

## TEMPLES AS EDUCATIONAL CENTRES IN AGRAHARAS IN SOUTH INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO VIJAYANAGARA PERIOD

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### ABSTRACT

An attempt is made in this research article to explain about Temples as Educational Centres in Agraharas in South India with Special Reference to Vijayanagara Period. Religious institution like temples, Agraharas and Mathas of Vijayanagara City played an important role and promoted the cause of religion and also served as centres of religious activity and learning. Education in its beginning was religious. Religious establishments like Hindu temples of different faiths, mathas and agraharas became centres of education.

With the introduction of Jainism and Buddhism, monastic establishments evolved. This had its impact on Hindu Religion and tradition was continued by the acharyas and the priests of the Hindu temples, and mathas. Education was been given much importance for the ancient times. Education was patronized by the rulers, nobles, merchants and the people of all strata of the society.

Many factors such as ethical, social and religious contributed to the development of education in the medieval times. As Vijayanagara city was developed, large number of people belonging to different regions, communities and professions came and settled there. The king took great interest in providing education to the members of the royal family nobles, military servants, merchants, and other subjects. As it was in ancient Karnataka, even in medieval period temples were the centres of education.

**Key Words:** Agraharas – Residences of Bhramins Donated by the King Temples –Religious Centre for Promoting of Education, Finearts etc.

Dana – Gift, Curiculam – Various Subjects Taught

### INTRODUCTION

The construction of large temples like Virupaksha, Vitthala, Balakrishna, Hazara Rama, Tiruvengalanatha, Pattabhi Rama and establishment of Agraharas and few Mathas bear evidence to the fact that education received great support and encouragement from the kings. Rayas like Devaraya II, Krishnadevaraya, Achyutadevaraya, made liberal donations and grants of lands to the acharyas and priests of temple and mathas for their services rendered to spread education.

During the reign of Vijayanagara kings education flourished. Innumerable instances clearly show the generosity and bounty of the people in the matter of education. No wonder all temples and mathas of the city including Agraharas and other educational centers together with literary persons enjoyed the benefit of the general prosperity.

In the capital city of Vijayanagara one could see temples almost in every street. Abdur Razzak observed that here and there were wonderfully carved temples and fanes to Hindu deities with

Brahmanical colleges and schools attached to the more important amongst their number. The teachers were generally of high moral character, religious minded and were well versed in all branches of knowledge. They were proficient in teaching philosophy, logic, veda, vedangas, grammar, poetry, drama, dance, music astronomy, mathematics and many other branches of learning and literature. The teachers were paid remuneration for their services in the form of lands houses, money etc. They were highly respected in the Vijayanagara society.

The Vijayanagara capital city was an important seat of learning. Vyasarayya was much honoured and respected by Krishnadevaraya. He became the chancellor of the Vijayanagara University as poet Somanatha says. Many temples of the city were the training centres of dance. And they also patronized music and other allied arts. For instance at Tiruvengalanatha temple there was a separate mantapa for dance and it was the natyasala or training school of that time. It shows how the Rayas gave encouragement to the development of dance and music.

In the city every large temple courtyard was provided with one or more pillared halls or mantapas, specially constructed and often very handsome buildings, in which during the great temple festivals, certain ceremonies connected with the idols enshrined in the temple were performed, such as annual marriage ceremony between the main god of the temple and his consort. Whereas other mandapas were used as places of religious institutions, and the cloisters or pillared verandahs usually found abutting the outer walls of the courtyard, were for the use of priests and pilgrims who visited the temple. Especially in the temples of Hazara Rama, Virupaksha, Malyavanta-Raghunatha, Tiruvengalanatha, Vitthala, and Patabhi Rama this kind of large pillared halls can be seen, which were used for various purposes of imparting education and also for dance and music learning.

The acquisition of knowledge by people as well as the progress and prosperity of a country depends mainly on the growth of education system, norms and standards. Education is the long and continuous process by which the culture of the society is transmitted from one generation to the other. This transmission through both the formal and informal systems of education and learning process. It is needed for the continuation of culture. The growth of formal education system in terms of the establishment of centers of learning such as temples, agraharas and mathas played an important role during the medieval period in South India.

During the Vijayanagara rule, the state did not take active interest in spreading education to the people by establishing schools and colleges with government funds. But some of mathas patronized by the Vijayanagara kings imparted religious and secular education. However, it is interesting to note the rulers of Vijayanagara did not continue the policy of the earlier ruler like the Pallavas and Eastern Chalukyas who had established schools and colleges to improve educational facilities for the people. Therefore, this chapter will clearly discuss the nature of education system during Vijayanagara period.

In the Vijayanagara period, education was divided into many kinds such as:

- 1) Secular Education
- 2) Religious based Education
- 3) Vocational Education
- 4) Mass Education
- 5) Medical Education

## GENERAL EDUCATION

The general education, in the days, started with the child going through an initiation ceremony called upanayana before he was entitled to receive education. The upanayana literally means taking a pupil close to his teacher. To age limit prescribed for upanayana ceremony was eighth year to Brahmins and twelfth year for the castes.<sup>1</sup>

The primary education was practiced in either temples or private houses of teachers who would select pupils of their choice. However, private tuition were also in vogue but generally looked down upon. The teachers who charged for teaching was termed as Bhritkadhyapaka or paid teachers to distinguish term from the regular ones who lived on grants.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, were known as Thirthakkas with a strange habit of transitory stay like a crow.

## SECULAR EDUCATION

In the Vijayanagara period, Agraharas imparted religious and secular education; secular education in agraharas was imparted only to Brahmin youngsters in those days while the vaishnava mathas liberally allowed the pupils of other castes to get educated there.<sup>3</sup> Many of the writers who became famous in the sixteenth century received their education from some Vaishnava teachers. Vedic schools probably taught the Vedas and the allied literature in agraharas. Another subject of study, which appears to have been popular, was the Ayurveda, or medicine constituting eight angas or branches.<sup>4</sup>

The large section of people were specially trained for service under the Government.<sup>5</sup> Young men were usually admitted into such schools in the autumn. They would begin their studies by learning to write upon oblong planks of blackened wood with pencils. The boys were also taught to write well both on the kadithem and palm leaf. A knowledge of mathematics especially arithmetics was considered indispensable for a person to become a qualified karnam or account. He should also acquire a knowledge of several scripts, particular of the calendars and of the history of kings who ruled the country previously.<sup>6</sup>

In the Vijayanagara period, the people are interested in science, Dharmashastras, philosophy, mathematics and vocational education (agriculture, animal husbandry, minerals and metals, games, textiles and business management) in those days government provided funds for the classes of mathematics and arithmetic to be conducted. It was said in Manu Charitra.

In the Vijayanagara period, different writers were encouraged to write books on various fields of science such as medicine, mathematics, poetics of natural phenomena and grammar. For instance, there emerged such books as Khagendramani Darpana, a medical book dealing with various poisons and their anti-dotes, by Mangarasa A.D.1360,<sup>7</sup> Asva Vaidya by Abhinava Chandra 1400 A.D., Asva Vadiya by Bachavusa in 1500 A.D. Vydyamrutha by Sridhara Deva and Arithmetic, Algebra and Mensuration (in verse) by Rajaditya. In this period, in Arithmetic, Algebra and Mensuration pupils were given a special training. In that period, many vocational courses and mass education played a very important role.

## RELIGIOUS BASED EDUCATION

In the Vijayanagara period, education is largely religious, as shown by the epigraphical evidence collected for this study suggests that Mathas, Agraharas and temples were patronized by the Vijayanagara rulers for spreading education among the people. For example, the matha of Sringeri, which was the seat of the founders and Rajagurus of Vijayanagara rulers, become a famous center for learning. The mathas were considered to be important agencies of education in medieval South India. A matha was originally the residence of the monks belonging to the religious orthodox. There were

mathas of shaivism, vaishnavism and madhavism, in the whole of Vijayanagara. The religious establishment of monasteries as ancillary religious institutions was a common feature of all religious. They were meant to function not only as centers of learning but also as custodians of religious Orthodox and doctrinal interpretation. By the 14<sup>th</sup> century, several mathas, or theological seminaries, sprang up to propagate their respective religious denominations, viz., Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Madhavism, and enriched the different schools of religious thought within the Hindu fold and thus maintained a generally animated religious atmosphere. They co-existed with the temple on a footing of equality and enjoyed the patronage of the rulers and individual philanthropists. As could be seen from the abundant epigraphical evidence available, there was a profusion of such mathas in the Vijayanagara Empire. It was in consonance with the policy of the Vijayanagara rulers that they re-established Hinduism against the possibility of its getting submerged into Islam. The mathas, therefore, were very important religious institutions at that time. A matha was in its origin a place of residence for monks belonging to any religious order. But in the medieval period, most of the mathas were shaivaite. It was most interesting to learn that the golaki matha has its branches in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil regions.

In the medieval Andhradesa, the most famous was the Golaki Matha during the tenure of Kakatiyas, and later the Vijayanagar rulers also patronized it. Various mathas belonging to Saivism and Vaisnavism flourished under the royal patronage. They include Golaki Matha, Shringeri Matha, Abhobila Matha and Bhiksha Matha of the Pashupata School at Devikapuram which was one of the important Pashupata Mathas of the period. In addition to the Bhiksha Matha, the Golaki matha and the Kallar Madam or Kallu Matha were some of the important Pashupata institutions.<sup>8</sup> Inscriptional evidence establishes the affinity of Pashupata institution with the Bhiksha Matha, Golaki Matha and the Kallar Matha. The associates of these Mathas were known as the Laksadhyaya Sanatan. Lakshadhyayi Sanatana is explained as "The descendants of gurus supported by a ministry endowed with a Bhiksha (alms) or a maintenance gift, or without any gift. A record of the reign of Immadi Narasingaraya Dharmaraya dated 1500 A.D. refers to a certain Pandimandaladhipati Pandinathy Mudaliyar as belonging to Bhiksha Matha Santana alias Laksadhyayi Santana, Golaki Matha and the Arubattumullan Tirumadam at Tirukkodungunram alias Baksina Kalilasam.<sup>9</sup> The Periyannattu Matha Attirunnamalai was a Saiva Matha and it appears to have exercised a great influence on the administration of the local Arunachalesvara temple. A copper plate grant dated A.D.1513 of the reign of Krishna Devarayana throws light on this matha. According to it Sri Krishnadevaraya and Saluva Nayaka requested Aliya Viradam Konda Tambiran of the Periyannattu matha for his consent to construct the thousand pillared mandapa in the Arunachalesvara temple. Srisailam temple was at zenith in that period. The kings directly and indirectly donated some villages for developing educational services.

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In the Vijayanagara period, it appears that the early education aimed at elementary knowledge and also at self sufficiency to those students who did not continue their studies. Consequently, the practical subject like Tailoring (Kartan), Calligraphy, Embroidery and elementary medicine, drawing and painting and so on were taught at the initial stages only.<sup>10</sup> Thus it is evident that early education was vocational, apart from its efficiency to display knowledge.

There were other vocational subjects to be studied by the student specializing in various professions. For instance, trade, agriculture, animal husbandry, examination of minerals including metals and gems, textiles perfumery and business management were prescribed for the students of business

community.<sup>11</sup> For the lower sections of the people, the practical training of various arts and crafts was also in vogue which was imparted mostly on hereditary basis.<sup>12</sup>

## MASS EDUCATION

In the mass education of common people, there was in the curricula, various types of folk arts that played a significant role during the Vijayanagara period. Majority of the people, who had not any access to formal educational institutions like mathas, secured religious type of education through the Yakshaganas, puppet shows and Harikathas. These folk performances were carried out in vernacular plays such as the kondakata and gangavatara which were preserved in the inscriptions and literature. They seem to be the earlier representatives of the modern Yakshagana. The Yakshagana is a dramatic composition set to music and song and acted upon the stage accompanied by instrumental music as the Vina, Flute and Mridanga.<sup>13</sup>

The plays of this type was enacted by actors and actresses belonging to the courtesan community who formed into companies and wandered from place to place staging plays usually connected with some puranic story in addition to Yakshagana and the Bommalata which were also a very popular medium of mass education to the village people. The puppet show (bommalata) or shadow play appears to have been popular. One of Sri Krishnadevaraya's confidential servants was kala, the son of a certain Bommalata Artiste Virupaksha. Their surname or family name of kala was probably derived from the profession which his father had followed. His considerable interest as indicated that the people of sixteenth century were familiar with Bommalata or the shadow play. The bommalata, like the Yakshagana, was staged at night in a temporary shed, open in the front and closed on the other sides.

The popular entertainment games like cock fighting,<sup>14</sup> rock trick, wrestling, bullock racing, snake charming and ram fighting. For the purpose wrestling, special gymnasiums were available for the purpose of wrestling. People participated in those games with great interest during the festival season. According for Manucharitra,<sup>16</sup> Natya competitions were conducted for women to entertain the people. They were also meant to provide some sort of education. These games were popular during the time of village fairs and festivals. The people of dommara caste performed folk-magic and folk arobatics. Their caste was subdivided into 24 sub castes as mentioned in several inscriptions. Thus, the attracted and entertained the people from them which they called donations. They had to pay a percentage of their earning as tax called Dommari tax. It is known from the kaifiets of that the Dommari people usually paid the tax during regin of Sadasivarayalu.

Vipravinodinis were the caste of people who entertained Brahmins. It is said in the incomplete inscriptions<sup>17</sup> that they knew the magic art called Yakshini. According to the Telugu dictionary named Sabdaratnakarn, the Yakshini art involved the revelation of the past incidents in addition to the entertainment through funny words and actions. The common people took considerable interest in cock fighting.<sup>18</sup> A kind of game resembling polo was played by princes and nobles. The player of the game mounting a charger had to beat a ball lying on the ground with a long staff held in one of his hands while the animal closely followed the movement of the ball.<sup>19</sup>

The most exciting outdoor amusement, however, was the chase in which the Emperor and his courtiers were greatly interested. Several varieties of chase such as teraveta edduveta and gantaneta were mentioned by contemporary writers.<sup>20</sup> But it is not easy to make out the difference between these entertainment games and popular dramas. The common people were familiar with the various themes of mythology and religion.



The themes of Puranas and Bhagavatham were also propagated by songs and dance performances. These folk arts were performed by some professional caste people like Dommaras, Pichakuntlas, and Haridasas. This type of propagating education to the vernacular was different from the education imparted through Sanskrit in the mathas agraharas and temples. Hence it can be said that during medieval period, different types of education systems had spread simultaneously.

## MEDICAL EDUCATION

Ayurvedic medicine is so ancient that various human ailments have been cured of by this since time immemorial. This indigenous medical system of India consists of eight kinds of therapies: Kaya, Bala, Graha, Oordhangaka, Salya, Damshttra, Jara and Vrisha. The system of Kaya treats the ailments of blood and bile and the diseases caused by gastric disturbances. The Bala system treats the diseases of children. The Graha system treats the maladies caused by ghosts. The Oordhangaka system treats the diseases of eyes, nose, ears, head and other upper parts of the body. The Salya system treats the diseases of bones. The Damshttra system treats a snake bite and the like. The Jara and Vrisha systems treat the maladies of all the tissues. All these are described in Manucharitra.<sup>21</sup> The treatment of ophthalmological diseases is mentioned in Kalahasti Mahatyam.<sup>22</sup> The method of stitching the skin cut by a knife or sword is described in Amuktamalyada.<sup>23</sup>

## TEMPLES

The next important institution which promoted learning and which also served as a centre of learning was the temple. It was a Gurupitha to propagate the principles of religion, it was a Vidyalaya for imparting the Vedic Education; it was a platform from which religious teachers delivered lectures; it was a sabha where the scholars discussed Shastras; it was a public forum from which the Pauranikas recited and expounded the epics; it was a prayer hall; and it was the greatest institution which protected culture and the life of the age.

We have inscriptional evidence to show that when some endowments were made to temples, the condition that they should impart learning was there were endowments for Vidyapradanam. The Tadikonda plates of Amma Rajka II refer to the king's gift to the temple of Samastha Bhuvaneswaraya, and a teacher of Samaveda named Prabhutarasi received from the king. The gift was referred in the grant. The Pithapuram plates of Virachodadeva to which reference has already been made states that temples were destroyed and provision was made for the maintenance of one who expounds grammar, two share to Mimamsa, one share to Rigveda, one share to Yajurveda, one share to singing of Samaveda, one share to Rupavatara, one share to recite Puranas, one share to physicians and one share to astrologer. This shows that a Vedic college was attached to the temple in the Chaturvedimangalam.

The institution is very much similar to the institution attached to the contemporary temples in the South India. In the reign of Rajendra I the members of the sabha of Rajarajachaturvedi mangalam in South Arcot resolved in the presence of an officer of the king to make arrangements for the feeding of the pupils and the remuneration of the teachers of a college in accordance with the terms of an order made by the king himself. Provision was made for 270 junior students, 10 senior students and a teaching staff of 14 people. Of these, the teachers of Rigveda were three, the teachers of Yajurveda were three, the teachers of Chandoga Sama were one, the teachers of Vajaseneya were one, the teachers of Naudhanya Grihakalpa Kamika were one, the teachers of Vyakarana were one, the teachers of Mimamsa were one, the teachers of Vedanta were one and the teachers of Vedanta were one and the teachers of Prabhakara were one. These were given daily allowance which was prescribed clearly in the inscription. The Kalidindi plates of Rajaraja says that the king set up three Shaiva Temples in memory of his three generals who were slain while fighting the Karnatakas and he further granted

three villages for conducting worship in those temples, for feeding 50 students and for the maintenance of choultry. Rajaraja was also related to the Cholas of the South. The commanders who were slain were Tamil commanders. So he was very much influenced by the system in South. Hence the arrangements made for the maintenance of 50 students would indicate that he established colleges attached to the temples and a free boarding house or a choultry for maintaining the students more or less similar to institutions in the south.

An inscription from Simhachalam dated in the regional year 35 of Rajadhiraja refers to the teachers of the Vedas who specialized in the yajurveda. They were addressed in the inscription as Upadhyas (Vedadhyayanam, Cheyinchandi Upadhyayulu). This indicates that there was a vedic college attached to the temple.

While all other centres of learning like the Agrahara, the Brahmapuri and Ghatika specialized only in higher castes, the temple besides being a similar institution was also a popular one which educated the masses. The temple as a monument was an aid to study. The temples as sculpture was educative in the sense that through it, the people became familiar with the achievements of the great heroes described in the epics and the Puranas.

The temple also served as a theater for the troupes of wandering players. In Kridabhiramam, there is a reference to the practice of reciting and enacting plays and stories like Palanati Vira Charitra in front of the temple of Ekavira. The people assembled here and listened to the religious discourse given by scholars and other cultural programs organized in them. Thus the temples kept alive all branches of knowledge and art.

## **CURRICULUM**

There were several inscriptions which throw light on the subjects which is made in them of the subjects in which the Brahmins and other scholars were included in the curricula.

The subjects taught and studied in these institutions were associated with religion of the times. In the first place, the institutions imparted Vedic Education. The teachers were qualified in the Vedas, the Vedangas and the 14 Kalas.

An inscription refers to scholars versed in 18 kinds of learning (Ashtadasavidyas). Thus, the Pedsacherukuru inscription refers to the Ashtadasavidyas as flourishing in the village called Ikshugrama. Those 18 subjects are (1) Ayurveda, (2) Dhanurveda, (3) Ghandarvaveda (4) Arthashastra, (5 to 8) four vedas, (9 to 14) shaddangas, (15) Mimamsa, (16) Nyaya (17) Purana and (18) Dharmashastra. These 18 subjects covered a very wide range from medicine to statecraft and from literature to religion and philosophy. Great importance was also attached to proficiency in a number of languages. Those who aspired to become poets and those who expounded the Puranas and the Shastras to the public had to be acquainted with at least two languages like Sanskrit and Telugu. The Nandamapudi Grant of Rajaraja could be taken as the best inscription to illustrate the importance of proficiency in different languages in those days.<sup>23</sup>

From various inscriptions found, it can be assumed that the following was the general curriculum prescribed specially for the Brahmins: (1) Language including the study of Grammar, (2) Literature including Poetry, Drama, Stories, Epics and Puranas, (3) Vedas, Vedangas and the Upanishads, (4) Six systems of Philosophy, (5) Logic, (6) Mathematics, (7) Astrology, (8) Medicine and (9) Politics.<sup>24</sup>

In the same manner, there was a special curriculum for princes, and they were trained like the Brahmins in languages, philosophy, mathematics, religion, logic, politics and literature through great emphasis must have been true because, in Potana's Bhagavata of the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, the author

refers in the story of Prahlad to the special curriculum for princes. Moreover, group learning and schooling were considered essential. Even though the duration of study is not indicated in the curriculum followed that it must have extended over several years. We have the authority of the smriti which says that a Brahmachari (Bachelor) should spend from the ninth to the thirtieth year with his guru.

The system of education was residential in character. It was necessary for students to remain with their teachers during their study. That was the reason why as noted above, in some cases, endowments were made for feeding and maintaining them. The Arasavalli Inscription refers to an endowment made in the time of Anantavarman II Vidyashasta, for maintaining students and educated Brahmin teachers and pundits. Here Vidyashasta would mean residential college. Again Srimahabaleshwara Kulothunga Choda Gonda Raja in S.2069 made endowment for the Mahajana's of a particular Agrahara and assigned to them the taxes perusunkamu, Vadderalamu, Koluchuvialu etc. Due from the village of Kodammaguda for the maintenance of students, sanyasis etc.

Another conclusion is that even the Brahmins who according to tradition were expected to concentrate their attention on the study of subjects which had a bearing on religion did not devote their attention to the study of state craft and the art of warfare. This was considered necessary as Brahmins were also employed as ministers of state and to a great extent as commanders of armies. There is inscriptional evidence of the time of Vijayaditya III says that Kadayaraju and Peddapandaraju the father and son who were Brahmins and who were proficient in all the Shastras were the commanders of armies and that Panduranga who was well versed in the 64 kalas was like Kartikeya to Iswara in his relation with the king.

Higher learning was not the monopoly of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas only. An inscription refers to one Namadeva Pandita who was a kayasta and an agent of Gangayya sahil. He was a scholar, proficient in all shastras besides Niti sastra. He was also capable of Ashtavadhana.

## **MASS EDUCATION**

In those days care was taken to educate the masses of the people in the traditional religion and culture of the country. It was the duty of the Pauranikas to do this. In the court of kings, they had an honoured place. In the Mahabharata, Nannaya refers to the Pauranikas in the court of Rajaraja. Discourse on religion, recitation of episodes from the epics and the Puranas and the signing of popular ballads descriptive of warlike deeds of ancient heroes were quite common. Temples specially served this purpose, as has already been referred to above. In literature like Panditaradhy Charitra, we find reference to this feature of mass education. It was the age when poets began to write in the language of the people as distinct from Sanskrit. The Shaivite writers made it a point to write in a point to write books in easy language and they used meters like Dvipada which could be easily followed by the common people. Their main purpose was to spread knowledge of religion among the masses.

## **METHOD OF EDUCATION**

Instruction was normally oral and the use of books was rare. In the introductory stages of teaching language and literature it was the analytical method that was adopted and it has been the method in use from the earliest time down to the present day in all the traditional educational institutions. It consisted of six parts which may be described as follows:

- (1) Reading (Vachan) which was followed by analysis of words and syllables in the passage. In Sanskrit, this is named "Padacheda".



- (2) Reading: Analysis of grammatical structure of words; if it is a verb its conjugation, different form's tenses and peculiarities of its transformation;
- (3) Reading: Relation of a noun and adjective.
- (4) Reading: Arrangement of the subject, the predicate etc., in Sanskrit this is named Anawayanta. The system of analysis in English grammar is the nearest approach to this.
- (5) Reading: Compounds and dissolving of compounds. The Sanskrit language and all other Indian language abound in long compounds (Samasas).
- (6) Reading: The summary and moral of the passage. This step is to see whether the student thoroughly understood the passage.

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

While there were organized institutions and agencies for the transmission of spiritual culture, we do not come across similar institutions of education in practical arts and for the transmission of material culture. As almost all occupations were hereditary in character, a knowledge of these arts and of the tools and implements used in them was acquired by the children from their parents and there was no need for vocational schools or colleges. That this system was efficient is clear from the fact that all these arts continued to flourish in their full splendor. Weavers, carpenters, masons, musicians, dancers, sculptors and painters acquired their knowledge in this way. The large number of temples that were built at time and the various categories of persons employed in them prove beyond doubt that this system of hereditary training was effective in transmitting professional skill to successive generations of people.

It may be pointed out in conclusion that the system of education especially in regard to the higher branches of learning suffered from two defects. One was that it was practically a monopoly of the higher castes especially the Brahmins. Members of the lower casts have usually neither the inclination nor the opportunity to acquire proficiency in these subjects. The other defect was that while the system did great deal to preserve the traditional learning it did not provide for any changes in it. There was little scope for original thinking and much scholarship and education was utilized on writing commentaries. Scholars had no opportunity to come into contact with the learning in other countries or other societies and thus their growth become arrested.

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