

# Paradigm Shift in Role of Teachers, From Teachers to Academic Leaders

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## ABSTRACT

Education plays an important role in nation building. India was known for its effective education system from Gurukul era to modern technology based teaching. The role of teacher has changed widely from guru to teacher to academic leaders. The aim of this paper is to study the change in practices followed by teachers in gurukul to present era. In this paper we have discussed that how our education system is going through a dilemma, whether to opt ancient education system where the focus was more on teaching value system, skill development, and contribution in society as compared to today's era where the focus is on scoring marks and to perform by any means and becoming self centered at the cost of society.

## 1. Introduction

India has always understood the importance of education and believed that education serves as the backbone of society. Education has its roots in India since ancient times in the form of gurukul education system. Education helps in developing in us a perspective of looking at life. It helps us in building opinion and have a point of view about things in life. Education leads to growth and development of an individual. Education is a lifelong progress and is incomplete without the involvement of a guru as known in gurukul times or a teacher as known in present times. The guru is the one who leads the life of his student and brings him into light from darkness by imparting knowledge, value and beliefs. Guru is responsible for the overall development of the child. In ancient times the teacher or Guru was considered as torch bearer of his shishya's life and helped in the mental(intellectual), physical(practical) and spiritual development of their students. The time when the students left their guru's they were ready to face the challenges of life. They possessed greatest values and contributed towards the betterment of society. In gurukul era, the immediate aim was to prepare the students for the actual needs of life and not to join the rat race for securing higher positions and better marks from others as it is done in present-day education system. With the introduction of modern education system, we have forgotten that education is the only means of civilizing our youth and prepare them to face the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Modern education has become more commercial rather than being an institutional concept. The gurukul era of leaning focused on theory as well as practical education whereas very less time is dedicated to physical and skill development activities in modern education system. Acharya's of gurukul system had set high standards of conducts and standard of living for their shishya's which they also followed. We cannot revive the old gurukul system that was followed 1000 years ago as it is not relevant in technological societies of today with totally different horizons but some of the practices can be incorporated into the modern education system that would lead to a better life for the students of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To sustain in 21<sup>st</sup> century, students must learn to think critically, they must possess the problem-solving skills. To

develop the students with all these qualities teachers must understand their role as nation builder and extend their duties beyond classroom and they must connect with the students to influence them for their overall development which is different from their academic development where the students are under pressure of their parents and society to compete for marks and higher positions.

In India, millions of students are victims of unrealistic, pointless and mindless competition where they gather information just to compete with others and not for knowledge. This mind-numbing competition and rote learning practices crushes the creativity and originality of million of students of our country. In majority of schools any deviance from the designed curriculum is discouraged, risk taking is mocked and the major flaw in their education system is that it incentivizes memorizing of the information over originality of thoughts. Our present day education system has a very narrow definition of success with standardized testing, competition, ranking and comparison. This one size fits all approach negates the self-worth of the child which in present era is determined by the academic success and not by the individual quality they possess. The whole system is focused towards achieving better academic outcomes or to be a master of all the traits rather than getting kids to love learning, and consequently there is a hierarchy of pressure, with kids right at the bottom Gurukul followed holistic approach of teaching. Holistic education is a philosophy of education based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to humanitarian values such as compassion and peace.

A teacher therefore must act like a leader who can create a classroom that encourage the students to take up the tasks that will help in developing their decision-making skills, critical and analytical thinking abilities and prepare them to face the challenges of the real life and should also sensitize them to the need of society.

## 2. Shift in role of teachers to Academic leaders

In gurukul education system, the students lived with their gurus for several years. The guru identified the capability of his

students and accordingly imparted knowledge. A Guru, irrespective of the nature of students, has three tumultuous things to enact, namely to induce and promote creativity among all levels of students, to equip students with confidence and ability, and to maintain integrity in their words and deeds.<sup>1</sup>

The roles and responsibility of teachers in modern education system according to the directorate of education(India) that the teachers must attend the morning assembly, maintain the teacher's diary regularly with lesson plan, evaluate the students time to time, conduct regular meetings with parents. What severely lacks is the duty/role of teachers as leaders. It is more of a transactional than transformational role. Except a few private schools the role of teachers is restricted to the classroom and mainly chalk and talk method.<sup>2</sup>

In gurukul education system the basis of education was much similar to modern education system<sup>3</sup>

- Personality development
- Perfect teaching learning atmosphere
- Personal attention to every student
- Discipline
- Low student -teacher ratio
- Free education
- Development of civic responsibilities and social values

Despite the similarity between both the education system, these practices are not followed in all the schools in India and rather restricted to some schools where getting admission is not easy for majority of people due to the high fees and tough competition for seats.<sup>9</sup>

### 3. Drawbacks in Present Education System

Following are the factors responsible for the deteriorating quality of education

- Declining teacher's status
- Declining teaching values
- Poor performance of teachers

Teachers status has depleted and demoralized these days as some teachers relentlessly opt for this profession for the sake of monetary benefits attached to this profession and not for the sanctity of it. professionalism, poor teaching methods and changing social attitudes are some of the responsible factors for this decline. Lack of training, inadequate salary and poor recruitment process are some of the factors responsible for the poor performance of teachers.<sup>5</sup>

Acquirement of marks and grades put extreme pressures on teaching community, therefore leaving no choice but to follow it, this system compels teachers which in turn compels students. Deadlines to complete syllabus, necessity to stock up revision time, the hard reality of handling 40 and more students per class, being held answerable by administrative authorities and parents for student 'failures' leave our teachers alone,

cold, extremely stressed and finally burn out feeling with the insult of professional dissatisfaction<sup>6</sup>

### 4. Need for Change in Educational Practices

The best practices of gurukul system of education can be implemented today. Though the advancement in technology makes it unrealistic to use all the practices of ancient era to modern times but some of the practices like teaching value education, promotion of creativity and innovation can be promoted. Modern education has given our country scientific and democratic thought but somehow the education practices makes the mind of the students just the store house of knowledge and discourage creative thinking. To foster an ideal education system, we need an amalgamation of both where we can integrate the best practices of both the system. The importance of the role of the teacher as an agent of change, promoting understanding and tolerance, has never been more critical as it is becoming in the Twenty first Century.<sup>7</sup>

### 5. Why is Value Education Important?

As the students are nurtured in a spirit of excessive competition and are trained right from the beginning to relate to aggressive competition and facts detached from contexts. The individualistic idea of excellence is promoted at the cost of emotional and relational skills which contributes to the ever-rising importance of value education. India is dealing with concerns about degeneration of values, impact of change on children and youth, increased crime and violence, effect of media, the competitive mindset among students, parents, teachers.<sup>8</sup>

### 6. Conclusion

Although there's wide gap of education between gurukul system and present education system, there's enough space wherever each will be integrated in theory and observe.

Some of the discipline that should be under focus

- a) More preference should be given to character, truth, non-violence, spiritualism rather than wealth and materialism.
- b) The sense of discipline and cordial relation should be there between teacher and students.
- c) "Simple living and High Thinking" ought to be the motive of student life.
- d) Sense of belongingness and contribution to the society.

India has IIT's IIM's but lacks the renowned schools as school education and especially primary education should be given prime importance as early years of a child's age is the foundation stage of the life. Boarding schools follow the gurukul system of education but it is not accessible to majority of the population due to very high fees and strict admission policies. There is a need for amendments in education policy which ensures adequate training and development programs for teachers.

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