



A Brief Introduction to Gurukul Education

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Abstract

This paper presents gurukul system of education as the main concern in the quality of human beings. Education is the only means of civilizing ourselves to maintain high qualities of integrity, devotion, sincerity and an ethical and moral purpose in our national life. The goal of our national education should be to supply a constant stream of knowledge, character, fearless open minded, truthful, and patriotic people, who will become the basic material, for building up the nation. Gurukul Style of Education system is a 5000-year old Hindu tradition of transmitting higher knowledge and enlightenment to the students by yogic powers by the guru with an aim to develop the latent yogic powers of the child and build him up into a moral and spiritual power.

Keywords: Gurukul Education, Origin of Gurukul, Importance of Gurukul

Introduction

A gurukul is known as gurukulam in Sanskrit is an ancient system of education. It is based on guru-pupil tradition as a sacred tradition of Hinduism started in religious groups in India. Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia has mentioned gurukul education system as the term used to refer to residential monasteries or schools operated by modern gurus. In gurukul education system, the students learn from the guru and help the guru in his everyday life, including carrying out of mundane daily household chores. However, some scholars suggest that the activities are not mundane and very essential part of the education to inculcate self-discipline among students. Typically, a guru does not receive or accept any fees from the *shishya* studying with him as the relationship between a guru and the shishya is considered very sacred. Regarding importance of guru, Singh (2015:12) has written, "Guru is regarded as the same as the Supreme Absolute Being." In this way, a guru is known as god in gurukul education system.

At the end of one's education, a student offers the guru something before leaving the gurukul which 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 school, the students would be away from their home from a period of months to years at a stretch and disconnected from their family completely. This system of education has been in existence since ancient times since the time of writing Ved, Puran and Upanishad.

Regarding necessity of Gurukul education, Poudel (2017) has mentioned that Gurukul education is necessary to uplift the degrading society of the present time. He has also highlighted that western materialistic education cannot direct people in the right direction. Gurukul education today is necessary to follow peace and gain skills.

Regarding Gurukul education, Kachappilly (2003) has mentioned that Gurukul education was regarded having high ideals for all round human development such as physical, mental and spiritual.

In this way, Gurukul education system supported all aspects of human activities so that people would become wise and skillful. This situation has helped to make clear about importance of Gurukul education.

In Gurukul education system, there was high importance and respect of the Guru. Regarding this situation, Oldenberg (1964) has stated that Guru takes the students so close to himself as a child is in the womb of the mother. Thus, the guru establishes a good relationship of unity with his student, such as at the time of Upanayana. This makes it clear that there was no difference between the teacher and the mother of the learners. Guru was all in all source of protection in the life of a learner.

Regarding ancient education, Sharma (1986) has mentioned that there were education institutions based on Devkul, Rajkul, Gurukul, Pitrikul and Rishikul in ancient time. Such types of system of ancient educational institutions were followed in different parts of Nepal which has got freedom of their own and these institutions had been changed in western model of institutions after recommendation of Maculley. In this way, present system of education has also got its base on ancient Sanskrit

Research Methods and Materials

This is a qualitative study and the methodology applied is related to qualitative technique, the process of data collection is through literature review. And the data for analysis are fixed through documents and the author's own experience. The headings and sub-headings are fixed for discussion and analysis; and they are presented descriptively using thick language. Regarding literature review, it is within text body under each heading.

Origin of Gurukul Education

Gurukul education system was a residential schooling system whose origin dates back to around 5000 BC in the Indian subcontinent. It was more prevalent during the Vedic age where students were taught various subjects and about how to live a cultured and disciplined life. Gurukul was actually the home of teacher and was the center of learning where pupils resided till

their education was complete. All students were considered equal at the Gurukul because students and teachers resided in the same house or lived near to each other. This relationship between guru and student was so sacred that no fee was taken from the students. Similarly, Jayapalan (2005) has mentioned gurukul education which has made compulsory residential school for students. The system is from ancient time till today. Education has been the most opted avenue of expressing freedom of will while inculcating the spirit of thought and moral conscience to a more transcending level. In spite of such rich connotations, the present educational system seems to be devoid of this very essence, promoting mindless acquisition of knowledge to suit vocational pursuits.

Moreover, students need to have supple minds that are capable of analytical thinking, while integrating complex core concepts that support them to evolve as human beings. They need to build an infallible foundation of scientific and technological knowledge, while staying true to their roles in the planet. This is possible through deep levels of determination, focus and concentration that is enshrined in Gurukul learning. Due to this reason, gurukul systems are considered to be the best places to facilitate a sound learning environment.

Historical Background of Gurukul Education

Gurukul is a type of school is related to the residential schooling system in which students (shishya) lives with the teacher who is also known as acharya or guru. The teacher feeds them, teaches them, and treats them one with the family. In such type of school, the students help the teacher's daily works and on the other hand students learn from teacher's behaviour Yogi, (2011).

The Gurukul system of education has been in existence since ancient times. The Upanishads mention multiple Gurukulam, including that of Guru Drona at Gurgaon. The Bhrigu Valli (a discourse on the Brahman) is said to have taken place in Guru Varuni's Gurukul. The vedic school of thought prescribes the Gurukul (sacred rite of passage) to all individuals before the age of 8 at least by 12. From initiation until the age of 25 all individuals are prescribed to be students and to remain unmarried. Gurukulam were supported by public donations. Gurukul education system was going on continuously in India for a long time. Afterwards when there was colonial system in India, Gurukul system started to decline. But today many researchers have studied effective part of Gurukul education.

Gurukul system of education is supposed to be the most ancient education system which is mentioned in our legends and Upanishads. Our legends and Upanishads are known as the basic roots for our knowledge existing ten thousand years back in Sanskrit language. It is real that Gurukul education system has produced many saints/ sages and educated scholars with scientific knowledge. Our ancient Vedas are known as scientific explanation of the universe. Gurukul education spread not only in India and Nepal but also in overseas countries, too.

According to Sharma (2000), Pundit Shadananda Adhikari founded a Gurukul, which sustained for almost a hundred year on its own resources. At that time, there was no any provision of levying fee from students. The system was managed in such a way

that the students would get two days' leave every month to visit their home and family. After that they would come back to Gurukul School taking their rations to last for the rest of the whole month ahead. At that time students were independent and brought their food themselves to the place of their guru.

Regarding Gurukul system, Sharma (2000) has stated that the saint, Yogi Hansananda Saraswati established a popular Gurukul in the western part of Nepal named as Swargadwari (a place named as the gateway to heaven). This Gurukul School provided food and accommodation to all the students which was free of cost. And it was priority for inclusive education without any discrimination in terms of caste and race.

In some middle part of Nepal, Pundit Harihar Gautam established a Gurukul School in Khidim of Arghakhanchi District, Nepal. Pundit Nayaraj Panta established a Sanskrit School at his personal initiative in Kathmandu in 1997 BS. His teaching technique was wonderful and he did not allow students, who were studying in other schools, to take education in his school. His students had to come at his school early in the morning after they had taken meal and had to stay till evening. He had got two sons and both of them studied there at his school but none of them got formal certificates. They became qualified and educated people from their father's school. The education was provided free of cost to students (Adhikari, 2015). This is the way education was imparted to everyone during the Vedic period and Mahabharata period well up to the 18th century till the British introduced an alternative day-boarding system .

Importance of Gurukul School

The main focus of Gurukuls is on imparting learning to the students in a natural surrounding where the pupils live with each other with brotherhood, humanity, love, and discipline. The essential teachings are in subjects like language, science, mathematics through group discussions, self-learning etc. Not only this, but the focus is also given on arts, sports, crafts, singing that develop their intelligence and critical thinking. Activities such as yoga, meditation, mantra chanting etc generated positivity and peace of mind and made them fit. It is also mandatory to do daily chores on own with a motive to impart practical skills in them. All these help in the personality development and increase their confidence, sense of discipline, intellect and mindfulness which is necessary even today to face the world that lay ahead. Moreover, gurukul schools are known as child friendly schools. Regarding this view, UNICEF (2006) has reported that gurukul schools provide inclusive, effective and relevant education according to the need of the children. But present modern education has been more commercial in nature rather than an institutional concept that should impart holistic learning to the students. Modern education devotes very less time for physical activity and the development of other skill sets that can assist a student to become a better human being in the future.

Regarding the importance of gurukul education, Chandawani (2019) has stated that children can learn better if they get free environment, it means that they need the environment of fraternity with bear teachers and follow students. In gurukul education, these days other inter disciplinary subjects are also being taught so that the skill and knowledge needed for the professional development

will be obtained. These days' experimental skills for job market are essential which makes the learners confident and well characterized in their scoter, to move a head. The chief emphasis of Gurukul was on communicating learning to the students in a natural surrounding or environment where the shishyas lived with each other with brotherhood, humanity, love, and discipline.

It is understood that the main objective is to develop the knowledge and to train students with meditation, yoga and other skills which are related to livelihood of students. Students more respect to their teachers as rules and regulations of schools. Gurukul education has developed the habit of making the sense of balanced system of life style through their performance of labour, diet and other exercises. So, gurukul education much towards practically rather than theoretically and they learn by doing practically applying theoretical knowledge they have. This type of system of education has developed working skills to the learners in their way of life. The function of education is to make the learners conscious about their individual as well as social life style.

In contemporary era, it can be accomplished by producing a perfect alliance of academics and extracurricular activities along with teaching learning activities in the scope of mindfulness and divine awareness to make the students better individual.

Conclusion

The National scene today on the educational front presents a bewildering picture. The situation prevailing in the Educational Institutions and the Universities is alarming. The quality of the teachers and the students has taken a nosedive, in the recent years. The production of text books, the planning of their content, the methods of instruction as well as the goals to be kept in view for making our Education serve the National goal as well as the individual aims, all these are in a declining phase today. Moreover, National Planning Commission (2005) has stated that curriculum needs to be made more relevant by integrating skills and resources. This reminds that the framing of text books, the selection of materials for study, the preparation of reading materials and also the production of high quality study materials as well as their free marketability. The new policy will have to take all these distressing trends into account and suggest remedial measures. Moreover, gurukul schools need to be formal and fit for global market.

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