

13. Changing Dynamics of Guru-Shishya Relationship

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ABSTRACT

According to the Indian perspective, the purpose of human life is to develop via inner and outer experiences until a person lives in God, realizes their spirit, and develops divine qualities in their knowledge, will, and joy of being. The guru occupies a unique position in the process of obtaining this life-changing experience. The interconnection between the guru and his shishya touches deeply regressive strata of the two primary aspects of the relationship, closeness with the guru and the shishya's surrender. Real teaching is thought to take place when the disciple has self-discipline and is tuned to the guru's frequency. Mentoring heavily relies on teaching, leading by example, and influencing. Its poly-variantness is one of the guru-shishya relationship's most defining traits. It shows the all-inclusive nature of its quality. The dynamics of the connection suggest that the guru's complete transformation of the shishya served as its foundation.

Key Words: Dynamics, Guru-Shishya, Relationship, Indian perspective

Introduction

“Guru Bina Gatinahi”, an ancient proverb, means there is no progress without a guru. A guru is not a person; a guru is a wholesome knowledge. The English word guide is derived from the Sanskrit word guru.

The guru has always held a position of prominence in India. They were respected, feared, and listened to. A guru is someone who paints his shishya's white canvas with the colors of knowledge and discipline. A guru inspires the life force within you and leads you toward wisdom and understanding. The contribution of the guru was for the betterment of his shishya. Coming to the guru entails having faith in the guru's constant presence. This signifies that we will get what we want and be guided in the right direction.

Objectives of the research paper

- ✓ To interpret the shifting dynamic between the guru and the shishya
- ✓ To comprehend the roles that the Guru performed for creating his shishya knowledgeable
- ✓ To understand what an ideal shishya looks like
- ✓ To study various examples of Guru-Shishya of Vedic ages
- ✓ To examine the Guru-Shishya parampara

Research Methodology

Research type

- The purposed research is a descriptive and historical type of research.
- The purposed research is developed from a qualitative point of view; however, quantitative data were also sought.

Population and sample

- The sample size of the purposed research is 60 respondents from the age group of 15 to 45

Methods and Techniques

In this research the following methods were used:

- Secondary data
- Historical documentations
- Primary data collected through questionnaire

Please Note: The quotes from ancient texts have been taken as quoted, retaining the essence and originality of the verses.

A ‘Guru’ is more than a teacher

The word GURU consists of the two syllables "GU" and "RU." The combination of the words GU meaning darkness and RU meaning light denotes someone who shines the light of knowledge or wisdom and drives out the darkness of ignorance. In the Brahmanda Purana, the Guru is described as Shiva without his three eyes, Vishnu without his four arms and Brahma without his four heads. He is Parama Shiva himself, manifest as a human.

The teacher solely uses words to convey information throughout the allotted time of the lesson. On the other hand, the Guru continues to mentor his disciple around the clock using verbal mediums and sometimes beyond that.

For instance, a teacher teaches the curriculum, techniques, and other aspects of music; while a guru teaches how to approach music, how to comprehend, internalize, and enjoy it. A guru simply highlights and encourages us to develop our positive traits. A real disciple of a guru receives kindness and affection from him. Every guru emphasizes the fact that the disciple has to discover the innate divine in oneself on his own. A guru reaffirms the goal while showing the path. The Guru's Grace shields his followers from all peril and aids them in overcoming obstacles.

Every soul long for the penultimate level of happiness, which the guru helps his followers achieve through various means as they navigate the ocean of life.

Who is called an ideal “shishya”?

In Hinduism, a shishya is a disciple or follower of a guru. A shishya is guided by his guru on various aspects of life. The Sanskrit term shishya means to approach. Therefore, a disciple is someone who, through their proximity through commitment, obedience, action, and trust, can inspire love and compassion in their master's heart.

The word Shishya also stands for dedication. A shishya's depth of dedication to the Guru decides his or her spiritual condition. A shishya is fully committed and has faith in his guru. Ego should not exist in this sacred relationship. A shishya needs to be humble and behave like a simple child with no announcement of his self-importance and prejudices so that he is just initial clay left to the guru to be moulded.

To be a true disciple, complete acceptance must be necessary. Shishya's genuine nature is determined by true feelings rather than arguments and doubts. Accepting a master implies that you value his wisdom and expertise in spiritual affairs and occult destiny theory. Everything is subject to the Guru's instructions. The disciple must follow the instructions as soon as they are given.

At all times, you must be both spiritually and physically present at the feet of the guru. The closer a disciple is to his Guru; the greater will be the grace and its fruits.

Guru-Shishya Parampara

The guru-shishya is a traditional format or parampara of schooling that denotes a succession of teachers and disciples in Indian-origin religions such as Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism. Each parampara belongs to a particular sampradaya and had its gurukuls for teaching based in akharas, gompas, mathas, viharas, or temples. Guru-shishya denotes "succession from guru to disciple".

In the traditional mode of schooling, the shishya continues to stay with his or her guru at gurukul or ashram and receives the education as a true learner. The guru was regarded as a god. It is thought that this relationship, built on the sincerity of the guru and the respect, commitment, devotion, and obedience of the disciple, is the most effective means of transmitting subtle or advanced knowledge.

Guru-Shishya Bond

In earlier times, the guru and shishya had a deep understanding of one another. In gurukul, a shishya's both physical and emotional needs were satisfied by the guru. The environment in gurukul created both intellectual and emotional bonds between the guru and shishya.

A guru mentors and leads the shishya spiritually, going beyond mere academic knowledge (disciple). Both the guru and the shishya need to be sincere and committed to one another to both lead and be led. The guru was highly regarded by the shishya. The shishya obeyed the guru's commands blindfolded.

Guru treats his shishya like a child. When a mother and her kid go for a day out together; the kid insists on buying toys and candies. As a responsible mother, she will consider the consequences of the situation on her child before making a decision. She is aware of how much liberty her child should have at what age. In the same manner, the Guru assesses his disciple's overall position and offers guidance as necessary. A guru is aware of his disciple's needs and when they should be met.

The relationship between a guru and a disciple is comparable to that of a cattleman and his cow. When a cattleman accepts and cares for a stray cow, she feels respected and safe even if she has no one to look up to. A Guru is someone who will show you a dignified path from darkness to a morning full of sunshine.

An 'Abhang' of Saint Tukaram conveys the extreme importance of a guru in shishya's life, it goes as:

*"सद्गुरूवाचोनीसापडेनासोय। धरावेतेपायआधीआधी॥
आपणासारखेकरितीतत्काळ। नाहीकाळ-वेळतयालागी॥
लोहपरिसाचीनसाहेउपमा। सद्गुरूमहिमाअगाधचि॥
तुकांम्हणेकैसेहेआंधळेजन। गेलेविसरोनीख-यादेवा॥"*

Saint Tukaram mentioned परीस (something that can turn iron into gold) in the above 'Abhang' which means a Guru is himself an alchemist who wants to make his shishya alchemist and not gold. He will transfer the same knowledge and wisdom to others and serve as a guide to many.

Guru-Shishya from Indian Mythology

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुगुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः। गुरुःसाक्षात् परब्रह्मा तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः।

According to the shloka, the creator Brahma, the preserver Vishnu, and the destroyer Shiva are all our teachers. These teachers are 'Source of Absolute'. I extend my greetings to these great teachers. In India's long and glorious history, there have been many idealistic Guru-Shishya combinations.

A) Shri Dronacharya and Eklavya

The first instance that comes to mind when we read about the greatest Guru-Shishya connection is Shri Dronacharya and Eklavya. Eklavya mastered archery and was extremely committed to his guru. He showed his dedication by chopping off his thumb when his Guru Shri Dronacharya asked for his thumb in the form of 'Guru Dakshina'. Shishyas were so dedicated to their Gurus that they showed readiness to give anything and everything to them in 'Guru Dakshina'.

B) Shri Krishna and Arjuna

The bond between Bhagwan Shri Krishna and Arjuna is the only other ideal illustration of a guru-shishya relationship. Everyone knows the bond that they shared was of a guru and shishya. All five Pandavas were shishya of Shri Krishna but Shri Krishna became the 'chariot' of only Arjuna and showed him the right direction. Arjun was given the order by Shri Krishna to kill his father, brother, and relatives who are against 'Dharma'. It wasn't easy for Arjuna but he followed and did what Shri Krishna said. Arjuna stood for dharma, and ultimately, dharma won the battle in the end. As a result, the battleground was given the name "Dharmakshetre-Kurukshetra." The commands of the Guru were considered to be the final word. This is how the gurus of ancient times made their shishya skillful, ingenious, and responsible humans.

C) Swami Vivekananda and Ram Krishna Paramhansa

If Shishya receives his Guru's blessings, he can accomplish anything he sets his mind to. Swami Vivekananda was the shishya of Ram Krishna Paramhansa. Swami Vivekananda is best known worldwide and especially in the United States for his ground-breaking speech to the 1893 world parliament of religions. Swami Vivekananda was with Ramkrishna Paramhansa when he was about to bid adieu to the world, Shri Ram Krishna Ji transferred all his knowledge in the form of blessings to Swami Vivekananda and said:

"आज मैं तुझे सब कुछ देकर फकीर हो गया और इस शक्ति के द्वारा तू संपूर्ण सृष्टि का महान कल्याण करेगा औरत भी तू वापस जा सकेगा।"

Guru offers his shishya knowledge and shows the right direction as well as motivates him to take steps for the world's welfare.

D) Sadguru Shri Pithale Maharaj and Sadguru Moredada

Sadguru Narayandas Ji Pithale Maharaj did 'तेजाचीउपासना' (Gayatri Sadhana) for 36 years in the Himalayas and 12 years in Trimbakeshwar, Nashik, and Maharashtra. He aimed to

transform entire humanity for the betterment and direct them to a good path. To achieve his life's purpose, he formed 'ध्येय'.

His shishya Sadguru Khanderao More known as Moredada lived his whole life to fulfill his 'ध्येय'.

ध्येय- Pithale Maharaj explained to Sadguru Moredada that he should feel the emotions of every person who will come to him with his problems to seek guidance and answers and should not disappoint anyone.

In addition, the 'भाव' that needed to fulfill his 'ध्येय' was:

भाव- Sadguru Moredada was told by Pithale Maharaj that, provide guidance remembering that the person who wants to seek an answer to a problem is sent by 'परब्रह्म भगवान श्रीस्वामी समर्थ महाराज' and 'परब्रह्म' is going to guide them through you.

The aim was already set, to achieve that aim ध्येय was set by Sadguru Shri Pithale Maharaj but Sadguru Moredada's 'निरपेक्षभाव' made it all happened.

Modern-Day Spiritual Gurus

The origins of numerous ancient religions and practices emphasize the growth of a person's spirituality. The majority of Indian religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc., place a strong emphasis on elevating one's spiritual consciousness.

In today's modern world, people are becoming oppressed and detached from themselves and their surroundings. Many people are looking for self-realization as they feel materialistic possessions do not provide all the happiness and joy that fulfill one's life purpose. Modern-day spiritual Gurus assist people in achieving this level of contentment in life.

The most notable modern-day Indian spiritual Gurus and their priceless teachings:

A) Shri Shri Ravi Shankar

Shri Ravi Shankar Ji founded the NGO “Art of Living” intending to aid those who are economically and socially backward. In addition, he is well-known for founding the International Association for Human Values, an organization that works to promote universal values among all people, regardless of race, nationality, or religion.

He believes that spirituality is the only way to elevate fundamental principles which help in creating human life more satisfying and purposeful. He finds answering the “Who am I?” question essential to discovering one's life's purpose.

B) B.K. Shivani

B.K. Shivani is popularly called "Sister Shivani". She teaches at the Brahma World Spiritual University. She is a famous spiritual guru all over India known for delivering strong motivational courses and seminars. She finds materialistic satisfaction is not enough. This helped her explore answers to the deeper questions about life through meditation. She encourages her followers in doing the same to help them become more self-aware.

C) Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev

Sadguru Ji began his journey when he was quite young. He used to practice yoga regularly and started taking yoga classes from a very young age. He worked toward a Bachelor of Arts in English literature.

At the age of 25, he achieved early success by becoming a prominent businessman, but not enough satisfied with his life made him decide to look for a more gratifying purpose for living.

Sadguru Ji became a yoga teacher by promoting yoga practices and spirituality. He then rose to fame as a motivational speaker and is regarded as one of India's most modern yogis.

He is one of the most popular gurus among Indian youth due to his endearing nature and contemporary teaching style.

D) Gaur Gopal Das

Gaur Gopal Das Ji is an Indian lifestyle coach, author, and well-known motivational speaker. In addition, he is a monk with over 20 years of practice who seeks to understand the most intricate aspects of human emotions, including relationships, happiness, and meaning. He has encouraged students from many colleges and universities to make a difference in the world by teaching them his lessons.

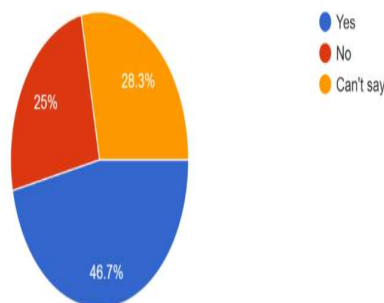
Analysis of the Data on the Subject “Modern-Age Bond of Guru-Shishya”

The purpose of this paper was to explore the evolution of the Guru-Shishya relationship from the Vedic age to the modern age. Some examples from Indian mythology describe how committed shishya was to his Guru. It also talks about how modern-day spiritual Gurus are enlightening people to discover their true selves.

The paper will conclude with a brief discussion on a paradigm shift in the role of a Guru in the modern age with reference to the primary data that has been collected through a questionnaire. The data gathered was then put into tables and figures to analyze the purpose of the study.

Research Question 1: Is there any difference between a Guru and Shikshak (Teacher)

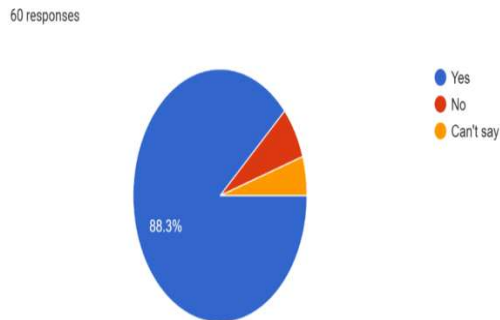
60 responses



Responses	Percentage
Yes	46.7%
No	25%
Can't Say	28.3%

The table and pie chart shows how many respondents know the difference between a Guru and a Shikshak 46.7% of the respondents feel that there is a difference between the two and 25% find no difference between the two.

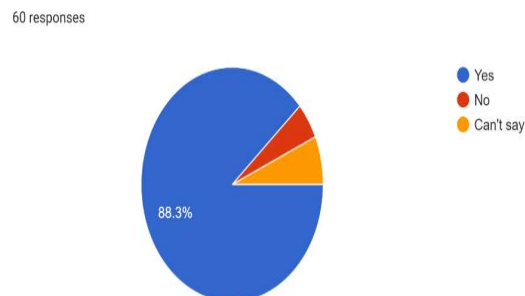
Research Question 2: Do you feel the need for a 'Guru'?



Responses	Percentage
Yes	88.3%
No	5%
Can't Say	6.7%

The table and pie chart shows how many respondents feel the need for a Guru 88.3% of the respondents feel the need for a Guru and 5% don't.

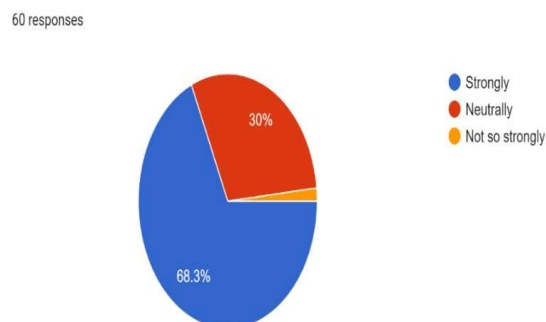
Research Question 3: "There could be different types of Gurus." (e.g. Health Guru, Academic Guru, Career Guru, Spiritual Guru, etc.) Do you agree?



Responses	Percentage
Yes	88.3%
No	6.7%
Can't Say	5%

The percentage of respondents that believe there can be several types of gurus is depicted in the table and pie chart 88.3% of respondents believe there can be various types of gurus, while 6.7% disagree.

Research Question 4: How strongly are you connected to your 'Guru'?

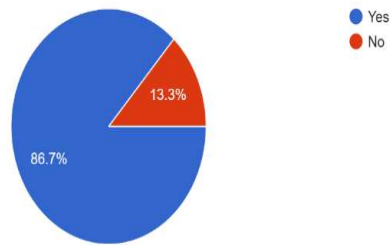


Responses	Percentage
Strongly	68.3%
Neutrally	30%
Not so strongly	1.7%

The table and pie chart shows the proportions of respondents who say they feel connected to their gurus 1.7% of respondents don't feel a strong connection to their gurus, compared to 68.3% who do.

Research Question 5: Can you think of any Guru-Shishya relationship from Indian mythology?

60 responses



Responses	Percentage
Yes	86.7%
No	13.3%

The percentage of respondents who can recall a Guru-Shishya example from Indian mythology is displayed in the table and pie chart 86.7% of participants could name an instance of the Guru-Shishya connection from Indian mythology, whereas 13.3% were unable to.

Findings

This study's findings have shed light on the significance of the guru in contemporary society and how it differs significantly from the Vedic period. People continue to require gurus in their lives even when the culture of gurus and the shishya is diminishing slowly. Most people believe that their guru will guide them down the correct path. He bestows insight, knowledge, and spiritual precepts.

The difference between a guru and a Shikshak was perceived as true through the research. Guru imparts life lessons while Shikshak only concentrates on academic knowledge. Shikshak does have time constraints and is only intended to last for a brief time in a student's life, but a guru is someone who mentors and guides his shishya at all stages of life outside of school.

The necessity for a Guru in one's life is felt through the research paper. A guru is someone who supports you emotionally and physically. One knows they can always count on someone to save them whenever things go wrong. Guru is unbiased and considerate. Having an honest individual who would comment on your decisions and consult properly is vital. We all experience situations in life where we need someone to lead us and assist us in overcoming the challenge. Guru imparts the knowledge and wisdom that a person requires in the initial stage of his life. Guru acts as a support system.

There could be different types of Gurus like Health Guru, Academic Guru, Career Guru, and Spiritual Guru. People also view their parents and academic teachers as their gurus.

The research also shows that the majority of them feel a close connection to their guru. The shishya feel supported and connected. Further more, it asserts that if they are connected, they are also devoted to and committed to their guru.

In the modern era, although guru holds a prominent place in one's life, somewhere the necessity for gurus is dwindling and it is quite upsetting to see that teachers and gurus are not

accorded the importance they merit. Since moral standards have been lost and disciples no longer respect their gurus the way shishya of the Vedic age did, the relationship between guru and disciple now is far less fulfilling than it once was.

The values and morals established by the Gurus and their shishya in Indian mythology are being forgotten by the current generation. Their dedication and commitment can teach us how to be the ideal shishyas. People remember and are aware of Eklavya's dedication to his Guru Dronacharya, but they fail to put it into practice in modern times.

Conclusion

The guru-shishya tradition has been the foundation of countless generations. With the current population boom, we can see that the process has enabled more people to pursue education. Additionally, we observe that kids are exposed to a variety of educational mediums in today's world of rapidly evolving values and technology, including books, the media, and the internet, to mention a few. Many people may wonder if we still need gurus to teach and show paths in this technological world. Can audio-visual tools take the place of a person? Of course not, as they are impersonal, emotionless machines, and only capable of feeding facts. Teachers should therefore work to keep up with next generation to understand their students better. Also, the shishya should perform his part of the role perfectly. Shishya should be fully committed and should have faith in his guru. This will help in maintaining and protecting the sacredness of the bond.

One could reasonably conclude that as time goes on, the one-on-one interactions between teachers and students are dwindling. However, in our opinion, they are irreplaceable.

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