



CHAPTER- 3

REVIVING ANCIENT PEDAGOGIES - THE GURUKUL SYSTEM IN MODERN EDUCATION

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1. Introduction

Education is the most important thing for both personal and national growth, everyone says. It's possible that the lesson and the way it's taught are still not the same thing. Because they have different ideas, attitudes, and goals, each group is different from the others. Schools have come a long way in the past few years, but they still have a long way to go. Because they have to remember things, worry about how well they do on tests, and see school as a chore, they don't feel linked to it. They don't learn how to get better or how important morals are. There is a problem with the system as a whole when people are stressed out, have mental health problems, or have trouble getting work even with a degree.

To get their drive and sense of balance back, more and more people are going back to the old ways of learning. One great example of this idea is the Gurukul way of teaching. It was very important to the people of India during and after the Vedic time. This was more than just a school; it was a spot to learn. It was a way of life. Both the teachers and the students believed that learning was an important part of daily life and that character building was just as important as learning.

This part isn't about seeing the Gurukul system as something old that doesn't exist anymore. Instead, it wants people to see it as a source of ideas that can be used effectively in situations that are important to learning today. We can think of education as a process that changes people and supports moral behavior by looking at its historical roots, comparing them to modern institutions, figuring out how relevant they are now, identifying problems, and coming up with new ways to deal with them.

2. The Gurukul System - Historical Roots and Philosophy

2.1 Where it originated and how it functions in the world

The Gurukul system was established at the same time that the Vedas were written, which was approximately 1500 BCE. The term "Gurukul" is derived from the words "guru," which in turn means "teacher," and "kul," which can be translated as "home" or "family." Gurukuls were typically located in ashrams or in the forests, and pupils, known as shishyas, resided with their teachers during their time there. The way that public schools operate in the modern era is not like this. To phrase it another way, education was all-encompassing, lived-in, and an extremely personal experience.

In many cases, the first thing that had to be done in order to gain entry into a Gurukul was to perform the sacred ceremony of upanayana, which signified the beginning of each child's formal education. Students from all over the world lived together, worked together, assisted the guru, and put forth a lot of effort in their academic pursuits. It was not enough to simply read books; other requirements included adhering to norms, being responsible, and maintaining discipline.

2.2 Courses and Instructional Strategies

Within the framework of the Gurukul system, a wide variety of classes were offered to students. The Vedas and other holy writings were the primary subjects that the students studied; however, they also mastered physics, mathematics, language, music, martial arts, politics, and ethics in addition to these subjects. Students gained knowledge in a variety of practical areas in addition to academic courses, including how to work, how to care for animals, how to construct things, and how to stay alive. It was because of this that individuals were prepared for life beyond school and for the workforce.

2.3 Varieties of Instructional Methods

During their time at Gurukuls, the students engaged in activities such as reciting, talking, disputing, memorizing, and asking questions. Not only was it about acquiring knowledge, but what was more important was really accomplishing things. It was recommended that pupils learn by repeatedly practicing what they had already learned, thinking about what they had learned, and doing what they said they had learned. As a guide, mentor, and moral advisor, the guru's role in the process was an extremely significant component of the overall procedure.

Teaching Vidya, also known as education, at the Gurukul consisted of more than merely memorizing facts and figures, according to the students' thoughts. On top of that, it was a method for discovering who you are. The objective was to assist individuals in developing in all aspects of their lives, including their minds, bodies, morals, and spirits. The importance of being taught values such as respect for adults, discipline, service, and living in harmony with nature cannot be overstated.

The Gurukul was a method of instruction that was designed to complete a person so that they might bring about change in their own lives, as well as in the lives of their colleagues and their families.

3. Modern Education and The Gurukul Contrast

3.1 Facts About Schools

Today, Colonization, industry, and globalization have made most of modern education structured, standardized, and focused on credentials. It has a lot of good things about it. It has sped up research and technology, made it easier for many people to learn, and given people new ways to go about and find good work. There are a lot more people who can read and write now that there are more schools and colleges.

But this method does have certain problems. People often put creativity and critical thinking ahead of grades, memorization, and mechanical evaluation. A teacher-student relationship is not the same as having a guide. It looks more like a commercial deal. People don't care about morals or values; getting a job is the most essential thing.

3.2 Ways to Compare

The Gurukul is different from other places in a number of ways:

- **Teacher-Student Bond:** The guru was a moral guide, a teacher, and a parent figure in a Gurukul. Gurukuls taught a mix of theory, science, and practical skills. Most of the time, teachers in today's schools are only guides who have to follow a set timetable and curriculum. Modern courses, on the other hand, tend to break up subjects and focus more on skills that may be used in the job market.

- **Assessment:** Gurukuls put more emphasis on practice and personal growth, while modern systems mostly use examinations and assessments from outside sources.

- **Values:** The Gurukul's education was based on respect, simplicity, and service. In modern institutions, on the other hand, learning is all about being competitive and doing well on your own.

3.3 The Missing Link

Schools nowadays have had a hard time teaching all parts of human growth, but they are quite good at teaching science, technology, and how to get along with others. The Gurukul way of life can help you live a more balanced

life. It makes something better instead of replacing it by bringing back values, mentoring, and life skills.

4. Relevance of The Gurukul Pedagogy in Contemporary Times

4.1 Life Skills and Comprehensive Learning

One of the most crucial things we need right now is education that teaches us how to be resilient, caring, responsible, and strong. Living in the Gurukul, where they were responsible, self-sufficient, and frugal, taught the students these qualities. A lot of young people are under stress and are unsure of how to handle it. The Gurukul approach aids in their acquisition of critical abilities.

4.2 Students and teachers assisting one another

With dozens or even hundreds of kids in a classroom these days, it might be challenging to assign a unique mentor to each student. Gurukul advocated for a tight, almost familial relationship between the guru and the shishya. If this type of mentoring resurfaces in the shape of guidance cells, smaller groups, or one-on-one assistance, students can resume communicating with one another.

4.3 Integrating faith and values

The Gurukul attempted to teach religion and values in addition to education; it was not a value-free institution. In an increasingly violent, corrupt, and isolated society, it is critical to teach civic responsibility and character in a way that makes sense. The Gurukul concept aligns with the inclusion of yoga, meditation, and morality courses in the curriculum.

4.4 Being environmentally conscious and taking care of the planet

At Gurukul, we spent a lot of time outside. The children learned to live modestly and to respect nature from their teachers. Schools can use this concept to teach people how to take care of the environment and live in a way that is healthy for it, especially now that it is in danger.

4.5 Contemporary Experiments and New Gurukuls

Some Indian schools are already attempting to revive the Gurukul's concepts today:

Both traditional and modern concepts are taught in Chinmaya Vidyalayas and Dayananda Anglo-Vedic schools. The Rishi Valley School, which combines formal education with leading a holistic life, was influenced by Jiddu Krishnamurti. Both Vedic and contemporary subjects are taught in gurukuls, which are administered by religious organizations. These examinations demonstrate that, with proper modification, the Gurukul model can be used with CBSE, ICSE, or UGC systems.

5. Challenges, Critiques, and The Way Forward

People are once again paying a lot of attention to the Gurukul system in the twenty-first century. This has led to new conversations in schools, communities, and politics. There were a lot of great ideas in there, like teaching the whole person, having teachers mentor students, and learning based on concepts. We need to understand their problems if we wish to fix them or change them to fit the current situation. To make integration work in schools today, we need to know what the problems, chances, and dangers are.

5.1 Bad things that happen during rebirth

There are several reasons why it would be hard to bring back the Gurukul system, such as social, practical, and institutional ones. This is still true, even if it fits with the present drive for all-around education.

- **Getting in touch with and including everyone**

One of the most important things to do is to get everyone involved. Many Gurukuls used to not let women in, those from lower social groups, or people who lived in poor areas. It's not typical for anyone to be banned from school these days because everyone should be able to go. For Gurukul-based schools to work well in today's world, these difficulties need to be fixed on purpose. They can do this by campaigning for women's rights, fair economic conditions, and easy money. People might think the model is looking back instead of forward if these changes aren't implemented.

- **How to Tell the Difference Between Customization and Individualization**

Traditional approaches and one-on-one learning don't always work well together. Most of the time, the Gurukul method was one-on-one teaching. The teacher would change the lessons to match each student's needs, interests, and way of learning. Schools now follow national curricula and tests, though, to make sure that students learn and reach certain goals. Pedagogical paradoxes arise when individualized teaching methods and student accountability for their work are at odds. Even though kids need to take care of themselves, many of them still have trouble doing so.

- **Things youngsters should know**

Today, everything is quite competitive and focused on work. A lot of parents believe that school is the best method for their kids to do well in life. It's really important to them that kids learn how to work, study for tests, and get good grades so they can go to college. People don't usually think that value-based or inclusive projects are important or useful, yet they can be. It can be hard to convince parents and teachers of the importance of building moral foundations, character, and resilience.

- **Problems in cities**

It can be hard because most kids these days live in cities. In the past, students who lived with their gurus in peaceful, natural places like ashrams or forests helped gurukuls. It's hard to make these kinds of communities these days because land is expensive and hard to get. Because of this, a lot of people, especially those who reside in cities, might not like the idea of a full-fledged Gurukul.

5.2 Dangers of Increasing Commerciality

There are several problems that need to be fixed before the Gurukul plan can be disseminated, which makes it more dangerous.

- **Branding on the surface of products**

A lot of groups and businesses have been called "modern Gurukuls" in the last few years. A lot of these people are more interested in the system's uniforms, ceremonies, and older architectural styles than in its philosophical and educational roots. As a result, the Gurukul turned into a business instead of a place to learn life skills and values.

- **The past has come to the present.**

A lot of people romanticize the Gurukul system and don't think about its flaws. The planet was completely shut down, it was hard to replace the buildings, and the restrictions were very strict. But it did teach discipline, rules, and character. It is wrong to use the Gurukul as an example in history and in teaching. Romanticizing tradition may hide its flaws. This could result in improvements that don't work because they don't take into account how schools are now run.

- **Forms that never change**

There were strict gurukuls at my school that made students follow the rules without thinking about them. If not challenged, this rigidity may be at odds with democratic values, student independence, and the modern education system's focus on critical and creative thinking. So, we need a smarter way to keep the best parts of the Gurukul system while getting rid of the parts that go against modern ideas of freedom and equality.

The Gurukul may become something else if it is rebuilt for sentimental or financial reasons. Businesses should try to use the ideas instead of merely declaring they agree with them.

5.3 Institutions and Policies' Role

Institutions must change and new rules must be made in order to appropriately incorporate Gurukul ideals into modern education.

What NEP 2020 Does: India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a great example of how to mix old and new ideas. Gurukul's ideals are in line with NEP 2020's focus on values, learning via experience, and personal growth. The Gurukul's purpose is to prepare students for more than just tests, hence it focuses on teaching them life skills instead of a lot of data.

- **Help and advice for teachers**

Teacher training is one of the most important parts of regeneration. The master of a Gurukul was more than just a teacher. They also acted as spiritual guides, teachers, and examples for others. We need to change how we train teachers so that they are ready for problems like these. Values-based education, meditation, yoga, mentorship, and

taking care of the environment should all be part of training programs. Teachers should be encouraged to mentor kids outside of class to help them become stronger, smarter, and more aware of other people.

- **Changes to the curriculum**

The program should take into account all important elements. In addition to STEM fields, civics, yoga, ethics, and environmental conservation should be given more importance. This helps kids grow up to be good citizens and workers. Public schools can use "combo models" like Gurukul's as long as they don't break the law. These models can include mentorship groups, community service, and project-based learning.

- **Paths in Public Places**

A lot of Indian schools already use different ways to teach. The Chinmaya Vidyalayas, the Rishi Valley School, and the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic schools are some such examples. These programs show that formal education may work alongside value-based learning and a whole-person approach to life. If the government gives them the right training and support, these models could help spread Gurukul-based practices.

5.4 The Repercussions

A lot of individuals still don't agree on what would happen if Gurukul ideals were reintroduced back into modern classrooms.

- **Instead of replacing, you should employ blended learning.**

The Gurukul system won't fully change how we teach currently. In the future, Gurukul's direction, aims, and all-around growth approach should be blended with the speed, diversity, and technology of modern education. This method takes into account both stability and change.

- **Mentoring programs**

One nice thing that could come from this is that the government could start mentoring programs. Teachers could get small groups of pupils together to talk about matters other than schoolwork. These chats could be about things like how to deal with moral difficulties, how to grow as a person, and how to live a good life. This form of engagement brings back the crucial bond between teacher and student that is part of the Gurukul system.

- **Getting information via doing things**

Because of this, a lot of schools now require their students to perform projects that are useful in the real world. Students at Gurukul learn by doing things that require them to work together, be independent, serve others, and take care of the world. Environmental protection projects, community service programs, and group activities that help people solve problems might all be part of normal school.

Gurukuls that you can read on the web: Digital Gurukuls use technology to let people learn and acquire a full education from anywhere. It's easy to talk about ethics and sustainability, do yoga and meditate online, and talk to other people in the digital age. This could make the old way of life more significant.

- **Improving the teachings**

People are taught subjects like social responsibility, philosophy, meditation, and how to take care of the environment. Because of this development, schools would teach things like values, being ready for work, being a good citizen of the world, and mental health.

- **The possibility that things will improve**

How much of a difference this rebirth makes will depend on how well we see education as a way to get ready for life instead of a way to generate money. Students can learn to find a balance between knowledge and wisdom, cooperation and competition, purpose, and integrity by using Gurukul ideals in modern classrooms.

It is not easy or evident how to bring back the Gurukul system. A lot of consideration needs to go into marketing, setting city limits, and what parents want. The NEP 2020, digital platforms, and hybrid learning environments all demonstrate that selective adaptation is feasible and beneficial. Without being dogmatic or restrictive, it's hard to give a thorough critique of the Gurukul system that focuses on its principles, recommendations, and living a fulfilled life. It would be fantastic if schools and governments could agree on a way to teach kids the skills they need to be good people and professionals, as well as the empathy and toughness they need to be happy.

6. Conclusion

The Gurukul system has been around for a long time, yet the principles it teaches are still valuable now and in the future. It displays a manner of teaching where learning is a part of life, facts are connected to values, and the way a teacher interacts to a pupil is very real. Modern education is great at science and easy for many people to receive, yet it has become more automated and promoted. Ethics, sustainability, discipline, mentoring, and holistic growth are all things that Gurukul teaches us that help us go back to equilibrium. It's not about missing the good old days to bring back old ways of teaching. It's about giving students an education that gets them ready for life and job. If you apply the Gurukul spirit correctly, you might be able to make a school system that helps kids grow in both their skills and their character. People will be able to get along with themselves and the world, and society will actually transform.

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