



Rejuvenating learning process through Ancient Indian Pedagogic Skills

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Abstract

The modus operandi of the Teaching as found in Ancient Indian classical shastras determined the very fabrication of the societal living promoting healthy habits & good community existence. The society was always inculcating good leadership, good mannerism & good individual qualities. This paper reviews various values highlighted in ancient India which included enlargement of scientific outlook, averting of blind faith, support of sciences, arts, philosophy, industry and technology etc, & assesses the current educational pattern with the above reflections. The education during Vedic period was life building, self making, character structuring and integration of all good ideas. In ancient India, the aim of education was to develop the pupil's personality, his innate and latent capacities as a process of one's inner growth and self-fulfillment. If these tenets could be incorporated in present day education we could anticipate a confident generation.

Key words: Ancient Indian scriptures, pedagogic tools, education, character building

Introduction

The modus operandi of the Teaching as found in Ancient Indian classical shastras determined the very fabrication of the societal living promoting healthy habits & good community existence. The society was always inculcating good leadership, good mannerism & good individual qualities. The various values highlighted are enlargement of scientific outlook, averting of blind faith, support of sciences, arts, philosophy, industry and technology. The education based during Vedic period was life building, self making, character structuring and integration of all good ideas. In ancient India, the aim of education was to develop the pupil's personality, his

innate and latent capacities as a process of one's inner growth and self-fulfillment. This view of education evolved its own technique, its rules, methods and practices.

The ancient education system has been a source of inspiration to all educational systems of the world. The ingredients, which our present system, lacks, and which were the predominant facets of our ancient system relate to admission policies (upanayana), monitorial system, low teacher pupil ratio, healthy teaching surroundings, free schooling and higher education, sympathetic treatment, role of punishment in discipline, regulation governing student life (Ghosh, S.C. (2007).



Process of Instruction

There were three steps in instruction:

1. Sravana is listening to words in texts as they uttered by the teacher.
2. Manana is the process of deliberation or reflection of the topic taught.
3. Nididhyasana represents the attainment of highest stage.

Development of all round personality:-

In ancient times Vedic Indians believed that personality & character should be developed through education. Personality was developed through the following methods: -Self-restraint- -Self-confidence- -Self-respect.

There was a time when India provided her children with a culture which was the product of her own thought and creation. But this culture was brushed aside by the educationists under the British rule. "Our educated community is not a cultured community but a community of qualified candidates." Rabindra Natha Tagore says "Western system of education is impersonal. It dwells in the cold-storage compartments of lessons and the ice-packed minds of the schoolmasters". (Prabhu, Joseph (2006),

Aims of Teaching Methodology in Ancient India

Ancient Indian education system had prerequisite methodologies. It was a pupil centered education. No single method of instruction was adopted, though recitation by the pupil followed by explanation by the teacher was generally followed. Besides question –

Answer, Debate and Discussion, Storytelling was also adopted according to need. There was no classroom teaching. Monitorial system was prevalent and senior pupils were appointed to teach juniors. Travel was regarded as necessary to give finishing touch to education so the methods of teaching generally practiced during vedic period were main oral. The classes in ancient India were usually small ones, consisting of not more than 15 or 20 students. It was therefore possible to give individual attention to each student. This was one of the strongest points in the ancient Indian system of education. Lectures to large classes of 100 or 200 students, which are unintelligible to some, superfluous to others and partially useful to the rest, Students could not afford to go to the class room without thorough preparation. There was a daily examination of every student and no new lesson was given until the old one was thoroughly mastered. There were no annual examinations and mass promotions at fixed intervals.

Concepts of Teaching Methodology in Ancient India

Learned Discussions

Learned discussions were a normal and important feature of the student life and young scholars were very anxious to come out successful in them. Debates and discussions have always played an important part in the literary training of students. (Muir, John (1861). The Vedic literature refers to such literary combats and describes how the victors were



suitably honoured .Shastrarthas or learned debates were constantly held in colleges where students of literature, poetics, philosophy and logic were called upon to defend their own propositions and attack those of their opponents. The training in debates made students ready-witted and developed their powers of speech. Discussions help students to apply abstract ideas and think critically about what they learn. In fact, studies show that discussions build students' problem-solving skills more effectively than do lectures. However, fostering productive discussions can be difficult for even the most experienced instructors. Preparing for discussions, asking questions that promote discussion, getting students to talk, and handling common problems that arise during discussions is a common technique of teaching these days.

The Use of Parables: It is a statement or comment that conveys a meaning indirectly by the use of comparison & analogy, The use of parables was often made in expounding obscure principles, as would appear from the plot of the Hitopadesha and Panchatantra, where principles of politics are taught under the guise of telling stories about animals.

The Dialogue Method

The dialogue method was followed by many a philosopher, as would appear from the evidence of the Upanishads and the Buddhist works. It enabled the teacher to ascertain the reactions in the student's mind to his own observations. Prominent educational theorists like Dr. Robin Alexander, author of "Towards

Dialogic Teaching: Rethinking Classroom Talk," and Dr. Sylvia Wolfe, University of Cambridge pedagogy expert, denounce the practice of keeping children quiet. They argue for constructive dialogue as the basis for true education. Properly executed dialogic teaching methods are extremely effective at teaching critical thinking and independent analysis.

Comparison and observation Method

The value of comparison and observation was also realised by many teachers who used to develop the power of understanding of dull students by asking them to carefully observe new facts and compare them with those already known. Observational techniques are an important aspect of many action research studies and of case studies.

Scientific outlook Method

The focal assignment of Vedic education was to generate scientific outlook in the society. This was equipped by bringing out the embryonic qualities of the soul i.e. virtue, goodness, beauty, love, harmony and many others, which help in suppressing the negative qualities caused by three gunas, particularly rajasic and tamasic leading to fickleness, jealousy, deceit, avariciousness, cowardliness, ungratefulness and others. It is a fundamental way for making students to practice thinking critically. By this students learn how to define a problem, observe situations, take notes, synthesize the results, and come to a



logical conclusion based on objective results.(Lindberg, David (2007).

Thinking Method

Thinking method was another part of the teaching method. Through this an attempt was made to preserve the veda mantras (vedic hymns) and Richayas (vedic verses) Manan was higher method of teaching than a thinking. Thorough Manan the meanings of vedic mantras the meanings of vedic mantras were developed and preserved in one's own mind. This method was used to encourage the highly intelligent students by guiding them to make research, similarly in ancient days, Manan (Reflection) was a method specially adopted for highly intelligent students

Case Study Method

Pancha Thanthra stories followed an unique way of enabling learning by children. They teach morals to be embibed in the minds of children. Abimanyu learnt cracking of Padma vyuham from womb, as was described by Lord Krishna. These are all nothing but case studies under different names, enabling the reader or listener to position himself in that situation and think and act swiftly. Case studies improve creativity and innovations in decision making & fix the minds of the students in a specific situation and facilitate them to develop the art of making smart decisions by practicing. & enables students to visualize real life situations in the organization and facilitates the students in making trial and error attempts to sole the issues.

They simulate organizational situations, requiring strategic as well as tactical decisions.

Creation Of Enlightened Mass

The creation of enlightened mass was stressed because it was believed that a country's cultural effervescence directly relied on the scholastic contributions of absolutely knowledgeable & civilized individuals. The field of education was value based, morally justified, indigenously shaped, absolutely powered. That knowledge was real, which led to emancipation-led from unreality to reality, from darkness to light, from death to immortality. The ideal of education was grand, noble and high in ancient India. Its aim, according to Herbert Spencer is the 'training for completeness of life' and the molding of character of men and women for the battle of life.

Education for the Masses

Andrew Bell, (1775- 18230) a Christian missionary in Madras took the Indian system of education back to England, and introduced it there. Until then, only the children of the nobles were given education there and he started education for the masses in England. So, we gather that it is from India that the British adopted the system for educating the masses. All the management terms and concepts of psychology used today in the advanced corporate world are rooted in Indian civilization somewhere or the other. The concepts of Intelligence quotient, Emotional Quotient, Spiritual Quotient had all been derived from this.



Researchers have proved time and again the glory of this mother culture. Bhatti Vikramadithya cracked several cases put forth by the vethala. The vethala described several social, political and managerial issues and paradoxes which were intelligently solved by Vikramaditya. They were all cases where wise decisions were made in the context of that peculiar situation

Relevance in Modern Context

Today technology has revolutionized the classrooms all over the world but it has disadvantages. Many classrooms are being retrofitted with Smart boards and computers but they cannot replace old methods of teaching. The technology available today has made a wealth of knowledge available to students, which offers great potential for the speed and style of learning. Information is presented in so many ways that any type of learner, whether gifted or disabled, can find and use the necessary material. This fact relates not only to the Internet, but to all the many technological improvements in learning, from smart boards to handheld dictionaries. With this increased access to knowledge also comes a probable loss of communication skills and interactive abilities between students and teacher, and students to peers. These skills are not as necessary in a classroom of computers, where individuality is a component of learning and is encouraged. Aside from learning, conflict resolution and socialization used to be two prominent reasons children come to school. The emphasis now has shifted away from these areas.

Contemporary Adaptation of Indian Teaching Methods by Western Education System

The western countries have adopted the Montessori method in teaching young children. (Maria Montessori (1870-1952), Italian physician and educationist, born in Rome, the first woman in Italy to receive a medical degree (1894), she founded a school for children with learning disabilities (1899-1901), and developed a system of education for children of three to six based on spontaneity of expression and freedom from restraint. The system was later worked out for older children, and applied in Montessori schools throughout the world. She opened the first Montessori school for children in the slums of Rome in 1907).

- This allows better and deeper understanding of the topic they are working on & assists them in recuperating through memorization.
- They spend more time on class room and group discussion in order to know how to speak up logically and learn to accept other people's opinions.
- They are often given assignments in the format of a report or project and will have to do their own research and gradually develop their own thinking & researching liberty.
- Presentations are also expected to be given properly with a clear voice and information, good time-control and stable eye contact.



- The skill of taking notes directly from the teacher's lecture replaces following lifeless Text books.
- Thus education is perceived as training to students with skills they would need in their auxiliary studies and prospective careers.
- Class rooms have become bigger & student teacher ratio is very less.
- Stress on eye contact, body language, soft skills is stressed.

Conclusion: Thus it seen from the above discussion that the method of -teaching followed in ancient India was on the whole the best suited for an age, which did not enjoy the advantages of paper and printing. It developed the powers of memory, a facility which is being sadly neglected in modern times. It did not however encourage cramming & revising, because the texts that were memorized were well understood by students. Reflection and analysis was also encouraged especially in the case of those students who had taken logic, philosophy, poetics or literature. Lucid exposition & elucidation was a forte of Indian teachers, for which they were well known all over Asia during the first millennium of the Christian era. The methods of teaching should not only provide information and equip our children with knowledge but also ultimately manifest the spark of divinity within each individual. The system of education should breathe in practical philosophy by trying to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of contemporary society. Teaching is

almost a vibrant contact of one mind with another and this is an art which should not be reduced to a single set of unvarying laws and rules of procedure which can be used mechanically to achieve success on marks cards.

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