



International

Journal of Recent Research and Applied Studies

(Multidisciplinary Open Access Refereed e-Journal)

ISSN: 2349 - 4891

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF BRAHMANICAL AND BUDDHISTIC SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The Brahmanical and Buddhist systems of education, rooted in ancient India, shared the goal of spiritual and Moral development but diverged in their Methodologies accessibility, and philosophy found actions. Both systems emphasised discipline, oral transmission of knowledge, and teacher student relationships, however, the Brahmnical tradition was deeply hierarchical, ritualistic and Sanskrit based primarily accessible to upper primarily accessible to upper castes, especially Brahmins.

Keywords: Oral traditions, residential learning, moral education, ethical conduct

Buddhism was nothing but a particular phase of Hinduism. It was not totally a different cult. By 600 B. C. there were many sects within Hinduism demanding reforms within it. Buddhism arose as a reform movement within the Hindu system. It was an enlargement of Hinduism. It had no original religious concepts. Buddhism is deeply rooted in the pre-existing Hindu systems of thought and life. In this context Max Muller says, "to my mind Buddhism has always seemed to be, not a new religion, but a natural development of the Indian mind in its various manifestations-religious, social, philosophical and political¹. According to Rhys Devids, the Buddhist philosophy was not entirely his creation. Buddha himself was the product of his age. Hopkins goes

so far as to assert that" the founder of Buddhism did not strike out a new system of morals; he was not a democrat; he did not originate a plot to overthrow the Brahmanic priest hood; he did not in vent the Order of monks. "

Buddhism was born in the womb of Hinduism, not with the mission of destroyng the latter, but with the objective of reformation. It was a new light, not a completely new thing. It inherited many of the Hindu theories. Obviously it had similarities with and indebtedness to Hinduism. Yet, it was a reforming doctrine. Hence, it had vital differences too.

Acceptance of the 4 noble truths, the imperishability of the soul, and the concepts of rebirth and salvation caused the similarities. Rejection of God, the Vedas, the domination of Brahmanas, Varnasrama, and worldly life caused the dissimilarities.

Similarities Between the Brahmanic and the Buddhist Systems of Education: There was no fundamental difference between Hindus and Buddhists as far as the general educational theory and practice was concerned. It was the fundamental tenet of Buddhism that the world is full of sorrow and that the salvation can be obtained only by renouncing it. In the beginning, therefore it naturally concerned itself only with the education of novices and monks. When however in the course of time it took up the education of the laity also, its educational system did not present any important points of difference from those of Hinduism. Both the systems had similar ideals and followed similar methods.

Doctrines Common to Both : Those of Atman, Sorrow, Deliverance, Desire Karma, Rebirth : There were doctrines and beliefs common to Buddhism and Hinduism-Atman, Sorrow, Deliverance, Desire, Karma, Rebirth etc. The doctrine of Karma and transmigration was accepted by both the systems. The endless round of births and rebirths was recognized by both the systems

of philosophy. Buddhism accepted the four great truths of Brahmanism there is sorrow, there is cause of sorrow and suffering, there is end of sorrow and ultimate salvation.

Self-control was recognized by both the systems as a path to salvation. Buddhism gave many answers to questions which were already raised by different sects of

Hinduism. Buddhism thus has its roots deep in Hindu philosophic thought.

The concept of Nirvan was equivalent to the concept of Moksha, although the methods of attainment were different.

Buddhist Scheme of Life As Influenced by Brahmanical : Philosophy or Religion, especially in India, has been always lived, and not merely contemplated, and so it has always developed its outer side in strict accordance with the inner. The two developments must always run parallel to each other in vital harmony. Thus it is that as in the old Brahmanical speculations we see the sources of the dogmatics of Buddhism, so in the Brahmanical scheme and ordering of life or social organization was largely laid the foundation of the Buddhist Community and Church. Far from discarding and denouncing the Brahmanic ideal of life, "Buddhism achieved, in one sense, the full realization of this Brahmanic ideal.

Similarities in the Organizational Pattern of Education in Both the Systems : Buddhist Samaha Life as Influenced by the Brahmanic Asramic Life of Education.

Samgha life in Buddhist education was an adaptation of Asramic life. The characteristic of Buddhism is its organization of Monks into Samgha. This central idea of Asceticism had its source in Brahmanism. The Brahmanical scheme of life divided it into four Asramas, of which three were based on asceticism. The Brahmachari was of two classes

Upakurvan, student for a period; Naishthika, a life – long student.

The Brahmachari of the 2nd class was a Sannyasi like a Buddhist Bhikshu. The Vanaprastha and Sannyasi were regular ascetics like Buddhist monks. Buddhism

had adopted for its monks most of the rules of Brahmacharya.

Begging: The first duty of the Brahmachari was begging and the Buddhist term Bhikshu implied one who begged for livelihood. The third Asrama was also called that of a Bhikshu

by legal authorities like Gautama or Apastamba. Begging was compulsory in both the systems.

Rules of Brahmacharya: The rules of Brahmacharya as to alms-bowl, manner of begging, eating, sitting, sleeping, cutting of hair, clothing, discipline, abstention from luxuries like garlands, scents, oils, sporting in water etc. were all adopted by Buddhism for its Bhikshus.

The Creed of Non-violence : The Buddhist doctrine of Ahimsa was Brahmanical. The texts forbid Brahmachari trod on land that was ploughed, or grew crops, lest life was destroyed. For the same reason, the Parivrajaka was forbidden travelling in rains, but was to keep to a rain-retreat., an institution specially Buddhist.

Evolution in the Housing: In the Brahmanical system, the Sannyasi who renounced home was called 'Aniketa', had to live under a tree as a Vriksha-mulika. Later texts allow him better residence such as Sunyagara, Devagara (temple), Matha, Kutu, Aranya, Girigruha, and the like. Buddhism also shows the same evolution in the housing of the Bhikshu. He started as an Anagarika, living under a Vriksha-mula, and in Aranya (forest), Gandara, Girigruha etc. A merchant prince of Rajagruha offered to provide for improved housing, whereupon the Buddha allowed the following: "" Vihara, Ardha yoga, Prasada, Harmya, and Gruha of "bricks, stone, wood or earth." Normally, however, the Bhikshu lived in a leafy hut (tinakuti)

Right Habits (achara): Buddhism runs after physical purity (Sauchachara) as much as Brahmanism. Brahmanism treated religion as something to be lived, as more a matter of conduct than philosophy. Brahmacharya itself meant "the practice more a matter of conduct than philosophy. Brahmacharya itself meant" the practice (charya) of Brahma (=Veda)" The teacher was called Acharya, " he who practises the precepts of religion" Thus Brahmanical education emphasized right habits more than mere study of books. Buddhism was full of such practices (achara). The Vinaya gives regulations regarding such trivial details of life as the size of tooth-brush, of clothing, seat needle-case, manner of eating etc.

System of Fasting: The Brahmanical system of fasting on select days has also been adopted by the Buddhist system.

Dominance of Ceremonies : The dominance of ceremonies in Buddhist life has come in for censure in an Edict of Asoka.

Women Student : It is also to be noted that the Parivrajika was the precursor of the Buddhist Bhikshuni.

Free & Residential System: Both the system were residential and free Buddhist education valued moral life just as the Rishis had considered morality more valuable than abstract knowledge. That is why the ways of life in the Asram School and the Vihara were similar.

Ceremony of Initiation (Le. Admission to Studentship) : The practice of initiation was associated with both the systems. It was Upanayana in the Brahmanic system and Pabbajia in the Buddhist system.

The ceremony of initiation or admission into the Buddhist Order and the Samgha followed closely the lines of the Brahmanical initiation of studentship.

Under the Brahmanical system the youth had to find his teacher to whom he had to formally apply for admission to studentship. The Buddhist monastic Order began as a union of the master and his disciples after the Brahmanical model. The idea of the individual responsibility of the teacher for his pupil's training and conduct was emphasized in both the systems. Brahmanic Upanayana and Buddhist Pabbajja were comparable, although the detailed procedure were different.

It may also be noted that the Pabbajja, this "going out" of home into the Order, was akin to the Brahmanical system of studentship under which the young disciple had to go out of his own home to live with his chosen preceptor as an 'antevasi' in his hermitage or Ashrama in a new home and environment under rigorous conditions of discipline and training. Under the Buddhist system, too, the layman admitted to the Order was placed under the discipline of a preceptor who was to control his conduct.

As in the Brahmanical system, a minimum age limit was fixed for initiation, viz, eight years, and children below that age were not accepted by the Order.

Corresponding to the epithet Brahmachari conferred upon a youth after his Upanayana was the Buddhist epithet Samanera applied to the youth who was a Pabbajita i.e. had become a homeless one on his performing the ceremony of initial or preliminary ordination (Pabbajja).

Length of Study: The minimum period of studentship in the Brahmanical system was twelve years. the same was the period of Buddhist novitiate.

Duties of the Studentship: Service to teachers was obligatory for the students of both the systems. The Buddhist system, like the Brahmanical, enjoined upon the

pupil the duty of serving his preceptor as a part of education.

Teacher-Taught Relation: In ancient India, the teacher was associated with his pupil in filial relation. He had immense moral responsibility. Particularly he was the guardian of the student's health, habit and conduct. He maintained the student and nursed him in his ailment. The teacher enjoyed high esteem.

Teacher-pupil relation, on the whole, in both the systems was direct, cordial, personal and intimate. It served the scheme and system of education. Non-commercial teachership endowed the teacher with inherent rights regarding absolute control of the student, including expulsion and Punishment.

Discipline : There could be no question of indiscipline in the ancient system of education guided by different moral principles of life. As in the Hindu system, so in the Buddhist system, education was synonymous with discipline. Discipline was also same in both the cases.

Educational Finance : Both the systems enjoyed social patronage and royal help, but neither was subjected to state control.

In ancient India, there was no state system of education. But the state patronized education in different ways. Patronage of education was regarded as one of the most important duties of the Kings. In those days, the King was the State. So any patronage on the part of the Kings meant patronage of the State.

Methods of Instruction in Both the Brahmanic and Buddhist Systems of Education.: The oral instruction was the actual educational method in ancient times. Teaching in ancient India was individualized. Learning by heart, in the form of rote, prevailed in both the systems.

Self- study and concentrated meditation constituted the best method of acquiring inner knowledge. There were occasional debates and discussions which helped to clarify difficult thoughts and ideas. Learned assemblies were patronized by kings and rich people.

In Fa-Hien's time, the time-honoured Brahmanical system of oral tradition was still obtaining as the method of instruction among Buddhists .

Professional and Industrial Education in Both the Cases: Para and Apari Vidya were combined in the Brahmanic scheme of education. Under the influence of Chaturasrama and Varnasrama, professional and industrial education got a valued place. Hence spiritual and temporal aspects were gradually combined.

Buddhist education was originally education for Monkhoo and renunciation. But with the acquisition of a popular base, secular education including professional and industrial was extensively incorporated.

Comments : Such similarities inspired many scholars to observe that Buddhism was but a phase of Hinduism.

Differences Between the Brahmanic and the Buddhist System of Education : Dissimilarities between the two systems again were equally natural. Buddhism developed a system of education which was a rival of the Brahmanic system. The mode of life was different in both the cases. Hindu religious principles were more ritualistic, whereas the Buddhist principles were more ethical. Buddhism was more humane than Hinduism. Hinduism was mystical but Buddhism was less mystical. Buddhism did not accept the supremacy of the Vedas.

Absence of Caste-System in Buddhism: Caste-system was conspicuously absent in Buddhism. The main difference between the Brahmanic and Buddhist education was that the latter was not based on Vedic study and its teachers were not Brahmanas. It was open to all comers, and not merely to the three twice-born castes. Lay adherents were recognized in Buddhism. Buddhism's call reached the ordinary man who could practise the Shilas. In the place of ceremonial rites of Hindu Karmayoga, Buddhism now preached the goal of Nirvan by vanquishing sorrow and decay through the path of self-development and self-purification. By challenging the super-human origin of the Vedas and by claiming abolition of caste distinctions, Buddhism became a popular religion of the masses.

Difference in Basic Philosophy of Life & Education: In the Hindu concept of life, salvation comes through successful completion of life's mission by discharging duties and responsibilities which led to the Chaturasrama scheme of life. But the sole aim of Buddhist life and education being the attainment of Nirvan, there was little value attached to family life. Monkhoo was the desired aim. Hence morality, service and disciplined Samgha life free from worldly bonds constituted the basic aims of Buddhist education. Hindu philosophy propounded reunion with the Absolute and freedom from cycles of birth, as ultimate aim of

education. Buddhism also propounded the end of cycles of birth, the path being not reunion with God, but complete negation of desires, which meant Nirvan.

Features of Difference Between Brahmanical And Buddhist Organizational Pattern of Education : In the Hindu system, the institution was the Gurukula. The house of the teacher was the school. But the Buddhist system was

monastic The Viharas or the Monasteries were the centers of learning. The Buddhist schools were not isolated or independent institutions like Brahmanical ones. Viharas were federal organizations.

While Brahmanical culture depended upon the system of individual schools, the Buddhist culture was the product of confederations of such schools in larger monastic institutions comprising numbers of teachers and students. The monastery provided wider, collective academic life. A Vihara was a federation of individual educational groups or schools.

Thus Brahmanic system was individualized but the Buddhistic one was institutionalized. As against Gurukul-based Brahmanic education, Buddhistic education was Samgha-based. Each Gurukul was a property of the Guru concerned. The Vihara belonged to the Samgha. The Brahmanic system was not only autocratic, but also unitary. The authority of the Brahmana teacher was supreme and could not be challenged. The Hindu Gurukul was autocratically administered by the Guru, but the Buddhist Viharas were democratically administered. The Monks collectively controlled the monasteries. In a word, while the Brahmanical system was based on the monarchical principle, the Buddhist corresponded to the republican or democratic type.

Absence of House-holder Stage in Buddhistic System of Education : There was another great difference between the two systems. In Brahmanic system of education there was a stage of 'Grihi' or house-holder. But in the Buddhistic system, studentship was for ever. A Bhikshu could not come back to the life of a house holder. Worldly life was strictly forbidden in the Buddhistic Order.

Difference in Educational Rituals Between Both the Systems : The higher ordination of the Upasarnpada by which a Sarnanera completed his course of probation and entered upon the full membership of the Samgha for which he was destined and had been prepared since his Pabbajja ordination, marks an important point of distinction between the Brahmanical and Buddhist systems of education. Under the former system, the Brahmacharin, on completion of his studentship, and coming of age, returned to his home and family as a Snataka and

presently married and became a Grihastha or householder. His "going out of home" or 'Pravrajya' was for a temporary period.

In the case of the Buddhist, the "outgoing from home into homelessness" was final But there were some exceptions in the Brahmanical system. The Brahmacharin could live with his preceptor for life with his special permission. But the exceptions became the rule in the Buddhist system. In the Brahmanical scheme, the final renunciation of the home and the world belonged to the third and fourth stages or Asramas (V anaprastha and Sannyas.).

There was thus a great difference in the termination of education. In the Hindu system, it ended with the ceremony of Samavartana. In the Buddhistic system it was the preparation for the life of a bhikshu. Buddhistic education was characterized by final renunciation. In the Hindu system, education was a preparation for the life of a "Grihi". There was no ending ceremony like Sarnavartana in the Buddhistic system. As a result, the ideas behind Samavartana and Upasarnpada were diametrically opposite. The Guru was the sole authority in conferring graduation in the Brahmanic system, while monkhood was conferred by the Samgha in Buddhist education.

Curricular Difference: The curriculum was also different in both the systems. In the Brahmanical system it mainly included the Vedas, the Angas and other ancillary subjects.

In the Buddhistic system it consisted of the Vinayas, the Jatakas, the principles of Buddhism etc. Medical science was highly encouraged in Buddhism. Arts and crafts were more encouraged by Buddhism than Hinduism. The Milinda Panha refers that, the Buddhist curriculum included the eighteen Sippas. Thus Hindu and Bouddha Philosophy, Medicine, Law, Polity, Jatakamala, everythmg from Philosophy to Grammar, Popular Sciences, Fine arts etc. found place in Buddhistic curriculum. Medicine and Logic had been two specialities of Buddhist education. On the other hand, Brahmanic education excelled in Mathematics, Astronomy and Astrology.

Women's Education : The scope of women's education which had been wide in Hindu system was narrowed down in the Buddhist system. In Brahmanical period, women enjoyed high status and independence. They had free access to education. Co-education was also prevalent in those days in mild form. Early marriage was not in vogue in Brahman1c period. Educated women, who took prominent part even in public affairs, showed finest skill in fine arts as well as military arts.

Remarkable negligence of women's education was noticed in the Buddhistic period. Buddhist education was meant for religious expansion, whereas Brahmanic education was for life. Buddhist education was democratic while Brahmanic education was monocratic. Administration of education was more democratic in Buddhistic system and certain fundamental rights of the students were recognized in this system. But it was not so in the

Brahmanical system. Buddhist education was collective but Brahmanic education was individual. In Brahmanic system, (i.e. 'Gurukul' system) the teacher used to have a number of students and taught them under his direct guardianship. But in Buddhist system, education was given in monasteries and greater importance was attached to collective educat

The Brahmanical education was not meant for the masses but for the specially qualified. But Buddhist education was meant for the masses. Education was now institutionalized. The value of secular education was recognized. Brahmanic system imposed more restrictions, on the students than Buddhist system. In Brahmanic system, luxuries were strictly prohibited for the students, but in Buddhist system, the rules were not so rigid.

Buddhist education was free from restrictions, whereas Brahmanic education maintained it. In Buddhist Samgha, anyone might enter it, without consideration of caste, creed, etc. and gain education to improve his capability. In Brahmanic system, it was not so. Great importance was attached to the "Varna" of the student. In the Brahmanical system, the Brahmanas had special position in teaching and priestly activities. In the Buddhist system, there was no monopoly of any particular caste. The right to renunciation did not belong exclusively to the Brahmana caste alone. In Buddhist system, everybody had the right to lead a life of renunciation. All had the right to the spiritual treasures.

Critical Discussion : In the Pre-Christian era, Brahmanic education had a monopoly sway. In the first few centuries of the Christian era Buddhist education asserted itself Since the 4th century A.D. again Hindu education was resurgent. For several centuries, thereafter, the two systems co-existed, competed, inter-acted and supplemented each other. With Turko-

Afghan invasion, Buddhistic system of education faced destruction, while Hindu education maintained its existence, although, with reduced splendour. Evidently, "ancient Indian education" encompasses both Brahmanic and Buddhistic education. The two together made a whole pattern and system of ancient Indian education.

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