

Changes & Challenges in the Present Day Pedagogy

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Abstract: *As has been said correctly, things should and must change in accordance to time, place and situation. But the said aphorism is not very apt keeping in mind the current pedagogy both in context of teaching and learning methodology. Though we have steered to a new and more advanced path in the field of education and learning considering the adoption of new technological methods but still we have forgotten the foundational tenets of Gurukula or Vedic education system for which our nation was associated with and known for world - wide. In the present time, in the race of technological advancement and AI bots we have lost touch with intrinsic humanity which human beings are known for. This has not just made an impact on our overall pedagogy but also on our social life as well as. The quality of education is not just limited to the intellectual capacity and need of the learner but is also dependent on their emotional and moral quotient. Similarly, besides efficient skills and relevant knowledge of one's field the quality in teaching is dependent on various other factors like the healthy mindset of the educator which in turn is dependent upon the workplace environment and professional ethics. In today's age of technological revolution and busy professional life both learners and educators are facing various impediments on the path of quality education which requires immediate attention and restitution.*

Keywords: Pedagogy, Teaching - Learning Methodology, Educator, Learner, Gurukula, Modern Education

1. Introduction

Education has always been the foundation of human life in its varied aspects be it spiritual, physical, social or purely academic or skill based. It is also a widely known fact that the level and quality of education has undergone changes from time to time. As compared to the current scenario in education, the Vedic education system of Gurukula's teaching - learning process was more holistic encompassing all the aspects which made a learner grow and become a better individual. "Holistic education addresses the broadest development of the whole person at the cognitive and affective levels" (Singh, 1996). It aims for the fullest possible human development enabling a person to become the very best or finest that they can be and develop fully "those capacities that together make up a human being" (Forbes, 2003). Teaching which is associated with the role of a teacher or educator and learning associated mostly with the learner or student are the two major foundational elements on which the structure of education is build upon. Besides this, there are various sociological, economical, cultural and psychological factors or variables which govern and regulate directly or indirectly, the tenets of pedagogy in a particular age or scenario. According to Van Manen, "Teaching is not only governed by principles of effectiveness, but also by special normative, ethical, or affective considerations. In colloquial language: the teacher teaches with the head and the heart and must feelingly know what is the appropriate thing to do in ever - changing circumstances with children who are organized in groups but who are also unique as individuals." (Van Manen 6)

2. Discussion

In earlier system of education, the overall development and growth of the learners was taken into great consideration. The learner was placed in an altogether unfamiliar and natural environment where he/she use to learn and grow

independently under the guidance and motivation of the educator. There the learner not just acquired the academic knowledge but also various other skills of social and practical utility along with it. Education in Gurukulas was holistic, encompassing not only academic learning but also physical, emotional, and spiritual development. Basically this kind of education aimed at nurturing every aspect of their personality. However, contrary to this in modern times we are undoubtedly more equipped with technology and advanced means in imparting education where even the temporal, sociological, physical barriers etc. doesn't limit the teaching - learning process. The modern pedagogy is more academic centric rather than learner centric as it aims more on acquiring and imparting skilled knowledge in the chosen professional sphere rather than on the holistic growth of the learner. Even though few initiatives like the incorporation and introduction of basic human values and professional ethics in the curriculum, focusing upon the overall as well as the individual development of inner self and values has been done recently but still it lacks the practical approach and has failed to achieve the required importance. Just the mugging up and gaining of the theoretical knowledge of ethics and values doesn't ensure effective incorporation of those values in the real life. Thus, it can be said that there is a lack of practical and hands on experience and approach which the learners used to get in the Gurukula Education system. Modern pedagogy has put considerable lesser amount of focus and attention on the moral, physical and emotional growth and well beings of the learners. Due to the increase in the number of distractions led by the boom in technology, the learners are getting distracted from their goals and are more focused on their professional growth and opportunities rather than paying attention on their individual inner growth and well being. In present times, technology is not the only bump on the road of distance learning. Divided attention disrupts learning, and there are distinct distractions when learning occurs remotely from home. This non - classroom environment, where students are indoors with family, flat mates, pets, constant

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access to cellphones and social media is not ideal for learning. Blasiman et al. (2018) examined six types of distractions while students watched a 5 - min online lecture, from playing a video games to texting, and found significant impairment of encoding information and, in turn, performance. The transformation in the mindset of human beings due to the increase in competition and materialistic values of life has changed the learner's approach and understanding towards the teaching - learning methodology. The selfless and independent approach which the learners used to implement in the small educational scenario under the supervision and guidance of the Guru or the educator made him/her self sufficient to deal with anything in the greater scenario. This not only boosted the confidence and independence in the learner but also encouraged him or her to be a better version of him or her. However, in the modern pedagogy due to the various limitations, the teaching learning process has become more theoretical and rigid and therefore, has lead to lack of essential skills such as empathy, communication, and conflict resolution in the students.

Close teacher - student relationship was another advantage of Gurukula system. Since, the learner lived in Gurukula, he/she shared a close bond with the teacher. There was a deeper connection and hence more trust and respect towards the teacher and a deep understanding of individual learning needs. The close bond between the teacher and student facilitated personalized attention, mentorship. In modern education scenario with larger classrooms with diverse and greater student population, establishing such bond between teachers and students can be challenging. The teacher - student ratio in modern education is typically higher. Now, Teacher's multi disciplinary roles besides guidance, motivation and teaching have over burdened the shoulders of an educator. This non productive, time consuming and energy draining work has contributed to the further deterioration of modern pedagogical standards of teaching learning. Increasing the complexities and adding numerous concepts and components doesn't ensure quality standards in education. Also, due to large number of students and poor teacher - student ratio it is almost impossible to genuinely pay attention on each and every learner and thus the concept of actual mentorship has been reduced to mere formality on papers.

Further, the respect component has also almost disappeared due to the advancement in technology and free and easy access to knowledge. The Guru or teacher in the Gurukula on the other hand was not just respected but revered by the shishyas/learners. The Guru was often placed on a high pedestal and worshipped by his disciples like a parental figure. In modern education setup the gap between teacher and students is being gradually reduced due to which the guidance of the educator is not given due importance and consideration, which in turn affects the holistic development of the learners. It is happening due to the impact of Western education where the relationship between the teacher and learner is more informal and casual and learners treat their respective teachers as their friends and companions.

The curriculum in Gurukulas was flexible and adapted to the individual needs and interests of students. There was room

for customization based on the student's aptitude and inclinations. Thus, in Gurukula the curriculum aimed at the holistic development and well being of the learner. While modern education systems are evolving towards personalized learning, there is often a standardized curriculum that all students must follow. Customization is limited as a standard curriculum is followed for different level of learners. This method can never ensure quality in education. A learner is given a fixed number of chances to improve or pass after which he/she is disqualified from a particular field. All this has led to unfair means of acquiring a degree or qualification, cut throat competition, suicides and depression in the learners. Especially in India, parents still persuade their ward to acquire degrees and pursue knowledge in few conventional fields only to have a stable life and career instead of letting the child pursue their interests and passion. In Indian system of education also only certain fields of knowledge are favoured and respected above others discouraging the learners to explore their interests in these areas of knowledge. Though over the years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of diversifying fields of study. Specialized programs and courses catering to a wide range of interests have been introduced at various levels of education. Efforts have been made to introduce flexible education policies that allow students to choose subjects based on their interests and career aspirations. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, for example, emphasizes flexibility in curriculum and promotes multidisciplinary learning.

Gurukulas were open to students from various backgrounds, irrespective of their socio - economic status. The emphasis was on providing education to all, and students lived together in a communal setting. However, in the modern education system socioeconomic factors can still pose barriers to quality education. Learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are deprived from good schools, resources, and educational opportunities. Though government has done reservations to promote the upward mobility of such learners but this has also lead to tougher competition and less vacancies and jobs for those who can easily access all the benefits of education. All this has led to more discrimination and unrest among the job seeking youth. Further, the caste system and social hierarchies continue to influence access to education. There is no doubt that government has taken many initiatives to overcome such barriers to education but still these evils are prevailing beneath and could not be overcome completely. In such an environment the necessity of overall inner well being and holistic development of learners become all the more important in order to free the human minds from such bondages and orthodox thinking.

The integration with Nature approach followed by Gurukula System was more enriching and Gurukulas were often situated in natural surroundings, providing a serene and conducive environment for learning. The integration with nature was believed to have positive effects on both the mental and physical health of the learners. In Modern Education System, the educational institutions are situated in urban settings, with a complete disconnection from nature. Though efforts are being made by incorporating outdoor and experiential learning through sports and other field projects

but still there is a kind of disconnect and distance from nature and our real corporeal source of existence as we have separated ourselves from nature and natural surroundings. The culprit is again the advanced technology and changes in the system of education. The company of nature helps to alleviate both mental and physical stress, tensions, troubles and other negative feelings of discord, misconduct, hatred and bias which have clouded the logical and mental faculty of both the learners and educators. Thus, proximity with nature and natural surroundings is essential for the proper and holistic development of both the educators and learners so that both can become awakened and conscious of their duties and responsibilities and can fulfill the same sincerely. This will definitely make the society a better place just like it was in earlier times when Gurukulas were functioning as major institutes for imparting education.

Some changes need to be adopted for a more balance approach in today's teaching learning pedagogy. Firstly, due to the increase of work burden and responsibilities on the educators along with today's modern hectic lifestyle and schedule there should be some recreational activities and motivational sessions which should be organized from time to time for the purpose of rejuvenation. The mindset of the educator should be balanced and calm so that he/she can think of novel ideas and innovative ways to deal with the different kind of learners. Due to the rise in suicide cases, excessive competition, rise in stress and anxiety due to various reasons among the learners, it becomes all the more important for an educator to be mentally strong and calm to deal and resolve such issues. Not only this, learners mental health and well being also need equal focus and attention along with the academics. But, unfortunately, these types of services are not available either at school level or college or university level. Though some institutes follow this practice but only with an intention to stand out different from other institutes. One shouldn't forget that we are living in very complex age. Every now and then there are new sets of problems to solve for which we are not yet mentally trained. Old moral values are being discarded and the new normal which seems like abnormal is appearing on the horizon of society. In such a situation, a teacher has to adapt himself or herself to play these new demanding roles by getting equipped with all the tools required to guide and mentor the youth.

Secondly, a conscious effort should be made at a universal level in all the educational institutes to focus upon the moral and ethical growth of the learners and educators. The learners should be motivated to inculcate basic human values and ethics as this will make them better students who will be more focused and motivated towards their goals and career by overcoming all the distractions and temptations. Not only this, they will become more responsible and cultured citizens in future who in turn will make this society, nation and the whole universe a better place to thrive. This concept or idea is not limited to the learners only but to the educators as well as. The educators in modern times also need to be reminded and awakened towards their real duty of being a nation builder. It is proved that a country's development is primarily based on its people and its resources. However, it ultimately depends on the people only, as to what extent they can use the scarce resources

efficiently in order to achieve a rapid rate of development and breakthroughs in innovation. As people play the most important role in shaping the status of the country; education is responsible for shaping a person. Therefore, education is the backbone of any country, it plays a crucial role in technological developments and imparts various skills, values, and awareness. If a country has a higher literacy rate, it will lead to a lower unemployment rate and greater GDP growth. Today, countries face various issues including terrorism, discrimination, global warming, poverty, and gender inequality. Proper education for everyone can eradicate these problems from its roots and would lead to a better country with higher standards of living. In the long term, education reaps greater benefits, educated kids today will develop a very civilized and moral society tomorrow. The human mind has a great potential to achieve radical developments in society. To reap the benefits of the human mind, education is the most important step to work on. It is an investment which is crucial for development of every being. In India, the glory of the Guru has been mentioned as unparalleled. Teachers are the creator of the future. As quoted by the great thinker Aristotle, "Teaching is the highest form of understanding." Among all professions, teaching is the only profession that invests in the future and creates the future. Underlining the importance of teachers, Swami Vivekananda has said: "My dearest and nearest relative in life is my Guru; next, my mother; then my father. My first reverence is to the Guru. If my father says, "Do this", and my Guru says, "Do not do this", I do not do it. The Guru frees my soul. The father and mother give me this body, but the Guru gives me rebirth in the soul." He did not stop here and heaped praises on Gurus for their selfless service and devotion. He remarked: "It is easier to become a Jivanmukta (free in this very life) than to be an Acharya. For the former knows the world as a dream and has no concern with it; but an Acharya knows it as a dream and yet has to remain in it and work." Thus, it becomes very important that a teacher realize and work consciously towards his/ her role or duty by being truthful and sincere.

The importance of education in lap of nature can't be denied. Nature is an ever changing environment in which we not only interact with the cornucopia of sounds, smells and textures but also build a kind of a relationship with the natural world. Whatever and wherever we learn will forever stay with us through this strong emotional bond, and so connecting positive learning experiences with the natural world will help us feel part of it. We as human beings should try to establish an empathic connection with the biosphere and should understand our role and responsibility within it. This empathic understanding and connection cannot be learnt and inculcated theoretically through reading book, and sitting and studying within the four walls of a classroom. For this, practical knowledge learnt in a natural setup is very important to ensure holistic education. If we can include these basic tenets of Gurukula education in our current pedagogy of teaching and learning our education system will definitely become the best in the world. Though there is no doubt that education has evolved over time, and each system has its own strengths and challenges. Modern education system should aim to incorporate the best practices from various educational philosophies to create a balanced and effective approach to learning and teaching.

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Author Profile



Dr Shipra Malik has almost 13 years of teaching experience in the field of English Language & Literature. Currently, she is working as an Associate Professor in the Department of English SKIT College, Jaipur. She has taught for five years (2017 - 2022) at Foreign Languages and Literature in Al - Baha University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. She has done B. A. English Hons., M. A. (English Literature), M. Phil. (English) and Ph. D. in American Drama on the topic - "Social Criticism in the Plays of Edward Albee". Beside this, she has done Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching of English from English and Foreign Languages University of Hyderabad. She has penned a book of poetry entitled "The Shades of Life". Beside this, she has contributed and published many research papers, articles, short stories, Book reviews and poems in various prestigious journals of English literature. She has Offered Graduate and Post Graduate Courses in various genre of English Literature. Beside this, she has taken Personality Development Classes and have also offered Professional Courses in interpersonal skills and Business Communication.



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