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Indian Scriptural Tradition and the Modern Context of Education

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India's educational heritage is one of the oldest and richest in the world. Indian scriptural texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, and Mahabharata are not merely religious writings but also contain profound philosophical and educational ideas. These texts emphasize moral values, self-discipline, social responsibility, and holistic development of human personality. In the modern era, the education system has become largely focused on technical knowledge, professional skills, and competitive achievements. While such developments are essential for economic growth, they often overlook ethical and cultural values. This research paper examines the educational principles embedded in Indian scriptural traditions and explores their relevance in the modern educational context. The study argues that integrating traditional Indian wisdom with contemporary educational practices can promote value-based education, character formation, and holistic development among students.

Indian civilization has a long intellectual tradition where education was considered a sacred pursuit. Ancient Indian education was not limited to the acquisition of information; it aimed at the overall development of the learner's character, intellect, and spiritual awareness. Scriptural texts such as the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita emphasize self-knowledge, discipline, and moral responsibility. The ancient Gurukul system served as a model of holistic education in which students lived with their teachers and learned values such as humility, service, and self-control. However, modern education has largely shifted towards specialization, technological advancement, and employment-oriented learning. While these changes are necessary, they have also created a gap in value-based education. Therefore, revisiting Indian scriptural wisdom may help restore ethical balance in modern educational practices.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the educational philosophy present in Indian scriptural traditions.
2. To analyse the challenges of modern education.
3. To explore the relevance of Indian philosophical values in contemporary education.
4. To highlight the importance of value-based education in the present time.

This research adopts a qualitative and analytical approach. The study is based on textual analysis of classical Indian scriptures such as the Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita along with modern educational literature. Secondary sources including books, research articles, and policy documents such as the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) have also been examined. The objective is to analyse the philosophical and educational significance of scriptural teachings and their relevance to contemporary educational discourse.

Indian scriptures place great emphasis on knowledge and wisdom. The Vedas describe knowledge as the highest form of enlightenment that helps human beings understand truth and reality. The Upanishads highlight the pursuit of self-realization through dialogue between teacher and student. Education was considered a process of inner transformation rather than mere accumulation of information. Similarly, the Bhagavad Gita emphasizes duty, discipline, and selfless action. These teachings provide moral guidance that is highly relevant for students and educators even today. The Gurukul system further demonstrated how education could integrate intellectual learning with ethical living.

Modern education has evolved significantly due to globalization, technological innovation, and scientific progress. Digital learning platforms, online resources, and interdisciplinary studies have expanded access to knowledge. Despite these advantages, modern education faces challenges such as excessive competition, academic pressure, and erosion of moral values. Many scholars argue that the absence of ethical education has contributed to social and psychological stress among students. Therefore, there is a growing need to integrate value-based education with modern knowledge systems.

- Value-Based Education: Scriptural teachings promote values such as truth, compassion, tolerance, and non-violence.
- Holistic Development: Ancient Indian education emphasized physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth simultaneously.
- Cultural Awareness: Scriptural traditions help students understand their cultural roots and civilizational heritage.
- Ethical Leadership: The teachings of Indian philosophy encourage responsible leadership and social commitment among learners.

Conclusion

Indian scriptural traditions represent a profound source of ethical and philosophical wisdom. Integrating these values into modern education can enrich the learning process and contribute to the holistic development of students. By combining scientific knowledge with ethical and cultural understanding, education can become more meaningful and socially responsible. Therefore, the revival of Indian knowledge traditions in modern education is not only desirable but essential for building a balanced and humane society.

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