



Spiritual Knowledge And Its Importance In Moulding Child's Psyche: A Study In Support Of The Mahabharata

Kankana Sarmah^{1*}

^{1*}Ph.D. Research Scholar, MSSV, Department of English, Email Id: sarmahkankana93@gmail.com, Contact No: 7002338271

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ABSTRACT

The development of a child is decided by the experiences that he/she retains from the very moment of breathing life in mother's womb. Though an appropriate upbringing of a child along with the education given are the keys to a its growth, in framing its future, the before birth environs, and the overall surroundings where the fetus has slowly developed into a physically well-structured whole are need not be overlooked. Instances are evident in ancient scriptures to establish this claim as a sensible one. No one is oblivion of the tale of 'Pralhad', the son of Asur king Hiranyakasipu. Though Hiranyakasipu was an atheist and despised Vishnu, the lord, Prahalad his son stood complete opposite to him in showering his devotion to Vishnu by claiming him as everyone's saviour and started chanting his name in every moment. This saintly apparatus of Prahalad is subjected to his fortune of listening to many tales of the mighty Vishnu from Narad Muni, when he was in his mother's womb. Examples are not limited to Prahalad, another character named 'Ashtabakra' is found to be mentioned in Mahabharata, who furnished himself with almost all the knowledges of Shastra, spirituality and logic by listening to the reading of religious scriptures by his father from his mother's womb. By keeping view on the development of mental and cognitive features of the children in support of literary scripture *Mahabharata*, thus the study facilitates a qualitative study based on available primary sources as well as other collected secondary data.

In structuring the cognitive of a child, ethical knowledge, knowledge of spirituality, of morality and of behaviourism are undeniable, lack of which may result into a mere human stripped off humanly attitude. In today's scenario, annihilation of humanly attributes is visible everywhere, but very few measures have been adopted to mitigate the issue from its root. The necessity of writing this paper is to bring out the significance of the spiritual knowledge in a child's life that eventually forbids him to be away from the path of vice and not to be morally stooped.

Key Terms: Ethical knowledge, Knowledge of Spirituality, Annihilation of humanly attributes, behaviourism.

Introduction: Human psyche is a complex whole of conscious and unconscious realms. The consciousness is the real force behind each individual's activity, whereas, the unconscious or the vaguely aware sphere works as the ruling agenda. Unconsciousness is here mentioned as the ruling agenda due to its capacity of targeting human senses and emotions which are the components to decide the way someone will behave and will act out in a particular situation and also throughout one's lifetime. Hence, both the conscious and the unconscious realms need to be posited with positive thoughts and emotions that eventually make up a healthy individual to carry a healthy body and a heathy mind. The atmosphere in which a child is surrounded can be fabricated wisely and intentionally to a better one by apprehending the inclusions of those factors and aspects that evoke positive essences and all other uplifted values. This process starts with the prenatal education. Prenatal education can be introduced through the pregnant mother which may have profound impact on the developing fetus and the future child. While specifically concentrating on prenatal education on spirituality, research suggests that spiritual practices during pregnancy can reduce stress and anxiety in the mother, creating a more peaceful womb environment, it influences fetal brain growth while shaping the child's future emotional and

cognitive abilities. Moreover, prenatal spiritual education fosters a sense of connection and unity, promoting empathy and compassion in the child. Research also indicates that it enhances the mother-child bond and leads to a more secure attachment and better child development outcomes. Along with, spiritual education promotes a sense of purpose and meaning, supporting the child's future life-satisfaction. There are many ways of practicing prenatal spiritual education such as meditation and mindfulness, prayer and visualization, yoga and breathwork, journaling and reflection and also by connecting with nature and the universe. By incorporating prenatal spiritual practices into prenatal education, parents can cultivate a supportive and nurturing environment for their child's development, setting them up for a lifetime of well-being and growth. The roles of family and society in the development of a child are crucial and considered as foundation pillars.

Ethics and moral developments are essential components of spiritual awareness. By discussing ethical and moral dilemmas, children can develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, leading to thoughtful and reflective decision making. In a morally uplifted family, a child is hoped to be boosted up with moral education which would be his/her decors throughout the life. The society with its practiced norms and values can set good examples to its dwellers and may inhibit greater sense of humanity into the young souls. Next to family and society, the responsibility rests on the education system. Education enriches a child's knowledge and it spreads its impact on his/her mental nourishment. The curricula thus bear the utmost importance which should aim at not only affirming the intellectual development but also at bringing up desired changes towards positivity. Inclusion of spiritual awareness into the educational curriculum is vital for children's overall growth and development. This may help children become compassionate, thoughtful and responsible individuals who are prepared to make a positive impact in the world.

Moreover, the sense of spirituality shall be manifested by each child based on the fact that spiritual knowledge works as a shield against negative urges and keeps one intact to follow the right way of living life. Meanwhile, it is also important to guide children towards community service and social action. This can help children develop a sense of responsibility and compassion towards others. By engaging in acts of kindness and service, children can experience the value of interconnectedness and the impact they can have on the world around them. Now the question is how does spirituality guide one to adapt virtuous means of life? The answer is as clear as the splashing water of a running stream. Spirituality brings one close to the concept of 'atma' and 'param-atma', the supreme realization of shared connectivity between God and the human being, the greatest celebration of the relationship between God and we human being as father and son.

The realization of God's existence within us thus can forbid one to not to be indulged in anything against God i.e. 'satya' or 'truth'. If a child gets the opportunity to cherish spiritual lessons from elders and to the best of it if spirituality is dictated through their classroom lessons, it will definitely bring successful output. The tales of *Puranas* and *Shastras* and of epics are very attractive and mesmerizing to children's ears and imagination and hence, it will provoke them to follow the path of dharma by practicing truthfulness, righteousness and docility. A child will itself be aware of the concept of 'end judgement' and will heartily admire 'dharma' by overthrowing all probable attacks of the adharma. Here, religion and spirituality should not be considered as a single entity. Irrespective of religious beliefs and practices, sense of spirituality can be cultivated by anyone and this will aware an individual about the inner greatness and harmony along with a sense of knowing the self which is also the core of Indian philosophy. On the other hand, spiritual awareness is the quintessence to uphold oneness among all religions and religious beliefs.

Referring Mahabharata: *The Mahabharata* is one of the greatest Indian epics which resonates the Indian culture wrapping in stories of the reigning of the Satriya kings in course of establishing Dharma Rajya. It is consisted of thousands of anecdotes that are on and about destruction of negative forces and the subsequent defeat of vices. In *Mahabharata*, the two clans of the Kauravas and the Pandavas in Hastinapur are projected as symbols of evil and glory respectively. The Kauravas were the hundred sons of the blind king Dhritarashtra and his wife Gandhari, whereas, the Pandavas, five sons of Pandu, the younger brother of Dhritarashtra were the five precious gems empowered with all the knowledges of Shashtra and of virtue. Though the Kauravas and the Pandavas had the same ancestral blood and lineage their activities and behaviours could not be observed through the same lens.

While the Kauravas demonstrated demonic attributes, the Pandavas acted as soothing balms with their aesthetic auras and blissful insights. The differences between these two will lead one to understand the power of enthused knowledge into a child during his childhood. The Kauravas was materialistic and worldly oriented, focused on power, wealth and status, driven by ego, greed, and sensual attachments. They often prioritized short term gains over long-term consequences. They also showed their disregard towards spiritual values and ethics. On the other hand, the Pandavas endowed themselves with wisdom, compassion and selflessness attributes. They were spiritually inclined and values-driven. All of the five Pandu sons emphasized on their duties, righteousness, and had superb self-control. Unlike the Kauravas, they prioritized long term consequences and greater good. They had adherence to ethics and spiritual principles. All these differences encompass the process of rearing up a child, the kind of lessons he/she achieves, the environment of boyhood

years and most importantly the kind of upbringing one has come through. The Pandavas had to live their early boyhood days amidst forest in close terms with a number of saints who had enormous influences in building them morally astride men and thus even after being princess of Hastinapur, the Pandavas were free from pride. Rather the character of the elder Pandavas Yudhisthira projected an utterly calm image like one of the Brahmanas. On the other hand, the Kauravas had their upbringing amidst all the luxuries that one could ever imagine for and mostly the blind love and support of their parents towards them filled them up with almost all possible existing vices on this earth. Their impatient and ill-mannered attitudes slowly hindered the peace of old Dhritarashtra as well. The psychical differences thus to be exhibited between the Kauravas and the Pandavas can be observed as instinctual differences resulted due to the lack of spiritual knowledge and on the other side due to the fullest coverage of spiritualism. Spirituality makes a person enduring and ready to give up on earthly possession and materialistic senses, which is really desirable in contemporary world, where people are fighting with each other and maligning their kinship only in aspirations of possessing fame and wealth.

The character of Bhishma from *Mahabharata* shows how can one be strong enough to give up on everything by being selfless. Bhishma's oath of being unmarried and not to be seated on the throne of Hastinapur is testimonial of the power of spirituality that endowed him as the son of Devi Ganga. Bhishma's greatness in restraining himself from kingly power and position and on top of that from the opportunity of ruling over his ancestry were out of reach to Satyawati's father, who was a mere fisher man and just wished to ascertain his own grand children's luck in rightly possessing the throne of Hastinapur. To satiate his own selfish regard Satyawati's father did not even care to smash up the legal rights of Bhishma and thus reflected on his shallow mentality. This anecdote sets another example of the state of lawlessness in absence of ethical and spiritual knowledge. There are many discussions available in crux of the epic of *Mahabharata* which at times claim about all these happenings as plans of God in his way of establishing Dharma. But none has denied that these plans of God ideally keep moral messages for humankind in their kernel. Another reference to Mahabharata on spiritual knowledge in building children's cognitive abilities is in the character of the great warrior Arjuna who was taught by Lord Krishna to focus his mind and concentration through spiritual practices. That enabled Arjun to develop his cognitive abilities, discern right from wrong, and make the ideal and the wise decision. Similarly, teaching children spiritual values from a young age can furnish them with ability of being focused and concentrated i.e. 'Dhyana', self-awareness and introspection i.e. 'Swadhyay', critical thinking and discernment i.e. 'Viveka', emotional intelligence and empathy i.e. 'Karuna' and courage and resilience i.e. 'Dheera'.

Another example can be traced in the story of Abhimanyu, the young warrior. His story is one of the greatest examples of how spiritual knowledge can aid cognitive development. Abhimanyu's father Arjun, taught him the spiritual practice of 'Chakravyuha' (a complex battle formation) in his womb. Abhimanyu's mother, Subhadra, would narrate stories of Krishna's teachings and spiritual values during her pregnancy. As a result, Abhimanyu demonstrated exceptional cognitive abilities from a young age including exceptional memory and retention; he remembered the Chakravyuha formation, strategic thinking and problem solving; he navigated the complex battle formation, courage and determination; he fought bravely despite being surrounded, and also possessed adaptability and quick thinking; he adjusted his strategy mid-battle. Abhimanyu's story illustrates how spiritual knowledge and practices can enhance memory and cognitive function, develop strategic thinking and problem-solving skills, cultivate courage and determination as well as foster adaptability and quick thinking among children. By teaching children spiritual values thus they can be helped in developing cognitive capabilities in all areas of life.

Review: Spirituality has a lot to do in framing human sense of mannerism and essentially in building up his/her whole course of life which has been clearly showcased as well as affirmed from the discussion laid above. In apprehension to modern day's materialistic world the need for spirituality honestly demands a revival. In lack of spirituality, all other related values and conscience have also lost charm and it's rightfully intimidating human relationships. A young mind can be the powerhouse for a better tomorrow. Thus, ethical and spiritual upliftment shall be the anchors to the drooping souls.

Conclusion: Spiritual knowledge plays a vital role in shaping a child's psyche by instilling values, morals and a sense of purpose. By exposing children to spiritual principles and practices, they can be helped to build a strong foundation for life. Practice of spirituality would enable them to navigate challenges with resilience, empathy and compassion. With their growing age spiritual knowledge would guide them to explore their identity, foster meaningful relationships, and cultivate a sense of connection with the world around them. Spiritual growth would empower children to become confident, thoughtful and caring individual in the long run. By prioritizing spiritual knowledge in their upbringing, they can be gifted with a life long treasure that would illuminate their paths of life.

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