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**ONE DAY CONFERENCE ON
“INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS: REDISCOVERING
THE ROOTS OF TIMELESS WISDOM”**



Date: 09/01/2026

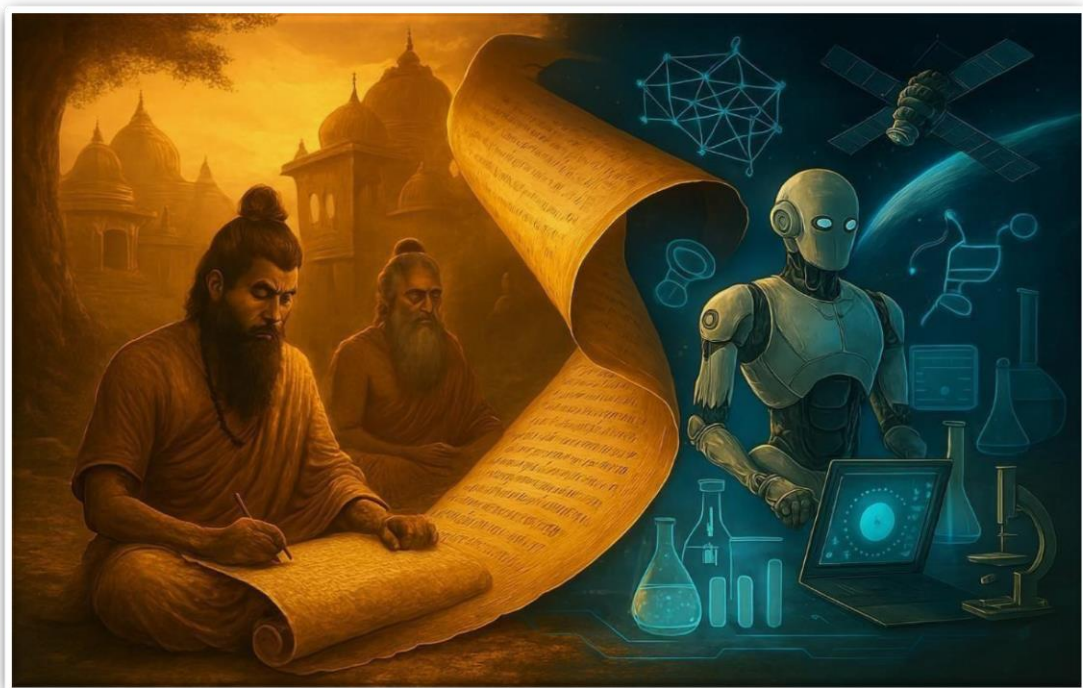
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Book Name: Indian Knowledge Systems: Rediscovering the Roots of Timeless Wisdom

ISBN Number: 978-93-5619-426-7

Editor: Dr. J. JOLLY VINI SHEEBA

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**Published by
KG College of Arts and Science,
KGiSL Campus,
Saravanampatti,
Coimbatore – 641 035,
Tamilnadu, India**

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ROLE OF DISCIPLINE IN ANCIENT INDIAN EDUCATION

Dr. T. Mohana Sundari

Assistant Professor, Department of B.Com (CA)

Nallamuthu Gounder Mahalingam College

mohanasundari688@gmail.com

Abstract

Discipline served as the foundation of ancient Indian education, especially in the Gurukul system, where it cultivated self-control, moral values, and holistic growth among students. Discipline integrated physical routines, obedience to gurus, and ethical training to build character, humility, and societal responsibility. It emphasized values like honesty, respect, and truthfulness through daily immersion in the guru's ashram. Students followed strict schedules with pre-dawn prayers, yoga, chores, and studies, fostering self-discipline over external punishments. This approach balanced intellectual pursuits with spiritual and physical development via oral learning and debates. The system produced disciplined individuals ready for life, prioritizing inner growth and service, as seen in Vedic and Buddhist traditions like Nalanda. Discipline functioned as a core pedagogical principle in the Gurukul system, embedding self-control and moral development into every aspect of learning to shape well-rounded individuals. Gurus modeled discipline through their conduct, teaching students obedience, humility, and ethical values via immersion in ashram life, where learning occurred orally and holistically. This principle prioritized character over rote knowledge, using routines to instill truthfulness, respect, and detachment from materialism.

Keywords: Indian Education, Ancient Education System, Discipline in Education system.

I. Introduction

Discipline played a pivotal role in ancient Indian education, particularly within the Gurukul system, where it served as the bedrock for holistic student development by instilling self-control, moral integrity, and unwavering respect for the guru-shishya tradition. Rooted in Vedic principles around 1500 BCE, discipline transformed education into a lifelong process of character building, blending rigorous daily routines with spiritual practices to foster humility, truthfulness, and ethical conduct essential for societal harmony. Students embodied discipline through pre-dawn regimens of meditation, yoga, chores, and Vedic studies in the guru's ashram, where obedience and service modeled intrinsic motivation over punitive measures.

Vedic texts and ancient scriptures outline disciplinary practices in Gurukuls, emphasizing self-control, moral conduct, and guru obedience through structured routines rather than harsh punishments. Yajurveda (34.5) highlights discipline (niyama) as the ethical backbone, likening the guru's role to the sun illuminating the student, while Atharvaveda (19.71.1) stresses personalized instruction contingent on steadfast discipline and moral integrity for continued acceptance in the Gurukul. Upanishads describe teaching methods fostering reverence and assimilation of knowledge orally. Manusmriti provides detailed rules on student conduct, urging abstinence from distractions, strict self-control, and ethical living to cultivate moral integrity during ashram life. It promotes humility, truthfulness, and service as daily disciplines.

Vedic texts like the Upanishads and Manusmriti describe routines indirectly through prescriptions for student life, but these are literary, not inscribed finds; no Brahmi or later inscriptions explicitly reference "Gurukul" daily schedules. Nalanda's excavated remains (6th-12th century CE) reveal monastic routines akin to advanced Gurukuls, with cells, temples,

and viharas suggesting disciplined communal living, though focused on Buddhist vihara rather than Vedic ashram life. Epigraphic records from sites like Taxila or Ajanta mention educational grants to teachers, implying structured student communities, while 9th-12th century mutt inscriptions (e.g., Chalukya vassal temples) note mathas functioning as Gurukul-like centers with routines of study and service. Archaeological yields, such as pottery and tools from Vedic-era sites, hint at self-sufficient ashram economies supporting chores, but lack direct routine depictions.

II. Significance of Discipline in Homes and Learning Institutions

Discipline impacts the learning process by creating a stress-free environment for apportioning time to various activities, improves planning through observing and maintaining a set daily routine, moulds learner character and enhances their motivation, enables the setting of good examples and positively contributes to better grades. Elements such as test anxiety, environment, motivation, and emotions require consideration when developing models of academic performance. Various studies have shown a positive link between discipline in learners and their school performance, with the latter increasing with the increase in discipline levels. Although learning institutions have a duty to enforce the rules or code of conduct guiding learner behavior, parents also have a role to play to ensure consistency. Aspects such as dress code, hairdos, and basic manners start from home. Parents and educators, especially heads of institutions, are two pillars with a significant influence on grooming learners. Unless discipline is tackled from an early age, achieving quality education with full learner impact will remain a challenge. Thus, if learners at all levels are disciplined, they are most likely to acquire the requisite knowledge and skills with ease because they are focused and self driven. Despite their busy working schedules, parents should spend time with their children to discuss various issues, including discipline.



III. Review of Literature

Prasenjit Das (2023) The NEP 2020 was approved by the Indian Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020. The Ministry of Human Resource Development in India ratified the recommendations of a panel that Dr. K. Kasturirangan, a former chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), had set up to plan the country's new educational system. The discourses of the New Education Policy question the existing educational system's portrayal of

affordability, fairness, access, and accountability in relation to quality. This policy draft consists of four parts: I, school education; II, advanced education; III, additional important areas of attention; and IV, making it happen. This study focuses on the second portion of the advanced education curriculum, which addresses the preparation of educators.

Biswamitra Purohit et al. (2022) The overarching goal of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Gopabandhu Das's educational philosophy as it pertains to the current situation in India. The educational philosophy of Gopabandhu Das and its applicability in the modern setting of India were the only subjects of the research. Since this is all secondary and qualitative data, the researcher used tools like theme and content analysis as well as document analysis to draw conclusions. At long last, the renowned philosophical genius Gopabandhu Das was revealed to be a strong nationalist. By putting his educational theories into action, he ensured his own eminence as an educator.

Dinesh Joshi (2020) In ancient times, there was a system of education called a gurukul where students lived with a guru and learned practical skills that could be applied to real-world situations. Before engaging in the teaching-learning process, there had to be an emotional connection between a guru and a shishya. Religion, Sanskrit, scriptures, medicine, philosophy, literature, statecraft, astrology, history, and many other subjects were transmitted by the guru. It wasn't just about reading books; it was also about making connections to real-world examples. It was not as simple as committing certain information to memory and then writing test

Sintayehu Kassaye Alemu (2018) This article aims to start academic discussions on what universities are, how they came to be, and their place in history. This serves as a reminder that there are many different kinds of higher education institutions (HEIs) and an opportunity to challenge the dominance of any one narrative about the purpose, philosophy, or history of universities. Despite historical evidence indicating the presence of other institutions of higher learning, there are researchers who contend that Western Europe was the only location where higher learning "indisputably" originated and has persisted since the Middle Ages.

Younis Ahmad Sheikh (2017) The world has come to understand that governments' educational systems are the direct determinant of their economic performance. An educated populace is a powerful one. Being well-educated is a hallmark of a developed country. After China and the US, India has the world's third-largest system of higher learning. As a developing country, India has been making substantial strides in education since gaining independence. While India's higher education system has faced many obstacles, it also has many potential to innovate and improve.

IV. Ancient Education

During the ancient period, two systems of education were developed, Vedic, and Buddhist. The medium of language during the Vedic system was Sanskrit, while those in the Buddhist system were pali. During those times the education was of Vedas, Brahmanas, Upnishads, and Dharmasutras. From the Rigveda onwards, our ancient education started with the objective of developing the students not only in the outer body but also on the inner body. The ancient education focused on imparting ethics like humility, truthfulness, discipline, self-reliance, and respecting all creations to the students. The education was mostly imparted in ashrams, gurukuls, temples, houses. Sometimes pujaris of the temples used to teach students.



The teacher is called as a Guru and the students are called as Shishyas. They were situated in a serene environment such as a forest. Students consider the gurukul as a second home as they stayed there for many years. The education imparted in gurukuls is not just restricted to men. Women like Maitreyi, Viswambhara, Apala, Gargi and Lopamudra went on to become famous Vedic scholars. Education consisted of learning about basic skills such as wood gathering, cooking along with the Vedas.

V. Conclusion

The study of the Education System in the Vedic period and Brahmanical Educational system makes it clear that in those days the residence of the teachers (Gurus) were the educational institutions called Gurukulas. There the teacher and the taught lived together as the members of a single family. In Ancient India, in Vedic and Buddhist periods, well-organized educational institutions like that of the modern age had not come into being. In those days, some monasteries and huge sacred places had been established. It is said that the learned persons from different places used to assemble there and debate. Most of the universities are seen to have ended around the 12th century.

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