

THE GURU - SHISHYA PARAMPARA IN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM (IKS): PEDAGOGICAL BASES AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

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Abstract: In the Indian Knowledge system (IKS), The Guru - Shishya Parampara serve as the structural foundation for knowledge transmission. The lineage -based mentorship emphasis the combined development of student's ethical, cognitive, and practical talents rather than only a system of academic education or mechanical vocational training. This paper explores the philosophical foundation of Guru -Shishya model such as Shravana (focused listening), Manana (reflection), and Nididhyasana (meditation or experimental mastery) and describes how this framework was systematically interrupted during the colonial period. Finally, in alignment with Indian's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, this study evaluates Contemporary framework for integrating the ancient lineage-based mentorship into modern technology-driven higher education to foster experimental, ethical and interdisciplinary learning.

Introduction

The excessive standardisation, transactional nature and intense emphasis on measurable economic results of contemporary global education system are being criticised more and more. Educational research has looked to the rich legacy of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in quest of comprehensive alternatives. The Guru-Shishya Parampara, an unbroken lineage of knowledge transmission from teacher (Guru) to disciple (Shishya), is at the core of Indian Knowledge System. The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) represents one of humanity's most enduring intellectual traditions, encompassing millennia of accumulated wisdom across diverse domains including philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, linguistics, ethics, and ecological sciences (Kour and Singh, 2025). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a watershed moment in India's educational history by explicitly mandating the integration of IKS into contemporary pedagogy, asserting that "education must build character and enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring, while at the same time preparing them for gainful employment" (Kour and Singh, 2025; Rani, 2024). The colonial disruption of indigenous knowledge transmission created what scholars' term "epistemicide"-the systematic erasure of non-western knowledge traditions (Chandel and Johnson, 2025; Kour and Singh, 2025). Macaulay's 1835 Minute institutionalised this marginalisation, establishing an educational paradigm that devalued Sanskrit-based knowledge systems and created what postcolonial theorists identify as an "inferiority mentality" regarding indigenous epistemologies (Admin, 2025; Kour and Singh, 2025).

The ancient Indian worldview sees education as a sacred process of self- realization, character building and cosmic alignment rather than just as the transmission of information. In order to address the broken of modern education, this paper explore how this antiquated approach can provide philosophical and structural insights.

Philosophical and Ontological Foundation

The main Indian philosophical systems especially Vedanta, Sankhya and Yoga are the foundation of the Guru- Shishya tradition. Knowledge (vidya) is divided into two areas in these traditions:

- **Apara Vidya:** Lower or secular knowledge, encompassing the sciences, grammar, arts, and economics.
- **Para Vidya:** Higher or indirect knowledge, leading to absolute truth and liberation (Moksha).

Pedagogical Methodologies of Indian Knowledge System

The traditional Gurukul utilized a sophisticated, tried cognitive pedagogy that aligns remarkably well with modern mate cognitive framework like Bloom's Taxonomy.

Table 1: Flipped Learning Adaptation in the IKS Context

Traditional Element	Modern Translation	Implementation Challenge
Shravana (Listening)	Pre-class video lectures	Bandwidth constraints in rural areas
Manana (Reflection)	Online discussion forums	Low digital literacy among educators
Nididhyasana (Application)	In-class case simulations	Resistance to non-lecture pedagogy

The Triad of Learning: Shravana, Manana, and Nididhyasana

- **Shravana (Listening):** Shravana highly focused oral reception of text or teaching. Because Indian knowledge system was predominantly an oral culture, shravana trained an impeccable capacity for auditory memory and phonetic precision.
- **Manana (Reflection):** The intellectual processing of what was heard. Students were encouraged to question, debate and apply to logical tools (Tarka) to test the validity of the concepts.
- **Nididhyasana (Meditation):** The constant contemplation and experiential practice until knowledge become an inseparable part of the student's behaviour and consciousness.

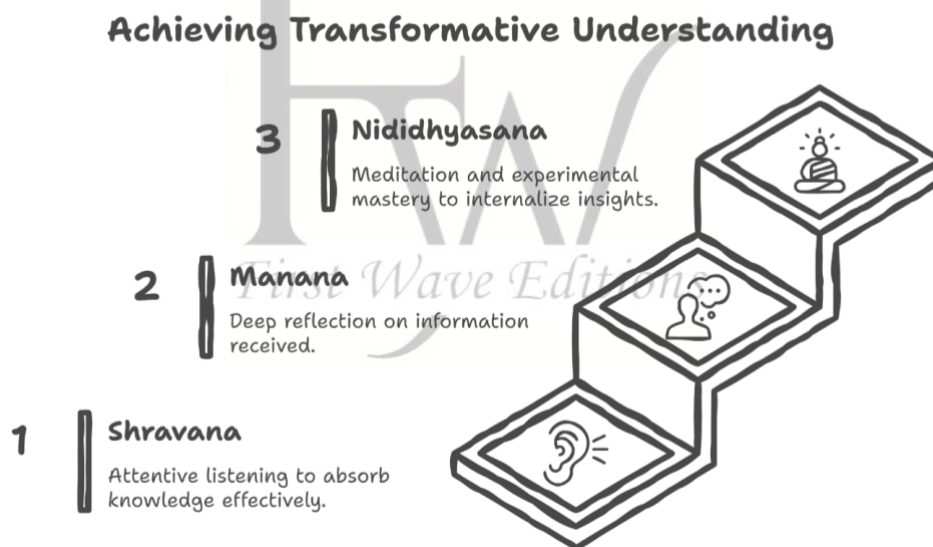


Figure 1: generated from Napkin

Experiential Externship

In practical sciences like 'Ayurveda' or 'Shilpa Shastra' learning was entirely experiential. This guaranteed that theory (shastra) and practice (prayoga) were never decoupled, fostering deep technical competency and creative mastery.

Historical Interruption

During the Colonial age, 'Lord Macaulay's Minute of Indian Education' (1835) served as a catalyst for the systematic marginalisation of the Guru- Shishya tradition. In order to create administrative clerks, the colonial authority purposefully destroyed the native Gurukul network and replaced it with a class room model from the industrial period.

Table 2: Traditional vs Modern approach

Feature	Traditional Parampara	Modern / Colonial Model
Primary Objective	Character, growth, Liberation	Employability, utility
Place of Learning	Individualized, mastery- based	Standardized, time bound
Evaluation	Continuous observation	Quantitative testing

Contemporary Relevance and NEP 2020

Indian Knowledge System integration at all the education levels is specifically required by NEP 2020. Universities are implementing a number of new frameworks to operationalise the Guru- Shishya ethos:

- ❖ **Faculty Mentor Model:** Moving from academic advising to structured comprehensive mentorship.
- ❖ **Blended Pedagogy:** Utilizing digital platforms for synchronous master classes while maintaining the personal mentor connection.

Table 3: Integration Models in Contemporary Education

IKS Domain	Traditional Sources	Modern Integration	Educational Benefits
Linguistics	Panini's Ashtadhyayi	Natural language Processing	Meta-linguistic awareness
Arts	Natyashastra, Silpa shastras	Arts-integrated learning	Creative expression
Ethics	Dharma shastras, Jataka tales	Value education frameworks	Moral reasoning development
Mathematics	ShulbaSutras, Baishali Manuscript	Vedic mathematics modules	Enhanced computational fluency
Medicine	Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita	Integrative health courses	Holistic health perspective
Ecology	Vrikshayurveda, Sacred groves	Sustainable agriculture Programs	Environmental consciousness

Conclusion

The Guru- Shishya Parampara is much more than a legacy of the ancient history of India. It is a living educational model that offers substantial solutions to the limitation of the modern mass education. In this chapter the researcher has tried to show that Parampara is not just a transmission of knowledge, but a transformation of identity. This approach is founded on the basis principles of intentional mentorship, experimental learning, dialogic inquiry, ethical education and the much-needed development of an open student mind, which is in stark contrast to the split, exam oriented and often context less approach to nature of modern pedagogy. In this study the researcher showed that central genius of this tradition is its recognition of two truths: first, that knowledge is not a commodity to be transferred but a reality to be realised; and second, that the relationship between the knower and the know is mediated by the quality of the human bond between the Guru (the dispeller of darkness) and the Shishya (the devoted learner). The Parampara reminds us that in the age of digital learning, artificial intelligence, standardised curricula, attention patience, humanity and individualised feedback are not outdated virtues but essential cognitive and ethical prerequisites for deep learning.

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