

# The Shantiniketan School of Education – A Precursor to AI Based Education

Dr Klinsa Kurien

*Assistant Professor in English, Acropolis Institute of Management Studies and Research, Indore*

India has been a home for the fundamental and advanced schools of learning since time immemorial. People of many different nations used to visit this land to imbibe knowledge from the great texts of literature and classics that formed the character and minds. They were highly dependent on social life in order to generate material for intellectual scholarship and life. This ancient knowledge helped them in building lives and developing a mind full of skills and ventures.

Education was the most important activity for the Brahminical community or the High Class Indians. Their prerogative was to learn from the Master Gurus (Teachers) and imbibe those concepts into the students, making them into capable beings. The Gurukul Style of Teaching was the trendsetter of the early Indian style of Education. This played a very important role in shaping the character and lives of the learned. Its sole aim was holistic education. Thorough learning was provided as the shishyas (students) followed the practice of staying with the Gurus. They would make them learn theoretical concepts, practical aspects of knowledge and scientific experiments were being conducted. In all, the skills gained were an eclectic mix of both theory and practice. Meditation as an art form became more and more predominant in this time. Knowledge and skills were being emphasized upon. More than this, there was also a stress on building inter-personal relationships. The Community based life and living, feeling of oneness, student centric behavior became part of the teaching-learning process.

The Pathshalas and Madrasas were also generating learning for the other classes of Indians. Without any discrimination of caste and creed, they used to be building and creating educational content and tasks for the relevant strata of society that came to learn. Pathshalas had only a limited range of subjects including the religious texts, Sanskrit and Mathematics. The Curriculum was fixed and did not permit any possible changes by exploration from the side of the learners. The patterns of work and education were defined for specific purposes.

Madrasas were the religious schools of education. It delved deep into the finer aspects of religion and philosophy like the Islamic school. Primary and Secondary Education was being provided along with food and lodging. Stipends were provided to students who excelled in learning. Under the rule of the Delhi Sultanate it became more and more popular. This came into being in the Muslim based dynasties of the North. As time passed by, other subjects were also introduced like Medicine and Mathematics.

Vernacular languages were being used in the Madrasas. Shariat law was not imposed in its totality. The advantage was that there was sufficient education in the areas of Science, Law, and Economics. Most of the eminent Islamic people got their education from the Madrasa schools. The language that used was also Classical Arabic. It was believed that religious instruction should be imparted in the direct language used by the Gods. Alongside this, the famous Shantiniketan School which was established by none other than our poet laureate and freedom fighter cum Nobel Prize winner Shri Rabindranath Tagore was famous for developing a unique approach to learning. Shantiniketan was a concept, idea and culture apart from being called a school of Education. It offers a very holistic and Gurukulam style of Education. There is no stress on marks and grades alone. The child would be having a blended approach. Nature was the best teacher as per the Tagorian Style of teaching and learning. Personal growth was the only branded approach and intellectualism on the same lines. There was no concept of mere rote learning. The Learning is based on a system of memorization and temporary focus on memorization. The conceptual pattern of teaching was gaining prominence and that would help in fostering the intellectual growth. Without any emphasis on traditional syllabus and approach, it was an outward kind of education followed by a judicious blend of the Oriental and Occidental philosophies.

My research paper follows an inductive approach of study by basing itself on three premises and research objectives.

1. The Shantiniketan School as relevant in the present day patterning a stress-free Education system
2. The Advent of AI and its relevance on Free thinking
3. Blending of the Universal System of thought and approach.

The focal point became that of character development and recognition. The Mentorship style of Education became very profound and established. Students would have gained better knowledge and tutelage with a single teacher than under different teachers. They had an impact on the nurturing of individual's talent, rather than on a group based study. The student and teacher had a free interaction and on an open basis. The bond between the learner and the learned was helpful in gaining a richer and better outlook by the student community. This was enhancing the knowledge levels of both of them. It became the most awaited place for non-formal education. Talents of students were being nurtured and cultivated, developing a certain pace of learning, skilling up one's potential and fully enhancing their knowledge levels.

The aspect of learning at one's own pace is very advantageous as it does not create unnecessary competition between and amidst weak and average minds. The pace it keeps up with is the aspect of learning with the emotional and spiritual development through subjects like music and art. There is an equal importance being attached to the analytical subjects and a rounded skill development ensues. The concept of holistic education was initiated by great philosophers like Rabindranath Tagore himself. The normal pattern of study is not encouraged. In fact the stress is on the blending of creativity and intelligence. The Aristotelian Method of study is encouraged like that of learning by questioning and enquiry. The concept of benches and desks are far beyond a point. It is not mandatory to be seated in them. The formal setting is done away with rather than being an enforced concept or approach. The best of the lessons are learnt in the lap of nature. One of the first proponents of Experiential Learning is credited with the Shantiniketan School of Education and learning. The practical exposure to learning lends it an artistic touch with a soft and non-imposing kind of an education system. Complete

involvement of the child with an adaptive kind of behavior pattern is followed. A totally immersive type of behavior is encouraged. The concept of maintaining a classroom which is kind of an open-air theatre helps in inculcating the concept of free will and thinking. Many famous personalities like Amartya Sen and Nandalal Bose have attributed their free will and thinking beyond the boundaries pattern to the Shantiniketan School of excellence. Along with these intricate characteristics and features, this School blends in with the look and feel of true art and culture. Aestheticism at its best is the credo that is followed. The Traditional Methods are done away with and instead a renewing, hopeful and rejuvenated one is followed. Connecting to one's belief systems and approach is more important than the actual lesson that is being taught and followed. There are a few resemblances of the modern day Artificial Intelligence to the Shantiniketan School of Thought. The skill of rationalizing was the early methodology that the Tagorian school performed. This caliber based skill is performed by the Artificial Intelligence bots. In order to reach or attain a particular goal, the Shantiniketan School insists on self-exploration and discovering topics after imbibing and involving oneself deeply into it. So also, the bots are trained and manipulated in such a way that the genetic programming devices can be installed into it and made to train it in the way it demands.

The Algorithms applied by the Artificial Intelligence Technology can be compared to the knowledge that the Human Brain generates or is generated. The concept of Reinforced Learning which is a method of the trial and error type of the Artificial Intelligence type is a pre-defined concept of the Shantiniketan School. This is an application of mind over the matter concept.

Agentic AI is the concept of coordinating tasks with multiple users rather than a single user. In the Shantiniketan School, children largely learn with interaction through the peer group model of study. They are encouraged to interact with others frequently and fairly rather than mere rote learning. Independent thinking models and traits of behavior are encouraged. This is referred to as the Pre-Processing tasks that the Artificial Intelligence driven machines can make. The teachers of the Shantiniketan School adopt a family like exposure and experience and are made available all the time without casting a formal look and attitude. Similarly the Artificial intelligence's concept of chat bots or

virtual assistants can offer services round the clock. Failures are handled with the utmost care and precision in the Shantiniketan School of Education. Learning at one's own comfortable pace and motion is seamless rather than an enforced system of grades and imposition of talents.

Through a totality of efforts and establishment, the Shantiniketan School of Education has been the torch-bearer or a precursor by the blended methods of learning and its thrust on creativity and free-flowing character that follows. The original always remains the original and the prototype by which other leads might follow.

#### REFERENCE

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