



SELECTION, INDUCTION AND EDUCATION OF SCHOLARS IN AYURVEDIC STREAM DURING ANCIENT ERA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is considered one of the ancient systems of knowledge in India. Various compendiums of Ayurveda i.e., Charaka, Sushruta, or Vagbhata have enumerated an education system based on Gurukuls i.e., An Educator and their pupils. It is evident from them that a very systematized and organized form of medical education starting from selection to induction and then to well effective teaching and training were given during that ancient era. The triad of education viz. *Adhyayan* (studying), *Adhyapan* (teaching) and *Sambhasha* (an argument based on logic) is key to knowledge and learning process as per Charaka. The selection of students and the teachers were based on some set of fixed criteria's which were necessary to be fulfilled. Induction was done prior to admission and proper disciplinary, ethical rules were practised. For the development of knowledge and skills in branches of Ayurveda, problems-based case discussion, identification, causes, treatment of diseases, their principles were taught. *Yogya* (a set of dummy objects) was used to practice prior to final surgery.

Keywords: Education, Ayurveda, Induction, *guru shishya* etc.

INTRODUCTION

Vedas are roots to all existing education systems. Vedas are itself derived from the root word *Vida* means

knowledge. India has been a pioneer in exploring and propagating knowledge. This knowledge was

propagated via *guru shishya parampara* which compiled of A master and his disciples.¹ In Upanishads, it is also stated that various streams of knowledge were prevalent during the ancient era like *Veda*, *Upanishads*, *kshatra vidya*, *nakshatra vidya*, *bhuta vidya*, *itihas*, *Purana* etc. Ayurveda is considered as *upaveda* of Atharvaveda where learning and propagation have been very effectively described in Ayurveda Compendiums; where the effective triad of learning is given by acharya Charaka as *adhyayana* (learning), *adhyapana* (teaching) and *sambhasha* (an argument based on logic).

The term “education” derivation and meaning In the contemporary era of school education, the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university is termed as a course of education with its various synonyms terms as teaching, schooling, tuition, tutoring, instruction, pedagogy, andragogy, coaching, training, tutelage, drilling, preparation, guidance, indoctrination, inculcation, enlightenment, edification, cultivation, development, improvement, bettering. This term called education got its origin in the mid-16th century from Latin *educatio(n)-*, from the verb *educare*.²

According to oxfords definition of this term is given as a process of teaching, training, and learning, especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills.³

Ancient Indian Education: The emergence of ancient Indian education is from the Vedas because the Vedas are considered to be the root of all emerging knowledge forms. The term Veda is derived from the root word "*Vida*" which means knowledge. During this period education was divided into two kinds of knowledge i.e. *Aihalokika* (worldly) and *Paralaukika* (otherworldly). This worldly education dealt with the social aspect, whereas the other worldly education was related to intellectual pursuits for achieving salvation.⁴

The objective of Vedic Education: The main objective of Vedic education was the development of the physical, moral and intellectual powers of man and to achieve salvation through it. In the field of salvation, much emphasis was laid on attention, concentration and yoga.⁵ The vitality of Indian education has been

emphasized and stated that ancient India was to nurture all the tools of expression by every available resource: physical, vital, mental, social and spiritual as described by Sri Aurobindo⁶ we are nurtured in a community where living for mutual emotional understanding, ethical values for humanitarian approach, exploring the inner potentials are foci which are achieved through Vedic system of education⁷

How to choose a stream amongst popularized streams of knowledge?

Many streams of knowledge were prevalent during the Vedic era and a student was liberal to choose any stream of his choices which included not only literature (sacred and secular) with accessories such as logic, poetics and philosophy, grammar but included various metaphysical and science branches such as astronomy, astrology, mathematics, botany and mechanical arts.

Before the *Adhyayan* (Education) process is begun, the disciple should examine the *Shastra*(stream) and *Acharya* (faculty) and the one with the highest qualities should be selected.

1. Examination of the Shastra (Stream of knowledge)- The Shastra should be prepared and recognized by the experts of the concerned field. It should have a well-arranged matter, easy to understand and be free from errors.

2. Examination of the Acharya (Faculty of school) –The teacher should have virtuous theoretical, clinical and applied acquaintance of the subject. He should have a high ethical character without ego besides having good behaviour with the disciples.⁸

Eligibility for training

It is quite evident in Charaka's structure of training, that an aspirant was liberal in choosing any stream amongst the medical text before approaching a teacher. The aspirant was therefore well informed and capable of choosing a particular text and branch of medical knowledge when he presented himself before a teacher. The selection of a pupil was systematically done by observing and analysing the physical, mental, intellectual and moral attributes besides his aptitude for a long and hard period of training.⁹

Unlike the current situation of the classroom where a large number of students are to be taught by a teacher without paying individual attention whereas face to face individual interaction is and was far better practised during the Vedic era. A teacher accepted only handful of scholars at a time where personal attention could be paid at a time.¹⁰

Selective criteria for students:

1. Qualities of a disciple: As per Acharya Sushruta, one belonging to good family background, worthy age, possesses courage, cleanliness, morals, humbleness and with the qualities of enthusiasm, strength, intelligence, memory, temperament and antipathy etc were preferred for giving education and whose mind, speech and efforts are pleasing, and is able to bear to endure the tribulation.¹¹

As per Acharya Charaka, qualities of the student include students who are *Kulya* (Healthy), *Krutakshana* (Attentive all the time), *Praataruthaayopavyusha* (Who wakes up early in the morning), *Krutva-Avashyakamupasprushyodaka* (One who bows down to god, sages, Brahmanas, guardians, elders, accomplished persons and the teacher), *Shuchou Deshesukhaupavishta* (Sitting comfortably in a clean and even place), *Manapurasaraabhirvaagbhi* (Who has the presence of mind and is attentive), *Sutramanukra-maan* (Recites in the same order), *Punaraavartayeth* (Recites the sutra with clear voice attentively), *Budh-vasamyag anupravishtya arthamswadoshha parihaara artham paradoshha pramaanaartham* (Understanding their importance fully, in order to correct his own faults of reading and to recognize the measure of those in the reading of others).¹²

2. Bodily features of student for preference: necessary qualifications included features like whose tongue, lips and teeth are thin and mouth, eyes and nose are upright and straight.

Induction of The Student It is evident in scriptures that a specific time and methodology opted during the entrance of disciples in different schools.

3. Different practices followed during the entrance of disciple: Following admission to the gurukul, the pupil underwent a formal procedure of initiation which amounted to a sacred contract that imposed mutual

obligations on the teacher and the taught. The ceremonial customs involved Vedic Tradition which includes sacrificial fire, chanting of *mantras* and oblations to the fire. At the end of the ritual, an appeal was made by the preceptor to the initiate before a learned gathering that included many physicians. The exhortation summed up all that is noble and sacred in religious medicine and defined the path and a code of conduct for the medical aspirant who expressed his compliance by taking an oath. In the Charaka tradition, the oath was taken at the beginning, not the conclusion, of the course of a physician's training.¹³

3.1 Time for entrance: Auspicious date, *Karan*, *Muhurta* constellations during auspicious direction and holy time.

3.2 Preparation of spaces of school: In the flat area, make four cubic long and wide squares were dug and the entire surface was coated with cow dung. oblations of flowers, fried paddy, gems and sun-dried rice. After worshipping various gems, gods, Brahmins and Vaidya were advised. pull the vertical ridges on the ground and protect them with water. Establish Brahma in the South direction and light a fire nearby.

3.3 Rituals during oblation: Senegalia *catechu* (Khardir), *Butea monosperma* (Palash), *Cedrus deodara* (Cedar), *Aegle marmelos* (bilva), *Ficus religiosa* (peepal) and *Madhuca longifolia* (mahua) along with ghrta, curd and honey; *Homa* is conducted with the wood of the above-mentioned drugs. *Omkara* was enchanted during the dipping of ghrta in burning *Homa*. Apart from this, all deities, the sages, and deva were referred and also a shout from the disciple as *Swaha* during *ahuti* is performed.

4. Discipline in schools

After offering oblation to fire, perform the three times of *Hutagni* and in presence of fire various pledges were in taken by a disciple which was necessary rules as to stay in premises.

4.1. Pledge regarding removal of mental ailments: Various psychic anomalies are an obstacle to a disciplined academic life and thus students were said to let go of their *kama* (intense sensual desires), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *Mana* (honour), *ahamkara* (ego),

dwesha (jealousy), *parushya* (harshness), *pishunata* (complaints about others), untruths, *alasya* (laziness).

4.2. Proper hygiene: Rules regarding regular cutting of hairs and nails have been advised along with wearing clean clothes.

4.3. Dress code: *Kasaya* (saffron) clothes was advised to wear.

4.4. Conducts: *Satyabhashana* (truthfulness), *Brahmacharya* (celibacy) and salutation to the Guru was amongst conducts to be followed.

4.5. Permission: A student had to take prior permission before going to some other premises, for going to sleep, sitting, administering food and during study phase and was always advised to do conducts which were beneficial.

4.6. Prohibited time for study: The two days of the end of *Ashtami* and *Krishnapaksa* (ie *Chaturdashi* and *Amavas*), similarly the Sunrise of *Shuklapaksa* (*Ash-tami*, *Chaturdashi* and *Amavas*), And at sunset, lighting, in a famine (without rainy season), in the emergency of the nation and the king, the crematorium, riding (travel time), in slaughter and during the war, festival and celebration, On the days of (earthquake) and on the days in which Brahmins are indistinct, One should not study in the stage.

5. Disciplinary action during non-obedience: If a disciple does not follow the rules and regulations regarding school, proper disciplinary action was taken, and the disciple was cursed by his masters that all the intellectual skills developed would go in vain.

6. Medico legal aspect in practice the medico-legal aspect was very important for a physician as well as a surgeon during Vedic period too and thus clear instruction regarding criteria for selection and rejection is advised as If instructions are not followed then it was considered unrighteous, and all skills developed will become unfruitful and one lost his name and fame with this conduct.

6.1 Selection of patient Brahmins, gurus, poor's, friends, ascetics, humble persons, sages, orphans and devotees were advised to be treated with all possible resources and knowledge gained by a medical professional.

6.2 Rejection criteria for the patient the hunter (trapper of animals and birds), selfish behaviour, corrupt and sinners should not be treated. Acharya Charaka has used the term "*shakyai upekshanam*" i.e., based on prognostic condition, a physician should clearly reject such patients.¹⁴

7. Effective triad of learning

The training of a physician had three components namely **learning, instruction** and **discussion**. Maxims had to be learnt by repetition, but the learner was grateful to consider and gain an understanding of their meaning through long hours of study. The teacher instructed the pupil on the textual passages and ensured that the learning process including pronunciation, pitch and understanding was flawless. Even though writing and written texts were in trend, the emphasis on memorising texts was clear.

However, discussions towered above self-learning and teaching in the training of a physician. Its merits were not only praised but were demonstrated through the many discussions held between the disciple and its preacher Punarvasu Atreya. Discussions have been praised to raise intellect. Besides promoting understanding at the training level, discussions prepared them for the competition from rivals, win academic and professional renown and perhaps obtain royal favour. *Vada Marga* (44 logical terms), friendly and hostile debate and the emphasis on scoring over the opponent are an indication of the importance of discussion and debate in a physician's training and career development.¹⁵

8. Quality of good teacher:

The teacher should be calm, of noble nature, not indulge in mean acts, intelligent, endowed with reasoning and memory, with a broad mind, having insistence for truth, without any deformity or impairment of senses, humble, having ability to understand the essence of the ideas, without anger and addictions, endowed with modesty, purity, good conduct, affection, dexterity and sincerity, interested in the study, devoted to the understanding of ideas and practical knowledge without any distraction, having no greed or idleness, compassionate to all creatures, following all the instructions of the teacher and being attached to him. He

should have clear ideas of the subject, should have seen the practical applications, be skilful, amicable, pure, having practical experience, well-equipped, possessing all the senses in normal condition, having his knowledge uncensored, conceit, envy, anger, forbearing, fatherly to disciples, having qualities of a good teacher and capable of infusing understanding. The teacher possessing such qualities inculcates physician's qualities in his disciple in a short time like the

seasonal cloud providing good crop in a suitable field¹⁶

9.1 Training and skill developments of Surgical branches: In the ancient period, the invasive exercise was generally executed over creatures or vegetables, or replicas of humans made up of clay, and the scholars of the medical profession used to exercise on those things. Applied surgical training of scholars was mostly imparted over some common objects that were easily available at those times.

* **Table 1:** Showing the different surgical processes and their dummy objects for training¹⁷

S.N.	Surgical Process	Dummy Objects Used
1.	Chhedana (Excision)	fruits of Bottle gourd, Pumpkin gourd, Cucumber, Watermelon
2.	Bhedhana (Incision)	Leather bag, Urinary bladder of dead animals, Leather bottles, etc. filled with watery mud
3.	Lekhana (Scraping)	on a piece of hairy skin
4.	Vyadhana (Puncturing)	veins of animals or Lotus stalk.
5.	Eshana karma (probing)	Moth-eaten wood, a tube of bamboo and reed, and mouth of dried bottle gourd
6.	Aharana Karma (Extraction)	fruits having seeds like Jackfruit, Vilwa, Bimbi and also on teeth of dead animals
7.	Visravana Karma (Drainage)	planks of Salmali wood pasted with bee-wax
8.	Seevana (Suturing)	between the two edges of fine and thick cloth and on the borders of leather

9.2 Qualities of surgeons evolved after their training process: Surgical branch of the school had disciples with certain important needful characters as mentioned by Acharya Sushruta as *Shauryam* (courage), *Ashu Kriya* (quick action.), *Shastrataikshyanam* (sharp instruments), *Aswed* (no sweating) *avepathu* (tremors in emergency i.e. should not be frightened), *Asammohasha* (must not become hopeless).¹⁸ The above characteristics were necessary as a surgeon had to deal with various surgical interventions in which his fast action, decision power and calmness during emergency condition was selective capping criteria.

disciples. Along with field education, other norms like social etiquette, code and conduct along with medico-legal aspects were also taught. Surgical schools have taught different principles of surgical processes on various dummies for training and skill development.

CONCLUSION

Entry to the Ayurveda stream required a preliminary examination of disciple along with proper induction before entrance in the medical field, proper training and skill development was imparted to them along with education to code and conducts.

DISCUSSION

There were different fields of knowledge evident during the Vedic era where a student was free to choose his field of interest. Ayurvedic text Charak Samhita gives an effective form of gaining knowledge by an effective triad of *Adhyayan*, *Adhyapan*, *Sambhasha* which is effective to date. *Gurusutra*, *Shishyasutra* shows *Gurushishya* tradition of learning. Sushruta describes a chapter of *Shishyopanayaniya* which describes the selection, induction and education of

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