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Educational Institutions in Ancient India: A Historical Study of Knowledge Traditions

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Abstract:

A rich and varied tradition of education was developed in ancient India through colleges including Gurukuls, Ashramas, Buddhist Viharas, Jain learning centres, temple-based schools and higher education centres like Takshashila, Nalanda, Vallabhi, Vikramashila, Odantapuri and Jagaddala. These were not only the institutions of instruction, but also the centres of conserving, cultivating and transmitting traditions of knowledge in the fields of religion, philosophy, grammar, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, logic, ethics, arts, architecture, statecraft and social life. The paper is a historical analysis of educational institutions in ancient India particularly in terms of their structure, curriculum, teaching methods, function of the institution and contribution to Indian Knowledge Systems. The research is premised on secondary sources and is descriptive, qualitative and historical. It claims that ancient Indian pedagogy was value-based, teacher-centred, residential, oral, dialogic and practice-based. Simultaneously, the paper notes critically that the access to education was not that even and highly depended on caste, gender, class, region, and religious affiliation. The paper concludes that ancient Indian educational institutions have valuable insights to offer to contemporary education, particularly in terms of holistic education, development of ethical character, teacher-student relationships, interdisciplinary education, and respect of native knowledge traditions.

Keywords: Ancient India, educational institutions, Gurukul, Nalanda, Takshashila, Indian Knowledge Systems, knowledge traditions, Buddhist Vihara, ancient education

1. Introduction:

Education has been a core part of the Indian civilization. The ancient Indian concept of education is not limited to the learning of literacy or the training of a person to be a worker, but it is seen as a process of physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual and social growth. Education was meant to make the individual a disciplined, responsible, learned and ethical member of the society (Altekar,

1944). The ancient Indian education was thus intertwined with character development, self-regulation, responsibility, devotion to society, and pursuit of knowledge.

The historic, religious, and cultural contexts of Indian ancient educational institutions evolved differently. Vedic and Brahmanical traditions were closely connected with the Gurukul and Ashrama systems. Buddhist Viharas were significant centres of monastic, philosophical and intellectual education. Ethics, logic, literature, and scriptural studies were the contributions of Jain institutions. Sanskrit education, ritual preparation, music, dance, sculpture, architecture, and cultural heritage was maintained in temple schools. Higher learning became known through the ancient centres like Takshashila and Nalanda who had students and scholars who came to their centres (Mookerji, 1947). The significance of examining these institutions is in knowing how Indian Knowledge Systems were kept and passed down through the generations. The Indian traditions of knowledge incorporated oral, memorized, debate, commentary, and apprenticeship, observation, practical training and residential learning. These techniques enabled the transfer of knowledge between the teacher and the student as well as between generations (Altekar, 1944; Mookerji, 1947).

Indian Knowledge Systems have recently been the revived subject of scholarly and policy attention. The National Education Policy 2020 focuses on the holistic and multidisciplinary learning and mentions the long-term tradition of education in Indian institutions like Takshashila and Nalanda (Ministry of Education, 2020). (Education India) As such, a historical analysis of ancient educational institutions not only helps in the study of the ancient past but also in reconsideration of current changes in education.

2. The problem is as follows:

Several types of educational institutions existed in ancient India, although their organization, curriculum, pedagogy and contribution to the tradition of knowledge are usually discussed independently. The Gurukul system is broadly referred to as a moral and religious institution, Buddhist Viharas as monastic centres, Jain institutions as religious learning centres, and Nalanda or Takshashila as higher learning centres. Nonetheless, these institutions were linked to a wider culture of knowledge production, storage and dissemination (Mookerji, 1947).

The central concern of this paper is to review the educational establishments in ancient India in the past and to learn about how they led to the Indian Knowledge Systems. The paper also aims at determining the strong and weak sides of these institutions in terms of the current educational needs.

3. Research Objectives:

The major objectives of this research are:

1. To study the major educational institutions of ancient India.
2. To examine the structure and functioning of Gurukuls, Ashramas, Viharas, Jain centres, temple schools, and ancient higher learning centres.

3. To analyse the curriculum and teaching methods used in ancient Indian education.
4. To understand the role of these institutions in preserving Indian knowledge traditions.
5. To assess the historical significance and modern relevance of ancient Indian educational institutions.

4. Research Questions:

This paper addresses the following research questions:

1. What were the major educational institutions in ancient India?
2. How did Gurukuls, Ashramas, Buddhist Viharas, Jain institutions, temple schools, and ancient centres of higher learning function?
3. What subjects and knowledge traditions were taught in ancient Indian educational institutions?
4. What teaching methods were commonly used in ancient Indian education?
5. How did these institutions contribute to the preservation and development of Indian Knowledge Systems?

5. Methodology:

This research is based on a qualitative, historical and descriptive research design. It is grounded on secondary data gathered in the form of books, scholarly research, historical documents, educational policy reports, and interpretations of ancient Indian education by other scholars. Field survey, questionnaire, interview, and experimental data are not utilized in the study. Thus, it relies on the analysis and interpretation of literature available to reach its conclusions (Altekar, 1944; Mookerji, 1947).

The approach to this paper involves the historical analysis, document analysis, and thematic analysis. The historical analysis is applied to learn about the development of educational institutions in various times. Books, policy documents, historical accounts and educational reports are interpreted using document analysis. The thematic analysis is employed to structure the discussion based on the key themes like institutional structure, curriculum, pedagogy, teacher-student relationship, knowledge traditions, and modern relevance (Singh, 2008).

6. Review of Literature:

The nature and development of ancient Indian education have been discussed by a number of scholars. One of the most significant works on the goals, methods, curriculum and institutions of ancient Indian education is the Education in Ancient India by Altekar. According to Altekar, ancient Indian education was related to discipline, religious training, character building, and social duty (Altekar, 1944). In his work, he demonstrates that the concept of education was perceived as a whole process of human development.

Ancient Indian Education: Brahmanical and Buddhist by Mookerji is an elaboration of Vedic, Brahmanical and Buddhist educational traditions. Mookerji talks of the Gurukul system, oral

education, monastic education, higher education institutions and teacher student relationship (Mookerji, 1947). His contribution is helpful since it reveals the variety of the Indian education in the ancient times as opposed to making it appear to be one system only.

Research on Takshashila has indicated that it was a great seat of learning, but this should not be taken to mean that it is a contemporary university. Britannica describes that Taxila was an educational hub where the teacher had his own students, and students could pay in cash or service to the teacher and his family (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2026). The significance of this interpretation is that it is aimed at preventing an anachronistic comparison of ancient institutions and modern universities. Nalanda is given particular focus in historical and archeological works. The Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara in Bihar is defined by UNESCO as one of the oldest, biggest, and longest-lasting monastic-cum-scholastic centers in the Indian subcontinent, which existed between the 5th century CE and the 13th century CE (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016). (UNESCO World Heritage Centre) This affirms the importance of Nalanda as a centre of high Buddhist studies and world scholarship.

Another reason that the literature gives is that ancient Indian education was interdisciplinary and multifaceted. It comprised Vedic education, Buddhist philosophy, Jain morality, grammar, medicine, astronomy, logic, arts, architecture, and practical skills (Altekar, 1944; Mookerji, 1947; Singh, 2008). Nevertheless, researchers also indicate that education was not equally available to people of various castes, genders, social status, geography, and historical times. Thus, ancient education must be critically studied and not just glorified.

7. Conceptual Framework:

The main idea of this paper is the knowledge traditions. Knowledge traditions are systems of creation, preservation, transmission, interpretation and application of knowledge. Traditions of knowledge in ancient India were not confined to the written texts. These were oral recitation, memorization, teacher student transmission, commentary, debate, practice training, apprenticeship, observation and community life (Mookerji, 1947).

There are four dimensions that can be used to comprehend ancient educational institutions. The first is the institutional, which encompasses Gurukuls, Ashramas, Buddhist Viharas, Jain centres, temple schools and centres of higher learning. The second is the curricular aspect that encompasses religion, philosophy, grammar, logic, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, arts and governance. The third is the pedagogical aspect which entails oral instructions, memorization, discussions, training, and learning at home. The fourth is the social aspect which incorporates character building, cultural continuity, religious education, intellectual interchange and social leadership (Altekar, 1944; Singh, 2008).

In this framework, the ancient educational institutions can be examined as not only schools of the past but also as significant centres of Indian Knowledge Systems. They maintained knowledge,

gave rise to scholars, trained people to serve in social positions and they also added to cultural continuation.

8. Gurukul System:

Gurukul system was among the ancient and most powerful types of education in ancient India. This system had students residing with Guru, typically in an Ashrama or a bare bones household, and their education consisted of personal direction, service and discipline and practice. The Guru was a teacher, a mentor, guardian, moral guide, and role model (Altekar, 1944).

The Gurukul system emphasized the overall development. Vedas, Upanishads, rituals, grammar, philosophy, ethics, mathematics, astronomy, music, warfare, agriculture and usefulness in life were taught to students based on their social position, capability and the learning environment (Mookerji, 1947). Education was not only intellectual but also moral, physical, spiritual and social training.

In Gurukuls, the approach to teaching was mostly oral. Learners had to listen to the teacher and repeat the lesson, memorize texts, discuss meanings and learn to pronounce things correctly. As most of the sacred writings were passed orally through generations, memory, focus, pronunciation and interpretation were highly regarded (Altekar, 1944).

The teacher-student relationship was very intimate. The pupil was to serve the Guru and live a disciplined life. This formed a close relationship between the teacher and the learner. It was a system that promoted simplicity, self-control, humility, obedience, and respect to knowledge (Mookerji, 1947).

Nevertheless, Gurukul system also was not without flaws. Education was not equally available. During numerous times, access to education was based on caste, gender, family background and social status. Consequently, although the Gurukul system played a significant role in knowledge retention and in shaping the character, it can also be scrutinized as the issue of social inclusion (Singh, 2008).

9. Ashrama Education:

Ashramas were significant centres of spiritual, philosophical, moral and intellectual education. They were frequently in the rural setting and offered an atmosphere of simplicity, discipline, contemplation, and intimacy with nature. The Ashrama was not just a geographical location, but also a discipline of life (Altekar, 1944).

The knowledge was related to everyday behavior through Ashrama education. The students were taught through living with the teacher, through being involved in daily chores, observing behaviours, serving others and exercising self-restraint. The Ashrama education was also experienced-based and life-based as opposed to being classroom-based only (Mookerji, 1947).

Ashrama system also stressed the harmony among human life, nature, society and spirituality. Students were conditioned to attain mastery over senses, respect towards elders, respect to nature and

consciousness of moral responsibility. This type of education demonstrates that the ancient Indian education was directly connected with the ethical and spiritual growth (Altekar, 1944).

Ashrama education may be conceptualized today as a kind of residential, value-based and experiential education. Nevertheless, like the Gurukul system, it must be critically studied since not every group in society had equal access and participation in society.

10. Monastic Education and Buddhist Viharas:

The institutional growth of education in ancient India was significantly contributed by Buddhist Viharas. Initially, Viharas used to be the homes of Buddhist monks, but as time passed, they became the places where religious scholars, philosophers, manuscripts and intellectual discussions took place (Mookerji, 1947).

Buddhist education focused on discipline, meditation, morality, study of scriptures, logic, grammar and philosophical argument. The students were taught by recitation, by interpretation, by argument and by discipline as a monastic. This rendered Buddhist Viharas as significant centres of spiritual and intellectual training (Mookerji, 1947).

The manuscripts were also preserved by Buddhist institutions. Libraries were run in monasteries where texts were copied and stored, studied and transmitted. This was significant in conserving Buddhist scriptures and other body of knowledge (Mookerji, 1947).

The international nature of Buddhist education was another significant aspect of Buddhist education. Chinese, Tibetan, Korean, Central Asian and Southeast Asian students and scholars came to Indian centres of Buddhism to study. This made Buddhist institutions centres of transregional knowledge exchange (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016). (UNESCO World Heritage Centre)

11. Jain Educational Institutions:

Another significant contribution to the education in ancient India was made by Jain learning centres. The Jain traditions were focused on ethics, non-violence, self-discipline, logic, philosophy, literature and scriptural knowledge. Jain scholars and monks had a significant role in sustaining the Prakrit literature, religious commentaries, grammar, mathematics, cosmology, and teachings on moral values (Singh, 2008).

Jain schools tended to cluster around the centres of monasticism, communities of temples, and academic families. The students were taught scripturally, memorizing, conversation and discipline. The Jain teachers also helped to argue on metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and logic (Mookerji, 1947).

The Jain philosophy of *anekantavada*, or many-sidedness of truth, promoted intellectual receptiveness and acknowledgement of different viewpoints. It rendered Jain education relevant to religious education, as well as to philosophical thinking and moral consideration (Singh, 2008).

Jain contribution is important in the sense that it demonstrates plurality of the ancient Indian

knowledge traditions. Vedic and Buddhist education was only one of the ancient Indian educations; Jain and regional traditions were also included. This diversity assisted in the establishment of a rich intellectual culture.

12. Temple-Based Education:

Ancient Indian temples were not merely a religious venue, but also a centre of learning, art, culture and social structure. Education in temples involved Sanskrit instruction, ritual knowledge, music, dance, sculpture, architecture, astronomy, medicine and local administrative knowledge (Singh, 2008).

Cultural knowledge was maintained in temple schools by practicing. Performance traditions taught music and dance, apprenticeship taught sculpture, and ritual taught by watching and memorizing. Even the architecture of temples was a manifestation of geometrical, proportional, symbolic, measuring and craft knowledge (Singh, 2008).

Community life was related to learning through temple-based education. Temples were social and cultural learning centres due to festivals, rituals, public performances, inscriptions and artistic traditions. By so doing, temples served to conserve both the textual and non-textual knowledge traditions (Altekar, 1944).

But temple-based teaching must be critically studied too. Social hierarchy, gender, region and occupation often determined access to some types of temple learning. Therefore, temples played a significant role in the maintenance of culture, however, they also need to be analyzed in terms of social inequality (Singh, 2008).

13. Takshashila as a Centre of Learning:

Takshashila, in modern-day Pakistan, is best known as one of the first and most significant centres of higher education in the Indian subcontinent. It had a reputation of teachers and students were brought in by other regions. Some of the subjects covered in Takshashila were grammar, medicine, law, politics, military science, astronomy, philosophy and arts (Mookerji, 1947).

Takshashila, however, is to be understood. It was not a contemporary-style university with a centralized campus, fixed departments and formal degrees. According to Britannica, a centre of learning existed at Taxila where each individual teacher had their pupils, and the students paid either in cash or service (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2026). (Encyclopedia Britannica)

This implies that Takshashila was more of a group of teachers and learners than an individual contemporary university. It was known by the quality of its teachers and range of subjects taught. The conventional histories have linked characters like Panini, Jivaka, and Chanakya to Takshashila, but these links must be historically approached with caution (Mookerji, 1947).

The importance of Takshashila is that it was a seat of higher learning, specialization and interaction of ideas. It indicates that even before the emergence of big monastic universities such as

Nalanda, ancient Indian education had higher learning forms.

14. Nalanda Mahavihara:

The Nalanda was a school in ancient India and one of the most renowned. Nalanda developed into a significant Buddhist monastic and scholastic center and is now in modern-day Bihar. It drew students and scholars not only in India but also other parts of the world and became renowned in the study of philosophy, logic, grammar, medicine, Buddhist studies among others (Mookerji, 1947).

Nalanda Mahavihara is one of the earliest, largest and longest-standing monastic-cum-scholastic institutions in the Indian subcontinent, thriving particularly between the 5th century CE and the 13th century CE (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016). (UNESCO World Heritage Centre) This indicates that Nalanda was not just a religious monastery but a large centre of organized higher learning.

The curriculum of Nalanda was wide. It was mainly a Buddhist doctrine but did not teach Buddhist doctrine exclusively. Subjects such as logic, grammar, philosophy, medicine, astronomy and other fields of knowledge were studied. The fact that Nalanda had international students demonstrates that it was a hub of transregional intellectual interaction (Mookerji, 1947).

Nalanda possessed monasteries, lecture, libraries, teachers, students and a rich culture of debate and scholarship. Its libraries were renowned in classical history and its significance in the ancient Indian education in terms of manuscript preservation (Mookerji, 1947).

The decay of Nalanda is generally linked to the shifting political trends, loss of patronage, and the assaults on the Buddhist institutions. Nonetheless, its historical legacy is prominent. It is one of the best-preserved higher learning institutions in ancient India (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016).

15. Other Ancient Centres: Vallabhi, Vikramashila, Odantapuri and Jagaddala:

Other than Takshashila and Nalanda, there were other centres that furthered higher learning in ancient India. Vallabhi a current Gujarat was a key centre of learning that came to be linked with both Buddhist and secular studies. It brought students of various backgrounds and was renowned in terms of administrative, religious, and intellectual education (Mookerji, 1947).

Another large Buddhist establishment was Vikramashila which was established during the Pala period. It gained significance in the Buddhism philosophy, logic, tantric studies and translation works. It was a part of a bigger system of Buddhist learning centres in eastern India (Singh, 2008).

Odantapuri and Jagaddala were also developed with royal patronage and related to the Buddhist scholastic traditions. These institutions assisted in the preservation of manuscripts, educating of scholars, and facilitating intellectual exchange among regions (Mookerji, 1947).

These centres demonstrate that the higher education in ancient India was not restricted to a single location. Various regions had different institutions based on religious, political and cultural factors. Such institutions and their network preserved the traditions of knowledge in India.

16. Ancient Indian Curriculum:

The education of ancient Indian institutions was varied and adapted to the institution, the time, the place and the tradition. Vedas, Upanishads, rituals, grammar, ethics, philosophy and practical skills of life were significant in Gurukuls and Ashramas (Altekar, 1944).

Buddhist scriptures, logic, philosophy, grammar, meditation and debate were the main concerns in the Buddhist Viharas. Ethics, logic, Prakrit literature, philosophy, and scripture were stressed in Jain institutions (Mookerji, 1947).

Scientific and practical knowledge were also part of ancient education. Other aspects such as Ayurveda, astronomy, mathematics, architecture, metallurgy, agriculture, music, dance and warfare were learned. Takshashila and Nalanda were related to medicine, grammar, law, and statecraft and philosophy, logic, grammar, medicine and Buddhist studies respectively (Altekar, 1944; Mookerji, 1947).

This liberal curriculum indicates that ancient Indian education was interdisciplinary. The separation of religion, philosophy, science, art and practical abilities did not always exist. Knowledge was perceived to be a whole system in union with life, community, rightness and intellectual inquiry (Singh, 2008).

17. Pedagogical approaches in India:

Ancient India was diverse in terms of teaching methods that were significant to the time. The oral approach was the focus. Students were listening to the teacher, repeating lessons, memorizing texts and practicing proper pronunciation. This was particularly significant in Vedic learning which had a high degree of oral preservation (Altekar, 1944).

The Guru-Shishya approach entailed close personal instruction. The teacher monitored the behavior, capability, discipline and development of the student. The process of learning was individualistic and not mass based. This approach was useful in building intellectual discipline and character (Mookerji, 1947).

The aspect of debate and discussion was critical, particularly in Buddhist, Jain and philosophical traditions. Students were taught how to pose questions, argue, analyze the text, and to confront opinions. This approach created reason, logical thinking and intellectual confidence (Singh, 2008).

Pragmatic training was applied in areas like medicine, warfare, architecture, crafts, music, dance, and rituals. Apprenticeship enabled the students to learn through practice. Residential learning was also significant in that education was combined with day-to-day life, service, discipline and community life (Altekar, 1944).

18. Part in the retention of Knowledge Traditions:

Knowledge was preserved in various means in ancient educational institutions. To begin with,

they maintained oral customs. The texts were learned by heart and were carefully taught by the teacher to the student. This technique was particularly significant in Vedic education, where sound and pronunciation accuracy was deemed to be a key factor (Altekar, 1944).

Second, these institutions kept manuscripts. Buddhism monasteries and other centres had libraries, where manuscripts were copied, stored, studied and transmitted. This aided in the preservation of religious, philosophical, grammatical and scientific knowledge (Mookerji, 1947).

Third, interpretive traditions were maintained in ancient institutions. Teachers and scholars made commentaries, engaged in discussions, interpreted writings and developed new systems of comprehension. The knowledge was not repeat knowledge, rather it was discussed, extended and systemized (Singh, 2008).

Fourth, these institutions disseminated knowledge over regions. Nalanda and other Buddhist institutes also got international students and scholars, and the knowledge traditions of Indians spread to Tibet, China, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016). (UNESCO World Heritage Centre)

19. Social Function of Ancient Educational Institutions:

The social functions of the educational institutions in ancient India were important. They educated priests, teachers, monks, doctors, administrators, philosophers, artists and kings. They maintained cultural memory, morality, religion and intellectual culture (Altekar, 1944).

These institutions served to preserve social order as well by passing on duties, norms, responsibilities, and values. In most situations, education was associated with occupation and social role. This brought education to social significance, but on the other hand brought about restriction since not all people could acquire knowledge (Singh, 2008).

The education of women was present in certain times and cultures, although not everywhere. Likewise, not all the lower social groups had equal access to the higher levels of learning. Thus, ancient education played a positive and negative role in society (Mookerji, 1947).

Both aspects should be acknowledged in a balanced historical study. The ancient institutions played a significant role in knowledge cultures, yet the modern education should take their best to the new knowledge without adopting any aspects that are exclusive.

20. Comparison to Modern Education:

There are differences and similarities between ancient and the modern education. They both need teachers, students, curriculum, methods, institutions and assessment. Old institutions placed a great emphasis on discipline, oral learning, residential life, value education and personal guidance. The contemporary education is focused on the formal curriculum, written examination, certification, research, technology, professional training, and mass access (Altekar, 1944; Ministry of Education, 2020).

Modern education is more democratic in spirit as it is meant to give education to everybody, without considering caste or gender, religion, class or region. The ancient education was in most cases more personalized, and value based yet less inclusive in most of the social settings (Singh, 2008).

The ancient systems can be applied to modern education in mentorship, holistic development, ethical training, interdisciplinary learning, learning through debate, and practical skills. Nevertheless, contemporary education must be equal, scientifically tempered, constitutional, and socially just (Ministry of Education, 2020).

21. Modern Relevance:

The ancient Indian institutions of education are studied today because it makes us reconsider what education is, outside of examinations, marks and even employment. The ancient systems teach us that education must build the entire being, the whole person: the intellect, the character, the body, the emotion, the ethics and the social responsibility (Altekar, 1944).

The National Education Policy 2020 focuses on multidisciplinary, flexible, value-based education and holistic education. It also acknowledges the Indian culture of learning which has a long history and promotes the adoption of the Indian Knowledge Systems to contemporary education (Ministry of Education, 2020). (Education India) This brings in a chance to re-define the ancient educational concepts in democratic and modern manner.

This approach has practical value in the South Asian context, such as India and Bangladesh. Modern topics can be integrated in schools and universities with local history, folk traditions, ethics, environmental knowledge, language diversity, and community-based learning. As an illustration, a university course might examine Nalanda not as a pride source, but as a model of residential education, international education, library culture, debate, and interdisciplinary education (Mookerji, 1947; UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016).

22. Discussion:

The ancient Indian educational institutions were manifold, vibrant and of historical importance. Gurukuls and Ashramas stressed on moral discipline, individual guidance, and spiritual growth. The Nalanda and Buddhist Viharas along with the great institutions promoted international scholarship, the preservation of manuscripts and debate. Jain academies built into ethics, logic and literature. The cultural and artistic knowledge was preserved in Temple schools. Takshashila came to be symbolized as a centre of higher learning and intellectual dialogue based on the teacher (Altekar, 1944; Mookerji, 1947).

Ancient education was strong through its holism. It did not distinguish between knowledge and life. The concept of learning was related to ethics, discipline, practice and social responsibility. The teacher student relationship was another strength that enabled personal guidance and character building. Another strength was interdisciplinarity whereby ancient institutions tended to integrate

philosophy, language, science, medicine, arts, government and work skills (Singh, 2008).

The restrictions should not be neglected either. There was no equal access to ancient education. Learning access was determined by social hierarchy. There were institutions that relied on royal patronage or religious patronage and thus were prone to political transformation. This was with techniques like memorization, which were effective in preservation and may turn out to be limiting unless paired with debate and critical questioning (Mookerji, 1947).

Blind glorification or rejection is thus not the most meaningful approach. Educational institutions of ancient origin should be critically and constructively studied. Their advantages can guide contemporary education, and their shortcomings are a reminder of the necessity to be inclusive, equal, think critically, and be socially just.

23. Conclusion:

The schools in ancient India were crucial in preserving and advancing the Indian knowledge. Gurukuls, Ashramas, Buddhist Viharas, Jain centres, temple schools, and ancient higher education centres served to provide moral, intellectual, spiritual, scientific, artistic and practical education (Altekar, 1944; Mookerji, 1947).

Takshashila is a teacher-centred type of higher learning network and Nalanda a more structured monastic-scholastic establishment with international influence. The variety of intellectual traditions in ancient India is reflected in Buddhist and Jain institutions. Education, culture, religion and society: Temple schools and Ashramas demonstrate the relationship between education and culture, education and religion and education and society (Mookerji, 1947; UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016).

This paper has been able to conclude that ancient Indian education was rich, diverse and historically important. It has made a great contribution to Indian Knowledge Systems. Yet, it needs to be learned in a critical manner, keeping an eye on both successes and shortcomings. It can be studied in modern education because it has a holistic vision, ethical focus, interdisciplinary curricula, and teacher-student relationship, but must guarantee equality, scientific thinking and democratic access to all (Ministry of Education, 2020).

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