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Comparing Vedic and Modern Education System-Psychology, Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

Vedic literature is meant to be a fragment of our lifestyle. Vedic education is the fundamental foundation of India's culture and rich heritage. It provides holistic education instead of simply providing employment opportunities. Development of inner strengths and virtues-a central concept of Positive Psychology- is extremely closely related with the Indian thoughts. In Indian Philosophy, education has given an impression to bring out constructive, practical and comprehensive character of a youngster. The aim of education is to manifest in our lives the perfection, which is that, the very nature of our inner self. This study is about the importance of Vedic ideals of education within the modern education system. The necessity of this study is to maintain the discipline within the modern educational institutes and to mark cordial relation between teacher and student. The aim of this article is to capture the wisdom of the ages and to make it relevant for these times and to assist the educators come up with innovative methodologies to assist students to harness their latent potential and channel their energies towards cultivation and sharpening of multiple dimensions of human competencies.

Keywords: Vedic Education, Holistic education, innovative methodologies, latent potential.

Introduction

Education is that the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of data, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include teaching, training, storytelling, discussion and directed research. Education is often believed as transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society.

The institutions of higher education are recognized as the most vital agency of social change involved within the human resource development of the country. The socio-historical journey of higher education has been started with an ancient system of education in the Vedic period.

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Early India had an irreplaceable position in the ancient world especially for its highly institutionalised education system. The secular and religious knowledge diffused from the early Indian learning centres showed the appropriate path to both ancient Indians and foreigners. Early Indian instructional organisations still function as the base and a source of inspiration for the modern Indian learning Establishments. A number of the features of those traditional teaching centres such as friendly relationship between student and teacher, natural environment for education, suitability to the society and the life, and guidance to be perfect citizenry are still a dream for recent Indian schooling. Earlier Indian education during its evolution and its decline had encounter with most of the qualities that we attempt for in modern education system. Traditional Indian education was connected with the requirements and requirements of society of Ancient India. Associated with this, there are certain modifications and changes in ancient Indian education consistent with the event and stability in society, economy, polity and religion.

According to Swami Vivekananda 'Education means that process by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, and intellect is sharpened, as a result of which one can stand on one's own feet'. Swami Vivekananda always believed that the development of a nation is not possible without real education.

Background of Education System in India

The institutions of higher learning are considered the foremost important agency of social change, social transformation, and full development of the country. In fact, this journey of higher education started with an ancient system of education within the Vedic period during which two sorts of educational system were present there, viz., the Brahminical and therefore the Buddhist systems of education. The Brahminical system of education was regulated by religious values, while the Buddhist sort of education was "secular" in nature. But the main change in Indian education happened through the initiatives of British rulers that made an impression both in positive and negative ways. At that point, the indigenous system of education received a severe setback because the British Imperial System created a replacement class which served British rulers.

At present, the amount of institutions in India is quite fourfold the entire number of institutions in both the USA and Europe. However, the typical size of an Indian education institution in terms of enrolment numbers is far smaller (500-600) thereto of Europe and therefore the USA (3,000-4,000) and China (8,000-9,000).

Review of Literature

The study on Educational Ideas in Bhagavat Gita and its relevance to Modern World (1999) is the contribution of K. Peethambaran Pillai. The study reveals that Education should ultimately aim for self-realization and the Education system should be re-arranged to promote the spirit of enquiry by adopting problem solving method. It also suggests that the concept of value education should be extended to non-formal education also. [15]

Radhakumud Mookerji (1960) in his detailed study of Ancient Indian Education brings to light the educational ideas found scattered in Hindu thought. He has stated that the aim of life and education was the realization of the absolute truth known as God. Education must aim at self-fulfillment and not merely the acquisition of knowledge. Education must not be limited to the brain or to the development of the physical senses. The aim should be to transform the entire personality of man. Education is a process of control of the mind. The total individual is its chief concern. The pupils have to imbibe the qualities and ideals of the teacher. The students should catch the ideas of the teachers. [11]

Divakar (1960) critically examined the-Educational philosophy of Upanishads with respect to knowledge, aim, objectives of life and education. The researcher analyzed the psychological basis of education, method of teaching, teacher pupil relationship and curriculum. He concludes that the Ashram system of education was based on interest, needs and capacities of the pupils. The practice of concentration of mind is supposed to be the keynote of all beings. [4]

Swami Sunishthananda, October 2005 [19]: Vedic Concept of Education: According to him, the best teachers are those who not only teach but also make their pupils worthy citizens possessing noble virtues. In an ideal educational process, a teacher is supposed to be a father figure, a role model. He attempted to interpret various aspects of education based on the teachings. Paul G. O'Sullivan(2008) in his Research Gurukula system of education examines the social dimension of Vedic education and considers the importance of a supportive culture. He Presents the Gurukula system of education (Gurukula) in a contemporary context. He has given in details about the Gurukula system of education and his main focus was that in modern education institution should be like gurukula type.

Objectives of the Study

- i) To understand Gurukula system of Education.
- ii) To understand the modern system of Education.
- iii) To find out the relevance Vedic ideals of education in modern education system.
- iv) To find out the difference in Grukula education system and modern education system.

Research Methodology

The paper is predicated on secondary data analysis and is exploratory in nature. Exploratory research was deemed suitable due to the evolving nature of the problem. Typically, exploratory research consists of Secondary research. This research analysed secondary data such as research papers and articles in websites.

Purpose of Ancient Indian Education

The direct aim of ancient Indian education was to make the student fit to become a useful and pious member of society (Rangachar 1964: 36) [16]. Inculcating the civic and social duties among the students was also a part of ancient Indian educational system. The students were not to lead a self-centred life. They were constantly reminded of their obligations to society. Convocation address to the students as found in Upanishads show how they were inspired to be useful members of society (Mookerjee 1989) [11].

Division of Life Span

The concept of four Asramas is predicated on the supposition of the span of life to be hundred years. The period is divided into four parts, each of which has appropriate duties assigned to it. It is believed that by performing all duties in all the Asramas, the Atman 83 is said to be released from the circle of birth and death through realisation.

The four stages are:

- 1. Brahmacharya or the period of coaching
- 2. GrhasthaSrama or the period of work for the world as a house holder,
- 3. Vanaprastha or the period of retreat for the loosening of the social bonds, and
- 4. Samanyasa or the period of renunciation and expectant waiting of freedom. They indicate that life is a pilgrimage to the eternal life through different stages.

The system of Education in ancient India was a unique one in many respects. The very importance of education was realised in India from early times, and utmost emphasis was laid upon the acquisition of knowledge.

In Ancient India knowledge was considered to be the pineal eye of a man and all the human acts were alleged to be merged in knowledge.

The centres of learning in Ancient India were very simple and mostly of informal type. During Vedic or Epic period, there were no Universities like Nalanda or Taks asiila. The main learning centres can be classified under the following heads:

- 1. Acharyakula or Gurukula (Hermitages)
- 2. Parishads or Samitis
- 3. Royal Assemblies
- 4. Places of Pilgrimage
- 5. Yajna mandapa (Sites of Sacrifice)

Gurukula System of Education

Gurukula system is the system of Guru-Shishya Parampara. The word Gurukul is a contraction of the Sanskrit guru (teacher or master) and kula (extended family). It is an ancient system of learning where all the students gather together to receive instruction from Guru's.

Dr. A.S. Altekar says, "The Gurukul system which necessitated the stay of the student away from his home at the home of the teacher or in boarding house of established reputation, was one of the most important features of ancient Indian education." N. Jaypalan (2005) [13]

Simple Definition of Guru: a teacher or guide that you trust; a person who has a lot of experience in or knowledge about a particular subject. [1]

The guru is more than someone who teaches specific type of knowledge, and includes in its scope someone who is also a "Counsellor, a sort of parent of mind and soul, who helps mold

values and experiential knowledge as much as specific knowledge, an exemplar in life, an inspirational source and who reveals the meaning of life." (Varene, Jean, 1977) [20]

Having accepted the position of student by the rite of Initiation the pupil was received into the household of his teacher. Sometimes, of course, the teacher might be his own father. But although he was thus made, as it were, a member of his teacher's family, and the teacher was bidden to love him as his own son, the pupil was subjected to a rigid discipline during his course of study. S.P.Arya (2002) [18]

The length of the course varied according to the number of Vedas studied. 'He shall remain a student for twelve years in order to study one Veda, or if he studies all the Vedas, twelve years for each, or during as long a period as he requires for learning them (Gautama II, 45-47).

Various subject that were studied were the Vedas (Sacred Scriptures) and other subjects, such as Shiksha (Phonetics), Vyakarana (Grammar) and Jyotisha (Astronomy), and sciences like Arthasastra (Economics), Dharmasastra (Laws), Sastravidya (Art of Warfare), Kala (Fine Arts) etc.

The Guru identified the capability of his students and accordingly imparted knowledge. The students learnt the Vedas and Shastras amidst the natural surroundings of the kula or ashram, in open air, in close contact with nature. The Gurukul System of Education was dedicated to the highest ideals of 'all-round human development', namely, physical (practical), mental (intellectual) and spiritual (religious), leading to God-realization (Brahmasakshatkara). The system was based on the principle, "Experience (anubhava) is the best teacher." At the end of their training, the students thus emerged as responsible individuals who are well learned in the Vedas and capable of facing the toughest challenges of life. One of the most popular cultural institutions in India, which still follows the Gurukul System of Education, is Shantiniketan near Calcutta, which was established by the great Guru, artist, philosopher and literary laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). Byron Bay (2003) [9]

In a Gurukul, shishya live together as equal, regardless of their social standing, learn from the guru and help the guru in his day-to-day life, including the empleting of mundane chores like washing clothes, cooking, etc. Typically, a guru does not receive any fees from the shishya studying with him. At the end of his studies, a shishya offers the guru dakshina before leaving the Gurukul or ashram. The gurudakshina is a traditional gesture of acknowledgment, respect and thanks to the guru, which may be monetary, but may also be a special task the teacher wants the student to accomplish. While living in a Gurukul the students had to be away from his house and family completely. The guru didn't take any fees and so they had to serve the guru.

The Gurukul were supported by public donation. This was followed by the many following Vedic thoughts making Gurukul one among the earliest forms of public school offices.

Outcome of Gurukula System of Education

i) The students of gurukul are more disciplined and organized. They are taught to follow a well- planned schedule.

- ii) The students are more focused and possess more concentration power. This is because they are trained through techniques such as meditation which enhances their focusing power.
- iii) In a gurukul, students are taught to respect everyone regardless of their caste, creed, ethnicity, culture, religion and perspective. So, such students grow up as people with strong character and values.
- iv) The 'guru-shishya parampara' is an integral part of Gurukul. Here, the students highly respect their teachers and share a good bond with them. They are molded under the guidance of their mentors.
- v) In a gurukul, 'gurus' also take complete responsibility for their 'shishyas'. They share their experiences, inculcate good habits and mold the character of the students in a positive direction.
- vi) The students are developed into strong individuals. They are taught to stay firm and face any adverse situation in the outside world.
- vii) Gurukul students are taught to value nature. So, they are very close to nature. They worship nature and also learn a lot of things from it.
- viii) Students are spiritually elevated which gives them an optimistic, calm and composed personality.
- ix) Gurukul emphasizes on practical knowledge which is quite beneficial to build the concepts of the students.
- x) Students are taught to follow the principle of 'simple living and high thinking' which is a great lesson for life.

Clearly, a gurukula school is the best for a child as it develops holistically. It creates individuals with strong perspective, character and personality.

Modern System of Education

India is the second largest education system within the world. The Indian education system has changed many phases. Great effort has been put to shape up present scenario of education system.

Indian education system has got contribution from both public as well as private sector. It is controlled by Central Government as well as State Government. Education has been specified as one of the elemental rights within the constitution of India. Modern Indian education system is split into many levels: pre-primary level, primary level, middle level education, secondary education, undergraduate level and postgraduate level. Preprimary level education or preschool education is provided to children before the age of five. It aims at satisfying a child's needs of fun, enjoyment, freedom, choice, belongingness, respect and love. These needs form the root for healthy development and life-long learning.

Knowledge is infinite. Every branch of knowledge witnessed explosive growth making specialists, wonder whether man can claim to know the ultimate in any realm. The task of learning something from everything is becoming difficult. Though the knowledge is vast and endless, we are fortunate to have any sort of information on finger tips which facilitates the learning process fast and can gain knowledge at rocket speed.

Learning through different websites by the use of internet has arrived as the recent learning techniques. Overcoming the adversities associated with primitive teaching methodologies, modern education is imparting knowledge more effectively and more impeccably. Delivering knowledge through online platforms or websites, it has been able to attract a variety of not only students but also teachers to participate in technology-driven learning.

The education space is expanding beyond the classroom. At present, having agreed with the pupils, lecturers can use the Web Video resources during the explanation and during the group work assignments which allows students to use smart phones when formulating a collective solution.

Hietajarvi et al. (2016) call modern generation as a generation with "Social and digital participation" and write that "Social and digital technologies are integrated systems of technology, social media and the Internet that provide a constant and intensive online interaction with information, people and artifacts. "Social and digital participation is a new concept of the practice of informal, socially-digital mediated participation" [7]

Socio-digital participation includes:

- > Flexibility in using of digital media
- Multitasking
- ➤ Intellectual ICT tools
- Surfing Internet
- Social and digital networking
- Working online
- > Creating content and sharing in email and other social media groups
- > Extended networks
- ➤ Knowledge content creation

Learning Theories and Interactivity

Leidner and Jarvenpaa (1995) has categorized learning models into several categories: objectivism, constructivism, collaborative learning, cognitive information processing, and socio-culturism. Among them, the constructivist learning model, which involves in learner-centered instruction, is one of the most commonly adopted in e-learning model. Learning is an active process in which a learner uses sensory input and creates meaning out of it but not a passive acceptance of knowledge that previously exists. Constructivism emphasizes active participation and reflection by learners, who would regulate the pace of tutoring and build understanding by oneself. It is identified that constructivist learning would at all times begin from a learner's point of view (Jonassen et al. 1995; Shang, Shi, and Chen 2001). [8]

In a learner-centered environment, knowledge is fabricated through highly interactive tasks. It can be inferred that interactivity is not just a function of computer-based transaction but a fundamental success factor for teaching and learning in an online environment. (Sims, Dobbs, and Hand 2002).

Moore (1989) [12] has defined three types of interaction in learning namely learner-instructor, learner-learner, and learner-content. Learner-instructor interaction is identified as one of the major element accounting for cognitive learning (Bloom 1981) [2]. Learner-learner interaction fosters collaborative learning. In this article, learner-content interaction refers to any interactive activities between the learner and instructional content in an online learning environment. It is identified that interaction is a critical factor for learner satisfaction, higher levels of academic achievement, higher learner engagement, and a positive attitude toward distance education (Chapman, Selvarajah, and Webster 1999; Fredericksen et al. 2000; Fulford and Zhang 1993) [3]. Online learners should be able to identify and differentiate on emphasis regarding measuring the importance and relevance of the contents based on their own needs.

Even though it is commonly believed that high-level interaction is anticipated and such kind of interaction has resulted in positive learning, according to the research conducted by Berge [1]. No inference has been made regarding learner-content interaction in relation with the quality improvement of multimedia-based e-learning. By reviewing the earlier researches made, it is identified that few empirical studies are conducted that investigates the effect of learner-content interaction on learning effectiveness in multimedia-based e-learning environments.

Teaching Pedagogies in 21st Century

Pedagogy is one of the most commonly understood as the approach to teaching. It refers to the theory and practice of learning, how this process influences, and is influenced by, the social, political and psychological development of learners.

21st century pedagogy aims to develop the skills and knowledge students prerequisite to succeed in work and life. It can be applied irrespective of all subject areas such as education, career and civic arena throughout a student's life.

Skill sets essential in 21st Century:

- Critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning
- > Research skills and practices
- > Creativity, curiosity, imagination, innovation
- > Perseverance, Self-direction, planning
- > Oral and Written Communication, listening skills, public speaking and presentation abilities
- ➤ Leadership, teamwork, collaboration
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT), programming, media and internet literacy, data interpretation and analysis using different recent data management softwares.

Relevance of Gurukula Ideals in Modern Education

a) Holistic Education

Gurukula System of Education (GES) and Modern Education System (MES) both aims on seasoned holistic development of a student, preserving the different essential values such as discipline, self-reliance, right attitude, empathy, creativity and strong moral beliefs. Instigating students into such enriching atmosphere helps them sharpen their discerning skills, evaluating and critical thinking.

b) Daily Routine

- i) Students of GES are engaged in practicing Yoga and the different Asanas to attain concentration, whereas the MES students are been imparted physicals exercises as that in a Gym for core strengthening.
- ii) Students of the GES used to chant Mantras and japas (mainly gayatri japa), for concentration and vocabulary building whereas the MES are taught rhymes (like Mary had a little lamb).
- iii) Students of GES are involved in offering puja themselves, whereas MES students do their daily prayers for mental balance.
- iv) In the evenings GES students sing Bhajans, whereas the MES students practise light music.
- v) The GES students play games like Kabbadi, chinni dandu, kho-kho but MES students play games like Cricket, Basketball, etc., to develop physical strength.

c) Aim to Develop Character

In GES, students studied Vedas and other supplementary texts to train their will-power which was necessary to develop the character. The same is taught in Moral Education in MES.

d) Education For Culture

During the Upanishadic days, hospitality was considered as a compulsory social obligation. The same ideology is implemented in MES of Higher education where the curriculum includes social work to understand the requirements of society and for the betterment. It includes involvement in various Government schemes such as Swachh Bharat, Educating unprivileged children, Social internship etc.

e) Practical Learning

The notion of "learning by doing" is similar to "the hands on learning" in this modern era. Traditional as well as modern education systems emphasises on both passive and active learning. The concepts that are taught by inductive reasoning method are a form of passive learning. On the other hand, Analytical reasoning focuses on in depth involvement and engagement which can be identified as active learning. The traditional education provided hands on education in the form of war fare, bow and arrow, horse riding, sword fighting whereas classroom teaching included teaching of shlokas, mantras, logic, maths etc., by using different techniques in GES. In MES, hands on teaching is taught in laboratories for testing chemicals and by conducting experiments and for other theoretical subjects other classrooms teaching techniques are used.

Difference of Gurukula System of Education and Modern System of Education

1. Subjects Taught

The basic difference between gurukul and modern school is that the gurukul education is entirely consists of Vedas, epics, literature and archery and the modern education includes variety of subjects like science, maths, English etc.

2. Fee Structure

The students of the modern institutions are dependent on their parents for education who have to bear the increasing costs of education. While a gurukul revolves around the concept that education should not be sold hence there is no fee structure.

3. Payment of Fee

The students in Modern Education System are supposed to pay fees fixed by the institution at the beginning of the study. Usually fees is paid annually or semester wise. Whereas, each student of the Gurukula after the education is completed education has to essentially bring Dakshina, for running of the Gurukula.

4. Dependency

All students of Gurukula generally used to seek alms (give it to the guru, as well as for themselves). Whereas, majority of the students at present seek help from their parents for fees and livelihood, only a few of them to meet daily expenses and support their family join for part time jobs.

5. Mphasis

Traditionally, Gurukulas have always emphasised on the importance of practical knowledge. MES emphasises is on the theoretical part rather than the practical part and there is a significant gap between the knowledge and skill taught in the institution or the curriculum set to the employability, but efforts in bridging the gap is considered in New Education Policy 2021.

6. Place of Teaching/ Preaching

Gurukula's were located at picturesque places enmeshed in absolute serenity, far from the hustle and bustle of the city to have a balanced, analytical vision. Whereas Colleges or Intitutions are places amidst the city so that it it convenient for the students to travel from the place of their stay.

7. Aim of Gaining Knowledge

In GES, the main aim of acquiring knowledge was to help one to forget worldly pleasures and understand the GOD to attain immortality. This kind of knowledge was considered above everything else. Whereas in MES, student's main aim to gain knowledge is to increase their opportunity of getting employed.

8. Language of Communication

The mode of communication was "Sanskrit" in GES. All the lessons were given in Sanskrit language. Whereas the mode of communication in MES is usually English or regional language based on the subject.

9. Participation of Society

In GES, the whole society was considered to be responsible for the education of students. So, they offer the Shishya (students) alms that are utilised by the guru, as well as the Gurukula

(organisation). There are no such practices followed at present in MES but few MNCs and NGOs contribute donations to the educational Institutions for upbringing the institutions.

Conclusion

At present, students are given education being within the society itself, they are affected directly or indirectly by the social evils namely idleness, egotism, poverty, sexual disability, materialistic appeal, evil practices, corruption, marginalisation, decline in moral values, destructive politics, etc. Thus, it is desirable that education should eliminate the evil social practices. The contemporary aim of education is to fulfil the necessity of a far better structure and revitalization of benchmarks. As a result, most of today's philosophers, socialists, educationalists and researchers are found judging the present education system against the traditional one, namely the 'Gurukula' system.

Some features of Gurukula System which can be followed at present in modern education system are character building and philosophy which should get an appropriate place in today's education system. The education institutions should be situated far away from the noisy and polluted environments of the cities to a place which is calm and pure environment so that the students are not affected by the everyday fights and bad practices and can rejuvenate their mind, body and soul. However, in modern times, it is not actually possible to completely lead a life without any control, but maximum efforts are to be made in trying to adapt to such way of living. Controlling of students can be reduced from the lecturers end by reducing the instructions imparting in each phase of studies relating to subjects and by motivating the pupils in leading a better life which shapes up the future of students.

The blend of two elements would result in an entirely new perspective. A best way of education can be evolved by incorporating the ideologies of Gurukula System in Modern Education system. It is essential to identify the good elements in both the education systems and maximum efforts to be made in reducing the drawback to bring in a new system of education or to blend both the systems of education. Hence, it is essential to comprehend the reason for Gurukula as to its nature of working, societal structure and thinking pattern in the past and how the objective of Gurukula training can be consummated in the present day scenario. It is not just a case of copying the past but re-modulation is required. There must be an adjustment and a mix of both cutting edge instruction and convention of the gurukul framework is to survive and affect today's general public.

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