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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ANCIENT AND MODERN EDUCATION SYSTEM: WITH REFERENCE TO INDIA

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#### Abstract

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include teaching, training, storytelling, discussion and directed research. In ancient India, both formal and informal ways of education system existed. Indigenous education was imparted at home, in temples, Pathshalas, Tolas, Chatuspadis and Gurukuls. There were people in homes, villages and temples who guided young children in imbibing pious ways of life. A Gurukula or Gurukulam is a type of education system in ancient India with Shishya ('students' or 'disciples') living near or with the guru, in the same house. At the end of one's education, a Shishya offers the Gurudakshina before leaving the Gurukula. Over a period of time two system of education developed, the Vedic and the Buddhist. As the name indicates in the former system Vedas, Vedanta, Upanishads and other allied subjects were taught while in the latter system, thoughts of all the major school of Buddhism was taught. Vidyapeeth was the place of spiritual learning founded by great Acharya, Sri Shankara in places like Sringeri, Kanchi, Dwarka, and Puri, etc. Agraharas was an institution of Brahmins in villages where they used to teach. Modern education is very different from the traditional education. Arya Samaj was founded by Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati on 10 April 1875. The traditional education and the modern education, both should be given equal importance.

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#### Introduction:-

Education is the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning, especially at a school or similar institution. The earliest educational processes involved sharing information about gathering food and providing shelter; making weapons and other tools; learning language; and acquiring the values, behaviour, and religious rites or practices of a given culture. Before the invention of reading and writing, people lived in an environment in which they struggled to survive against natural forces, animals, and other humans. To survive, preliterate people developed skills that grew into cultural and educational patterns.

Education developed from the human struggle for survival and enlightenment. It may be formal or informal. Informal education refers to the general social process by which human beings acquire the knowledge and skills needed to function in their culture. Formal education refers to the process by which teachers instruct students in courses of study within institutions.

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**Traditional Education**

A Gurukula or Gurukulam is a type of education system in ancient India with Shishya ('students' or 'disciples') living near or with the guru, in the same house. The Guru-Shishya tradition is a sacred one in Hinduism and appears in other religious groups in India, such as Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. The term is also used today to refer to residential monasteries or schools operated by modern Gurus. The proper plural of the term is Gurukulam, though Gurukulas and Gurukuls are also used in English and some other Western languages. The word Gurukula is a combination of the Sanskrit words Guru ('teacher' or 'master') and Kula ('family' or 'home'). Before the arrival of British rule, they served as South Asia's primary educational system.

The students learn from the guru and help the guru in his everyday life, including carrying out of mundane daily household chores. However, some scholars suggest that the activities are not mundane and very essential part of the education to inculcate self-discipline among students. Typically, a guru does not receive or accept any fees from the shishya studying with him as the relationship between a guru and the shishya is considered very sacred.

At the end of one's education, a Shishya offers the Gurudakshina before leaving the Gurukula. The Gurudakshina is a traditional gesture of acknowledgment, respect and thanks to the Guru, which may be monetary, but may also be a special task the teacher wants the student to accomplish. While living in a Gurukula, the students would be away from their home from a period of months to years at a stretch.

Traditional education is also called customary education or conventional education. The main motive of traditional education is to pass on the values, manners skills and the social practice to the next generation which is necessary for their survival. In traditional education the student learns about the customs and tradition of the society in which he lives. This type of education is mostly imparted to the students by the means of oral recitation.



There is very less written work or practical work. The students simply sit down together and listen to the teacher or another who will recite the lesson. The traditional does not include written tests but it includes some oral tests which are not very formal. Traditional education is very far from the use science and technology. Neither the education about sciences we study today in a great detail is imparted in the traditional education system. Traditional education system basically included the knowledge about customs, traditions, and religions. That is why it is called traditional education.

**Characteristics of Ancient Education**

In ancient India a child followed the occupation of his father, either religious or professional and his training in that particular field was provided by his father in his house. Over a period of time two system of education developed, the Vedic and the Buddhist. As the name indicates in the former system Vedas, Vedanta, Upanishads and other allied subjects were taught while in the latter system, thoughts of all the major school of Buddhism was taught. While Sanskrit was the medium of instruction in the Vedic system of education, Pali was the medium of instruction in the Buddhist system of education. But both system offered vocational education apart from religious education of their respective faiths. There was also a purely vocational system of education wherein master craftsmen and artisans taught their skills to students who worked as apprentice under them. Takshashila or Taxila was the famous centre of learning, including religion.

**The Education of Women:**

Education for women was quite important in ancient India. They were trained in housekeeping, as well as in dancing and music. Girls also had to conduct the Upanayana ceremony. Educated women were divided into two classes – Sadyodwahas, those who pursued their education just until they got married, and Brahmavadinis (Brahmcharya), those who never married and continued studying throughout their lives. Vedas and Vedangas were taught to women, too, but were limited to religious songs and poems necessary for rituals. Some notable Vedic and Upanishad women scholars were Apala, Indrani, Ghosha, Lopamudra, Gargi and Maitreyi.

**Ancient Educational institutions:**

Just as we have world renowned universities today, there were popular educational institutions here during the ancient times as well. Four of these institutions were quite prominent and known for different specializations. The University of Nalanda was famous for its Hinduism and cosmopolitan character and its department of logic. Takshashila University, in an area what is now modern-day Pakistan, was well-known across the world for its medical school and was the chief learning centre in 6th century BC. What Nalanda University was to Eastern India, Vallabhi was to Western India. It was also a famous study center that specialized in subjects like law, medicine and economics, and had students attending from all parts of the country. Vikramshila was yet another esteemed institution, best known for Tantric Buddhism.



Gurukul was the hometown of teachers where students come after completing their initiation ceremony and learn until the completion of their study. The parishads or academies were the places of higher learning and education where students learn through discussions and debates. Goshti or conferences were the places where the kings of the states used to invite scholars from every institute to meet and exchange their views. Ashramas or hermitages were the other learning centers where students from various parts of the country used to come and learn from saints and sages. Vidyapeeth was the place of spiritual learning founded by great Acharya, Sri Shankara in places like Sringeri, Kanchi, Dwarka, and Puri, etc. Agraharas was an institution of Brahmins in villages where they used to teach. Viharas were the educational institutions founded by Buddhists where the students were taught the subjects related to Buddhism and philosophy in the Higher Educational Institutions.

**Takshashila or Taxila:**

Takshashila was the famous center of learning, including religion and teaching of Buddhism in ancient times. It was famous for his higher education learning comprising of subjects like ancient scriptures, law, medicine, sociology, astronomy, military science, and 18 silpas, etc. The well-known scholars from the university were great grammarian Panini, he was an expert in his subject of grammar and published his work on Ashtadhyayi, Chanakya who is skilled in statecraft both studied here. Students from Kashi, Kosala, Magadha, and also from different countries flocked into the university despite a long and arduous journey. Takshashila was an ancient Indian city currently situated in north-western Pakistan was the well-known center of learning and has been declared as an archeological site and world heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1980.



### **Nalanda:**

When XuanZang came to Nalanda it was called Nala, which was the center of learning in many subjects. The students used to come here from different parts of the country and the world to study here. Different subjects were taught, including the Vedas, fine arts, medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. XuanZang himself became the student of Yogashastra. Nalanda which is currently situated in Rajgir, Bihar, India was also declared as a world heritage site by UNESCO. The other famous institutes around ancient times were Vallabhi, Vikramshila, Ujjain, and Benaras.

### **Methods of Teaching:-**

Though teaching in groups was common back then, students were also taught individually by their teachers based on their capabilities and aptitudes. Oral recitation was the basic medium of imparting knowledge and was practiced through various methods like introspection (listening, contemplation and concentrated contemplation), storytelling, memorization, critical analysis, practical study and seminars etc.

### **Methods of Learning:**

The teachers at that time paid special focus to their students and teach them according to their knowledge and skill level. Teaching was basically via orals and debates, and the different methods were as follows:

- i) At that time books were not there, so students had the habit to learn and memorize all the things taught in the class, and teachers also helped them in memorizing.
- ii) The students used to deep dive into the concepts taught by their teachers and explore new methods to learn it.
- iii) Listening, Contemplation, and concentrated contemplation were some new methods of exploring the way of learning.
- iv) The teachers used the storytelling methods to teach the students.
- v) Students used to ask questions about the topics taught by the teachers and these topics were discussed and then answered to the students.
- vi) The education of that time mainly focused on practical knowledge of the topics taught in the class.
- vii) The students got plenty of knowledge through seminars and debates conducted at frequent intervals.

### **Modern Education:**

Modern education is very different from the traditional education. The education which is taught in the schools today is the modern education. Modern education teaches about the skills required today that is the skills of science and technology, science of medical science etc. In addition to listening, the modern education includes writing, visualizing, imagining, and thinking skills. This type of education also includes written tests to examine if the students are learning properly or not. This is done in a very formal way. The methodology used for teaching is very interactive. Modern education is just an evolution of the traditional education which was imparted to the students a few years back.

### **Educational institutions:**

#### **Schools:**

Schools are the educational institutes where children are sent for their primary education. There are many private and government schools situated.

in India, primary education means education from Nursery to 10th standard. Children at their early ages are sent to schools to learn poems, grammar, prayers, alphabets, etc. besides this, the other subjects taught in the schools are English, mathematics, science, history, geography, and other regional languages. Schools are situated inside the city, also there are many cultural programs and sports events conducted in schools for the students to develop their inter-personal and physical skills. Private schools are run by organizations and the principal manages the academics and cultural activities in schools.

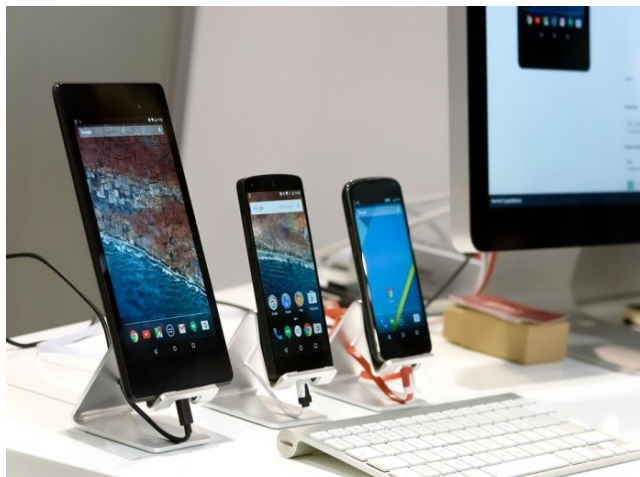


#### **Colleges:**

After completing primary education from schools, students are sent to colleges for secondary education. After primary education, students are required to give entrance exams to take entry into colleges and according to the marks scored in entrance exams students are allotted colleges. In some states, during college, they are advised to choose a stream from science and commerce and then further carry on their secondary education. College education consists of 11th and 12th standard. Different subjects taught in secondary education according to their streams are physics, chemistry, geometry, algebra, accounts, and many other regional languages.

#### **University: -**

After the secondary education, students are required to give the entrance exams like Joint Engineering Entrance (JEE) and other state-level exams to take admissions in universities. Students are given choices to choose a stream like a computer, electronics, civil, and Mechanical and then start their career in it. The University provides undergraduate and postgraduate course comprising of course duration of 4 and 3 years, different universities in India are SavitribaiPhule Pune University, Mumbai University, and many other aided non-aided and private universities. There are many cultural and sports events conducted in universities for giving students some time to joy and relax from studies.



#### **Higher Educational Institutions:**

1. Indian Institute of Technology: -It is one of the greatest universities in India for higher education like undergraduate, Post-Graduation, and many more streams. There is a total of 23 IIT colleges in India, every year lakhs of students compete to take admissions in these IIT's. JEE-Mains and JEE-Advance are the two entrance

examinations to take admission in these IIT's, according to the All India Rank (AIR) and marks students are allotted IIT's. Due to its high level of educational teaching and curriculum, IIT is famous all around the world.



The other top universities are Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), National Institute of Technology (NIT), Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

#### **Traditional Education vs. Modern Education:**

Traditional and modern educations are both related to each other and different from each other also. In the early history of our country, there was a time where there were no schools. The children acquired the education or knowledge from their ancestors. At that time this knowledge focused only on the skills required for survival. The people who lived in jungles got the education from their ancestors who taught them how to hunt animals for their food, how to use animal skins for different purposes, how to make tools. They were taught about their rituals or the customs they followed. They were taught about the religions they followed. AryaSamaj (Hindi: **आर्यसमाज**, "Noble Society") is a monotheistic Indian Hindu reform movement that promotes values and practices based on the belief in the infallible authority of the Vedas. The samaj was founded by Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati on 10 April 1875. Members of the AryaSamaj believe in one God and reject the worship of idols. AryaSamaj was the first Hindu organization to introduce proselytization in Hinduism.

They taught them the stories of their gods and kings from which they could learn good morals. The Kings used to send their sons to schools which were called gurukuls in India. In these gurukuls they were taught how to use different weapons, how to protect themselves and how to attack their enemies. They were also taught the basic principle of ruling an empire. These types of schools were not meant for the local population. It could only be accessed by the royal families. The rest of the children in the empire learnt the skill which their parents possessed from them. As the democratic government was established in the coming years, the importance of education spread throughout the country. Schools were opened where any kind of students could come and learn. This was the establishment of modern education.

Modern education system was implanted by British rulers. Before the advent of British in India, education system was private one. In 1835, Lord Macaulay introduced modern education in India. It was the introduction of Wood's dispatch of 1854, known as Magna Carta of Indian education that laid the foundation of present system of education and changed the scenario. The main purpose of it was to prepare Indian Clerks for running local administration. Under it the means of school educations were vernacular languages, while the higher education was granted in English only. British government started giving funds to indigenous schools in need of help and slowly some of the schools became government aided.

#### **Modern Education after Independence:**

After independence, even relentless effort of reformers, government and NGO'S only a small could educate a very small number of people especially from amongst backwards. Masses could not avail the benefit of modern/formal education. It is not so much because of resistance from caste Hindus, as for other reasons. It is falsely accused and propagated by some intellectuals, leaders, reformers and supporters of Reservation/Affirmative action policy that

privileged upper castes have taken advantage of modern education to establish or reinforce its traditional dominance. They prevented lower castes from getting educated or promoting their status in modern society. However, as modern history points out, on the contrary, it was mainly impoverished group amongst Brahmin and caste Hindus opting for modern education.

**Today’s Scenario:**

The scenario of education which now is totally different from the scenario which was a few years back. At that time modern education was not considered good and today traditional education is not considered enough. As the needs of the people are changing, the education system also has to change. And this change should be accepted by the people. Earlier the people used to teach their children how to fulfil their needs. This was the basic aim behind education. And the aim now is still the same. The only thing which has changed is the need of people. With the passing time, the things which were a luxury at that time have formed the basic needs now. As the needs grew, the education had to grow. If the education did not evolve, then it would be difficult to fulfil the needs of today.

**Equality in Education:**

Traditional education which was provided in schools was not meant for all the children. There was a lot of discrimination between the children. It was considered that education was meant for only high society people. The children who belonged to the families of lower society were not allowed to enter the schools. The traditional education was not meant for everyone. The modern education is accessible by all. Anyone can take admission in a school and learn the modern education. We can say that it is because of the modern education that modern education is accessible by all the children. As the modern education spread, the principle of equality was taught.

**The knowledge imparted:**

As mentioned above, in the traditional education the students are taught about traditions, customs, rituals, and religion. In the modern education, the students are taught about science, technology, language skills, and mathematics etc. the knowledge imparted in the traditional education system was enough for one’s own living, but it was not enough to match the whole world.

**Comparative Study:**

Both the types of education have their own place and importance. We cannot declare any type of education good or bad. The traditional was good in its period and the modern education is good in its period. Actually, it depends on the person. It depends on what the person wants to learn. If a person wants to learn about his customs and religion, then definitely traditional education is better for him. On the other hand, if a person wants to learn about science or mathematics, then modern education is good for him. Both the type of the educations is equally important. Traditional education is often associated with our culture. And it is good or we can say it is important to learn about own culture. Everyone should know what are their traditions, culture and the stories and beliefs of their religion. In the same way, it is equally important to catch up with world in terms of the modern developments which are occurring today. This describes the importance of modern education. Modern education is required to stay in touch with the whole world and to see what is happening in the world.

**Conclusion:-**

It is difficult to infer that which education is better. Both the types have their own importance. Both the types are also similar to each and different to each other. Modern education is inherited from the traditional education. But due to modern education, traditional education is being neglected which would result in losing our culture. The traditional education and the modern education, both should be given equal importance.

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