



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AND CONTEMPORARY INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a comparative analysis of the ancient Indian education system and the contemporary Indian education system. The ancient Indian education model, rooted in the Gurukul system, emphasised holistic development, moral values and spiritual education, blending subjects such as philosophy, mathematics, medicine and the arts. Education was personal, with a strong teacher-student relationship, and was not influenced by formal examinations or rigid structures. In contrast, the modern Indian education system, influenced by colonial and global developments, is characterised by institutionalised schooling with a focus on formal degrees and competitive examinations. While advances in science, technology and universal access to education have broadened opportunities, there is growing criticism of the system's excessive emphasis on rote learning, lack of value-based education and inadequate attention to critical thinking and creativity. The aim of the study is to identify the strengths and limitations of both systems, highlighting how ancient practices can inform current reforms, particularly in areas such as value-based education, teacher-student relationships and holistic education.

KEYWORDS

Ancient Indian Education, Gurukul System, Contemporary Indian Education, Holistic Learning, Rote Learning vs. Critical Thinking

INTRODUCTION

India's education system has changed a lot from ancient times to today. In ancient India, education was offered through systems like the Gurukul, Buddhist monasteries, and universities like Nalanda and Takshashila. These systems focused on the overall development of a person, including their spiritual, moral, and intellectual growth. Today, the education system is more structured, with a focus on academic achievements, skills, and standardized exams.

This research aims to compare these two different education systems to understand their key ideas, teaching methods, and outcomes. The study will also explore how ancient educational practices can be used to improve the modern education system in India, especially in promoting overall growth, creativity, and critical thinking in students.

2. Research Objectives

- To study the basic ideas behind the ancient and modern Indian education systems.
- To compare the teaching methods, curriculum, and assessment practices in both systems.
- To understand the roles of teachers, students, and the community in education during both periods.
- To evaluate the results of education in ancient and modern times in terms of personal development, job readiness, and contributions to society.
- To suggest ways to include ancient educational practices in today's system to make it better.
- To provide foundational knowledge across disciplines like science, mathematics, history, and the arts, enabling individuals to understand the world and solve problems.
- To cultivate both practical and cognitive skills, such as critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration, necessary for personal and professional success.
- To foster values such as integrity, empathy, responsibility, and respect for others, which contribute to the moral development of individuals.
- To encourage social skills, teamwork, and community engagement, helping individuals to function effectively within society and contribute to social harmony.
- To support individual self-awareness, emotional intelligence, self-discipline, and resilience, helping learners to grow as well-rounded individuals.
- To educate individuals about their roles and responsibilities within society, promoting active participation in democratic processes, environmental stewardship, and social justice.
- To equip individuals with the specific knowledge and vocational skills needed to succeed in the workforce and adapt to changing job markets.
- To promote an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, global perspectives, and the ability to function in an interconnected world.
- To instil a love of learning and the motivation to continue personal

and professional development throughout life.

- To promote physical health, fitness, and healthy living habits through physical education and awareness of health issues.

3. Literature Review

1. The Hindu view of life. S. Radhakrishnan.

- Throughout the book, Radhakrishnan emphasizes the importance of understanding Hinduism as a living tradition that is relevant to Contemporary life. He argues that Hinduism offers a holistic and integrated vision of reality that can help us to navigate the challenges and complexities of modern life. "The Hindu view of life" is praised for its clarity, depth and insight and is widely regarded as a classic of Indian philosophy.

2. A history of India Philosophy Surendranath Das Gupta. Volume I, Cambridge, 1922.

- A history of Indian Philosophy Vol. I written by Surendranath Dasgupta was published in the year 1951. The books offer in-depth knowledge about the vedas, Brahmanas and their philosophy. It also gives an insight into the Upanishads and makes general Observations about the System of Indian philosophy.

3. Political Agenda of Education – A study of colonialist and Nationalist Ideas. By Krishna Kumar, Sage publications, New Delhi (2005).

- Krishna kumar challenges this view and calls it theoretically feeble and historically untenable and launches a historical enquiry to understand why colonial education had the effects it had. He says, has little patience for equality and justice and that the challenge to alter this equation still exists.

4. Amartya Sen, (2006). Identity and violence: The Illusion of Destiny, London: Penguin Books.

- As per Amartya Sen faith based, inherited illusion of singular identity overlooks the reason, role of choice and multiple affiliations of persons. A person should have choice to choose his or her identity. Persons should have the freedom to choose their identity on the basis of reason.

The issue of which identity is Significant and relevant either class, Political conviction, religion, ethnicity, caste, religion, occupation or many more intellectually justified should depend on logic, reason and human conscience. Only the world can be a common home of human race. So according to Amartya Sen identity should be recognised on the basis of difficulties, common plight and shared humanity.

4. Research Methodology

This study will use a mix of different methods to collect and analyse data.

- Historical Analysis:** We will study ancient texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, and Buddhist scriptures, along with academic articles, to

learn about the ancient Indian education system. We will also look at historical documents to see how modern education in India has developed.

2. Comparative Analysis: We will compare the key aspects of the ancient and modern education systems, such as their goals, curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment techniques.

3. Field Research: We will conduct surveys and interviews with teachers, historians, and education experts to get their views on the strengths and weaknesses of both systems. We will also talk to students and teachers in focus groups to see how ancient practices might work in today's schools.

4. Case Studies: We will study some schools and colleges that have tried to include ancient practices in their modern curriculum to see what results they have achieved and what challenges they faced.

5. Data Analysis: We will look at the qualitative data from interviews and focus groups for common themes. We will also analyse the quantitative data from surveys to identify patterns and trends.

5. Expected Outcomes

This research will provide a clear understanding of how ancient Indian educational ideas can help improve today's education system. The study will offer practical suggestions for policymakers and educators on how to include ancient practices in modern education. The research will also add to academic discussions on education by showing how ancient methods can address current problems like overemphasis on rote learning and lack of focus on moral and spiritual growth.

6. Significance of the Study

This study is important because it can help connect traditional and modern educational practices in India. By using the best parts of both systems, the research aims to help create a more balanced and complete education model that better meets the needs of students today. It will also provide useful insights for educators and policymakers who want to build an education system that is not only competitive globally but also deeply rooted in India's rich cultural traditions.

7. CONCLUSION

This research proposal outlines a plan to compare the ancient and modern education systems in India. By studying their key ideas, teaching methods, and outcomes, the research hopes to contribute to the ongoing efforts to reform education in India. Integrating ancient educational practices into the modern system can create a more holistic and effective learning experience for students, preparing them for both work and life as responsible citizens.

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