

## **Paradigm Shift in Education: Classical to Constructivist Approach**

**Ms. Shalini Johar**

Research Scholar

&

**Dr. Vinod Kr. Shanwal**

Gautam Buddha University

Greater Noida

India

### **Abstract**

*The inevitable and centrally important role of education in advancement of any society is undeniable. India is not only known for its rich heritage, culture and traditions but its education system too has a rich history of its own. Its unique schools (gurukuls), curriculum, Guru-shishya unique relation are few of the many highlights that make our ancient education system to stand out in the world. The purpose of our ancient education was not merely imparting and acquiring knowledge but also transmitting the cultural norms of the group to its younger members. The aim of education was to inculcate morals, values, ethics and social norms in the learners. However, due to modernization, industrialization, privatization and globalization there has been a paradigm shift in the process of learning. Teacher centered learning has shifted to child centered learning. The major shift is in the mode of instruction- from face-to-face oral instruction to print based instruction, and from Paper learning to E-learning. Today's learners are knowledge managers and knowledge producers. They are co-constructors of knowledge along with their teachers and peers. No doubt our present education system is meeting the demands of the new knowledge and productive global economy but it is weighed down by many reasons as a result of which the outcome is becoming ego-centric & self-involved. Today, Indian society is witnessing decline in ethical values, facing problems of indiscipline & intolerance, violation of rules & unlawful activities is at its peak. Even the cordial relation between the teacher and the student which was once the highlight of our nation is missing. All this depicts that our present education system requires reforms which can be implemented from ancient education for overall development of students as a good human being. Drawing out basic essence of the ancient education system the present paper delineates the paradigm shift in education that articulates the trajectory of educational system from past to present. After discussing perks of classical and constructive approach the paper highlights the lacunae and reforms needed in present education system.*

**Keywords:** Ancient Education, Present Education, Moral education, learners

### **Introduction**

*“True education is that which cultivates the soul or the spirit, and leads ultimately to the full and complete development of man's body, mind and spirit...Literacy then is not the primary goal of education: it is the cultivation of character, and the development of the spirit; it is the education of the heart not the head”.*

-M.K. Gandhi

The aim of education is not merely making human being successful but it develops human personality with skills, values, morals and enhances different characteristics of human being. It dispels darkness and brings light. It is the base of all-round human development, stepping stone for the onward march of culture and the bedrock of all

human progress. The education system of any nation is mirror through which can be seen the image of the nation being shaped and likely to be shaped. India is not only known for its culture and traditions but is also famous for its unique ancient education system. The idea of education of ancient India has been very noble. Its aim was not just transmitting of knowledge but self-realization, training for completeness of life and character building. But today in modern India Education is the process of acquiring skills, skills of science, technology, medicine, visualizing and imagining out of the box etc. Our India's educational journey from ancient to modern has passed through many phases and each phase has its own pros and cons. This paper highlights the education system of ancient and modern India and the reforms needed in our present education system.

### ***Highlights of Ancient Indian Education***

The ancient education has emerged from Vedas and this Vedic age education has been regarded as a source of spiritual enlightenment, the backbone of our ancient education which shows the right path to a person for leading a successful and honorable life.

#### **1) Life related knowledge**

As knowledge was imparted through oral recitation in groups and individually, the students used to listen their teachers and try to comprehend all the problems of life through listening and meditation. Books were not used as sources of learning the students used to acquire practical knowledge of life and society by communication with the people. Teachers made efforts to make the students capable of experiencing the Supreme Truth themselves and bring about changes and transformations within the society. During their stay in Gurukul all the students had to give up all the materialistic worldly things and comforts.

#### **2) Teaching of Vedas**

The students were taught Vedas as Vedas are the sources of Indian philosophy of life. The Veda means knowledge. The students were given two types of knowledge one of existing world and the other of another world. Existing world used to deal with the social aspect whereas in another world students were taught about achievement of salvation. However, the greater emphasis was laid on the latter, because education was considered as the mean of free from life bondages. The supreme goal of life is self-realization and ultimate aim of education should be this only and this uniqueness of our ancient education system makes it stand out in the world.

#### **3) Close Association between Teacher and Student**

During ancient times Gurukul system of education was there. Where students used to reside and learn everything which their guru used to teach according to their aptitude, abilities and capabilities. The teachings were such that they could be later implemented to find solutions to real life problems. There was a special bond between and shishya and development of such bond was must before practicing teaching learning process. The students were not only given the knowledge of religion they were taught each and everything like Sanskrit, scriptures, medicine, philosophy, literature, warfare, statecraft, astrology, history and many more. They were given vocational education too. The learning was not just limited to books but to correlate it with the nature and life. The aim of education was not imparting and acquiring knowledge but also inculcating morals, values, ethics and social norms in the learners. Guru was role model for the shishya.

#### **4) Development of Personality**

The aim of ancient education was to develop the overall personality and character. The moral values were inculcated to make them good citizens who not only keep the society together but keep the nation united. The education always used to start and end with religious rituals to show devotion towards the cause of learning. Both formal as well as informal education was given due importance. Self-esteem, self-confidence, compassion, courage and empathy were few of the many traits that were inculcated in pupils through education.

#### **5) Providing Free Education**

During ancient times, the education was free. The students were not required to pay any fees and outside agencies were not allowed to interfere in the matters of education. The gurukuls or ashrams were completely autonomous. The students' skills, abilities and motivation towards learning was the only fees they need to pay. If guardians wish to donate something to the ashramas they can, accordance to their financial position. Cow, horse,

vegetables etc. were whole heartedly accepted. The teachers motivated students to perform their tasks and functions appropriately.

#### **6) Focusing on Discipline**

In the ancient system of education, the students have to follow strict discipline. They had to abide by the rules and principles of the gurukuls. They had to exercise self-restraint. They weren't allowed to gamble, sing, dance or kill animals. They had to keep themselves free from greed, anger, ego, hatred etc. Self-realization, character building, inculcation of moral, social values was the motto of education. So, all the students whether they belong to any caste or creed or of any status have to follow the rules and lead simple life.

#### **7) Development of Social Work**

The students were made aware regarding social work. As students are the posterities of the nation, they only can lead nation and help in the progress of the society. That's why students were asked to make use of their knowledge and skills towards social work. The students live in gurukuls and are assigned to do each and every work of their guru, from looking after livestock to collecting fuel-wood they perform all the household works of the teachers. In this way they all learn different skills and undergo learning experiences. This whole learning experience teach them the meaning of dignity of labor and social service.

#### **8) Vocational Training**

The students used to reside in gurukuls. They not only study, their duty was to do all the tasks of guru and look after the daily chores of the household. They just not only keep the place clean and cook food they have to rear livestock too. They were provided training for their look after. With rearing the students were trained in different occupations such as, animal husbandry, dairy farming etc. The students were not only given academic knowledge or knowledge of Vedas they were taught different vocations for their living.

#### **9) Personal Attention to Every Student**

The gurus were spiritual father. The students were taught based on his/her learning ability. Teachers were not authoritative they were very gentle and sweet while dealing with the students. Due to low student teacher ratio, the individual attention was given.

### ***Medieval Education System***

After the Islamic invasion again the education system of India changed. Maktabas and Madrassas were established for Muslims. Maktabas were primary schools in which students learned reading, writing, and basic Islamic prayers, and madrasas means secondary schools to teach advanced language skills. They were taught via lecture and discussion method. The curriculum was both secular and religious. Their religious education was study of Quran, Islamic law and Sufism. Education was given in Arabic and Persian languages and was primarily religion based. But it included the study of mathematics, astronomy, grammar, politics, art and literature. Teachers held respectable position and the pupil teacher relation was also intimate but the practice of living with the teacher was not like ancient period. The aim of education was to develop love for

Muslim culture and religion. But the education was not only limited to this only it was to inculcate vocation and prepare student for the next world. Madrassas took keen interest in preparing students for administration.

### ***Colonial Educational System***

After arrival of East India Company in India, the Indian education system changed again. There were two forms of education. First- Orientalists, believer of education to be given in native language. Second - Anglicist who believed that traditional education didn't have modern skills so best method of instruction is English. Text book and examination culture is given to us by Britishers only. This education system narrowed the area of knowledge and gave students the habit of cramming. The main aim of education was that Britishers wanted to make a community of babus who can mediate between locals and Britishers to communicate cultures and laws to each other. But the British Government didn't want to highly educated people as if there were more educated people in India the chances of revolution become brighter. Here I wish to quote Lord Macaulay's address to the British Parliament 2nd February 1835 which clearly highlights the intention of Britishers changing Indian Education

system, “I have travelled across the length and breadth of India and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief. Such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such caliber, that I do not think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage, and therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation”.

Moreover, Britishers wanted to spread Christianity in India through education. They constructed number of English missionary schools, colleges and other educational institutions to achieve their objective. They wished to convert people religion to Christianity and many people of oppressed class adopted Christianity.

### ***Present Education System***

Modern education is an evolution from traditional education. With the passage of time our country's rulers changed and finally after Independence modern formal education came into existence. Education system of a country changes according to the need of the people of the country. This led to new education curriculums formulation which included new theories to be taught. Our present education system has contribution of both public as well as private sector. It is controlled by two governments- Centre as well as State. Today education is one of our fundamental rights. It is divided into pre-primary level, primary level, middle level education, secondary education, undergraduate level and postgraduate level. Slowly and steadily modern education won people and today it has reached new levels with science and technology making education more fun and interesting to students. There has been a tremendous improvement in quality of life & education with the advances in technology. All over the world learning paradigm is under tremendous pressure to meet the demands of new knowledge and productive global economy in a better way. Due to modernization, industrialization, privatization and globalization there has been a paradigm shift in the process of learning. Teacher centered learning has shifted to child centered learning and over a period of time learning has shifted to lifelong learning. The major shift is in the mode of instruction- from face to face oral instruction to print based instruction, and from Paper learning to E-learning. Today's learners are knowledge managers and knowledge producers. They are co-constructors of knowledge along with their teachers and peers. This E-learning has revolutionized learning. It has provided immense opportunities for lifelong learning with volumes of open educational resources.

### ***Need For Reforms in Present Education***

No doubt our present education system is meeting the demands of the new knowledge and productive global economy. It is preparing students for their future career as it used to be in ancient times. Today technology is everywhere in our life. It is like a boon which has enhanced the quality of human life. But can we truly say that it is boon not curse because at one hand it is developing humans on the other hand its uncontrolled and unguided use or misuse has created danger to the society in terms of polluting youngsters' mind and thought process. For example, video games like Blue whale which provoke suicides, pubG promotes violence and unrest. The main objective of Indian students has changed. It is to take degree and earn money, without consideration of ethical values and national spirit in their life. Today the Indian society has encountered with never ending problems as there is uncontrolled corruption, decrease in ethical values, unlawful activities, inhuman behaviour, intolerance, indiscipline, violation of rules, no self-realization, misuse of technology: cybercrimes, hacking etc. and above all cut throat competition in education sector is slowly breaking the structure of Indian society. It is high time to identify the aims of education and reasons of declining social, moral values and spiritual strengthening in Indian education system. India's backbone is its rich spiritual and cultural heritage and today we need a value-based education system for the betterment of society and nation. Some of the initiatives that should be taken have been listed below.

#### **1) Purpose of Education**

To create entrepreneurs, researchers, scientists, innovators who can construct new knowledge and be partners in productive global economy should be the aim of education not just workers. The young generation should be taught to use technology for spreading knowledge and culture.

## 2) Skill Based Education

The modern education system ensures the success by conducting examinations. Identification of skills and molding learners into their direction of interest should be the motto of education. As acquisition of skill gives learner success in each and every walk of life. A person who is passionate about music should pursue career in that field only he will excel, how does it really matter how well he scored in Mathematics.

## 3) Recruitment of Competent Teachers

Today we need teachers who are lifelong learners, self-motivated, uses flexible teaching methods, think out of the box, uses flipped learning, well versed in social media etc.

## 4) Interactive Classroom

An interactive classroom intellectually engages the students as active participant with the teacher. The teacher allows the students to apply what they have learnt and motivate them to cultivate their own productivity.

## 5) Focus on Moral Education

Inculcation of moral values should be the aim of our modern education system. No doubt today the role of teachers has changed they are mentors, guide, friends of their students but to bring back the respectful relation between student and teacher that was the highlight of our ancient education, millennial teachers need to be empathetic too. Teachers are models for their students. Their friendly interactions, activity-based learning, group projects etc. can help in developing values.

## Conclusion

Today we all are in the blind race of materialistic development which is creating unrest all over the world. Education is a powerful instrument for shaping and modernizing the society. So, the need of an hour is balanced education system that not only make individual successful by developing skills but also inculcate moral values, endurance, spiritualism, feeling of brotherhood and strong character to make him an ideal citizen of a society. India's uniqueness spirituality & meditation, essence of our ancient education should be incorporated in our modern education. All the ancient languages like Sanskrit, Pali etc. should be given due recognition. Lucrative jobs should be created by government so that students willingly choose ancient languages for study and think of career in it. Our ancient education system was much more advanced as compared to today's modern education system. Aryabhatta's huge contribution towards mathematics and astronomy is unprecedented. Ayurveda, the ancient school of medicine is getting popularity in whole world. Charaka, its founder is considered as the father of medicine. Nalanda University one of the greatest learning centres in ancient India had been looked up by the people all over the world. So, for the betterment of our society we need to inculcate the essence of our ancient education.

## References

Indian Educational System: An Overview of the Ancient Indian Education

[http://www.ijarse.com/images/fullpdf/1426573415\\_815.pdf](http://www.ijarse.com/images/fullpdf/1426573415_815.pdf)

Altekar, A.S. 1957. Education in Ancient India, (5th edition), Varanasi: Nand Kishore and Bros.

British Council, "Understanding India: The future of Higher Education and Opportunities for International Cooperation" February 2014.

Chaube, S.P. History and Problems of Indian Education, Agra: Vinod Pustak Mandir. \*Chaudhary, S. (2008, Jan 28). Lord Macaulay's Quote on India. Retrieved from <http://sundayposts.blogspot.in/2008/01/lord-macaulays-quote-on-india.html>

Swami, H. 2007. An Introduction to Hindu Culture: Ancient & Medieval.

Georges, I. 2000. The Universal History of Numbers: From Prehistory to the Invention of the \*Computer, John Wiley & Sons.

Progress of Education in Ancient Education Review – Vedic and Post Vedic Education

Mukherjee, R.K. 1936. Hindu Civilization Longman, Green and Co. London.

V. Sasi Kumar, "The Education System in India", <https://www.gnu.org/education/edu-system-india.html>