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## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & CONCEPT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

In developed countries, the education and training that children receive during their teenage years has long been recognized as crucial to development of job skills and other attributes that affect the ability to function productively as a member of society. In less developed countries, economic pressures typically force children into the workforce at a much earlier age. Consequently, fewer individuals are well enough educated to make significant contributions to the economic and social development of their countries. Data from UNESCO and other international agencies suggest that some secondary education is becoming more widely available in some less-developed countries; however, the formal education of children in countries ravished by civil war, natural disaster, disease, or widespread economic hardship is often virtually nonexistent. As a world civilization, it is not clear that any significant progress is being made toward the education of the population.

**Key words :** secondary education, civilization

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### INTRODUCTION

Secondary education is informally regarded as the education children receive during their teenage years, although the average ages of entrance and exit vary considerably among various nations. The distinction between lower-secondary education and uppersecondary education is useful in a global context, because developing countries are sometimes able to provide some access to lower-secondary education, while uppersecondary education is still beyond the national reach. In this article, lower-secondary education is considered to generally target eleven- to fifteen-year-old children, and upper-secondary education to target fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds. In the context of life-support systems, secondary education systems in both underdeveloped and developed nations will be considered in this article. The objective is to identify key aspects of secondary education that may be essential contributors to national self-sufficiency. There is danger in examining and evaluating national education systems in less-developed nations because it is too easy to reach the conclusion that they should mimic the education systems of developed nations. In fact, attempts to emulate educational systems that have worked elsewhere may impede economic and social progress in a less-developed nation

### CONCEPT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

The concept of secondary education is as old as the establishment of first middle school by the missionaries in 18th century in India. They had brought with them the concept of 10 years schooling consisting first few years as primary and last 2 years as high school classes, thus nationally the middle classes 5 to 8 is considered to be the secondary stage of school education. This continued. In woods despatch of 1854, it was officially defined that first four classes as the primary school education, 5th and 6th as the junior middle classes and 7th and 8th as the senior middle classes. There was no definite pattern whether Junior and Senior middle classes would be attached to a primary school or with the high school in separate stages or in totality. Such an anomaly continued upto the end of 19th century, when for the first time, Calcutta University Commission in 1917 recommended the three or four years stage of education before graduation. Thus, since 1970 the confusion started whether classes 5th to 8th is secondary stage or the high school stage, prior to graduation education is secondary stage rather a new idea cropped up if intermediate classes that is Class XI and XIIth shall be the part of secondary

education or higher education. This confusion continued till 1947.

Notwithstanding the above the secondary education in fact has come down in India from the vedic period to this day. The central advisory Board of Education at its 14th meeting held in January 1948 recommended the appointment of a commission to examine the prevailing system of secondary education in the country and suggest measures for its reorganization and improvement. The Board at its 18th meeting held in 1951 reiterated its former decision and pressed for early implementation of its recommendation. There was other consideration before the Government of India for setting up a commission. There had been no comprehensive or through education, while the problems of elementary and university education had been surveyed and steps had also been taken to improve and co-ordinate facilities for technical education. Further, it was the secondary school that supplied teacher to the primary scholar and students to the universities. An efficient system of secondary education was found to effect adversely the quality of education at all stages. One of the major defects of the prevailing system of secondary education was its unilinear and predominantly academic character. So the need for the reorganization of secondary education with diversified courses had become more urgent as a result of acceptance by the Government of basic education as the pattern of education at the elementary stage.

The Kothari Education Commission was appointed by the Government of India to advise Government on the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all aspects. The Commission has divided the entire period of formal education into two main stages-schools and higher - and we have so far treated school education as one continuous unit. Some explanation for this procedure is necessary. The traditional practice has been to divide the period of school education into three stages-pre-primaries, primary and secondary and to discuss the problems of each separately. This is based on several considerations. In the first place, the three stages of Education are regarded as correspond to the three stages in the development of a child-Infancy, Childhood and adolescence. Again, from the social point of view, Primary Education has long been considered as education for the masses and secondary education for the select few. In our own country, distinctions have been made sometimes even on cultural grounds - Primary education was defined as education through the modern Indian languages while secondary education was regarded as education in English. In recent years, however, these distinctions are either becoming blurred or have vanished altogether. For instance, it is increasingly realised that the dividing lines between preprimary and primary and primary and secondary are arbitrary and variable. Similarly the traditional view that primary education should provide undifferentiated general education while secondary education should be diversified to meet the varying aptitudes, Interests and abilities of children is so no longer universally held; and in some countries, such as the U.S.S.R, the entire course of school education - Primary and Secondary has been designed on one set of principles. With the phenomenal expansion of secondary education in India, the social distinction between primary and secondary education as meeting and the classes has already ceased to be valid and so has the justification for classifying primary as 'vernacular' education and secondary as 'English' education. We have found it, therefore, more convenient and appropriate to treat the entire pre-university period of Education as one stage. So Kothari Commission has structured its report by considering the entire pre-university period of education as one stage.

**Structure of Education:**

It may be instructive in this connection to look briefly at the results of one serious effort made since independence to carry out a plan for the reorganization of the educational structure. As a result of the Report of the secondary Education Commission, a decision was taken to develop a national pattern of school classes covering eleven years - Five years of lower primary, three years of upper primary and three years of higher secondary classes. The kind of reorganization suggested above, which involves a lengthening of the duration of school education, cannot obviously be effected within a short period. The

vastness of the country and the variety of its educational partners make the task formidable one and the pressure of more urgent claims on the limited educational resources adds to the complenity of the problem. Kothari Commission recommends that the reorganization should be carried out through a phased programme spread over at least twenty years. The first step in this direction would be the abounding of the present higher secondary pattern in which specialization begin in Class IX, and the institution of new higher secondary course beginning in Class XI. Alongwith this measure, which should be completed by the end of fourth plan period, a systematic attempt should be made be transfer the pre-university course at present located in universities and affiliated colleges where it tends to depress standards of higher education, to secondary schools, where it rightly belongs. The next step would be to lengthen the duration by adding a year to secondary course.

## **SECONDARY EDUCATION DURING ANCIENT INDIA**

In Ancient India the education system cannot be said to be uniform and single system. There were several streams of education in different periods. In the beginning there were simple schools of mass education where the students gathered with teacher in their names. Later on this system developed into Gurukuls and Ashrams. There the pupils resided with the family of teachers and were active part of that family. Pupils used to serve their teachers in the matters of household. The Ashrams pupils stayed comparatively for longer period. These were the institutions of secondary and higher education and they were exclusively residential institutions. The Ashram system was much developed as the system of secondary and higher education. Sometimes the pupils resided as long as 10, 12 and 14 years for the higher attainment. Those pupils who joined the Gurukuls or Ashrams at the age of 6/7 got elementary education also and those who joined at the 12 years of age can-be said to be pupils of secondary stage in modern sense.

Teachers were a highly honoured class - honoured even by kings. Kings rose from their thrones to receive great teachers, such as Narada, Vashishtha and Vishwamitra. A well-known Sanskrit verse goes so far to say: The teacher is Brahama. The Teacher is Vishnu, The Teacher is the Great God Shiva. The Teacher is the Great Brahman (Supreme Divine Soul) incarnate. Bow to that teacher. Teachers behaved as parents to their pupils, and pupils behaved as members of the teacher's family. There was perfect harmony between them. Vinaya Pitaka, one of the well known Buddhist religious works, enjoined "The teacher should regard the teacher as his father." The attitude of the pupil was to be one of complete submission. Arjuna said in the Bhagvadgita: "I am thy pupil. Direct me. I am come to thee." In another place, Krishna said to Arjuna: "Learn through humility, repeated questioning and service" Knowledge sought in ancient India was of two kinds: Lower and Higher. Lower knowledge was knowledge of the Vedas and the Vedangas (phonetics, ritual, grammar, etymology, prosody and astronomy).

The subjects of instruction varied according to the vocational needs of the different castes - from the Vedas and Vedangas in the case of Brahmans to the art of warfare in the case of Kshatriyas, and to agriculture and trade, arts and crafts in the case of Vaishyas.

The method of study consisted in listening to the teacher, reflection on what had been listened to and its constant repetition (revision). It was, however, not considered enough for a student merely to study and acquire knowledge: it was necessary for him to put his knowledge to use and to impart it to others at public fairs, feasts and festivals. Nor was it enough for the teacher merely to teach. His duty was to gather knowledge from various sources, to use it himself, to impart it to others, and to make sources, to use it himself, to impart it to others, and to make them use it. The place of education was generally the forest 'far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife'- in Buddhistic times, Vihara. The medium of instruction in institutions conducted by Brahmans was Sanskrit, and in those conducted by Buddhists- Bhasha, the current spoken language of the people. There was, generally no corporal punishment. Self control or self- discipline was considered to be the best discipline. Self- indulgence was permitted in

childhood, restraint or control was imposed in boyhood; self-discipline was expected in adolescence, and freedom allowed in adult age. In later times, however, women came to be held under much restraint. As the following verse shows, the father was to protect them in girlhood, the husband in youth, and the sons in old age, on the ground that they did not deserve freedom.

Universities in ancient India were not well organised bodies like the Universities of Modern times. TAKSHASHILA bears the name of the capital of that name (derived from Taksha, the local ruler) of the province of Gandhar (modern Kandhar) near the present city of Peshawar. It was a seat of Hindu and Buddhist culture, where hundreds of teachers and students gathered from different parts of India and the outlying countries of Asia long before the beginning of the Christian era. BANARAS as a seat of learning, came into existence later than Takshashila, after the Aryans had advanced eastwards from the Indus basin to the Ganges basin and had settled there. Its fame, as a stronghold of religion and learning was so great in ancient time that every religious leader who desired to propagate his doctrine felt compelled to preach it first to its renowned pundits and shastris. Gautham Buddha had to go there to preach his first sermon on his new religion (Buddhism as it has since been known after him) in 528 BC. at Saranath, about 4 miles away from it; and Shankaracharya had to do likewise to propound his Advaita (Monistic) philosophy of the Vedanta in later times Chaitanya and Guru Nanak, the great Vaishnava and Sikh leader visited it and Tulsidas and Kabir, the well known saints, imparted their religious teachings there.

NALANDA interpreted as meaning “not giving enough” or “insatiable in giving”, was the most famous seat of Buddhist learning. It developed from a Vihara, founded by Aryadeva, a pupil of Nagarjuna, in the 4th century A.C. into a great place of Buddhist learning under the patronage of the Gupta kings who endowed it liberally, although they themselves were orthodox Hindus - a fact which shows the spirit of religious tolerance animating rulers in this country at a time when it was unknown in other countries of the world. It was situated on a beautiful site about 7 miles from Rajagriha, the old capital of the kingdom of Magadha, and 40 miles from Patna (ancient Patliputra) in Bihar. VALABHI (modern Vala in Kathiawad) was also a great seat of Brahmanic as well as Buddhist learning. It flourished about the same time as Nalanda - in the 17th Century.

The great Buddhist teachers, Sthiramati and Gunamati, of Nalanda, were for some time in charge of Buddhist teaching at Valabhi. It attracted a large number of students from far and near. Kathasaritsagara, the well known Sanskrit work, makes mention of a Brahman of the Gangetic plain sending his son to Valabhi for education. This shows the wide spread reputation which Valabhi enjoyed as a seat of learning. KANCHI, or Conjeevaram as it is called today, was a great place of ancient Hindu learning, Buddhist as well as Brahmanic. It is still known as the Dakshina Kashi by devout South Indian Hindus. It was the capital of the Pallava Kings of South India, and the birth-place of Chanakya, the reputed Indian Machiavelli-Kautilya, author of Arthashastra. MADURA was another great seat of learning in South India. Its sangham or assembly of teachers was reputed to be a highly learned body. It exercised great influence on the South Indian world of letters. MALKAPURAM in Guntur District, had also a college, a hostel and a hospital, all combined. The college had about 150 students and 8 teachers and its specialised in the teaching of the vedas, grammar, literature, logic and the Agamas.

There was a grammar college at PUNNAVAYIL in Tanjore district, offering free board and lodging, and tuition to about 500 students. It is worthy to note here what Dr. Graves, a well known American Historian of education, says of ancient Indian education. “Education in India,” he says, “is based upon a gloomy religious belief and the rigid caste system accompanying it. The Hindu boy is impressed with the unreality and wretchedness of his life, and is enjoined to escape from it as soon as possible, through reflection and inactivity. Western scholars have criticised the ancient system of education as based on

religious beliefs and Caste system. They consider that Hindus who still appreciate and desire their ancient system at education, Intellectually live in 1st century rather than modern age of science. Not withstanding anything that all most all the Western scholars have criticised the ancient system of education in India, we feel that they lack the necessary vision of the universal mind and the sciences that had been developed in that period, though no substantial evidence is available in our support but we unheritatingly say that the developments in modern age have been tremendous and the entire universal knowledge of the day is preserved in computers, satellites and websites. Any unmanageable virus can destroy the whole and the present day society would be as poor in the scientific knowledge as it become after the battle of Mahabharat.

## CONCLUSION

There are a lot of problems facing secondary education, which have made the achievement of the aims and objectives of this level of education almost impossible. The writer has examined some of these problems and suggested ways of solving these problems which includes community participation. It has been noted in this paper that community participation is a process that facilitates the realization or improving educational quality in our society

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