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



Date: 09/01/2026

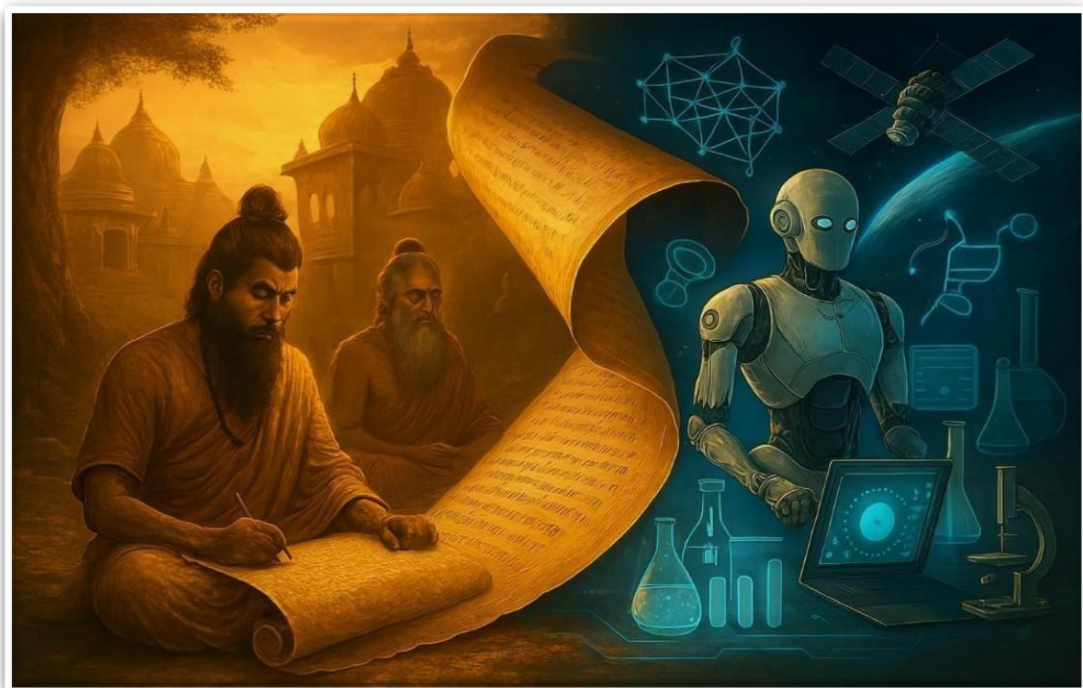
**Organized by
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WITH ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE**

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FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK



The organization of the ICSSR-sponsored One Day National Conference on the theme **“Indian Knowledge Systems: Rediscovering the Roots of Timeless Wisdom”** by the Department of Commerce (Accounting & Finance) reflects a timely academic initiative that addresses the growing importance of integrating traditional knowledge systems with contemporary research and practice. Indian Knowledge Systems represent a vast repository of intellectual heritage that has contributed significantly to diverse fields such as Commerce, Economics, Management, Science, Mathematics, Ethics, and Sustainable Development. Re-examining these knowledge traditions in the present global context is essential for fostering interdisciplinary understanding and innovative research perspectives.

In the current academic landscape, higher education institutions are entrusted with the responsibility of promoting research that is both contextually grounded and globally relevant. Conferences such as this provide an effective platform for academicians, researchers, and scholars to engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange ideas, and critically examine the applicability of indigenous knowledge frameworks in modern academic and professional domains. By encouraging scholarly discussions and research dissemination, this conference contributes to strengthening academic networks and enhancing research culture within institutions.

The focus on Indian Knowledge Systems also aligns with national priorities in higher education, emphasizing value-based learning, ethical practices, and sustainable development. Integrating traditional wisdom with modern methodologies enables researchers to address complex societal challenges with holistic and culturally informed approaches. The deliberations and academic interactions during this conference are expected to generate insights that contribute to curriculum enrichment, policy perspectives, and future research initiatives.

I am confident that this conference will facilitate productive academic engagement and inspire participants to pursue innovative and interdisciplinary research. While Congratulating the Organising team, Convey my best wishes to the faculty members, research scholars and participants for the successful conduct of the conference and for meaningful academic outcomes.

By
Dr. B. Vantiha
Secretary
KG College of Arts and Science

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK



The Department of Commerce (Accounting & Finance) has undertaken the organization of an ICSSR-sponsored One Day National Conference on the theme **“Indian Knowledge Systems: Rediscovering the Roots of Timeless Wisdom.”** In the contemporary academic environment, there is an increasing recognition of the relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems in addressing present-day challenges through interdisciplinary and integrative approaches. Rooted in centuries of intellectual tradition, these knowledge systems offer valuable insights that extend across disciplines such as Commerce, Economics, Management, Science and Technology, while also emphasizing ethical practices, sustainability and holistic development.

Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in preserving, interpreting and disseminating indigenous knowledge traditions alongside modern research paradigms. Conferences of this nature contribute significantly to strengthening research culture, encouraging scholarly inquiry, and fostering dialogue between traditional wisdom and contemporary thought. The present conference provides a platform for academicians, researchers and scholars to deliberate on emerging perspectives, reinterpret classical knowledge frameworks and explore their applications in a globalized context.

The integration of Indian Knowledge Systems into academic discourse promotes critical thinking, innovation and value-based education. By encouraging interdisciplinary research and collaborative engagement, this conference aims to generate meaningful academic outcomes that contribute to curriculum development, policy perspectives and research advancement. Such initiatives also support the broader objectives of national educational reforms by reinforcing cultural heritage while promoting global academic relevance.

I am confident that the deliberations, keynote addresses and paper presentations during this conference will stimulate intellectual exchange and lead to constructive academic outcomes. I extend my best wishes to the organizing committee, faculty members, researchers and participants for the successful conduct of this conference.

By
Dr. S. Vidhya

Principal
KG College of Arts and Science.

FROM THE DEAN'S DESK



The ICSSR-sponsored One Day National Conference on the theme “**Indian Knowledge Systems: Rediscovering the Roots of Timeless Wisdom**”, organized by the Department of Commerce (Accounting & Finance) represents a significant academic initiative aimed at strengthening research culture and interdisciplinary engagement. Indian Knowledge Systems encompass a rich body of intellectual traditions that have shaped thought processes across disciplines such as Commerce, Economics, Management, Science, Mathematics and ethics. Revisiting these knowledge systems in the present academic context enables scholars to explore their contemporary relevance and global applicability.

In an era of rapid transformation in education and research it is essential to integrate traditional wisdom with modern analytical frameworks. Academic conferences play a vital role in fostering scholarly dialogue, encouraging critical inquiry and promoting research collaboration. This conference provides an effective platform for academicians, researchers, and scholars to exchange ideas, present research findings and engage in constructive discussions that bridge classical knowledge traditions with contemporary academic practices.

The focus on Indian Knowledge Systems also supports value-based education and sustainable development by emphasizing ethical principles, holistic thinking and societal well-being. Through keynote addresses, paper presentations, and deliberations this conference is expected to generate meaningful insights that contribute to curriculum enrichment, research advancement and policy perspectives. I am confident that the academic interactions during this conference will inspire innovative research and strengthen interdisciplinary linkages.

I extend my best wishes to the organizing committee, faculty members, research scholars and participants for the successful conduct of this conference and for productive academic engagement.

By

Dr. S. Mahendran

*Dean School of Commerce
KG College of Arts and Science*

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INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS: REDISCOVERING THE ROOTS OF TIMELESS WISDOM TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP IN ANCIENT INDIA

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Abstract

In Vedic Period (c.1500-500 BCE), the teacher student is said to be the guru-shishya tie that was formalized via Upanayana, a sacred thread ceremony initiating the boys into student life, symbolizing the rebirth under the guru's wing. In ancient India, Guru often householders or forest sages select worthy pupils based on character, not caste rigidly teach Vedas, grammar, archery and ethics in gurukuls amid nature, promoting physical rigor alongside mental acuity. This relationship formed the cornerstone of Vedic and post-Vedic education systems, emphasizing the holistic development over mere intellectual training. This bond transcended conventional mentorship, positioning guru as a spiritual father, moral guide and life custodian for the shishya who resided in the guru's ashram during brahmacharya. The Chandogya Upanishad details daily routine: dawn salutations, scriptural recitation and guru-seva, where disobedience warranted gentle persuasion over corporal punishment as Manu Smriti forbade brutality. Esteem was absolute -shishyas addressed gurus as "Bhagavan" and avoided contradicting them, while gurus guarded against vices, sometimes arranging post-graduation, blending familial and spiritual roles. Thus, this system ensures knowledge purity with gurus like those in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad debating profound philosophies, that elevate disciples to rishis. Buddhist adaptations at Nalanda retained monastic oversight but introduced communal living, slightly diluting personalization yet upholding guru accountability.

Keywords: *Guru-Shishya, Upanishad, Holistic development.*

Introduction

By Epic and Puranic ages (500 BCE-500 CE), the teacher and student relationship in ancient India, revered as the Guru-Shishya Parampara, stands as one of the most profound and enduring legacies of Indian civilization, that embody a holistic fusion of intellectual, moral, spiritual and practical education that shaped generations of the scholars, warriors and sages. The Parampara drew from Advaita Vedanta and Samkhya philosophies, positing the guru as the visible manifestation of the atman(self), bridging the shishya's ignorance (avidya) to jnana (enlightenment) via direct transmission, often through maun (silence) or symbolic acts rather than verbose lectures. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad illustrates this in Yajnavalkya's debates with Gargi and Maitreyi, where the guru tests and elevates disciples through dialectical inquiry, emphasizing Shravana (hearing), manana (reflection), and Nididhyasana (meditation) as progressive stages of assimilation. Unlike Greek Socratic methods focused on logic alone, this Indian model integrated samskaras (character refinement), with gurus modelling ahimsa (non-violence), Satya, and tapas (austerity), correcting vices through gentle persuasion—Manu Smriti prohibits corporal punishment, favouring moral suasion to avoid karmic taint. The Chandogya Upanishad details daily regimens: pre-dawn baths, Vedic

chants, philosophical discourses, archery for kshatriyas, and guru-seva, blending vidya (secular arts like grammar, astronomy, medicine) with para-vidya (spiritual wisdom), ensuring well-rounded Aryas (noble ones). Women's participation, though exceptional, shone in figures like Lopamudra and Sulabha, challenging gender norms and underscoring merit over birth. Buddhist and Jain adaptations retained personalization—Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka lineage or Mahavira's Ganadharas—while introducing sangha oversight, yet preserved the guru's irreplaceable role in igniting Prajna (intuitive wisdom). This philosophical depth rendered the relationship a microcosm of cosmic order (Rita), where shishya's surrender mirrored bhakti to the divine.

Social and Institutional Framework

Socially, the Parampara democratized knowledge selectively; while Brahminical ideals prioritized twice-born castes, merit often trumped birth—Valmiki, a hunter-turned-sage, and Vishwamitra, a kshatriya elevated to Brahmarshi, exemplify upward mobility through guru grace. Gurukuls, spanning Taxila's urban academies (teaching 64 Kalas or arts) to Dronacharya's Hastinapur camp, operated residentially, with shishyas observing brahmacharya vows—celibacy, vegetarianism, simple bark-clothes—to channel Ojas (vital energy) inward, begging alms to dissolve pride and foster societal harmony. Institutional evolution marked epochs: Rigvedic family-based teaching yielded to post-Upanishadic Forest academies, Gupta-era universities like Nalanda (with 10,000 students under monk-gurus), and medieval math as preserving lineages amid Islamic incursions. Gurus wielded quasi-judicial authority, mediating disputes and arranging Svetambara marriages, extending familial duties; post-graduation, shishyas sustained gurus via dana, perpetuating the cycle. Archaeological relics—Indus seals depicting teacher figures, Taxila stupas—corroborate this intimacy, while foreign accounts like Megasthenes praise Indian pedagogues' austerity. Challenges included commercialization by 500 CE, with Dakshina morphing into fees, and caste ossification limiting Dalit access, yet the ideal endured, influencing Pallava rock-cut schools and Chola temple gurukuls.

Challenges, Evolution and Decline

The Parampara faced evolutionary pressures: Epic narratives reveal tensions—Arjuna's jealousy, Karna's rejection—highlighting human frailties, yet resolved through guru intervention, underscoring relational resilience. Buddhist Takshashila emphasized Vinaya (discipline) under acharyas, diluting personalization for scalability, while Tantric lineages introduced esoteric initiations (diksha), deepening intimacy via mantra-shakti transfer. Medieval Bhakti saints like Ramanuja and Kabir revived it against ritualism, with informal gurus guiding outcastes, foreshadowing social reform. Decline accelerated post-1000 CE with Turkic invasions disrupting ashrams, Mughal patronage shifting to madrasas, and British Macaulayism (1835) imposing Western curricula, fragmenting oral traditions as printing democratized texts. Colonial reports like Hunter Commission (1882) lamented lost reverence, replaced by salaried teachers. Yet, subterranean survival occurred in Carnatic music (Tyagaraja's disciples), Ayurveda (Charaka sampradaya), and Vedanta math as (Ramakrishna-Vivekananda). Modern revivals, like Swami Dayananda's Arya Samaj gurukuls, blend tradition with science, addressing rote-learning critiques.

Contemporary Resonance and Global Legacy

Today, the Guru-Shishya Parampara critiques impersonal ed-tech and exam-centric systems, advocating mentorship's return for mental health – studies link guru-like bonds to lower dropout rates in Indian coaching hubs like Kota. UNESCO recognizes Vedic sustainability in SDG 4 (quality education), praising holistic models amid AI disruptions. Globally, it echoes in Sufi pir-murid ties, Zen roshi-shinjin, and Western apprenticeships, disseminated via Ashoka's edicts and Bodhidharma's China voyage. Pitfalls – blind obedience enabling gurus' excesses (e.g., modern ashrams) – demand safeguards like transparency, yet core virtues (service, reverence, holism) offer antidotes to alienation. Figures like J. Krishnamurti critiqued institutionalization, urging inner guru awakening, while Aurobindo's integral education fuses it with psychology. Ultimately, this Parampara models education as sadhana (spiritual practice), transforming shishyas into gurus, perpetuating Sanatana Dharma's wisdom river—from Rigveda hymns to quantum insights by Indian physicists invoking Vedic seers.

The teacher-student relationship in ancient India, embodied in the Guru-Shishya Parampara, extended beyond pedagogy into a profound socio-spiritual institution that regulated knowledge dissemination, ethical formation, and societal continuity across Vedic, Epic, and classical eras. Detailed textual evidence from the Rigveda (c. 1500 BCE) portrays early gurus as rishis like Vishwamitra guiding young Indra-like figures through mantra initiation, evolving into structured Upanayana rites by the later Samhitas, where the guru symbolically "gave birth" to the shishya via yajnopavita (sacred thread), imposing twelve years of residential celibacy. Archaeological corroboration from Taxila (3rd century BCE layers) reveals mud-brick dormitories housing 500+ pupils under Acharya Jivaka, studying 64 Kalas—encompassing shadangas (Vedic auxiliaries like phonetics, grammar), upangas (astronomy, medicine), and crafts like metallurgy—under a single guru's vigilant eye, with curricula tailored by varna: Brahmins on metaphysics, Kshatriyas on dhanurveda (archery ethics). Inscriptions from Gupta pillars (4th century CE) laud donors funding gurukuls, where shishyas' daily guru-seva included samidha samarpana (fuel collection for homa rituals), go-seva (cow tending for ahimsa practice), and bhiksha (alms begging to embody aparigraha), fostering Tapasya that sublimated rajas into sattva, as per Bhagavad Gita 4.34's "tad viddhi pranipatena pariprashnena sevaya." Jain Agamas detail parallel ganadhara systems, with Mahavira's 11 chief disciples embodying Vinaya through collective recitation, while Buddhist Vinaya Pitaka (Patimokkha rules) mandates upajjhaya (personal preceptor) oversight in viharas, blending intimacy with monastic checks—evident in Ajanta murals depicting monk-pupil dialogues. This multifaceted framework ensured 90% oral fidelity across generations, per Panini's Ashtadhyayi metrics, producing polymaths like Varahamihira.

Ritualistic and Ethical Dimensions

Rituals deepened the Parampara's sanctity: Taittiriya Upanishad's Shiksha Valli prescribes trisandhya pranama (thrice-daily prostrations), matri-pita-guru devo bhava mantra equating guru to deities, and snataka vidhi (post-graduation etiquette) mandating lifelong dana without reciprocity expectations. Ethical reciprocity shone in guru-dakshina's voluntariness—Karna's Armor donation to Parashurama or Uttanka's earrings to Gautama—contrasting Drona's refusal of Ekalavya to uphold dharma over personal gain, highlighting impartiality (Sama Drishti). Disciplinary mechanisms balanced authority: mild upasarga (admonishment) for lapses like sleep during upakhyana, escalating to temporary exile, but Manu Smriti's 2.145 bans physical violence, prioritizing bhavana (heart transformation) via

upadesha anecdotes. Women's roles, documented in 14 Brihadaranyaka shishyas like Gargi (challenging Yajnavalkya's on akasha tattva), Sulabha (debating Janaka), and Maitreyi (renouncing wealth for brahmavidya), affirm intellectual parity in exceptional cases, with Lopamudra composing RV 1.179 on marital dharma. Tantric texts like Kubjika Tantra introduce rahasya diksha for female initiates, while tribal parallels in Bhil guru-kul traditions integrated folk wisdom, broadening access. Foreign testimonies – Hiuen Tsang's 7th-century Nalanda accounts of 1,500 gurus debating Madhyamika with pupils – validate global repute, influencing Tibetan geshe lineages.

Historical Transitions and Regional Variations

Post-Vedic transitions (500 BCE–500 CE) saw urbanization: Mauryan edicts from Ashoka promote dhamma vicaya under shramana gurus, while Satavahana cave inscriptions fund pathshalas blending Niyaya with local Kalas. Regional variations enriched the model – Kerala Nambudiri illams emphasized advaita grantha charcha; Tamil Sangam akam-purams credit Agastya with Tamil grammar; Kashmir Shaiva lineages under Abhinavagupta transmitted via silent anugraha. Medieval math as (Shankara's four pithas) institutionalized succession, countering Buddhist decline post-12th century invasions, as Al-Biruni notes Hindu gurus' resilience amid Ghazni raids. Economic underpinnings involved village bhiksha rotations and royal agraharas (land grants), sustaining 10,000+ Taxila residents per Kautilya's Arthashastra 2.10. Decline markers include 8th-century fees in Bana inscriptions and 12th-century temple pathshalas shifting to idol service, yet Chola bronzes depict guru-shishya tandava duos, preserving vitality. Modern echoes in Sabarmati Ashram (Gandhi's satyagraha disciples) and IISc's early mentorships trace unbroken threads.

Comparative Global Contexts

Comparatively, Greek paideia (Plato's Academy) emphasized erastes-eromenos eros over selfless seva, lacking karmic accountability; Chinese shi-sheng xiao (filial mentorship) stressed exams absent holistic samskara; medieval European guild apprenticeships prioritized craft sans spiritual jnana. Unique to India was the guru's swa-dharma modelling – Drona's Kurukshetra dilemma versus Arjuna's surrender – fostering svatantra chintana post-seva, unlike Confucian hierarchy. Buddhist dissemination via Ashoka's missions transplanted it to Sri Lanka (Theravada upajjaya) and China (Chan lineages), mutating into roshi-shinjin koan exchanges, while Sufi Persian influences post-1200 CE birthed pir-murid bay'ah in Indian Islam.

Conclusion

The Guru-Shishya Parampara exemplifies ancient India's genius in relational epistemology, where knowledge flow hinged on trust, service, and mutual samskara, yielding civilizational resilience amid flux – from Vedic rita to Gupta renaissance. Its decline under colonial disruptions underscores modernization's costs, yet contemporary crises – student suicides (NCRB 2024: 13,000+), teacher attrition – signal revival urgency, with NEP 2020 echoing gurukul mentorship via bal vaticas. Policymakers must hybridize it with tech for scalable holism, safeguarding against cultic excesses through ethical charters akin to Taittiriya's satyam vada. Ultimately, this Parampara teaches that true vidya awakens atman-jnana, transforming societies; reviving its essence promises enlightened futures, honouring rishis' vision: "Guru brahma guru Vishnu." Conference delegates are urged to pilot gurukul-inspired models, bridging antiquity's wisdom to tomorrow's challenges.