

Relevance of Ancient Education System in 21th Century

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ABSTRACT:-

The Indian education system has changed very much from ancient times to today's computer age. It is very popular and very diversified among other countries' education systems. However, the education system wasn't like this ever since from the start. There was a different method or environment of teaching. In Ancient times students were taught by teachers in a way that they can learn in a proper way. Students used to live far away from their parents' houses. They were taught physical and mental education, economics, politics, and social science. Their knowledge was based on practical aspects of life so they can survive in any condition. But The Education system has changed considerably from ancient Times to now.

The main purpose of this paper is to explain the relevance of the ancient education system and why there may be some points which are still needed in current society. It elaborates the main characteristics of the ancient education system and its aspects that are still relevant.

INTRODUCTION:-


In the present century, the definition of knowledge is way different from ancient times. If we compare the teaching methodology of that time with now, the contrast is huge. At that time books were not there, So students had to learn and memorize all the things taught in the class, and teachers also helped them in memorizing. The students used to have deep understandings of the concepts taught by their teachers and explore new methods to learn them.

However, In the present time, We all know how technology is making a huge impact on e-learning. From online courses to professional courses, all things are technology oriented. and after the corona outbreak, the popularity of e-learning has rapidly increased. but the question is 'is it enough?'. Can we rely on just online knowledge?. Not completely, Although the current education system is more efficient and improvised but we still need some old methods.

The education of the 21st century includes various aspects of socio-economic, cultural, and political fields. Every day it drives new information, concepts, and knowledge of the world. Thus this education

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started to increase stress upon the youth who are already facing the highly competitive world. The increasing demand for English and technical studies has made education turn global but it creates a world of competitiveness, cruelties, and battle of survival. It has no more relation to values, purpose, and development of potential.

In ancient India, education had a very much relation with moral values, ethics, and spiritualism. During ancient times, The education system was divided into two parts, Vedic, and Buddhist. The Vedic system was taught in Sanskrit. The education was based on Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads, and Dharmasutras. While the Buddhist education language was pali. The main objective of ancient education was to develop not only outer growth but also inner growth. . This education emphasized more on ethics and assertions of a person. It was focused on human virtue like humility, truthfulness, discipline, self-reliance, and experience. During ancient times the gurukuls, ashrams [center of education] were located far away from students' houses. It was mostly located in forests which used to give a feeling of a very peaceful, calm, and attractive atmosphere.

During the Vedic period (1500 bc- 600bc) education was based on Vedas (hymns, formulas, and incantations, recited or spoken by priests of a pre-Hindu tradition). Liberation is the main purpose of the Vedic education.

In Vedic education students had taught the right pronunciation and recitation of Veda, grammar, composition , different characteristics of nature, law of sacrifice, skills for different occupations. They also had knowledge of medicine. Cures for snakebite, fever, cough, baldness and different kinds of diseases are also mentioned In Vedas. From the Vedic period or Rigveda onwards, the Indian education system developed over the time. It taught us to take care of both inner and outer virtue.

There is also one positive point in ancient education is that it was free for everyone but over time it became more restricted or conservative because of social systems. Brahmins and Kshatriyas had access to Vedic education. Ancient education was also available for women in India. They were also taught dance and music. Women of brahmavadini class were educated for their whole life and they didn't get married in life. While the women of the sadyodwahas class got education until they got married. Some poems or parts of Vedas and religious songs were taught to women. Gargi, Indrani, Ghosha, Maitreyi, vishambhara, Apaka, and Lopamudra are some women scholars of ancient India.

Another source of education in ancient India was Upanishads. They gave the education of sacrifice and its true meaning. Upanishads gave an exploratory technique to education. In which students and teachers explore the true meaning of truth and life.

There are many other sources of education in ancient times such as Mahabharata and Ramayana. Mahabharata contains philosophical and moral education. It explains four goals of life that are duty, liberation, purpose, and pleasure. Mahabharata elaborates the term karma while Ramayaninsists on the concepts of Dharma.

In ancient times education was given mostly at gurukuls. It was a type of teacher's house or monastery. In this system, the teacher and the pupils were seen as equals. There was a ritual of guru Dakshina which was a voluntary contribution to teachers from their students. It was a way to respect their teacher. In these gurukuls the teacher gave knowledge of scriptures, religion, philosophy and medicine.

Another part of the ancient education system was Buddhist education. This education's main source was Pitakas which includes various lectures on this religion. These were some major Pitakas of Buddhist education.

- *VINAYA PITAKA* - Vinaya Pitaka includes rules and regulations that handle the Buddha community in the monastery. These rules explain not to harm people, nature, animals and the environment.
- *SUTTA PITAKA* - Suttapitaka is further divided into five Nikayas. It has Buddha's lectures as sermons.
- *ABHIDHAMMA PITAKA* - Buddha's lectures are analyzed and described in this Pitaka.

There were some institutions in ancient India that were very famous for their education. People used to come here from far away. Education of many subjects was given here. Some of these institutions are below-

- **TAKSHSHILA:-** In ancient times it was a noted center of education. Takshshila also known as Taxila was famous for its higher education of subjects such as law, medicine, astronomy, silpa or arts and military science. Takshshila gave the world amazing experts such as a legendary grammarian called Panini. His greatest work on grammar is called *Ashtadhyayi*, Jivaka and Chanakya both also studied here.
- **NALANDA :-** It was a center of learning from 5th century to the 12th century located in Rajgir Bihar it was called Nala before. Nalanda was also expert in higher education in different subjects. Nalanda students learned Vedas with arts, medicine, mathematics, and politics.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ANCIENT EDUCATION SYSTEM:-

The ancient education system was focused on the moral, physical, intellectual, and spiritual sides of life. It explained humility, truth, self-reliance and respect for each human being. Students were taught to balance the relationship between humans and nature. In other words its aim was a healthy mind and healthy body.

- The main advantage of this education was the teacher-student relationship. The teachers used to pay very much attention to students and teach them according to their knowledge and skill level.
- Ancient education was highly focused on one's personality development and inner growth. It explained the idea of enrichment in personal virtue and character. The objective of this education was to increase students' mental and physical ability so they can survive in any condition.
- Students were taught without books so they actually had to learn and memorize all the things. It helped them to deep dive into concepts and explore them more.
- The three method techniques were listening, meditation and experience. That's why they used to have a practical approach to a concept.
- Students used to ask questions to solve their queries and had plenty of knowledge via discussion, debate and discourse.
- In ancient times Indian universities like Takshila and Nalanda were known for their higher education with knowledge and skills. Indian education consisted of Vidyas and Kalas with practical knowledge. This education included nine Darshanas in which six Darshanas explained the open knowledge education system. There were 14 Vidyas consisting of FOUR Vedas (RIGVEDA, YAJURVEDA, SAMVEDA, ATHARVAVEDA) four Upavedas and six Vedangas. To perform an art is called Kalas in Sanskrit. These Kalas and Vidhya are still very relevant in the present different stages of life.
- The ancient education system focused on the all-round development of students. Practical knowledge was more important than theoretical knowledge. The grading system was not there so the only purpose was to gain pure knowledge.
- Ashrams and Gurukul were located in forests which used to provide a calm and pleasant atmosphere to students. There was no pressure on students related to studies so that they could learn effectively. Our present-day education had a lot to learn from the ancient education system.
- In Ancient times, the Government did not interfere in education. There was not any kind of agency or organization for education, Thus there was little to no politics in the system.
- However, Not everyone was given equal opportunity in education. It was most probably limited to higher castes like Brahmins and the royal family.

Whereas the Ancient education system insisted on developing virtue, ethics and a practical approach to a concept. Nowadays, the Education system provides a more efficient way to students and a centric way to a subject according to the interest of students. There is a huge contrast between the current and ancient education systems. Nowadays, private institutions have opened. With the increase in the number of private schools, new trends have encompassed the education system. We have seen Class 10 boards being discarded and the CGPA system being adopted by schools all over the country. Moreover, there are private and government schools that provide students with a lot of opportunities with extra activities like sports ,arts and culture. And after corona, the importance of Online Courses- E-Learning: has increased. We all know how technology is making a huge impact on e-learning.

The Government also gives importance to E-learning. The government has launched various schemes, providing low-cost tablets, To ensure students get the best of education while sitting in the comfort of their homes.

During Ancient times the sources were very limited but still education was more focused on the overall development of a person. After that the education system has changed very much. E-learning has taken the place of virtue development. Students can take the best knowledge from their homes. But only gaining knowledge to get good grades and a job is not everything in society. Because that only increases mental pressure on students. To avoid that we need some old techniques so that youth not only learn practical knowledge but also have inner growth that will help them to become a good example for this society which is day by day losing its moral value.

In the 21st century skills are a series of high class abilities. Learning newer techniques and high working efficiency are recognised as the key aspects of success in today's society, academics and workplaces. They are not based on traditional knowledge skills but are associated with deeper learning , analytics and teamwork. This is all good because we need to grow and change with time but that doesn't mean to completely ignoring old techniques. We can take inspiration from ancient education and make modern education more efficient. By this, we can achieve the goal of universal education. Education that is not only better for the technical world but also works for living as a human.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:-

The ancient education system consists of the rich culture and the beauty of ancient India. In modern times where students are more focused on getting a desirable life, it has become very necessary to revive our magnificent ancient culture and values. So that our education system can be improvised this integrated education will make our youth capable enough so they can be able to cope with new challenges. With contemporary education policies, we have learned that we still need our old ethics and morals and teaching techniques because modern education is maybe more efficient and knowledgeable but these are not enough to create an ideal society. Now most of them accepted this truth and more and more people know the worth of ancient education thus the government of India included the concept of pupil centric education in its National Education System Policy 2020.

NOTABLE ASPECTS OF ANCIENT EDUCATION SYSTEM :-

At present, our education is more focused on being employed and getting a wishful life. Our world is converting into a rapid increase of scientific and technical knowledge. These kinds of changes are affecting our society positively and negatively. because going through these changes moral education is being ignored. In ancient education, the knowledge of spiritualism and self-growth was very important. It is acceptable that we can't fully bring back ancient education techniques but there are some notable aspects that can be useful in the modern age.

➤ **SELF GROWTH:-** Education is that whose end product is salvation. while modern education increases pressure upon aspiring students to prepare for the future. But only bookish knowledge is not enough to achieve an aim. A person's self growth also plays an important role in it. India is not known for earning a living, it is known for great human values and virtues, the goodness of souls, its ethics. The ancient education was solely focused on it while the current system is absolutely far away from self growth.

➤ **THE EDUCATION OF VIRTUES :-** Vedic knowledge was more focused on moral virtues, ethics and respect for one another. In today's society where moral values are not much important but if we want to change it to make a good example then moral education should be a part of the education system. It will create a society where everyone's existence will be loved.

In today's time, humans have behavioral problems and nobody knows how to teach them moral values like respecting each other, helping weak people, and respecting women because there is no place for it. There should be an approach from our educational system.

➤ **PEACE OF MIND :-** Nowadays, Young generations have intense mind pressure to prove their worth. In moderntimes all they think is to maintain a high standard. Rather than giving importance to a healthy lifestyle, showing off has become more important. We need to take an example from old education where providing knowledge is not only an aim but also prepares youth for any possible situation so they can understand the true meaning of happiness. It also encouraged students to be selfless rather than self obsessed.

➤ **MEDITATION AND REALIZATION :-** The Ancient education was about listening, meditating and then self realising which gave students a deep knowledge of subjects. It was related to idealism, self learning , art, honesty and good deeds rather than wealth , power and violence. It emphasized all round development rather than bookish knowledge. Of Course we can not revive all old techniques but we can use some of this for the sake of humanity.

➤ **PRACTICAL APPROACH** - Education nowadays all about is employment. Moral education is nowhere to be found. By E-learning visual knowledge is gaining more attention but students who can not afford so many things are having a hard time having practical knowledge. The knowledge we gain from technology mostly we can not use in every aspect of life. The sole purpose of education should not be to fulfill every desire of life but the self realisation of oneself.

In the present century if we want to make a better society which is worth living then we have to follow the principle of ancient times.

➤ **SOCIAL ROLE:-** while in modern education youth don't learn about their role in society or their duties. In the ancient education system the inculcation of the civil and social role was the main aim. Pupils were not self centric; they learned that they had to fulfill their role and duties as a citizen too. They just not had to satisfy their own needs but they also had to be charitable and noble.

➤ **LOW COST EDUCATION:-**In ancient times education was not costly. To make all the young people educated was a high authority's responsibility. Ancient education preferred the talent of the students rather than focusing on how wealthy they were. Pupils did not have to pay any kind of cost for education.

The main reason ancient education did not cost that much was because there was not any kind of organisation which took part in it in gurukul too, it was affordable to get education for everyone. They all focused on giving better education to all pupils equally regardless of their wealth.

➤ **LESSON OF LIFE:-**In ancient systems education was both formal and informal. There was a lot to learn from home, temples, tols, chatushpada and gurukuls. They guided youth to the right way of living life. Lectures were mostly oral so students had to remember and meditate on them.

➤ **IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION:-**It played an important role in the ancient education system. Students used to participate in physical activities like games, recreational activities (krida), exercise (vyayama) archery (dhanurvedya) and mind and body training (yogsadhna). The teacher and students used to work together to become proficient in various kinds of learning.

➤ **SELF RESTRAINT:-**In ancient times self restraint was insisted to enlighten pupils' inner personalities. Teachers emphasized the importance of simple life to their students. They had been taught to have simple food, clothing and to lead a life of perfect chastity.

➤ **THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER:-**In the present education system of India teachers are only known as someone who comes and teaches a subject. Their role is now restricted.

To develop the Indian education system it is very important to revive the role of a teacher from ancient times. In ancient education teachers' main aim was to develop relationships with their students. Their role was defined into different titles with meaning. GURU was the highest title to be given to a teacher. PANDIT who could explain about a specific subject with deep insights, DRASHTA who used to elaborate visionary thoughts, the one who used to give basic information called ADHYAPAK. If he also explained info and included his own knowledge he would be called UPADHYAYA. ACHARYA had a high level in teaching because he also taught skills to his pupils.

Teachers are considered the pillars of education. Students look up to their teachers for gaining knowledge. They should not teach youth to become a mechanical puppet. Their main aim should be to give their students practical knowledge. They must take a role in nation building and create an ideal society. Teachers should be a role model for their students.

➤ **STUDENT TEACHER RELATIONSHIP** :- This is a common known fact that nowadays education and content are not stand alone institutions but it is changing into communications networks. Academic Institutions and Schools are not only sole givers of education. That is why teachers had to understand their students . In the era of virtual and e-learning it is hard to engage with students and active learning so it is the teacher's task to recognise their students' talent and abilities and ambitions. Students aim to study for a suitable career so their teachers should always try to enlighten their inner personality, increase their inquisitiveness, teach them human values and sensitivity for the environment to build a healthy mind and soul.

In the current education system, teachers and academics must adopt the ancient teaching techniques they should be able to provide feedback to their students. They must insist students to interact and increase peer to peer learning. The integration of this kind of learning with technology and virtual reality of education will create the new model of mixed teaching and learning.

➤ **PUPIL CENTRIC EDUCATION**:- In gurukul teachers used to pay very keen education to each pupil so they can grow individually every students had to show their talents and ability as an teacher it was teacher's responsibility to encourage them as an individual as well as they also taught them to be united.

➤ **DISCIPLINE**:-As a key part of all aspects of ancient education discipline was the key aspect in the ancient education system. Each and every student had to go through strict regulations. The teacher taught their students about moral values. They strictly told them to control their anger, jealousy , and enmity lust. They were taught to be humble, to always give respect to others, not to tell bad lies and to always give love to animals. It was important for a student to live a very disciplined and simple life regardless of their wealth and status.

Education's main aim should always be the growth of personality, inner or outer. The education system has to make sure it is a responsibility. The youth of India hopes to get confident and respected for its culture and language and its heritage. The education system must take responsibility that education is not only limited to powerful and privileged people, it has to reach everyone in order to become universal. It has to overcome the gap between people of various backgrounds. We must build new policies by integrating past strengths, experiences and values.

The current education system with new reform is set for some changes and developments with new techniques like e-learning. It was a sufficient way to provide knowledge this new programme is expected to remain because of its easy and smooth approach to students. But this way is not enough in itself.

CONCLUSION :-

This research paper is not criticizing the current education system it is the most sufficient and efficient for students. Distance learning, virtual learning, and e programs make it even more approachable to students but this kind of education will be in vain if it is not being provided properly. The modern education system should integrate peer to peer learning so we can achieve a balanced education system for our students.

To conclude this, The use of technology is increasing day by day. A very skilled person has given more importance. So everyone is competing with each other. For getting good grades,bookishknowledge is way more important than practical knowledge. There is a lot of mental pressure on youth to prove themselves, when they fail they do things that are inappropriate. Some of them lost so much of their lives so they commit suicide. Our society needs to revive some of the ancient education where a healthy and peaceful but practical atmosphere was there. There was no stress laid on youth. The future will be even more stressful and tough so not our educational system but also our society needs an environment where moral values are appreciated. Where the educational system will bring inner growth in youth and make them strong enough to compete and survive. We should give more importance to character, spiritualism, philosophy rather than wealth, power, and materialism. Thus, to achieve an ideal society, our ancient education system techniques can be integrated with contemporary education. These magnificent insights into our cultural heritage will be able to help us build new education policies. As Rabindranath Tagore once said that The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.

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