field of actual and potential kin, and the family is actual field of closest kin. *Jāti* is considered as the traditional form of community life in Indian context. For a long time, as *jātis* were formed on the basis of occupation, a child born in a particular *jāti* was given training in the prescribed occupation of that *jāti*.

The child followed the occupation of his *jāti* as prescribed by the lawmakers. It was his dharma and he was obliged to act accordingly. He was not allowed to take-up subjects of study or training that were sanctioned to other *jātis* or sections of the community. This limited the scope of education in the traditional communities.

The system of *jāti* has two aspects: it is a separating force as one *jāti* is different from another and at the same time it is structured in a hierarchy of chain relations. In short the relations between the *jātis* in an Indian village are ways of being together separately. It is true that each person is an individual in his family, a member of one group in a collection of groups, a part of a local society in a larger social order, but for an Indian village togetherness and separateness are carried on in the same locals. Even though the *jātis* keep distance from one another, and exploitation and hegemony are basic in this structure, all *jātis* provide essential services for each other and this togetherness or mutual dependence creates a unity within the diversity of *jātis*.²⁷

In the traditional village communities the occasions of festivals rituals marriages and such other celebrations gave opportunities for the pupil to show their solidarity and achievements. This also gave a chance for them to invite other villagers and have institutions with the visitors and guests. Various competitions were held during the community festivals

and an ordinary villager could get new experiences from these gatherings. Consciously or unconsciously the villagers were given education in the matters of employment and entertainment, rituals and religion through these celebrations.

A community is people living in a particular area, linked by common culture, language and common interests. In the Indian context we have seen that the traditional *jātis* have a great role in defining one's life in the community. Generally a village use a common language and the use of this language may vary according to the *jātis* or communities, which have their own systems of symbols, occupation and oral literature.

The language and culture of the prominent and powerful *jātis*, exerted influences on others. According to the varṇa system of social classification, the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas were the privileged section of the society. This gave dominance to their language and literature in the community as a whole. Sanskrit was the language of religion and ancient sciences which was at that time exclusively owned by the brāhmaṇas. Because of their knowledge of the Vedas, the brāhmaṇas were considered as the best among the *jātis*. The kṣatriya supported them with wealth and power. Only The Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, who were known as the traivarṇikas were qualified for the study of Vedas and Sanskrit śāstras. The śūdras and other sections of the society were

prohibited to study Sanskrit and Vedas. In order to maintain the supremacy of the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas, the *jātis* which were lower in rank were subjected to exploitation and suppression for centuries. These discrimination are not practiced in the contemporary India and such practices are illegal today. In modern times due to social reformations and political changes, there is a great decrease in caste oppression in the democratic republic of India. The subjugated sections of the society is becoming more and more empowered and armed with the democratic principles and human rights, equality and freedom they vehemently challenge the traditional order. Thus the social change in India is caused by the struggles fought by the oppressed castes for their human identity and their resistance to oppression and discrimination suffered for centuries.

The belief of the colonial historians that the well structured village communities in India were standing stable and changeless for hundreds of years and the changes appeared during the period of colonial intervention is not accepted today. Indian society has its own ways and habits of social change and one of those, as put forward by M.R. Sreenivas was Sanskritization. 'The concept of sankritization shows that social mobility was possible in India through subtle cultural and ritualistic ways. Sanskritization is defined as the tendency of the lower castes to imitate

and follow the culture and life style of the higher castes. Since Brahmanas were the highly privileged class, their influence was decisive in reforming the original or primitive customs and forms of religion followed by the lower castes. The ideology of brāhmaṇas, their literature and languages were held in high esteem by the subjugated communities. Since the brāhminical discourse was preserved in Sanskrit, this kind of aspiring for higher level by the people of lower level of the society is known as Sanskritization. According to this theory sanskritisation meant the acceptance of brāhminic ideals of worship, family and social life and the consequent attainment of promotion in social rank and the abandoning of the uncultured practices of lower castes.²⁸

This transformation in culture included the thought that the Vedas and Sanskrit language are the roots of the brāhmaṇical wisdom and social status. The infiltration of Sanskrit and its culture from the higher to the lower strata of the society are relevant for this type of social mobilization. People wanted to internalise new Sanskrit or brāhminical models formally and informally and this was an important motif for social reforms and organizations.

As a by-product of Sanskritization tendency to mix Sanskrit with local languages increased. The knowledge in Sanskrit was considered as a privilege and indication of scholarship. Attempts were made to translate

the knowledge of the folk or local community to Sanskrit and thus endow it a higher status. On the level of worship many local deities were renamed as hindu or aryan deities. And old forms of worship which were of animal sacrifices etc were abandoned. The use of Sanskrit mantras and non-violent forms of worship were introduced following the Brāhminic principles.

The method and history of Sanskrit education in the traditional communities will be treated in detail in the second chapter of the thesis. The theme, nature and ways of informal education were varied in the complex set up of Indian society composed of castes and sub castes, a plurality of languages and religions.

Religion

Religion is one of the most influential forces of social control and effective guides of human behaviour. It is a very ancient and unique institution. In sociology the word religion is used in a wider sense than that is used in religious books. A recent sociological work defines religion as, those institutionalized system of beliefs, symbols values, and practices that provides groups of men with solutions to their questions of ultimate being.²⁹ A common characteristic found among all religions is that they represent a complex of emotional feelings and attitudes towards mysteries and perplexities of life. As such religion comprises of attitudes, beliefs and symbols which are based on the assumption that certain kinds of social

relations are sacred or morally imperative and their structure of activities are governed or influenced by these systems. Rituals maintain religious attitudes and helps to remind individual of the holy realm and strengthen his faith in this realm. For example, Hinduism lays great stress on a variety of rituals. In a Hindu family at the time of birth, marriage and death many ritual ceremonies are observed. Likewise in a church congregation one observes several rituals: one rises, bows, kneels, comes forward, lights candles and so on. Many such ceremonies some times seem incredibly intricate. However the primitive people might have invented some of these ceremonies with a purpose in mind which is now lost that purpose due to social changes and the advancement of scientific knowledge. Behind ceremonies there is definitely a logic that is emotional satisfaction, which is realised by the sharing, expression and control of human emotions in the ceremonial contexts.

Religion is a universal phenomenon, it cannot be considered as a critical state of human nature but as something permanently embedded in man's psychology.³⁰ Galloway observes, 'The fact that men everywhere and always have developed religion, for there is no evidence that any tribe or race has existed without it points to the truth that religion must have its roots in human nature. No accident of environment or tenacity of tradition can account for what is constant and persistent that which is universal in

experience must be a genuine expression of man's life.³¹ Like the other social institutions religion also arose from the intellectual power of man in response to certain felt needs of man. It has been a powerful agency in society and performed many important social functions. According to the view of Selbie. 'it is not that the sacred society or church becomes or takes the place of God, but rather that man finds that he can best approach his God as he does so in fellowship, with others as a member of a community which exists to secure the end for which God stands'.³²

Religion serves and soothes the emotions in times of human sufferings and contributes to the integration of one's personality. That children should obey their parents, one should not tell a lie or cheat, women should be faithful to men, people should be honest and virtuous in their work are some of the social values propagated by religion which uphold social solidity. Religion bans unsocial activities and requires people to put some limitations upon their material wants and desires. Love and service are the two great teaching of religion. Religion has always generated a sense of belongingness in society. The most important function of religion is self-discipline. It is responsible for organizing the society on spiritual and moral principles and for teaching the values of reverence and obedience. Besides religion shapes domestic, economic and political institutions. Religious rites are performed on many occasions as 'birth, initiation,

marriage, sickness, death, hunting, animal husbandry and so on and they are intimately concerned with family and kinship interests and with political institutions'.³³ Religion has served humanity through the spreading of education. The scriptures are great literary works and storehouse of knowledge. It has also emphasized benevolence and forbearance. It also created the habit of charity among the people who opened many charitable institutions like hospitals, temples and rest houses to help the needy and the poor.

Religion supports the folkways and customs by placing the powerful sanctions of the supernatural behind them. They make certain acts not only offences against the society but against God as well. Violations of the moral codes evoke sin and punishment from the spiritual forces. In its positive form religion provides a model for living. It upholds certain ideals and values. The believer imbibes these ideals and values in his life. Religion can help youth to become morally disciplined and socialized citizens of the society.

Religion has also contributed to the growth of literature art and music. The desire to laud and please Gods has led people to extol them in songs, sculpture, painting and architecture. Some of the worlds most beautiful monuments are buildings erected to the glory of the Gods. Vast temples, mosque, cathedrals and artistic images express man's desire to

portray his conceptions of the supernatural in aesthetic and inspiring ways. The sacred writings stimulate an appreciation of beautiful prose and poetry. Religious themes are the inspiration for some of man's finest paintings and the desire to sing praises has led to the creation of some of the world's fine music. Religion also provides a good opportunity for friendship. The religious congregations serve as a place for men to find their mates and for friendly associations. This friendship functions of religion is vital service to adults and youth as well.

But if religion becomes a tool in the hands of fanatics and fundamentalists, all the virtues that are taken notice of it will be converted to its opposite. Instead of love and compassion there will be hatred for all other religions and instead of sacrifice and service, there will be selfish and cruel acts performed for money and power. There is also the threat of superstitions and false spirituality taking the place of true religions faith. In ancient India, as reflected in *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, the religion of the high-class society was following the rituals and yajñas. Like this the recitation of Śāstras on the occasions of the Yajña and the Śrāddha ceremonies was popular. Manu says (Chap III) - During the Śrāddha repast Vedas, Purāṇas Itihāsas and Khilas should be recited to brāhmaṇa guests when they would be eating.³⁴ Viṣṇu Samhita says 'This code should be studied, remembered and recited to others.

Persons deserving good, shall hear it narrated during the celebration of a śrāddha ceremony'.³⁵ In the ancient time story telling was the habit of sūtas and Māgadhas who traveled to various places and told the stories related to gods and heroes. The professional storytellers were great sources of popular instruction. The caste of Pāṇas were also traveling minstrels who used to recite songs and stories of fight and adventure before kings and noblemen on festive and other occasions.³⁶

These were the ancient or traditional provisions for the spread of knowledge among the masses. Many religions coexist in India. These religions have a long history and they have contributed many values, and produced great spiritual leaders who were able to guide the people of India. People of India respected all religions. The religions co-operated with each other following the principles of mutual respect and tolerance.

Sometime they came after the age of Yajñas and vedic forms of worship the corner stone of the ancient religious happened to be temples. The priests went into the temples and started the teaching of purāṇic stories. Temples became the main centers of religious education from the ancient period to the present day itself. Many temples provided funds for the fulfillment of educational needs and established educational institutions under its management.

In Kerala during the period of Kulaśekhara there were provisions for vedic education in some important temples. Brāhmaṇa students were given free vedic education in the institutions attached to those temples. Hundreds of Vedic scholars completed their education by the help of these temples which were under the royal patronage. To give opportunity for the ordinary people to have acquaintance with the itihāsas and purāṇas example the learned persons recited epics and purāṇas in temples. Through the recitation and explanation of the stories the ordinary persons know about the purāṇic wisdom and Sanskrit language and literature. It was a custom to perform Sanskrit plays during the festivals in the ancient days. Right from the vedic period performances were held at festivals in dance and mime.³⁷

Religious and cultural activities in temples took various forms which included music and pantomime, discourses by learned men on religious topics, and recitation of the itihāsas and the purāṇas. In *Kadambarī* Bāṇa writes that queen Vilasavati heard the recitation of the *Mahābhārata* in the temple of Mahakala in Ujjain. Similarly there were arrangements in the temple to provide for the reciting of the *Mahābhārata*. Popular education in the broadest sense were distributed from the temples as they were the centre of such activities.

Festivals

In the ancient society the celebration of festivals and religious functions had great importance. The community as a whole assembled together during these functions, exchanged things, communicated ideas and entertained themselves.

The festivals celebrated in India are of various types, for example temple festivals, religious festival, seasonal festivals, harvest festivals, new year festivals, birth festivals and public festivals etc. All of these festivals give the feeling of unity and collectiveness. Local stories and legends are related to these festivals. Relatives and friends, old and new come together in family, temple or village on these occasions. New generations learn the old customs and traditions from the old generation. During the festivals intelligent persons used to talk about various subjects and share their ideas and experience with others.

In ancient times unlike in the modern times there were no many chances or facilities for the people for conveyance and communication. So one of the main objectives of these festivals was the strengthening of social coherence and togetherness. People enhanced their knowledge about the life, customs and traditions during these festivals. New possibilities and changes in religion and community, old and new subjects of study, problems and issues in the community and family, cultural and

political matters, comparison between the old and new, all these types of topics were discussed by the people on these occasions. New friends were made and the old ones were renewed. The accumulated cultural experience and values of the old members of the community were passed to the new ones during these celebrations. Plays, music, dance and rituals performed during the festivals attracted the youth and to a certain extent, educated the masses informally.

Huge numbers of people are still attending the traditional festivals and people with different customs, traditions, belief and languages mingle together. People from different vocational fields meet and exchange their experience and problems informally. The Transfer of folk knowledge is the educational significance of these occasions.

.Festivals also gave opportunities for the villagers for selling and buying the necessary commodities. Villagers sold their products to masses who came to the festivals. They were also able to know the qualities of products, their sources and method of production etc. People knew about different languages and dialects during these occasions.

The most popular festival in the early times was the festival of spring in honour of Kāmadeva the god of love. At this festival people from different castes or social distinctions joined together and play all kinds of

jokes. This ancient festival still survives under the name Holi in the north though the love god had been replaced by Kṛṣṇa.³⁸

We have seen that from the ancient period itself people were aware of the importance of education or vidya. Many festivals were conducted to highlight this and it continuous even now. Navarātri and Vināyaka Chathurthi etc were celebrated for this purpose. Through the celebration of Dasara and Dīpavali the society uphold the failure of the bad and success of the good and the supreme importance of knowledge symbolized as light. Not only Hindus, people of different other faiths do enjoy and share the festivals like Durga puja, Dīpavali, Sarasvati puja.

In the modern period, many of the ideas and views of the traditional society have been changed. These changes are reflected in all the walks of life. Since caste system has been denounced in the modern society some of the caste based festivals of the past disappeared or underwent change and became socially more inclusive and unrelated to caste. As a result of this change society received these festivals with popular programmes and began to celebrate these festivals in a modified manner. So we can see new aspects, and new dimensions in the conduct of festivals and people from outside the country also come and participate in these festival as tourists for example Trissur pooram celebrated at Vatakkumnatha temple during the summer. In Kerala on the Vijayadaśami

day not only people from the Hindu community but people of other religions like Christians and Muslims also takes part now considering it as symbolic of initiation to the world of letters.

Different methods were adopted by the people of different ages for the amusement or entertainment. The festivals were the most important source of amusement for people of all ages. All these festivals are related to religion or public entertainment. In the celebration of these festivals members of all sections of the society attended. Dance drama and other cultural and folk activities were performed in It is notable that Sanskrit dramas like that of of Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti were written to be staged during the festivals.

Travel and pilgrimage

Traveling is an important source of informal education. There are different types of objectives and reasons for the tours and pilgrimage. People travel with religious, social and political motifs. A part from these objectives ancient people traveled far and wide for the acquisition of higher education and knowledge.

It appears the that ancient poets used to travel to foreign countries and utilised their experience in those countries in their works. Prince of Magadha after mastering all the arts at Taxila wandered through towns,

villages and all the land to acquire practical knowledge about the life of the people by direct observations.³⁹

After the completion of such long journeys the traveler was often completely changed in character because through these journey he faced a variety of powerful experiences and adventures. From these experiences he learned lessons of life and these lessons influenced his attitudes and view of the world.

Unlike the moderns period, there were no facilities for people to travel safely and with speed. They went to one place to another place by walking or using vehicles drawn by bullocks or horses. Long journeys lasted for months and years. The informal experiences from these journeys were the greatest education for the traveler. When the traveler came back to his native place, villagers thronged at his residence to hear from him about the world outside.

Religious pilgrimage were very important for a devotee during the ancient and medieval times. Such tours were conducted for the acquisition of virtue, propagation of religion and visit to the holy places. For example, Jagad Guru Sankaracharya visited all important places in India to preach Advaita Vedanta. For similar purposes sanyāsins and mendicants traveled to many religious and educational centers all over India. The scholars learned about the geographical peculiarities,

population, languages, customs, traditions etc. existed in this country. They distributed the knowledge they had acquired wherever they went. Pilgrims were often the great acquirers and mediators of informal education.

Another group of people were forced to runaway from their native place for the protection of their life from the political conquer or natural calamities or climatic changes, and conducted long and toilsome journeys and migrated to distant places.

In another cases some persons went to the distant places for material benefits: for the purpose of trade or search for job. They also covered hills, rivers, forests etc and mingled with the people of various places. They influenced their language, culture and modes of life.

But some persons conducted these tours consciously for educational purposes. Pāṇini the greatest grammarian in Sanskrit conducted many tour to study language. In these cases the aspirants were never satisfied with the existing knowledge and searched for new knowledge. They thought that their education is not complete or not enough for them. The world was very wide and they had to go beyond the limits of their own environment. For this purpose they traveled to many places by taking many years. During the journey they got chances whole discussions with other scholars in different areas or mingled with eminent

persons on different occasions. From these experiences they learned more language, philosophies or science formally or informally. This experience influenced and shaped their vision, ideas, beliefs and thoughts.

In the Buddhist period, as we have already referred, many scholars came to India from the other countries like China, Hiuen-T Sangh, Fahiyen etc, came to India and learned Sanskrit, Buddhism, Indian Philosophy, literature etc. They were also obliged to give instruction to the ignorant and the travelling scholars who held pilgrimages from one teacher to another were attracted by the fame of the teacher's special learning.⁴⁰ In the same way Indians also went to other countries for religious propagation. Eg: Samghamitra the daughter of Aśoka went to other countries like Ceylon, China and Tibet for the propagation of Buddha's teachings.

Guilds

In ancient India the craftsman helped by his family was the basis of all industry. The state owned mines, spinning and weaving establishments and workshops for military equipments and weapons. Each craft and trade occupied a separate street in the bazaar. The workshops, stalls and homes of artisans were all situated here. Worker's cooperative carried out large scale enterprises such as building houses and temples. Guilds

played an important role in the national economy and the growth of the trade castes. It existed in every big town and included all trades and occupations.⁴¹

Like modern trade unions guilds united individual workers and craftsmen, into a corporate body. The guild framed rules for hours of work and wages, helped to control prices of their products and maintain high standards of workmanship preserved and developed occupational skills and had judicial rights over their members.

In this guild people came from different places for various purposes, for purchasing or selling products in the temporary stalls. People of various places stayed there for many days. So they got opportunity to mingle with others and speak about trade, politics, life, religion etc. In these way, through these sharing, they got educated in many things. In the ancient Indian society apprenticeship under the guild was also very popular by which young man learned skills in various professions. The knowledge of the various languages of men might not have meant more than a slight acquaintance with the speech of foreigners with whom trade brought into touch. Thus the commercial education of the young meant that he would learn something from his father and the businessmen around in the actual course of business.⁴²

State

State is the well organized super associations of human beings which came into existence to carry out the functions of all the social activities more effectively. In the early times on the basis of social contacts people formed associations. These associations further formed a super associations known as State, and to carry out some important functions of society.

During the Vedic period there was no relation between state and education at all. In those days education was imparted by learned Ṛṣis in the gurukulas. State provided land for gurukulas and they did not collect the land tax from those gurukulas.⁴³

In some cases the king used to grant stipends and liberal allowances to students and learned men.⁴⁴ Some times the king helped the students in giving dakṣiṇa to their studies.⁴⁵ Similar endowments were also made by many south Indian Kings like Kulottunga Chola III.⁴⁶

In ancient days state made some provision for the care and education of orphans as evident from the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya.⁴⁷

Society maintained these institutions and the state admired and appreciated their efforts. In the brāhmaṇa period also education was maintained by voluntary and private organization. However there was no

direct control of state in education. During the Buddhist period institutions were changed into public institutions and were run by bodies like 'samiti'. In the Muslim period rulers established Maktabas and Madrasas. The Jātakas mention that state scholarships were awarded to some students for studies abroad. Aśoka furthered the cause of education by establishing innumerable monasteries throughout his empire.⁴⁸

It will be interesting to compare the old state of affairs with the modern period. In the modern period education is a responsibility of the state. The central and the state governments and the local bodies share the responsibility of educating the children of the nation spending the best of their resources and capacities. A democratic state devises a national scheme of education. The elected government propagate the political ideology of the state by way of film shows, military demonstrations, radio, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets and television shows. Social training is given through social service programmes, social functions and other various programmes. Cultural training is given by establishing various institutions like museums, picture galleries, exhibitions, zoos, clubs for entertainment and arranging action fairs and free film shows.

In addition to formal education state is to provide adult education for the uneducated and illiterate adults through various voluntary organizations and with the help of media.

Good education depends upon the availability of good and standard books. So the state prepares and publishes text books at reasonable price for the schools and colleges and establish public libraries, where the people get the opportunity to read. The state provide scholarships and stipends to the needy and deserving ones without and discrimination of caste, creed or religion. The state gives proper guidance and keeps close supervision in such a way that the entire educational system runs on the right track.

During the ancient and medieval periods King's court was one of the best educational centers in India because they provide many opportunities for the scholars to perform. They provided scholarships any stipend for the talented poor students and distributed rewards to the scholars. Some rulers appointed permanent scholars in their courts.

Another great educational influence in the country was the occasional meetings of learned men at the courts of kings during the sessions of sacrifices or rituals. Interesting and instructive functions like the recitations of sacred books were held at some convenient hours of the

day, which would be attended by the public at large. It was during a sacrifice that Vaiśampāyana recited the *Mahābhārata*.

The Upaniṣads also emphasizes some of the other features of these learned gatherings. They provided the arena where scholars seeking to establish their intellectual positions entered in serious debates. These discussions were called *Brahma Vada* and reference to them are often met within *Satapathabrāhmaṇa*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya upaniṣads*.

The ancient society had its own ways of formal and informal education. Time has changed and in this age of industrialization and technological development the ancient structures dissolve and new concepts and practices emerge. Informal agencies of modern society have gone up in number and substance. Society finds new ways of teaching, communication, and entertainment - new technologies are developed in the all fields. Radio, television, press, cultural programmes, book marts, museums and such other sources of education are available for a modern man. All these aspects in relation to Sanskrit education will be elaborately dealt with in the succeeding chapters.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined the various aspects of formal and informal education. The people of India were aware of the importance of education and role of Sanskrit in religion and scholarship. In traditional view education did not end with the end of formal education but it was a continuous process, the ultimate aim of which was the realization of truth. The gurukula mode of education was in vogue for hundreds of years in ancient India. Outside it family, community, religion and caste, tours and travels were sources of education which was informal in nature. All these informal agencies still exert influence in the education of a person even in the modern period though the ways and means are changed. In addition to these the sources of informal education has become much vast and perhaps endless with the introduction of modern information technology in this field. The informal study of Sanskrit benefited from the agencies that were present in the ancient society in the past and still continue to exist in the Indian society which has the tendency not to completely abandon its old stock of values.

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 स्वाध्यायं श्रावयेत् पित्रे धर्मशास्त्राणिचैव हि।
 आरव्यानानीतिहासांश्च पुराणानि खिलानि च॥
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