



**International Journal of Biology, Pharmacy  
and Allied Sciences (IJBPAS)**

*'A Bridge Between Laboratory and Reader'*

[www.ijbpas.com](http://www.ijbpas.com)

## EDUCATION IN ANCIENT IRAN

**ALI JAMALPUR, G. POURBAKHTIYAR, FAROKH REZAI AND MOHAMADREZA  
MASIHRAD**

Department of History, Shoushtar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shoushtar, Iran

### ABSTRACT

Education of children has occupied human's mind for a long time. The oldest document for this matter is a column that the code of Hammurbi has been carried on. In Iran, education has a 4000 years history. Iranian gave importance to knowledge and Education so that there has been in vandidad (there are three ways to paradisi: helping poor people, helping in marriage of two poor people, and the third one is helping in Education of human beings that thereby ignorance vanished from the world.) Training and Education of children in ancient Iran had a special place in this research, the primary factors of Education, goals, organization programs, limitations of Education are studied and then Education in periods of Median, Achaemenian, Parthian, Seleucids, and Sasanian are studied.

**Keywords: Education is for Islam. Goals of Education in ancient Iran, developments of Education, ancient Iran, veracity, archery**

### INTRODUCTION

Noting to Education in ancient Iran specifies that if its basis was unstable and non-genuine, it was not practical and successful in its era and today's civilization could not partake in it. Education policy was always on base of religion and government and its characteristics and principles originate from these two sources, religion take a special

glance at human and his guidance in life. But government looks at human politically. Governments consider some goals in order to run the country by maintaining ethnic and national characteristics. Therefore these two factors fulfill the policy of training. The meaning of training is broader than Education, because Education refers to a

special organization with special goals for children and teenagers, but training is no such thing and works for a border Education range. Necessity of study of training- In studying history, there are two basic points: one is continuity of civilizations and the other is their decline. What is noteworthy is the essence of continuity of civilizations. Voltaire wrote: greatness of on nation is not based on military power, but on brilliance of culture and laws (Nadoshan, 1978, p.19) So that , the basis of continuity of civilizations depends on essence of thought and belief. Og course, this continuity of civilization works by culture and foundation of culture is training. Mohammad arasteh khoy writes about culture and training: culture is social heritage and it means ways of life and is common among people and members of society. People transfor it from one generation to next generation, sometime with some difference. It is the important means of raining indirectly. Training in ancient iran reflected the common intellectual essence and foundation of that ear. Third intellectual framework was influenced by religious ideals and ethic and national characteristics. But it is based on two principles of mental and physical training. These two principals were important in Zoroaster religion and religions before it. The word aria (in avesta it is "airya" in ancient

Persian it is ariya) that Aryan tribes called themselves by, means nobleman and it was the sign of superiority against natives. This word indicated superiority pride. This belief created because of their physical power and apparent beauty. Against their aboriginal neighbors and aliens. Paying attention to physical power and training the body among arians and its continuity in Zoroaster caused careful attention to this aspect of human being. But the root of training the spirit should be found in religious beliefs of the people of this land. For knowing the history of religious ideas of Iranians including arians and natives, we should follow their clue in Zoroaster, because many of these belives were hidden behind the mask of zoroaster. In the oldest and most original zoro asterrian text (gathas which have been attributed to Zoroaster) we find ethics that were common in this land, these ethics placed in zoroasterainism and survived in terms of this religion for a long time . Iranian gave importance edncation from the most ancient periods. Wisom, knowledge and politeness were the most precious features of aperon among Iranians. In religious, literary and philosophic books like avesta, there are many speeches about knowledge and politeness and these speeches show continuity of history, iraninans, care about Education and honor of

knowledge and wisdom and politeness among them. These speeches repeated in various books differently in other centuries. Education in ancient iran meant that a person should gain knowledge and learn politeness in order to get good traits and deeds and could be a helpful member for society. These tradition was kept respectful in islamic period and commands of quran in which the place of teacher and knowledge was very eminent , were examples and inspiration for muslim (farshad , 1986 , p.353).

#### **Goals of Education in ancient iran**

According to documents and evidence remained from ancient periods, the total goal of training in ancient iran is known as the child would be a helpful member for sociality (almasi, 1970; sadigh, 1964). In support of this claim , some sentences of yasna are referred: (ahura mazda, grant me a child that can afford to do duties of my home , my city , my country and help my just king). (hekmat, 1960p.78; sedigh , 1964;p.75) The details of important goals of Education in iran before islam can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Religious and moral goals that: implement good thoughts, good words, good deeds under zoroaster's teachings.
- 2) The goal of strength and health for well-being and chivalry, as in Zoroastrianism cleaning of body is a religion duty and non-

cleaning of body and sickness attributes to the devil.

3) War and military goal for maintaining the borders and keeping peace and defense against the enemies.

4) Economic goals for providing bread and food and welfare and maintaining families and developing industry and arts.

5) political goals for public relations and security and governance and foreign relations (almasi, 1970,p.73; hekmat , 1960,p.63).

#### **Education organization of ancient iran**

During many centuries, training organizations were not the same and according to times , Educational places were different in ancient era. In most time of that era, family, palace, court school trained children and teenagers, and in some centuries elementary school and university added (sedigh . 1964. p-59; alamsi, 1970, p-65)

#### **Education in medieval era**

The evidence about medieval culture and civilization is such little that the possibility of definite comment about medieval culture is difficult in fact, there is not any information about medieval Education, because no inscription has been discovered by now as an evidence and no information has been obtained from Greeks and other nations in this scope ( bizhan , p-120). Even so far, any direct evidence indicative medieval's acquaintance

with alphabet has not gotten (diakonor, 1371, p-399). But social training of Median can be guessed from the quality of training in Achaemenian period, because, Persians were lower than Median in terms of knowledge and civilization, but they had the same race and language. Then Persians started to dominate on Median, they got their civilization too (with are that Achaemenid civilization used from all subordinate civilizations including Elamite civilization in order to develop). However, Median had alphabets and books and these alphabets may be similar to that alphabet which is called ancient Persian alphabet because it is unlikely that great kingdom of Median didn't have because it is unlikely that great kingdom of Median didn't have alphabets but Persians had. (diakonor, 1989, p-340) Of course some evidence implies to prove this matter, because according to the book of Daniel, there is no doubt that Median had alphabets and there are some scripts in Median language (Bizhan, 1371, p-124). Even reading and writing were somehow common among ordinary people and there were not just unique to magi and clergymen. Because based on what came in history, people wrote their petition to the king and the king read them and wrote each decree and sent back to them (Herodotus, 1986, p-60).

### **Education in Achaemenid era**

Plato said about teaching Arch Aemenid that princes were entrusted to dignities and trainers to be trained in the best way. When the child became seven, horse riding and hunting was taught to him. In fourteen, four persons – called royal trainers – were selected to train the prince. One of them was wiser than the others and was responsible for teaching Zoroaster wisdom and regulations of governance. The second one who was famous in justice, taught honesty and trust, and the third one who was the most virtuous taught virtue and liberality and didn't let the prince give up to lust. The fourth teacher taught courage and fearlessness (Soltanzade, 1974, p-17; Vakilian, 1988, 83). Higher Education of ancient Iran mainly is linked to Jundishapur University in Sasanian era because of lack of evidence and document. But based on the remained evidence from that period, it can be certified that higher Education existed in Achaemenid era. For example, Great Darius in Egypt – which was a state of Iran in Achaemenian – commanded to rebuild the Medical College of (Saees)? Under his command, young people of prominent Iranian families were sent to Saees to learn medical science (Bizhan, 1974, p-326; Soltanzade, 1974, p.19; Zamiri, 1983, p.67). On the other hand, in Achaemenid there were prominent colleges in Boursipah, Milt, Arkhouy, Ray, and Balkh for Education of

medicine (hekmat , 1960 , p-383; zamiri, 1983 , p-61) Great libraries in achaemenid in different parts of their domain indicate organized Education system . Among the libraries of that era, we can mention estrakhr, kohandzh, shah ardeshir, and shapigan (hekmat.1960.p-64)

### **Education in Seleucids and Parthian periods**

With collapse of the achaemenid by Macedonian Alexander and then establishment of Seleucid dynasty by Greeks (machedoians) in iran , cultural prosperity vanished in comparison to the previous period , in other words, Education was stagnated traditionally in this period. Because seleucids destroyed many altars and other training places and tried to make social and traditional customs as greek. In fact seleucids were a great factor in making orient as greek. In Seleucia, greek science and knowledge and industries were promulgated. For example, (Babylon diozhen) and his successor (apledor) learned and taught stoic philosophy in Seleucia (pirnia, 1990.p-1866). Totally in seleucid, knowledge and science in iran weakened and Education institutions and rules on them were disrupted, but by rising of Parthian, iranin culture revived again and its cultural Richness increased day by day. We don,t have enough information about

teaching and learning and training in parthians. But indeed the language of parthians was phjlav and had a little different with sasaninan(pirnian, 1970.p.2355). At the beginning of parthian era, greek language and alphabet were very common (almasi, 1970, p-93). The alphabet of parthians was arami and they used greek and Pahlavi alphabet, too. We can not think that cuneiform was extinguished because in babilon there were some tablets that belong to parthian and they were written in cuneiform (pirnia, 1990. P.2355) . In general it can be expressed that parthians used greek for writing their tablets and on their coins at the beginning of statesmanship. At the end of first century AS, greek language set aside and replaced by parthian language (soltanzade , 1360-p.22) Parthian wrote down on buckskin . There writing were found in a uraman in kordestan which were written on buckskin . Two often were greek, and one of them was Pahlavi and arami. Parthian used cotton and papyrus for writing, too (soltanzadeh. 1366-p.21-22) Parthians were Iranian and tended to old traditions, so they tried to revive educational institutions as previously. In the second half of Parthian, arts prospered very well and training and teaching strengthened by magi relatively and even for noblemen, some schools were established. Parthian taught horseriding and archery and different war

strategy and in general we can say that their training was appropriate to national needs. Parthians learned reading and writing but it was specific to nobles. (Vakilian, 1387,94) As in history, the program of literacy for children of nobles included religious sciences, writing, reading, calculation, object science, and agriculture. It can be mentioned that Parthians just like Achaemenids paid special attention to scientific aspects of training and the teacher punished the student when necessary (Vakilian 1988, p-94) The interesting point about Parthian knowledge was the invention of the semi electric cell. It was found in an excavation around Baghdad. Parthians obtained electricity from these cells significantly and used it in plating with gold and silver. In other words, they did that action which is called electroplating (Hekmat, 1393, p-238)

### **Education in Sasanian**

At that time, training was specific to nobles like previous periods with regard to class status, and ordinary people did not have any interest. But for many reasons, there were more needs for secretaries and governmental officials and revenue officers. So training expanded more than the past and apparently some of the commoners and middle class had a little literacy and Education (Almasi, p.) In Sasanian period, because of the emergence of new

religions like Manichaeism and Mazdak and also development of Christianity and Buddhism and new political and economic matters, discussion about social and governmental issues became more common. Even it was mentioned in history that King like Anoshirvan had interest in these issues and participated in these discussions (Keshavarz, 1992, p-89) Sasanian government felt the necessity of instruction religious organization with regard to recognition of Zoroastrianism and depending on it due to the power concentration, and so that religious schools on it due to the power concentration, and so that religious schools which usually were in alters, were multiplied and proliferation of these places increased the number of priests. As previously mentioned, Sasanian era was contemporaneous to the development of Christianity and emergence of Manichaeism and Mazdak and on the other hand development of Buddhist beliefs and Chinese thoughts that had an essential role in establishing new educational organization in Sasanian period, and so schools developed of quality and quantity and expanded. The most prominent example was two famous Iranian schools, one of them was in (Raha) and another was in (Nasibin). Each of them had around 800 students (Almasi, p-98).

---

**CONCLUSION**

Training in that quality mentioned before, was current for 4000 years more or less and surprising results emerged. moral and physical power, national honor, chivalry and bravery, and partitions that were developed in Iran, created the greatest empire for the first time at 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. it was widespread from India to Danube and from Oxus to Ethiopia. Its regulation and management became an example for next empires. Those factors promoted civilization and culture and defended the intellectual heritage of the Orient against aggressive tribes in all history of Iran.

**REFERENCES**

- [1] Ali Mohammed, diamond, Islam and Iranian history, education, knowledge today, 1970
- [2] Jesus, honest, Iranian culture, beautiful, Seventh Edition, 1964
- [3] Mohammed, elegant temperament, "The culture and ideology," the Ministry of Culture and the Arts, 1963
- [4] M, F,: engineering on Iran, Balkh, 1986
- [5] A., wisdom, education in ancient Persia, scientific and educational planning and research institute, 1960
- [6] Jesus, Sadiq, : Iranian culture, beautiful, Seventh Edition, 1964
- [7] A., B., garlic education in ancient Persia, p. 186.
- [8] Diakonov, A.m: Median date, translation of the Holy farmer, Scientific and Cultural Publications, 1989
- [9] Herodotus: Chronicles, translated by AS. Vahid Mazandaran, Iran's Academy of Literature and Art, Bita
- [10] H, Soltanzadeh,: history of ancient Iran to the establishment of polytechnic schools, aware, 1974
- [11] M, Vakilian, : history of education in Islam and Iran, Payam Noor University, 1988
- [12] Muhammad Ali, an objective history of education in Iran and Islam, help, 1983
- [13] Hassan, Pirnia, : ancient Iranian history, charm, Volume III, 1990
- [14] Muhammad Ali, agriculture, history of education in Iran and Islam, Roozbehan, 1992
- [15] Mohammad Ali Eslami Rice, Iran has something to say, from the series "the wind and Baranv ...» Tehran: Hafez, 1978