

A Case Study on Gurukul System of Education: A Contemporary Approach by Gotirth Vidyapeeth

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Abstract

The traditional Indian education system of “Gurukul” is based on Vedas. In the ancient times, education was mainly imparted through hearing and not writing. This system of education through lips and ears had the power to develop cognition, intelligence and strong memory. The present case study discusses details of Gotirth Vidyapeeth (Cow based education), started by the promoter Shri Gopalbhai Sutaria, in Ahmedabad. He established a Gurukul setup, in a spiritual environment, for providing education to the students in a traditional way. The students learn various skills here such as music, martial arts, agriculture, cattle rearing, preparation of various ark (extracts from the cow’s urine), ayurvedic medicines, reciting shlokas, performing yagnas, vedic mathematics, yoga etc. This school caters to students from diverse backgrounds with no discrimination between the rich and the poor.

Key Words: Character building, group entrepreneurship, gurukul, skill based education, traditional education system

Acknowledgement

Authors are thankful to Shri Gopalbhai Sutaria (The Entrepreneur) and Shri Kalpeshbhai Joshi (Principal) and Ms. Sharvaree Joshi (Teacher) for sharing their valuable inputs and time provided to them.

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1. Introduction

In ancient India, education was imparted through the Gurukul system. The students in a Gurukul system would offer services to the Guru and would follow strict discipline, live a moderate lifestyle and perpetually practice whatever education was imparted to the student by the Guru (Karve, 2013). Lord Shri Krishna, Lord Rama, Maharana Pratap, Arjun etc, were the popular alumni of Gurukul system of education, who, despite coming from affluent family, studied with the poor people. A feeling of sensitivity and understanding develops in the student when they study in the heterogeneous group, which teaches the lessons of life for a successful journey ahead. In contrast to the present education system, where a child starts attending the pre-school at the tender age of two to three years, in the Gurukul system, the child used to go to Gurukul at seven or eight years of age. The gurus were not appointed or delegated by any authority. They impart education because it was their dharma, the pre-eminent obligation of their life and there was no other ulterior intention (Chaudary, 2017). There were no separate schools for rich and poor. Education was mainly through hearing and not writing. The Guru-Disciple relationship in ancient Gurukul was intimate and personal as opposed to the formal relations observed at present. The courses were tailor-made as per the grasping abilities of the students.

Times have changed and so has the education system. And in today's context, it may not be feasible to implement the traditional Gurukul education system completely. However, certain valuable lessons may be adopted from this ancient and successful model of education. There are many conceptual studies conducted in India on Gurukul Education System. Studies by Karve (2013), Gadadhar (2018), Kumar (2016), Fredrick (2016), Nair (2016), and Shelly (2015) highlighted the relevance of Gurukul a Education system in the present circumstances and compared the western/modern education system with ancient Gurukul System. These are descriptive studies highlighting the pros and cons of ancient Gurukul system. However, there are no detailed appraisal studies in the form of cases that explain the fundamentals of any particular education system. In India, many schools following Gurukul system have been set up such as Navodaya Aawasiya Vidyalaya, Prabhat Ashram in Meerut, Chotipura Amroha for girls and Gurukul Kangdi University (Shelly, 2015). This case study is an attempt to describe the existing education model adopted by Gotirth Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad. In the process, the strength and the limitations of this setup are also highlighted. An exploratory method of writing the case study has been adopted. In-depth interviews were conducted to understand the modus operandi of Gotirth Vidhyapeeth.

1.1 Idea Germination

Gotirth Vidyapeeth is an extension of Bansi Gir Gaushala started by Shri Gopalbhai Sutaria, the promoter of the entire setup. Shri Gopalbhai was quite upset with the present education system. He used to feel that the current education system is quite stressful and fails to impart the basic skills and knowledge to the students. He discovered that the present education system gave a 'failed' label to the child if he or she is not able to get through even one of the subjects. He considered this to be a harsh system of assessment, in which all the credentials are considered absurd (despite spending considerable time of one year at particular level of hierarchical education system) just because of failure in one of the subjects. Shri Sutaria believed that a scholar may not be a good performer in one or more topics, in which he is disinterested, but the learner may be an outperformer in the area of his interest. In other words, the highest level of knowledge (which is marked by a Doctor in Philosophy in modern education system) could be gained by the learner in his area of interest. In a nutshell, it refers to the excellence in the interest area leading to happiest means of livelihood. He also made an observation that the present education system even fails to ignite the respect towards Motherland, Swadeshi Thinking, Self-Reliance, Loyalty to country and Ethical Values.

1.2 Brainstorming on Idea

The incompetent formal education systems led him to find an alternative to the problem. He had gone through a lot of literature, on what could be the alternative to this issue and he could find the solution in the ancient Gurukul System. He was surprised to discover the reasons of India being called as 'Golden Sparrow', firstly because the education was provided through Gurukul System in which the Mathematics of children was quite strong due to Vedic Maths. Secondly, the biggest asset that Indians had was cow in every house and thirdly, there were no imports (self-reliance) but only exports and that too of organic products. This motivated him to give wings to his idea.

In order to discuss the efficacy of the idea, he met his intimate friend Shri Kalpesh Joshi who is an alumni of Bhagvat Vidyapeeth (in-depth education is imparted in the subject of Sanskrit-Vedas via Gurukul model) and Shri Joshi also had an exposure in Masters of Education attained through the conventional system of today's education. In fact, Shri Joshi's blend of traditional and modern education pedagogy helped Shri Gopalbhai to critically evaluate the pros and cons of both the system. Shri Sutaria discussed his idea on developing Gurukul where students can learn life skills and the legacy of the spiritual and traditional heritage of India.

1.3 Evaluation of the Idea

Shri Joshi was also convinced and felt the need for having an alternate education system. His wife Ms. Sharvaree Joshi also joined in the quest to explore the concept of Gurukul system. As a team, they started doing a systematic research in this direction. They visited and studied the existing Vidyapeeths and education setups in India that were similar to the Gurukul system. They also interacted with the learned personalities such as Ms. Indumati Katd are who is involved in writing books for Vidya Bharti. After doing an in-depth study of the existing situation, they could find a gap. They observed that these existing Vidyapeeths were engaged in imparting the skills and knowledge of only Sanskrit and Vedas. Shri Gopalbhai wanted to develop a holistic setup where the children are taught many other skills apart from Sanskrit and Vedas such as Agriculture, Cattle rearing, Ayurveda, Yoga, Music, Dance, Vedic Mathematics and Science, different languages and above all ethical values. After a hardcore research of at least two years and based on the favourable endorsement of subject experts, the founder member Shri Gopalbhai and present principal Shri Kalpeshbhai and active supporter cum teacher Ms. Sharvaree were convinced with the idea of Gurukul.

1.4 Accreditation Myth

The team was very clear on imparting skills, knowledge and values. Under this backdrop, they decided to move against the modern system of affiliations to various boards, stringent course curriculum, student-teacher ratio, recruitment of faculty based on norms, fee determination rules, etc. It is very imperative to state that this Gurukul has no affiliations to any of the domestic or foreign boards and it follows its tailor-made and the gap bridging curriculum. This bold step has been taken to avoid the punitive do's and don'ts of formal education system levied on schools and which is often based on the sophisticated curriculum that is far from the grassroots realities and current needs.

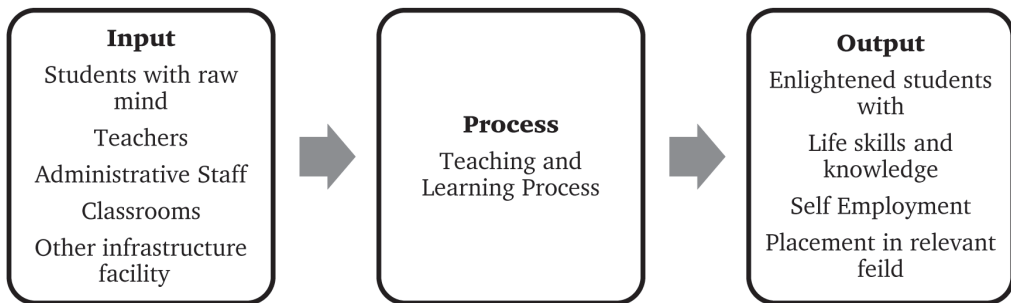
1.5 Birth of Gotirth Vidyapeeth

With the clear vision, the promoter Shri Gopalbhai started Gotirth Vidyapeeth in the year 2013 to not only impart skill based education but also ignite the spark of being 'Swadeshi', love for country and multiple moral values. "Go" means cow, "Tirth" means a Hindu place of pilgrimage and "Vidyapeeth" means Education academy. Hence, "Gotirth Vidyapeeth" means a journey (pilgrimage) of education which is just as pious as cow. Initially, two sons of Shri Gopalbhai and two daughters of his younger brother (Shri Gopeshbhai) were enrolled in the Gurukul. It is important to note that Shri Gopalbhai selected his kith and kin

to experiment with this traditional model of education. This increased the confidence level of other members of the society and gradually the students' enrollment started increasing. At present, Gurukul is having 50 students, and another 400 students are in waiting list which is a commendable achievement for the Gurukul. The education system, here, is designed in such a way that it provides students the knowledge about Hindu religion, brings them close to the nature, yogasanas, knowledge about practical situations of life, etc. In one of the interview excerpts, Shri Gopalbhai stated the statistics from United Nations Report. As per that if a child is being educated in his or her mother tongue, his/her performance increases three fold and if the education is imparted in any other language then the stress level increases three times. This was the reason that Indian Gurukuls preferred to teach only the mother tongue of India-Sanskrit language (which is a Devnagri language, i.e. language of God/Goddess) prevalent in ancient India. There was no obsession for teaching any other vernacular or foreign language.

2. Education Model of Gotirth Vidyapeeth

Any business model has three parts i.e. Input, Process and Output. Figure 1 presents the details of the components of these three parts for Gotirth Vidyapeeth.



Source: Prepared by the Authors

Figure 1: Education Model of Gotirth Vidyapeeth

2.1 Inputs

2.1.1 Student Enrollment

In today's education system, the schools follow various parameters for giving admission such as the capability of the students, the income of the parents, the qualification and the background of the parents, etc. Few schools also conduct

the admission test or interaction sessions to ensure that only capable students are enrolled. This is to ensure that the result of the school should not be hampered by enrolling the weak students.

However, this Gurukul has unique style of admission. Here, there is no discrimination between the rich and the poor. The only parameter that is checked by Gurukul is the willingness of the parents for admitting their wards to the ancient Gurukul system. The decision to keep the child away from the mainstream education is very critical as it will have a significant impact on the future of the child. Hence, once the Gurus of the Gotirth Vidyapeeth are satisfied about the parents' willingness, they enroll the child in the Gurukul.

The students undergoing education at Gurukul belong to a diverse background. They are very much confident that one can acquire knowledge in Gurukul system better than formal schooling system. There are kids of few parents practicing agriculture, cattle rearing or doing some business. These parents are not crazy for educational degrees. They put more emphasis on practical knowledge. There are few parents who are truly patriotic and therefore put their kids in to Gurukul. There is no caste or religion bar in this Gurukul. Children of builders, navy officers, police officers, businessmen, farmers etc. have willingly and keenly joined Gotirth Vidhyapeeth. And there is no differentiation in the services and facilities provided to the students. The education, residential and food facility are common for all the students.

2.1.2 Eligibility and Course Duration

Age of the child is one more parameter for the admission of the student. As mentioned before, in the present education system, the children start going to the pre-primary school at the tender age of three years or even below that. At this age, the children need the love and affection of their parents and may not prefer to be put up in the unfamiliar setup and strict environment. On the contrary, off the record competition and pressure is put on the child by the ambitious and competition fearing parents, even before he or she enters the pre-primary section. In fact the fancy towards the playgroups attracts the parents to admit their ward at an early age of two years, so that it opens the gate of admission to the dream school. It is very noteworthy that Lord Shree Krishna was eleven years old when he went to Gurukul. Gotirth Vidyapeeth also follows the traditional practice of the Gurukul. Here, the student gets admission at the age of eight years if he or she wants to be admitted in the residential school of the Gurukul. However, it is not compulsory for the child to opt for the residential programme. At present out of 50 students, 35 students are staying in Gurukul

and studying. Those who are staying nearby may not opt for the residential facility. These children may be enrolled at the age of five and half or six years. Their parents or guardians will have to come to drop and pick up their wards from the Gurukul. At present, 15 students are commuting to the centre from nearby areas. They have to report at 6:30 A.M. in the morning and stay till 7:30 P.M. in the evening.

Gurukul provides training for the period of approximately 12 years. Hence, a student who is admitted at the age of eight years will be trained till he or she turns 20, which is equivalent to the age of attaining Undergraduate level Degree in today's modern education system.

2.1.3 Infrastructure, Atmosphere and Amenities

The Gurukul is set up in completely natural environment and is away from the hustle and bustle of city life. Gaushala and Gurukul are spread across 70 vighas (ancient measurement of land area). There are total 5 classrooms and five rooms for residential facility of the students. One room is shared by 10 students at present. There is a space for the kitchen, dining area, area for doing Yagna and administrative office.

Besides, the Gaushala is just adjacent to the Gurukul. And the same is having around 800 cows. Due to the cows' breathing and the yagnas performed every day, the quality of the air improves, which activates positivity in the environment and quick learning amongst the students. In fact, Shri Gopalbhai explains that Mother Cow (who has 33 kinds of God and Goddess in her), blesses the students of the Gurukul, due to which fast paced learning progress is witnessed in the students.

There is no provision of Air Conditioning anywhere in the setup. The classrooms and the hostel rooms are constructed using cow dung, clay and limestone, therefore the temperature is maintained naturally even during scorching summers, bitter winters and pouring monsoon. There are no chairs in the class. As per the traditional system, students sit on the floor folding their legs, which leads to blood circulation in the forehead, thereby improving the concentration power, high memory power and speedy grasping power.

2.1.4 Teachers (Gurus) - The Torch Bearers

Teachers at Gurukul are known as Gurus. The recruitment of Gurus is purely on the skills, knowledge, character, moral values, mindset, and level of patience, intimacy with students, down-to-earth attitude and willingness to train to

perfection, perseverance for results, stress control and love-care for students. There are 15 Gurus and 5 non-teaching staff members associated with the system at present. Hence, a staff of 20 is engaged for managing the strength of 50 students. The student teacher ratio of 2.5:1 is very well above the revised AICTE guideline of 20:1. This will result in to personalized attention and care which is missing in our formal school education. Out of these teachers, there are few who are sharing their expertise without taking any monetary benefits from the Gurukul. Gurukul is paying to the teachers as per their experience, qualification and the time contributed to the system.

Here, all the teachers are not having master degrees or Ph D. However, they are practical experts in their own area of specialization. For example, a Guruji from Kerala has studied up to first standard, has a flair for detecting cancer, just by 'Nadi' diagnosis. He is recognized across India as an expert of 'Nadi Vidya' and chairs the Cancer Committee of India. He regularly visits Gurukul to train the students in Nadi diagnosis.

The institute is fortunate enough to receive the support from the learned people from different fields such as architects, engineers, etc. They are not driven by any monetary consideration. But they put their heart and soul in teaching minute details to the students. The teachers are so eager to teach that even if they are doing a small task then they keep the students around and teach them. For example, if the nail fixing is done by a teacher and if he finds the opportunity to teach them, then, he would not miss a chance. Majority of the teachers of Gurukul have never been to conventional schools, but have been educated through Gurukul methodology. Only for subjects like Science and Mathematics, the teachers who have studied in conventional schools are imparting education in Gurukul, but that too as per the Gurukul methodology. A couple of teachers are from the professional background like Engineering and Architecture, who provide honorary services to Gurukul, out of their love for the subject and happiness to share their knowledge amongst the students.

One of the challenges faced by the Gurukul is to have trained Gurus who have undergone education process at the Gurukul. To counter the same, Gurukul offers in-house training programme for the teachers where they are demonstrated how to teach a particular subject by generating interest among the students.

2.2 Teaching and Learning Process

2.2.1 Syllabus Design

The syllabus is designed by the teachers themselves. Teachers draft the syllabus

considering the blend of traditional Gurukul system and current curriculum prevalent in today's conventional schools. The syllabus is framed considering the child as nucleus and students' preparedness to learn new things. This is in contrast to our present education system where the syllabus is designed by the third party who may not have a realistic idea about the grass root situation. This problem can be handled in Gurukul very efficiently as the one who is close to the source of the requirement, designs the curriculum. Thus, it is entirely left to the Gurus to decide what they want to teach, how they want to teach, to whom they want to teach, at what time they want to teach, etc. In the entire teaching-learning process, the emphasis is given to the ethical values and virtues rather than marks and grades. The Gurukul builds the character of the students keeping mother India and Gaumata at the centre. Knowledge is provided to the students in such a way that the students become self-reliant.

2.2.2 Subject Focus

A total of 25 subjects are taught at present to the students in the Gurukul. The details of the subjects and teaching pedagogy implemented in Gurukul are mentioned in the Exhibit-I.

Exhibit 1: Course Curriculum

Sl. No.	Subjects	Description	Pedagogy
1	Sanskrit	It is the main language which is emphasized in the Gurukul. Conversation in Sanskrit is appreciated.	Listening and Speaking of 'Shlokas, Mantras, Stotras',
2	Gujarati (Mother Tongue)	Gujarati subject is being taught to them.	Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing
3	Science	By experiencing and experimenting the concept in Bhartiya way.	Practical sessions.
4	Vedic Mathematics	Shri Shankracharya and Shri Krushna Thrith's 13 formulae out of 16 are being taught.	Abacus method, making clay items and counting etc is also adopted.

5	Kalaripayattu	The oldest form of martial arts in India,	It is taught by the expert.
6	History	Ancient literature like Ramayan and Mahabharata is taught.	Role plays.
7	Agronomy	Students are made to understand the importance of cow-based farming.	Cultivation by students
8	Cow Rearing	Importance of cow rearing, cow breeding and manufacturing of Panchgavya products is taught.	Taught to milk the cows and treatment that should be given to her
9	Music and Dance	Classical music, Sugam music, folk music, Kathak dance and folkdance	Practical sessions of various types of dance.
10	Ayurved	'The cure through changes in diet, lifestyle medicines is being taught.	Taught to do the diagnosis of diseases
11	Yoga (Pranayam, Suryanamaskar etc)	Physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation or relaxation.	Compulsory sessions in the morning of 1 hour.
12	Yagya	Offering done in front of a sacred fire, often with mantras.	Performance by the students daily.
13	Drawing	Activity of carving on scriptures or designs on paper.	Students are asked to draw and colour
14	Indian Games	Judo, Ropemalkham, Polemallakhamb	Taught through the experts of the field.
15	Product Making	Art of making a thing.	Practical sessions
16	Cooking	Art of making food.	Practical sessions
17	Mehndi Art	Art of beautifying hands and legs through designs.	Practical sessions
18	Blindfold	Students are made to read and interpret the objects even if the blindfold is tied on the eyes.	Sequence of Exercise, Music and Dhyana

19	Handicrafts	It offers great entrepreneurial opportunity.	Practical sessions
20	Pottery	Making things from clay.	Practical sessions
21	Spinning	Spinning clothes from the self-grown cotton	Practical sessions
22	Playing of Musical Instruments	Various Musical instruments	Trained professionals impart the skills.
23	Hindi	National language	Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing
24	Regular/Current Mathematics	To enhance the logical and rational thinking.	linked with Vedic Maths concepts
25	Leadership and Independence	Moral and character building stories of Lord Krishna, Shivaji, Mahrana Pratap and Aryabhata etc.	Role-plays, dramas and oral recitation.

Source: Primary Discussion

Out of these, agriculture, Ayurveda and Cattle rearing are the main subjects. Apart from these subjects, the students are also taught languages, mathematics, science, sugamsangeet, singing, classical dance (kathak), folk dance, physical activity (kalaripayattu, rope mallakhama, polemallakhambh, self-defense, wrestling), food science, making of Panchgavya based products, self-dependence, etc. In food science, students are taught how to make changes in the dietary habits for prevention of health disorders. The students are also taught pottery work, handicrafts, and yarn making from fiber. In future, they will also be taught dyeing the clothes using organic colours.

2.2.3 Training Methodology

The Gurukul firmly believes that the method of teaching to the students is equally important as the content of the subject. In the teaching-learning process, recitation method is preferred over other options such as reading and writing. Here, the Guru speaks the concept first. The students listen to the concept and then they repeat the same. Apart from recitation, the role-play techniques are also adopted. When the students are practically demonstrated the concept, they can retain it in their memory for a longer period of time. Here, the methodology

of teaching differs according to the age of the students. The younger students are allowed to play more and be in touch with nature. They are provided with the task of playing with clay, separating the leaves from the plant, etc. so that they not only enjoy but it also enhances their motor skills. Once the student crosses a tender age, he or she will be given logical problem solving situations. After certain age, they would be given a task to explore the happenings of the events. Eventually, they would be diverted to research based exploratory activities. After attaining the age of 17 years, students would be allowed to choose their area for specialisation such as Ayurveda, Agriculture, Cattle rearing, Music, etc. Then, based upon their selected area, exclusive knowledge of that particular field will be offered by the experts to the candidates.

2.2.4 Teaching Techniques

The Gurukul has a unique style of teaching. The students learn all different subjects through activities, and they actually enjoy the process of learning. In a Sanskrit class, it is mandatory to interact in Sanskrit language only. The students are allotted to different subjects of learning as per their need rather than having a pre-structured time-table. There are three groups namely Dhruv, Prahalad and Aaruni for ensuring the class arrangement. This arrangement is only for physical allocation of space for a different session slot based on time. For illustration, if during the early hours, an alphabetical learning is conducted in Dhruv class and mathematics learning is conducted in Prahalad class, then students who have digested the alphabetical learning would sit in Prahalad class. Unfortunately, if the student needs more time in alphabetical learning then he or she would sit in the same class and master the alphabetical learning. His or her shift to the next class would be decided by the teacher.

The traditional teaching pedagogy is adopted for imparting education. Students are made to understand the concept by relating it with the objects, like number one is related with the sun, two with the eyes, etc. Rhythm, poetic tune etc. are set for difficult subjects to grasp. Framing of short acronyms (mnemonic technique) for remembering long theoretical concepts are also taught to the students. New vocabulary is introduced with the concept of feeling and sketching the photograph or diagram of the same in the notebooks.

Depth is always emphasized in the subject. For example, if the turmeric is introduced to the students, then they will learn its name in Gujarati, Hindi, English, Sanskrit. They will view it, taste it, identify it and learn its medicinal values and will pen-down a short note on the same in their notebooks. Teachers and students together make out a chart or a project or a model as a part of

assignment of relation of theory to practical dimension. For example, a lifecycle of a butterfly is taught through drawing and craft technique, so that name of different stages can be easily remembered. Thus, learning by doing is emphasized for higher level of retention and recall. The students at Gurukul learn everything from scratch. For example, they are taught the art of making pottery from the step zero i.e. how to get the clay for making earthen ware, which type of clay should be selected for making which type of vessels, till the finishing and designing part.

The strengths and weaknesses of each student are identified by the Gurus. The students are not taught the next theory/model until they are thorough with the previous concept. The guru would allow the student to go to the next class, only if the child has learnt the concept as per the expectations of the guru. Sometimes the teachers change their methods to teach the students. The senior students are given the task of teaching to the junior class students. This will be a revision for the senior student and will reinforce the learning for the junior students.

2.2.5 Exams and Evaluation

There are some similarities as well as differences between the evaluation pattern of Gurukul and the formal school system. The modern evaluation system is always pre-planned with a perfect schedule and even students of first standard know that when are they appearing for the exam. Modern education system offers grade after the exam, but it fails to provide remedy of rectifying mistakes. In ancient Gurukul, the tests were taken without circulating any time-tables and without informing the students. Thus, the guru conducts the exam of the student when he likes to and passively evaluates the skills learnt by the student. In this way, the students in ancient Gurukul appeared for a surprise test without knowing it and cleared the exam without any stress of grades. Gurus ensured that students learned perfection and if needed provided new exercises to test the knowledge of students after error rectification process.

Like the present schools, the students at Gurukul are under continuous evaluation by in-house experts, but without the formal communication of the same to the students. Sometimes, the experts from outside are also invited to conduct the evaluation of the students. Besides, the students participate in different competitions outside the Gurukul. Recently, 13 students of Gurukul achieved first and second rank in Gita Shlokas Chanting competition organized by Chinmaya Mission, Ahmedabad. One of the students got the silver medal in Wrestling during Khel Mahakumbh. These achievements are the certificates of evaluation for the Gurukul education system. Written tests are conducted on various subjects such as Mathematics, Gujarati and Science. The communication

of the exam is just done before two days, so that the students do not adopt the technique of simple mugging without understanding. Unlike the formal schools, here, the students are not assigned marks or grades. If the student makes a mistake somewhere, they are guided as to how to avoid the mistakes in future. The purpose of the written test is to correct the student rather than giving the score.

2.2.6 Clearances and Promotions

If the student's learning capacity is good, the student may be able to move to the higher level in a short time. However, the Gurukul is not following any standard wise (First Standard, Second Standard, etc.) system for promoting the student to the higher level. The one who completes the basic level is promoted to a higher level of learning, without students noticing the progression and any type of discrimination of moving to the new class. Thus, the teaching learning pattern at Gurukul, is completely flexible and ensures thorough learning.

2.2.7 Significant Practices

During the prayer assembly, turn by turn all the students are supposed to select one writer or poet and speak about them in front of other classmates. The topics for elocution are wide-range such as literature, science, general knowledge, new discoveries, explanation of acronyms, etc. In this process, students prepare themselves for the stage performance and this exercise removes their fear of public speaking. There is a provision for Diwali and Summer Vacation for the students wherein the students who are staying at Gurukul can go back to their homes and spend time with their family members. Students are encouraged to participate in various competitions held outside the campus, so that their morale is boosted.

2.2.8 Daily Schedule

The students who are the residents at Gurukul get up at five o'clock in the morning. After completing their routine by 6:30 A.M., they have to start doing yoga, pranayama, meditation, kalaripayattu and other physical exercises. The residents of Ahmedabad too join at 6: 30 A.M. for dawn-break tasks. All the students take their breakfast at 7:30 A.M. After that, the students do their school chores such as cleaning their rooms, classrooms, clothes, etc for an hour. It was perceived that students would get less time to study, when they were involved in the routine chores, but on the contrary it proved to be opposite, they not only received ample time for study, but a habit of doing one's work is inculcated from early childhood. At 8:30 A.M. students gather for prayers. Usually, their classes begin at 9:00 A.M. The timings are rescheduled with the change in the season.

It is a fact that in the ancient Gurukul system of learning there is no standard time table. The same practice is implemented in Gotirth Gurukul. However, it is completely dependent upon the wish of the experts, as to how many hours they wish to conduct the class. They interchange the class as per the need of the situation. The classes continue till 12:30 P.M. After the classes, the students have the lunch by 2:00 P.M., and the classes restart and continue till 4:00 P.M. From 4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M., the students again undergo physical activities such as rope mallakhamba, kalaripayattu, etc. Thus, the students do physical exercises twice a day, which keep them energetic and fresh. In fact, the schoolwork time is just five hours, and homework time is just 20 minutes, after which the students are not supposed to touch the books. Here, students learn practical things without killing their playful nature. Today's modern education system on the contrary emphasizes on either day school or long hours of schooling followed by long-hours tuition classes for grabbing better grades. The labour carried out by children is more than 10 hours (carried out at the cost of childhood), which is even higher than a person performing unskilled manual work.

2.2.9 Fees and Funds

In the present education system, the private schools are charging exorbitant annual fees for play-groups, pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. However, this Gurukul is not charging any fees from the students for the skills and the knowledge imparted here. The Gurukul is just revealing the total operational expenditure incurred in a year for running the entire setup. The same is approximately Rs. 1.25 crores. Accordingly, the parents may donate any amount depending upon their willingness and capability. The name of the donors and the amount is anonymous. At present, Shri Gopalbhai is providing the funding support to the Gurukul, in case of need on account of either shortfall of funds or expansion of infrastructure or other facilities at Gurukul.

2.2.10 Carnival Celebrations

The teachers of the Gurukul put forth the idea of celebrating the festivals. The students are asked to think on how to celebrate the festival. Various festivals like Navratri, Janmashtmi, Ganesh Chaturthi, etc are celebrated in the Gurukul. Students decide on things like which posters to be made, how the decoration is to be done, which craft and drawing items will be prepared, etc. Students decorate, paint and craft the items themselves. In this process, they learn many things. For example, if they are making an idol, then they learn which clay to use, which eco-friendly colour to use, the skill of shaping the idols, etc.

2.2.11 Blessings of Cow, Food and Nutrition

The students are served organic food in the breakfast, lunch and dinner. As the Gurukul is having Gaushala with around 800 Gir Cows, the organic pure milk, butter, ghee, butter-milk and other milk products are served to the students on a regular basis. The fresh, pure and organic meals are only served to the students. A high level of mental and physical capabilities is noticed in the students, due to the consumption of cow's milk, etc. Besides, as a part of their curriculum, the students are taught the cultivation of crops organically. These vegetables and fruits are served to the students. The feeling that the vegetables cultivated by them are used and they eat the same gives a sense of contentment to the students. Fiber based cereals such as 'dangar', sorghum (jowar), 'jav' (barley) etc are served instead of wheat as wheat is difficult to digest. As a part of teaching, they are taught which food is to be avoided such as fast food. Sometimes to cater to the taste of the students, western food is served in the Indian way by using the organic health friendly ingredients, and it is cooked in such a way that there is no burn-out of nutritional value. In the food festival organized every year by IIM-Ahmedabad, the promoter Shri Gopalbhai and his family members, setup a stall every year. The milk based products such as Ghee, and the medicine prepared from the ark of cow urine are displayed for the sale.

Before taking the meal, as per the tradition of Gurukul, students offer prayers to God. This practice attracts divine consciousness towards both the food and the person eating it. The team has observed considerable benefits of giving the organic and simple food to the students. Their fitness and energy level have improved. From five o'clock in the morning till nine o'clock in the night, the students are physically active and pursue mental as well as the physical activities. However, there are no signs of fatigue and stress on their faces. There is a significant improvement in their memory power as well. As per the opinion of the experts who are coming here to teach Sanskrit, the students of Gurukul can memorize the shlok as within three months which normally take more than six months in the normal course. The team acknowledges the fast learning due to blessings of the Mother Cow.

2.2.12 Medication

Whenever any student is not well, the herbal medicines prepared from the ark of the cow urine are prescribed to the students and this experiment has been proved to be successful in majority of the cases. The students are given even cow urine to drink when they fall sick.

2.2.13 Awareness and Spread of Gotirth

The Gurukul is not spending a single rupee on marketing its activities. As

discussed earlier, the centre started with just four children. The experts from different fields impart practical knowledge to these students in various disciplines such as yoga, music, Sanskrit, yagnas, etc. These students used to demonstrate their acquired knowledge and skills on occasions such as 15th August and 26th January to the invited guests. Gradually, people started noticing and appreciating the Gurukul education system. Besides, the visitors to the Bansi Gir Gaushala were also invited to visit the Gurukul by the promoter, Shri Gopalbhai. The team used to promote the concept of Gurukul in all the public forums. Due to all these efforts, the Gurukul which started with just four students reached to 50 in a span of four years. Yet another 400 students have put up inquires for admission that are in the waiting list. Thus, a positive word of mouth is an advocate of strong publicity.

2.3 Output

After undergoing the Gurukul education for the period of 12 years, the students come out confidently and can choose various career options. The aim of the Gurukul is to provide self-employment opportunity to the trained students of the Gurukul. However, if a student wants to opt for the job option, he may be absorbed in the existing setup itself. Shri Gopalbhai is a visionary person and has ambitious plans for the expansion of the activity of the Gaushala and Gurukul. In order to meet the growing skilled manpower requirement, the trained students of the Gurukul may be accommodated in the activities of the Gaushala or Gurukul. In other words, a backward integration model in the existing set-up of 800 cows would easily provide employment to the students in the same set-up. Excellence in the skills and knowledge would be their core-competence which would be their key strength to earn handsome income.

The trained students will be expert in different areas. Based upon their area of expertise, such students can start rendering consultancy services in the field of agriculture, Ayurveda or cattle rearing. Gurukul can promote group entrepreneurship as well. For example, some students may be expert in diagnosis of ('Nadi'), others can make the panchgavya products for fighting with the 'Nadidosh' and still others who are good at marketing may promote these Ayurveda products. Thus, Gurukul can provide synergistic benefit to the trained students in different areas.

In fact, the Gurukul offers an opportunity to the students to start earning before completing the education i.e. through sale of the medicines or crops cultivated by them. After attaining the proper age i.e. approximately 16 to 17 years, the students will be given money from such sale. The Gurukul does not believe in giving this money from the early years as this will divert their mind from education to commercialization.

It is believed that students of this Gurukul would be able to treat patients through perfect diagnosis through ‘Nadi-vigyan’ and suggest medicines to cure various diseases without any side-effects. They would never believe in cheating people and grabbing money from them, whatever they would earn would be a ‘Shubhlaxmi’ (money earned on right path, without cheating people and without giving any pain). Accountancy area would be a sector in which they would be employed, as these students would be powerful in Vedic Mathematics. Students would also earn income by sharing their talent in fields like dance, music, marshal art, etc. Guaranteed jobs would not be a problem due to the quality of sincerity, honesty, dedication and perfection inculcated in them, right from the childhood, once they seek the job, despite no formal degrees. As the students are learning the life subsistence skills, which are recession-proof, their knowledge and work would always be in great demand.

3. Expansion Plans

Gurukul has ambitious plans for expansion in future. Apart from increasing the number of students, it wants to extend the horizon by developing new courses for higher studies such as astrology, astronomy, etc. As per the desire expressed by the Principal of the Gurukul, it wants to impart the practical knowledge to the students on various areas such as how to bring water in to momentum, how to construct ponds, how to do rainwater harvesting, etc. The Gurukul is in search of people who are experts in these areas. Gotirth aims at teaching all the 64 kalas (form of art) and 14 Vidyas (techniques) to the students, the list of the same is described in Exhibit-II.

Exhibit 2: Different Types of Art and Techniques

64 Kalas (Art)		
Geet -Singing	Vadya- Playing musical instruments	Nritya-Dancing
Natya-Theatricals	Alekhya-Painting	Viseshakacheyda-Painting of face and body with colour
Tandula-Kusuma-Bali-Vikara-Preparing offerings from rice and flowers	Pushpastarana-covering of flowers for bed	Dasana-Vasananga-Raga-Applying preparations for cleansing the teeth, clothes and painting body

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Mani-Bhumika-Karma- Making the groundwork of jewels	Aayya-racana-Covering the bed	Udaka-vadya-Playing music in water
Udaka-ghata-Splashing with water	Citra-yoga-Practically applying an admixture of colours	Malya-grathana-vikalpa- Designing a preparation of wreaths
Sekharapida-yojana- Practically setting coronet on head	Nepathya-yoga-practically dressing in the tiring room	Karnapatra-bhanga- Decorating the tragus of the ear
Sugandha-Yukti- Practical applications of aromatics	Bhushana-yojana-Applying or setting ornaments	Aindra-jala- Juggling
Kaucumara- An art	Hasta-Laghava- Sleight of hand	Citra-sakapupa-bhakshya- vikara-kriya-Preparing varieties of delicious food
Panaka-rasa-ragasava- yojana-Practically preparing palatable drinks and tinging draughts with red colour	Suci-vaya-karma-Needlework and weaving	Sutra-krida-Playing with thread
Vina-damuraka-vadya- Playing of flute and small drum	Prahelika-Making and solving riddles	Durvacaka-yoga-Practicing language difficult to be answered by others
Pustaka-vacana-Reciting books	Natikakhyayika-darsana- Enacting short plays and anecdotes	Kavya-samasya-purana- Solving enigmatic verses
Pattika-vetra-bana- vikalpa-Designing preparation of shield, cane and arrows	Tarku-karma-Spinning by spindle	Takshana-Carpentry

Vastu-Vidya-Engineering	Raupya-ratna-pariksha- Testing silver and jewels	Dhatu-vada-Metallurgy
Mani-raga jnana- Tingling Jewels	Akara Jnana- Minearlogy	Vrikshayur-veda-yoa- Practicing medicines or medical treatement by herbs
Mesha-Kukkuta-Lavaka- Yuddha-Vidhi- Knowing the mode of fighting of lambs, cocks and birds	Suka-Sarika-Pralapana- Maintain or knowing the conversation between male and female cockatoos.	Utsadana-Healing or cleaning a person with perfumes
Kesa-marjana-kausala- Combing hair	Akshara-Mushtika-Kathana- Talking with fingers	Dharana-matrika-Use of amulets
Desa-bhasha-jnana- Knowing provincial dialects	Nirmiti-jnana-Knowing prediction by heavenly voice	Yantra-matrika-Mechanics
Mlecchita-kutarka- vikalpa-Fabricating barbarous or foreign sophistry	Samvacya-Conversation	Manasi Kavya-kriya- Composing verse
Kriya-Vikalpa-Designing a literary work or medical remedy	Chalitaka-yoga-Practicing as a builder of shrines	Abhidhana-Kosha- Cchando-Jnana-Use of lexicography and meters
Vastra-gopana- Concealment of clothes	Dyuta-Visesha-Knowing specific gambling	Akarsha-Krida- Playing with dice or magnet
Balaka-Kridanaka-Using children's toys	Vainayiki Vidya-Enforcing discipline	Vaijayiki Vidya-Gaining victory
Vaitaliki Vidya- Awakening master with music at dawn		

14 Vidyas (Techniques)

4 Vedas: Rigveda (hymns for praying to Vedic Gods), Samveda (Musical notes or meaning of things mentioned in Rigveda), Yajurveda(practical guidebook for simultaneous performance of sacrificial acts and prose prayers), Atharvaveda(consists of spells and charms)

4 Upvedas: Arthashastra (Treatise on statecraft, economic policy and military strategy) Dhanurveda (science of archery), Gandharvaveda (Treatise on performing arts, encompassing theatre, dance and music) and Ayurveda (science of life)

6 Vedangas: Shiksha (Science of Phonetics and Phonology of Sanskrit), Kalpa (Rituals), Vyakaran (Sanskrit grammar), Nirukta (etymology, particularly of obscure words, glossary of difficult Vedic words), Chhanda (Vedic meter in classical Sanskrit poetry), Jyotish (Siddhanta, Samhita, Medini Jyotisha and Hora)

Source: Sanskriti, 2015.

It also wants to set up the laboratory where students can take up research activity related to areas such as agriculture, Ayurveda, Sanskrit, cattle rearing, etc. In the setup of a scientific laboratory the students would be provided practical exposure in Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Keeping this vision in mind, Gurukul has already kept science and mathematics as a part of their curriculum. Students would also be taught English and Computer in future. This will increase their zeal for pursuing research activity at international standard. At present, due to lack of research facility, the Sanskrit experts mainly adopt the profession of doing spiritual poojavidhi. They do not think of giving the benefit of their subject knowledge to the society and the nation as a whole.

Gurukul proposes to start Panchgavya diagnosis, Panchkarma diagnosis, manufacturing Ayurvedic medicines and Yagna based healing. It also proposes to start Panchkarma treatment and Cow-based-Medication. Under this initiative, students will learn how to make 1500 different medicines.

At macro level, the founders of Gotirth Vidyapeeth wish others to start such Gurukul in different parts of the country so that the nation building exercise can be taken up collectively. Shri Gopalbhai, the founder, is already giving free consultancy to others for setting up Gaushalas in various parts of the country. Similarly, Gurukul is also offering free guidance and consultancy to others for developing such setups. Based upon their guidance, new Gurukuls are coming up in Goa, Manglore, Mumbai and other places. In order to accommodate more number of students, the Gurukul has to construct new facility especially residential.

4. Strengths and Shortcomings

One of the limitations for the students pursuing education at Gurukul may be lack of accreditation. As discussed earlier, Gurukul, at present, is not affiliated

to any board. Hence, the students may not be able to compete with their counterparts from the formal schooling, as far as the degrees and certificates are concerned. The importance of the same cannot be undermined in a country like India where people prefer writing their degrees. Besides, if a student wants to pursue a government or civil job in future, they need to have basic qualification certified by the board. One of the alternatives to counter this limitation may be the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), an educational organization which conducts examinations for the grant of certificates up to pre-degree level at par with other national boards.

In defense to this limitation, the promoter and the founder member of the Gurukul, are very clear that the motto of the Gurukul system is not to push the students towards the formal education system at any point of time. They want to turn these students into self-employed and self-reliant individuals when they complete the full course and then they may take up activities such as agriculture, cattle rearing, making herbal medicines from cow urine or cow dung, etc. At least a handsome, sustainable future income is guaranteed by the team based on the skills acquired by the students.

It may happen that few students may not feel comfortable with the Gurukul system at a later stage and then may prefer not to continue with the Gurukul education. Sometimes the personal circumstances may warrant the students to go in to formal schooling system. For all these students, NIOS may be a good option. However, the founders strongly believe that they will not go for any accreditation in future as it may take-away the flexibility of operations and they may have to follow the rules and regulations of the board. In fact, the Gotirth Gurukul does not even encourage and endorse the thought of appearing for the NIOS exams, which they consider as a weak decision to revert to the formal education system.

In the present education system, the parents have lots of expectations from the schools as they are paying hefty fees. The board authorities have designed the comprehensive syllabus. The teachers are always under the stress of completing the syllabus. Thus, the teachers are equally stressed. This will directly or indirectly be passed on to the students. The love and affection which the teachers should be giving to the students in their formative years of life is missed in this teaching process. As per the opinion of the Principal of the school, this is the biggest failure of the present education system and hence they do not seek the affiliation to any board. They strongly believe that this will destroy the freedom which is the uniqueness of the Gurukul at present.

5. Conclusion

The case study of Gotirth Vidyapith presents an experimental model of education based on the Gurukul system. The facts described herein validate the fact that Gurukul education is not completely obsolete. Gotirth Vidyapeeth has not simply imitated the past. But it has maintained a balance and a blend of both modern education and traditional training.

The skills imparted to students at Gurukul would make them self-reliant as they will learn to manufacture the goods, understand their importance and at the same time use them judiciously. This system of education teaches dedication, honesty and perfection in the work. These students would be real assets for the country. The character building of the students would be so strong that they would never cheat and earn, never believe in 'brain-drain' and more importantly they would always respect mother, motherland (Swadesh), cow, nature, sisters and will love ancient Indian Sanskriti. The four pillars of this Gurukul namely; Patience, Perseverance, Perfection and Pleasure provide true essence of education to the students.

The present case study provides a guideline for the potential Gurukul to understand the various parameters as discussed above for designing the education model. Further research can be taken up to analyse the perceptions and willingness of the parents to enroll their children in the Gurukul system.

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