

Perception of Integration of Gurukul System In Modern Indian Education: A Study Into Quality Education.

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Abstract

Education systems have always been an issue of debate in every country. The need to find a sustainable system that provides quality education is dawning upon us. Specifically, in a country like India where the education system is highly focused on performance than development. This paper analyses the public perception towards the current education system and the challenges faced by it. It also analyses the public perception of the possibility of integration of the Gurukul system of education with the current system, using modern techniques. The study is based on a sample of 145 respondents randomly selected. The study explores the inclination of people towards change in the current system and willingness to adapt to it. The study also gives a significant insight into the awareness about various developments in the integration of the Gurukul system.

Keywords

Education system, Gurukul System, Alternative techniques of education, Public perception

Introduction

India has a rich cultural and traditional history which is known to the whole world. It boasts of Aryabhata, Panini, Chanakya, and famous educational institutions namely Nalanda and Takshashila. It is also known for the origin of famous works of science like 'Arthashastra' which taught the world multiple facets of social and political sciences and the invention of zero. India was known as the hub of education and learning for a long time before it was attacked by various forces trying to get control of the country. After successfully winning back our freedom from one force after another, India lost its position as the temple of knowledge. We adopted western ways and conceded to their ideals of education and learning and since then, there has been no innovation in the method or system of education in India which can be called revolutionary.

The changes in the system of education in India can be called 'derived' to say the least. Rapid westernization and no time for transition left us with no other option but to accept and apply the western education systems and mould ourselves according to them. We went from the country with the first university to provide systematic education to curriculum set by foreigners for our population.

'Gurukul' was the Indian indigenous education system which once existed in our country. It is heavily written about in our scriptures and tales which provide us with an insight into the function of this system. It was not a perfect system,

it supported casteism, sexism and many more stigmas which existed during that time. But the approach which the teacher took towards the development of a student honed the child and the output were children with extensive knowledge of the world and a vast plethora of skills with them. Even though this system existed during the times of Kings and empires, its ideals are deeply rooted in our culture and tradition.

Education should not be restricted to the attainment of information and development of beliefs but should have a more holistic approach towards not just knowledge but life. It should involve learning by experience and passing on the light of knowledge from the teacher to the student. In days of mass media, computerisation and a strength of more than 50 students under one teacher, these ideas seem impossible. But there can be a more systematic way of providing not just information but education, which involves taking the ideals of our 'Gurukul' systems and integrating them with present facilities available to us, in short making the best of both worlds.

The need for change and rapid innovation in education techniques is imminent. And new research into the topic is minimal. Research conducted previously provides insight into the workings and the challenges faced by the current system, but further research into public perception developing new systems is required.

Research Objective

This research was undertaken to understand the education system in India. It presents, in brief, an overview of the current system and the 'Gurukul' system. After studying the literature available on the theme, it can be concluded that further research into techniques of sustainable education is required. The current system of education in the country is adequate but has proved to be inefficient and requires reform. Following are the primary objectives of the research paper:

1. To understand the current landscape of Indian Education, including challenges, reforms, and proposed betterments.
2. To conduct a survey and present its findings regarding the public perception towards the current system and the integration of Gurukul system with modern technology.
3. To study and access the ancient education systems in India, their methods and success, with a special focus on the 'Gurukul' system.

Research Methodology

For this study, the data has been collected by the process of random sampling. A sample size of 145 was estimated from the beginning of the study. The data has been collected by administering a self-structured questionnaire to them. This helped to improve the questionnaire and gave an indication about the responses that would be seen; with a few additions and deletions, the final questionnaire was prepared and circulated.

The analyses of collected data were done using simple frequency, percentage, and other basic statistical inference tools. The analyses are presented in a graphical form for better understanding. Besides this, crosstabs were used to determine the basic correlation between variables. All operations on data were carried out using statistical software.

Statistical Interpretation

The questionnaire was formed to collect data from all aspects of society hence, the responses are highly focused. Taking in consideration the objective of the study and the data collected, Basic Statistical Analysis was conducted on the data. Correlation between variables has been shown in the analysis below. Statistical Software has been used to create multi-variable tables which indicate certain outcomes considering the primary objective. No other statistical inferencing was found required for the purpose of this study.

Literature Review

Modern education in India was introduced during the British Raj. In 1835, Lord Macauley introduced the system of education which has been tweaked and reformed and is still followed today. The system implemented by him has been all about a rat race to be in front of others (Chandwani, 2019). Research on the system of education and its impact has been conducted by experts and professionals, who have given their opinions and suggestions about the same. India is known to have a high rate of illiteracy and was ranked 73rd in terms of quality of education in a study consisting of 74 countries (Gupta). The reasons for high levels of illiteracy have been attributed to population, lack of funding, caste disparity, lack of relevant teachings and low enrolment levels (Sharanabasappa & Kadamudimatha, 2017). As India is a developing economy these issues will be resolved with increased levels of employment and better government facilities. Research conducted into the ground reality of education in India has shown that the main reason for illiteracy is the focus on the development of tertiary education rather than refining primary education. Better primary education will allow higher levels of basic literacy among the population. Further studies have gone to say that, the level of people conversing in English and conducting business has increased but the levels of middle-class income are still stagnant (Cheney, Ruzzi, & Muralidharan, 2005).

Extensive research has been conducted about the Education System in India. (Trines, 2018) conducted a thorough, in-depth, and critical profile of the Indian education system. In this, an analysis was conducted about the education systems of various professions across India. This gives us an insight into the shortcomings at individual levels of education. Independent research has also been conducted in this field using the 'Capability approach' of welfare

economics (Gautam, Singh, Fartyal, Tiwari, & Singh, 2016). It has given a critical result towards evaluations, exams, and the overall system. The research concluded demanding a New Education Policy which critically evaluates the quality and quantity of education institutions across the country.

Research conducted into reforms in education has shown the intensity with which new reforms have been introduced. The target of these has been, to solve the basic issues which have been plaguing the system for decades like, adult education, improving infrastructure, and attempting to reduce illiteracy (Kumar, 2012). India has not seen a revolutionary policy or change in the original system of education, which has always focused on standardized education and the importance of marks. Research shows that the need for change is not universal, but highly focused. Simplifying the system, centralization of curriculum, focusing on universal primary education, etc are pressing issues which if tackled, will result in a chain reaction towards a better overall system (Sharma & Sharma, 2015). Experts in the field of education, psychology, and development have suggested that the holistic development of children has to be given more importance than textual knowledge (Rikhi). They also suggest the integration of Eastern and Western philosophies of education for a better and holistic approach towards the same (Rai, 2018).

Further research in the ideology of combining Indian education ideals from Vedic times along with modern infrastructure has shown to have promising results. The need for the reintegration of culture in the current education system is strongly seen from available research (Parthasarathi). Various traditions and cultural activities which were previously a major part of the overall development of children are seen equally important for current times as well. The integration of such activities in modern schooling has been researched upon and findings have been presented about the same.

Indian Vedic systems before incursions and change have been found, by current researchers, to be highly effective in enabling students to learn the ways of the world and to conduct themselves in an independent, confident, and self-sufficient manner. Research conducted into the workings of the pre- and post-Vedic era education systems have shown the tremendous potential when integrated with current-day technology. Research shows that the system of education in the later Vedic age, the Gurukul system, saw education as a method of salvation of the soul (Documents, Eacharya). The topics studied by students included literature and primary knowledge from the Vedas. The common subjects consisted of phonetics, grammar, astronomy, logic, yoga, ayurvedic medicine, philosophy, etc. This gave the students a training into performing their social, economic, and religious duties (Srinivas, n.d.). The method of teaching was based on hearing, thinking, meditating, and introspecting. Further research has shown that the Gurukul system practiced universal and free education without any state intervention (Kashyap). Even though the system had drawbacks including but not limited to casteism, lack of textual knowledge, over-reliance on the teacher, etc, the benefits outweigh them (Kashalkar - Karve, 2013).

The integration of Gurukul with modern technology has become a popular field of research in alternative techniques of education. The requirement of ideals of Vedic education imparted through the Gurukul system has become visible in the current day and age (Chouhan, 2016). The study into the importance of this integration from a philosophical perspective shows us the benefits of character building which will be achieved from it (Jain, 2015). Currently, theoretical research is going on in various fields of social sciences to determine the validity of this concept. Research

has been conducted in the integration of cloud computing with Gurukul ideals to provide wholesome education to children with the utilization of available technology (Santhi, 2013). The benefits, merits, and demerits of this integration have been researched upon and relevant solutions for overcoming the difficulties and building a system despite the same have been given (Joshi).

Even though this idea has been long existent, practical implementation of the same has not been seen extensively. A case study was conducted into such an experiment that identified the drawbacks of the system and the fruits reaped from it (Soni & Trivedi, 2018). The study also included the various facets of the system which were being implemented to make proper utilization of modern facilities and keeping the students in touch with Indian traditions and the ideals of the Gurukul system.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Following are the broad demographics of the data collected:

Age Groups	18 - 24	25 - 35	36 - 45	45 - 56	57 - 64	64 and above	Grand Total
Count of Age Group	106	12	8	16	2	1	145
Professions	Parent	Student	Teacher	Working	Grand Total		
Count of Profession	20	105	9	11	145		
Education Level	Doctorate	Graduate	High School	Junior College	Post Graduate	Professional Degree	Grand Total
Count of Education Level	2	35	30	45	25	8	145

Table 1 Association of Age Group and Education level with Perception of current education system.

Age Group	Education Level	Perception of Education System		
		Getting better	No change at all	Worsened
18 - 24		44	29	33
	Graduate	14	5	10
	High School	13	10	7
	Junior College	16	13	16
	Post Graduate	1	1	
25 - 35		5	3	4
	Doctorate		1	
	Post Graduate	4	2	4
	Professional Degree	1		
36 - 45		3	2	3
	Graduate	2	1	2
	Post Graduate		1	1
	Professional Degree	1		
45 - 56		8	3	5
	Graduate			1
	Post Graduate	6	2	2
	Professional Degree	2	1	2
57 - 64		1		1
	Post Graduate	1		
	Professional Degree			1
64 and above				1
	Doctorate			1
Grand Total		61	37	47

The perception of the current system plays a vital role in accessing the need for change or betterment. If the people associated with the current system find imperfections in the system, they are willing to accept a change or work towards it. According to the survey conducted it was found that, out of the total sample size, 57.93% of people believed that

the system was the same or had worsened. Out of this, 58.5% of respondents are in the age group of 18 – 24. This age group is in touch with the system the most. 42% of respondents believed that the system had started to get better but was far from it.

Table 2 Association of Age group and Education level with Familiarity about Gurukul system.

Age Group	Education Level	Familiarity with Gurukul		
		Extremely Familiar	Not at all	Somewhat Familiar
18 - 24		44	18	44
	Graduate	15	4	10
	High School	9	9	12
	Junior College	20	4	21
	Post Graduate		1	1
25 - 35		4		8
	Doctorate			1
	Post Graduate	4		6
	Professional Degree			1
36 - 45		2	1	5
	Graduate	1	1	3
	Post Graduate	1		1
	Professional Degree			1
45 - 56		4	2	10
	Graduate		1	
	Post Graduate	3		7
	Professional Degree	1	1	3
57 - 64			1	1
	Post Graduate			1
	Professional Degree		1	
64 and above			1	
	Doctorate		1	
Grand Total		54	23	68

From the survey conducted we found out about the ignorance towards our old systems due to colonization and rapid modernization. Gurukul education is known to be one of the oldest systematic styles of education to have existed in the world. But, from the survey conducted we can see that nearly 63% of the sample population responded that they either know nothing or are only somewhat familiar with the Gurukul system. From the data above, we can see that students who have completed education until Junior college level are extremely familiar with the concept of Gurukul.

From this and the data from Table 1, we can infer that current students understand the drawbacks of education in India and are finding for different systems of education.

Table 3 Relation between Age Group, Education Level and Profession and implementation of Gurukul systems with Modern technology.

Age Group	Profession	Fruitfulness of Gurukul implementation			Total
		Maybe	No	Yes	
18 - 24		52	29	25	106
	Student	50	29	25	
	Working	2			
25 - 35		4	2	6	12
	Parent	1	1	2	
	Teacher			2	
	Working	3	1	2	
36 - 45		3	2	3	8
	Parent	2	1	2	
	Student	1			
	Teacher			1	
	Working		1		
45 - 56		8	1	7	16
	Parent	5		5	
	Teacher	3	1		
	Working			2	
57 - 64				2	2
	Parent			1	
	Teacher			1	
64 and above		1			1
	Teacher	1			
Age Group / Education					
18 - 24		52	29	25	106
	Graduate	13	7	9	
	High School	14	10	6	
	Junior College	24	11	10	
	Post Graduate	1	1		
25 - 35		4	2	6	12
	Doctorate	1			
	Post Graduate	2	2	6	
	Professional Degree	1			
36 - 45		3	2	3	8
	Graduate	2	1	2	
	Post Graduate	1		1	
	Professional Degree		1		
45 - 56		8	1	7	16
	Graduate	1			
	Post Graduate	5		5	
	Professional Degree	2	1	2	
57 - 64				2	2
	Post Graduate			1	
	Professional Degree			1	
64 and above		1			1
	Doctorate	1			
Grand Total		68	34	43	145

The primary focus of this study rests on the responses collected about public perception about the implementation of Gurukul along with Modern technology. Overall, 47% of people are unsure whether this integration will yield any result. Due to a lack of practical research and experimentation in the field of alternative education systems, the respondents are hesitant towards the same. From the survey, we can see that 17% of respondents are between the age group of 18 - 24 and give an affirmative response towards the integration of Gurukul Systems and Modern technology. We can further infer that students who are currently completing their education have a good grasp on the workings of the system, from Table 1 and Table 2 we inferred that students show a trend towards alternative education systems and from Table 3, we can further understand that even though it is weak, there is a mildly positive response from students about this integration. More experimentation towards the same can increase this.

Table 4 Data depicting willingness to attend or teach at a Gurukul

Profession	Would you attend or teach in a Gurukul?		
	Extremely Interested	Not at all	Not so Interested
Parent	15	2	3
Student	63	11	31
Teacher	6		3
Working	10		1
Grand Total	94	13	38

Table 5 Data depicting willingness of parents to send their children to Gurukul type of School

Profession	Would you send your child to a Gurukul?			
	Does not apply to me.	Maybe	No	Yes
Parent	1	8	2	9
Student	47	17	16	25
Teacher		4	1	4
Working	4	2		5
Grand Total	52	31	19	43

After sorting the data, we can see that 64% of the total sample size was willing to learn or teach in a Gurukul with almost 46% of the parents willing to send their kids to learn in one. This shows a willingness and acceptance towards alternative education systems.

Table 6 Relation between Age Group and Level of Education with awareness of development in Gurukul system.

Age Group	Education Level	Awareness of current Gurukul development		
		Extremely aware	Not aware at all	Not so aware
18 - 24		16	42	48
	Graduate	7	10	12
	High School	6	16	8
	Junior College	2	15	28
	Post Graduate	1	1	
25 - 35		3	3	6
	Doctorate		1	
	Post Graduate	3	2	5
	Professional Degree			1
36 - 45		1	4	3
	Graduate	1	3	1
	Post Graduate			2
	Professional Degree		1	
45 - 56		3	5	8
	Graduate		1	
	Post Graduate	2	3	5
	Professional Degree	1	1	3
57 - 64			1	1
	Post Graduate		1	
	Professional Degree			1
64 and above				1
	Doctorate			1
Grand Total		23	55	67

As of now, from the sample size, almost 84% of respondents are not aware of the recent developments in such endeavours. The research regarding alternative systems of education the development of the same has not been publicized as much as it should be. The current developments, which said to be showing a positive impact on the holistic growth of the students, are unknown to people.

The questionnaire also collected data regarding the perceived issues being faced by the current Education system as well as the perceived benefits of implementing a Gurukul type system. These issues and benefits along with the percentage of respondents which selected them are stated below.

Issues being faced by the current Education System of India:

1. Decreasing amount of enrolment: 0.04%
2. Poor quality of curriculum: 76.5%
3. Shortage of facilities and infrastructure: 61%
4. Equality of opportunity: 48%
5. Political interference: 50%
6. Lack of research and innovation: 53%
7. Stagnation: 41%

Benefits of the Gurukul System:

1. More extra-curricular activities: 50%
2. Better one – on – one attention between teachers and students: 66%
3. Wholesome learning environment: 64.8%
4. Equity and equality among students: 42%
5. Increased level of independence between students: 64%
6. Better enrolment in schools: 0.08%

Suggestions

After sorting and analysing the data, certain inferences were drawn as seen above. Following are suggestions for future improvement and practical experimentation in the field of alternative education.

- In the current day and age, the concept of ‘going to stay with the Guru to complete primary education’ seems to be farfetched and impractical. Hence, the benefits availed by students through this process are overlooked. A practical and plausible solution to this is boarding schools. These allow children to have increased levels of confidence and a sense of independence.
- The current trend in schooling includes filling up classrooms until their maximum capacity without giving any regard to the attention received by individual students from one teacher. The Gurukul system allowed for better individual development, as the Guru could give one-on-one attention to a student whenever he felt the need. This is very important in the early years of education to sculpt young minds. Limiting the number of students under one faculty can solve this issue. The students will have a personalized mentor, for academic and non-academic assistance and the teacher will be able to imbibe a better understanding in every student.
- Another very important aspect of the Gurukul system was to inculcate the habit of self-sufficiency in the students. This was done by allotting daily chores to every student along with the responsibility to make his/her plate from leaves or washing individual utensils, and other such tasks. This allows for the better overall development of students and makes them more capable individuals as they do not require external support going forward. In the current schools, basic tasks like cleaning washrooms, arranging the equipment, washing personal utensils in the mess will allow for a more holistic approach towards individual development.
- The biggest issue identified in the current education system in the curriculum. Central, as well as state governments, have given the excessive focus on subjects that do not necessarily require guidance but can be learned by oneself, given the resources available today. Gurukuls did not focus on systematic subjects, rather had subjects relating to statecraft, spirituality, mythology, warfare, etc. These have become oblivious today, but the idea of teaching subjects through experiential learning which is relevant to the current scenario is still valid. Subjects like political sciences, governance, ethics in trade/business, personal finance, environmental studies, resource utilization, languages, etc can help for a better understanding of the world and its workings.
- Gurukuls if combined with current technology and requirements, should also include various courses and subjects relating to coding, computer languages, blockchain, the internet of things, etc. As we transcend from physical to virtual, the next generation of students needs to be well equipped with these subjects.

- As seen from the data collected, equality in terms of education is one of the issues currently pressuring the education system. The Gurukul eliminated caste, standing in society, and other discriminating factors in its days. Due to changes and unequal distribution of resources, this has become difficult in today's times. The practice of renouncing identity for primary education can prove to instil a sense of modesty and belongingness to the community in all. Equal treatment in terms of practices in schooling needs to be implemented across schools. Removal of special privileges and combining students withing classes can prove to a stepping stone towards this.
- In terms of implementation of Computer aided Gurukul education, the work being done currently is still majorly theoretical. The usage of cloud computing for personalized approach to education even though can prove to be highly effective, has no practical results. Until such a system comes into existence or is tried out, no claims can be made about it. But, the integration of technology and development of a school with ideals of Gurukul, including communal living, one Guru, learning through experience, etc has been done and is currently showing positive results.

Conclusion

India is a land of tradition and culture. Our systems have been integrating this in them since the beginning of time. We are known to have had some of the best educational institutions in the world. And currently, we are tackling with growing problems of illiteracy and issues which are bred from it.

After conducting the survey and analysing the data we can conclude, that the integration of the Gurukul system with modern technology and facilities will yield a positive overall result in the quality of education. The public perception towards the current system of education is seen to be skewed towards negative and the need for change is imminent. The lack of information about the Gurukul system within the respondents is understandable and a live example of the shortcomings of the current system. The integration of values, ideals, and teachings of the Gurukul system along with modern infrastructure, subjects, and facilities will give positive results.

Most respondents currently involved in the system show a willing response towards attending or teaching or sending their child to study at a Gurukul like establishment.

Using the resources, we have, we can overcome the drawbacks found from the Gurukul system and work towards building an integrated system that focuses on holistic development.

More practical experimentation in the field will encourage more people to take interest in alternative methods of education which will allow us to find a unified system of quality and sustainable education. Taking the learnings from the Gurukul system, we can devise a sustainable education system that focuses specifically on the lower income group of the society and providing them with practical knowledge allowing for earning opportunities.

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