



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

(Peer-reviewed, Refereed, Indexed & Open Access Journal)

DOI : 03.2021-11278686

ISSN : 2582-8568

IMPACT FACTOR : 8.428 (SJIF 2026)

“GURUKUL: A HOLISTIC LEARNING APPROACH” A STUDY OF SELECTED GURUKUL – INSPIRED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN MUMBAI

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DOI No. **03.2021-11278686** DOI Link :: <https://doi-ds.org/doi/10.2026-71932998/IRJHIS2602015>

Abstract:

The Gurukul system of Education represents one of the earliest holistic learning models in India, emphasizing intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical development of students. Unlike modern examination-oriented education, the Gurukul system focused on value – based learning, discipline, self – reliance and close teacher – student relationships. In recent years, several educational institutions in Mumbai have attempted to revive or adapt Gurukul principles within a modern framework. This paper examines selected Gurukul – inspired schools in Mumbai – Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul {Navi Mumbai}, Ram Ratna Vidya Mandir {Bhayandar}, and Shishuvan School {Matunga} – to analyse how traditional Gurukul values are integrated with contemporary education systems such as CBSE.

Keywords: Gurukul, Education, discipline, Mumbai, holistic, boarding.

Introduction:

Education in ancient India was deeply rooted in the Gurukul system, where students lived with their guru and received holistic training encompassing academics, ethics, discipline, and life skills. The modern education system, while technologically advanced, often lack emphasis on character building and moral education. This gap has led to renewed interest in Gurukul – based learning models. Mumbai, being a metropolitan city, hosts a few institutions that blend traditional Gurukul values with modern curricula. This research paper explores how these institutions function as holistic learning models in an urban context.

Literature Review:

Mukherjee, R. K. {1947}. Ancient Indian Education: Brahmanical and Buddhist. London: Macmillan: - This book provides a detailed historical account of the Gurukul system in ancient India. Mukherjee explains the guru – shishya relationships, residential learning structure and emphasis on

moral and spiritual discipline.

Krishna, G. {2009}. The Gurukul System of Education: - This work analyses the philosophical foundations of the gurukul system and its relevance in contemporary education. the author argues that Gurukul principles such as discipline, ethical grounding, and spiritual integration can address character gaps in modern schooling.

Objectives:

1. To understand the concept of Gurukul as a holistic learning model.
2. To study selected Gurukul – inspired institutions in Mumbai.
3. To analyse the integration of traditional values with modern education systems.
4. To evaluate the relevance of the Gurukul model in contemporary society.

Research Methodology:

The study is based on secondary data collected from official school websites, published articles, and institutional information brochures. A descriptive and comparative approach has been adopted to analyse the selected institutions.

“Gurukul as a holistic learning Model”

The Gurukul system emphasized all – round development rather than rote learning. Its key features included disciplined daily routines, moral and spiritual education, physical training, experiential learning and strong teacher – student bonds. Education was value – oriented, aiming to create responsible and self – disciplined individuals. Modern Gurukul – inspired schools attempt to preserve these ideals while incorporating structured curricula assessments and technological tools.

1. Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul – Navi Mumbai:

Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul, Navi Mumbai is one of the closest modern representations of the traditional Gurukul system. It follows a residential and day boarding model for boys and is affiliated with the CBSE board. The institution is known for its Brahmacharya – based discipline, uniform daily routine and emphasis on character education, including yoga, Sanskrit learning, spiritual practices, physical training and restrictions on mobile phones. The Gurukul promotes simplicity, obedience, and moral conduct alongside modern academic education, making it a strong example of holistic education inspired by ancient traditions.

2. Ram Ratna Vidya Mandir – Bhayandar {Uttan}, Mumbai:

Ram Ratna Vidya Mandir is a CBSE affiliated residential and day boarding school located in Bhayandar West. While not a traditional ashram – style Gurukul, it strongly reflects Gurukul values through its emphasis on discipline, value education and character development. The school blends modern academic teaching methods with traditional Indian ethos, focusing on moral values, environmental awareness and responsible citizenship. With options for day schooling, weekday boarding and full residential facilities. Ram Ratna Vidya Mandir provides a structured environment

similar to the Gurukul system while preparing students for contemporary academic challenges.

3. Shishuvan School – Matunga East, Mumbai:

Shishuvan school is a well-established day school in Mumbai that emphasizes discipline, creativity and holistic development. Although it does not follow a traditional Gurukul – like principles such as student – centred learning, ethical values and balanced development through academics and extracurricular activities. The school focuses on nurturing independent thinking, creativity, and social responsibility, making it a modern interpretation of holistic education suited for an urban setting.

Comparative Analysis:

Institution	Structure	Key Gurukul Features	Modern Integration
Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul	Residential day / boarding	Strict discipline, Spiritual practices, Yoga, Sanskrit	CBSE curriculum, Competitive exam prep
Ram Ratna Vidya Mandir	Residential day / boarding	Value education, moral ethos, citizenship	CBSE, flexible boarding options
Shishuvan School	Day school	Student – centred learning, ethics	Progressive methods, extracurriculars

Among the selected institutions, Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul most closely resembles the traditional Gurukul system due to its residential structure, strict discipline and spiritual orientation. Ram Ratna Vidya Mandir represents a balanced model combining Gurukul values with modern CBSE Education. Shishuvan School, though not a Gurukul in structure, contributes to holistic education through progressive teaching methods and value – based learning.

Suggestions:

1. Hybrid Gurukul model d Develop Karna Gurukul:

Inspired Institutions Should Formerly design, A structured Hybrid model That clearly integrates Spiritual discipline Value education CBSE / ICSE Curriculum Rather than Keeping Them parallel systems.

2. Teacher training in holistic Pedagogy:

Teacher should Receive training in value based and experiential Teaching methods So Gurukul principles are practised Meaningfully And not only symbolically.

3. Mental health and counselling:

Integration While discipline Is important Institutions Must integrate Professional Counselling systems to ensure Emotional well-being along with Moral development.

4. Gender inclusive Gurukul models:

Traditionally Many gurukuls wear Male centric. Modern institutions Should promote Equal access an inclusive boarding model for girls.

5. Point Structured value assessment system:

Along with academic exams School can develop Measurable parameters for evaluating Discipline Leadership ethics and social responsibility.

6. Technology with cultural balance:

Instead of strict provision of digital tools a guided digital Discipline model Should we adopted So students learn Responsible Technology usage.

7. Community engagement programmes:

Gurukul inspired schools Can expand social outreach programmes Like ruler education campus environmental rights and value workshops to strengthen practical learning.

Future scope of the Gurukul system of Education:

1. Integration With National Education policy {Nep 2020}:

The principles A holistic, value based, an experiential learning Promoted in India's education reforms align closely with Gurukul Philosophy. Policies like skill development, multidisciplinary learning, and character building create strong scope for reviving gurukul- inspired frameworks within mainstream education.

2. Expansion in Urban metropolitan area:

Cities like Mumbai are witnessing increasing academic stress and competition gurukul inspired institutions such as Sri Swaminarayan Gurukul, Ram Ratna Vidya mandir and Shishuvan School. Demonstrate that traditional discipline and holistic development can successfully coexist with modern CBSE curriculum Similar models can expand across other urban centres.

3. Value- based education in modern curriculum:

With rising concerns about lack of moral grounding and social responsibility among youth, Gurukul education can contribute structure models in ethic and citizenship yoga and meditation, Environmental responsibility, Leadership and life skills. This can be formally integrated into school boards.

4. Residential learning models:

The residential aspect of Gurukul creates strong teacher- student bonding and discipline routines. Future scope includes establishing semi residential models, weekend gurukul camps, character development retreats. This allows adaptation without fully replacing modern schooling.

5. Global Recognition of Indian pedagogy:

As global education system moves toward mindfulness, emotional intelligence and experiential learning. Gurukul philosophy can gain international academic interest. India can position the Gurukul

system as a cultural -educational export model.

6. Research and empirical validation:

Future scope also lies in conducting Longitudinal studies on alumni success, comparative performance analysis, psychological impact assessment. This will provide scientific backing to Gurukul inspired education.

Conclusion:

The study highlights that the Gurukul system remains relevant even in modern metropolitan contexts like Mumbai. Institutions inspired by Gurukul principles demonstrate that holistic education – integrating academics, discipline, values and the skills – can coexist with contemporary curricula. Reviving Gurukul values within modern education can help address current challenges such as lack of moral grounding, stress, and excessive competition, thereby nurturing well-rounded individuals.

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