

Teacher-student relation and Discipline in the light of the Indian knowledge system

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Abstract:

The **historical perspective** of teacher-student relationships in India reflects a deep-rooted tradition of respect and mentorship, as seen in ancient **Gurukul systems**, where learning was holistic and values-based. These relationships were built on trust, discipline, and moral guidance, with the teacher (guru) serving as both educator and life mentor. In modern times, maintaining this bond faces **challenges** such as large class sizes, lack of personal interaction, technological distractions, and sometimes a lack of respect or support for teachers. Solutions include fostering mutual respect, improving teacher training, promoting emotional intelligence, and incorporating value-based education. **Forms of discipline** have also evolved. While traditional models emphasised strict obedience, today there is a shift toward positive and empathetic discipline that focuses on self-regulation, communication, and mutual understanding rather than punishment. The **Indian Education System** plays a crucial role in shaping the teacher-student relationships. Policy reforms like the **NEP 2020** emphasize holistic development, experiential learning, and teacher empowerment, all of which aim to rebuild and strengthen the teacher-student dynamic. Finally, integrating **Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)** can revitalize teacher-student relationships by connecting students with traditional wisdom, ethical values, and a culturally rooted education. IKS encourages teachers to be seen not just as instructors but as carriers of cultural and moral heritage.

Keywords:

Historical Perspective, Challenges and Solutions in Maintaining Teacher-Student Relationships, Forms of Discipline, Role of the Indian Education System, IKS and Teacher-Student Relations

Introduction:

Teacher-student relationships refer to the dynamic interactions and connections between educators and their students, which can significantly influence the educational experience. A teacher-student relationship encompasses the interactions and bonds formed between educators and their pupils.

The student-teacher relationship plays a critical role in shaping children's academic, social, behavioral, and emotional development. However, this relationship can also pose challenges, particularly in contexts that require open dialogue and self-exploration, such as reflective practice. Students often remain acutely aware of the dual roles their teachers occupy—as both mentors and assessors—which can influence how freely they engage in reflection.

Twenty-first century. Also, the guru and taught relationship most powerful attachment for success in the field, both guru and taught, as well as classroom management, such relationships are the most significant factor in assigned in determining a teacher's success in a successful life. Student must respect their teacher as a professional. at the beginning of their career, teachers often face difficulties in establishing a strong and healthy relationship, as they are very close to the students' age and lack experience. Sometimes an experienced teacher establishes too close a relationship with a student, which can later generate various problems in classroom discipline, and education can make both the student and other teachers lose respect. Effective teaching does not require that all students like the teacher; however, it is crucial that they all respect the teacher and each other.

In the Indian context, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places a strong emphasis on integrating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into educational curricula across all levels. IKS encompasses a vast and diverse body of indigenous knowledge, rooted in centuries of intellectual, cultural, and philosophical traditions. This includes contributions across various disciplines such as philosophy, science, mathematics, literature, medicine, and astronomy. These systems have been preserved through ancient texts, oral traditions, and structured educational institutions such as gurukuls and early universities. By embedding IKS into modern education, the NEP aims to create a more holistic and culturally resonant learning experience.

Historical Perspective on Teacher-Student Relations and Discipline in Indian Education:

Ancient Gurukul System: The Gurukul system was the earliest form of education in India, where students (shishyas) lived with their teachers (gurus) in an ashram. Discipline was strictly maintained through rules that emphasized obedience, humility, and rigorous academic and physical training. Punishments were minimal as self-discipline was encouraged through spiritual learning and practical wisdom.

Colonial Influence on Discipline: The British education system introduced structured discipline in schools through the implementation of strict rules, uniforms, and punishments. Corporal punishment was common, and the system focused more on rote learning and obedience rather than creativity and critical thinking.

Post-Independence Reforms: After independence, India adopted a more balanced approach, incorporating discipline with democratic values. Policies promoted student-friendly environments while maintaining classroom order and respect for authority.

Types of Discipline in Indian Schools and Colleges:

The Indian context of the teacher-student relationship is deeply rooted in tradition and culture. Here are some types of teacher-student relationships:

Traditional Relationships: Guru-Shishya Parampara: A conventional relationship where the teacher (guru) is revered as a mentor and guide, and the student (shishya) shows respect and obedience. Respectful Relationship: A relationship built on mutual respect, where the teacher is seen as an authority figure and the student shows deference.

Modern Relationships: Mentor-Mentee Relationship: A relationship where the teacher acts as a mentor, guiding the student in their academic and personal growth. Collaborative Relationship: A relationship where the teacher and student work together as equals, sharing knowledge and ideas.

Cultural Influences: Hierarchical Relationship: A relationship influenced by Indian cultural norms, where the teacher is seen as an authority figure and the student shows respect and obedience. Nurturing Relationship: A relationship where the teacher takes a nurturing role, supporting the student's emotional and academic growth.

Role of Teacher-Student Relations in the Indian Education System:

Academic Excellence: A disciplined environment ensures that students focus on studies, complete assignments on time, and respect deadlines. Punctuality and time management are key aspects of academic discipline.

Character Development: Discipline installs values like honesty, responsibility, perseverance, and prepares students to face real-world challenges with resilience and determination.

Social Harmony: Schools promote discipline to foster mutual respect, teamwork, and cooperation among students from diverse backgrounds, thereby helping to reduce conflicts and promote a peaceful learning atmosphere for learners.

Preparation for Professional Life: The disciplined environment of educational institutions prepares students for the workforce, where punctuality, work ethics, and responsibility are essential.

Challenges in Maintaining Teacher-Student Relationships:

Maintaining positive and effective teacher-student relationships can be a challenge in any educational setting. Various factors—cultural, psychological, social, technological, and institutional—affect how these relationships evolve and function. Below are some key challenges faced by both teachers and students in maintaining strong relationships:

Communication Barriers

- **Cultural & Language Differences:** In diverse classrooms, cultural and language barriers may hinder clear communication, leading to misunderstandings.
- **Generational Gap:** The gap between a teacher's generation and that of the students may result in differences in communication styles, technology use, and worldviews.
- **Fear of Authority:** Some students may feel intimidated by their teachers, making it difficult for them to communicate openly about challenges they are facing in class.

Lack of Personalized Attention

- **Large Class Sizes:** In schools and universities with large student populations, teachers may struggle to give individualized attention to every student, which can lead to students feeling overlooked or disengaged.
- **Time Constraints:** Teachers often have to balance multiple classes, administrative tasks, and grading, leaving little time for meaningful one-on-one interactions with students.

Teacher Stress & Burnout

- **High Workload:** Increased expectations, administrative duties, and the pressure to perform academically can cause teacher burnout, affecting their ability to engage emotionally and intellectually with students.
- **Lack of Support:** Teachers may sometimes feel unsupported by their institutions, which can result in frustration, affecting their attitude towards students and their ability to foster strong relationships.

Technological Disruptions

- **Overreliance on Digital Tools:** In today's digital age, the growing reliance on online learning platforms and virtual classes can sometimes lead to reduced personal interaction, making it harder to form strong teacher-student bonds.
- **Tech Disparities:** Not all students have equal access to technology, leading to feelings of exclusion or isolation, especially when lessons are delivered predominantly through digital platforms.

Emotional and Mental Health Issues

- **Stress & Anxiety in Students:** Academic pressures, social media influences, and personal issues can contribute to stress and anxiety in students, which may affect their ability to engage effectively with teachers.
- **Teacher Emotional Intelligence:** Teachers may not always be trained to deal with mental health concerns or emotional distress in students, making it harder to form supportive relationships.

Lack of Mutual Respect

- **Disruptive Behaviour:** Disrespectful behaviour, such as speaking out of turn, lack of discipline, or bullying, can erode the teacher-student relationship.
- **Teachers' Unchecked Biases:** If teachers exhibit favouritism or unconscious bias towards certain students, it can create resentment and division within the class, undermining healthy relationships.

Differing Expectations

- **Teacher Expectations:** Teachers may expect students to behave, perform, and engage in certain ways, but these expectations may not always align with the needs or capabilities of students.
- **Student Expectations:** Students may have unrealistic expectations of their teachers in terms of personal attention, grading, or emotional support, which can create frustration on both sides.

Generational Differences in Learning

- **Varied Learning Styles:** Students today may have different learning preferences, such as a preference for interactive or digital learning tools, while teachers may rely on traditional methods. This gap can affect student engagement and the development of strong teacher-student bonds.
- **Diverse Cognitive Abilities:** Students' cognitive and emotional development varies, and teachers must adapt to the different learning needs of their students to maintain an effective and supportive relationship.

Potential Solutions to Overcome These Challenges:

- **Foster Open Communication:** Encourage active listening, empathy, and clear communication, both inside and outside the classroom.
- **Smaller Class Sizes:** Institutions can strive to reduce class sizes to ensure more personalised attention to each student.
- **Professional Development for Teachers:** Providing teachers with mental health resources, conflict resolution skills, and emotional intelligence training can enhance their ability to connect with students.
- **Incorporate Blended Learning:** A balanced approach combining both traditional and digital tools can ensure engagement while maintaining meaningful personal interaction.

- **Encourage Emotional Support:** Schools and colleges can integrate counselling services, peer support groups, and stress-relief activities to ensure emotional well-being for both students and teachers.
- **Cultural Sensitivity Training:** Teachers can undergo cultural competency training to better understand diverse student backgrounds and learning needs.
- **Set Clear Expectations:** Both teachers and students can benefit from mutual clarity regarding academic expectations, classroom behaviour, and communication boundaries.

By addressing these challenges with empathy and proactive strategies, schools and educators can create environments where teacher-student relationships are respectful, supportive, and conducive to both academic success and personal growth.

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and teacher-student relations:

The integration of **Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)** into Teacher-student relationships offers a unique opportunity to foster a deeper, more holistic educational experience. By grounding the relationship in principles derived from India's rich tradition of knowledge and pedagogy, there can be a more authentic and meaningful connection between Teachers and Students. Here's how IKS can positively impact these relationships:

Emphasis on Guru-Shishya Parampara

- **Foundation:** The traditional **Guru-Shishya (Teacher-Student) Parampara** emphasises a bond of mutual respect, trust, and learning. This relationship goes beyond a mere academic exchange and is rooted in **spiritual and moral growth**, where the teacher serves as a guide and mentor, imparting wisdom not just for exams but for life itself.
- **Impact:** Teachers who adopt this model are more likely to build stronger, more personalized relationships with their students. Students feel valued not only for their academic performance but for their individual growth and potential.

Role of Dṛṣṭi (Perspective) in Teacher-Student Interactions

- **Holistic Education:** **Dṛṣṭi**, one of the guiding principles of IKS, emphasizes seeing the world through an Indian lens, where knowledge is interconnected. This principle encourages teachers to view students as multifaceted individuals, considering their mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being, not just their intellectual abilities.
- **Impact:** Teachers who embrace this holistic view tend to engage more meaningfully with their students. They offer guidance that nurtures the **whole person**, recognizing that academic success is often intertwined with a student's emotional and social development.

Learning from the Depth of Paramparā (Tradition)

- **Timeless Wisdom:** IKS stresses the importance of **Parampara**- the continuous flow of knowledge from one generation to the next. This understanding encourages teachers to view themselves not just as educators, but as custodians of a rich intellectual tradition.
- **Impact:** Teachers can instill in students a sense of pride and connection to their heritage, strengthening their identity. When students feel this connection, it often leads to a deeper respect for the teacher, as they see them as part of a larger, respected tradition.

Laukika-Prayojana: Practical Application of Knowledge in Relationships

- **Practical and Applied Learning:** The principle of **Laukika-prayojana** suggests that knowledge should have practical applications in everyday life. Teachers can use IKS to make the learning process more relevant to the real world, connecting ancient wisdom to contemporary challenges.
- **Impact:** When teachers bring this principle into their teaching practices, students see the relevance of what they are learning and are more likely to engage actively in the process. This leads to a **dynamic, interactive relationship**, where students feel that their teacher is not just an authority figure but a guide helping them navigate both academic and life challenges.

Developing Emotional Intelligence through IKS Principles

- **Balanced Emotional Responses:** IKS values qualities like **equanimity** and **self-control**, which can be reflected in teacher-student relationships. Teachers who embrace these values tend to remain calm and composed even in stressful or challenging situations, setting a positive example for students.
- **Impact:** By adopting such practices, teachers can help foster emotional intelligence in their students. Over time, students learn how to approach difficult situations with a balanced perspective, contributing to a healthier, more respectful teacher-student dynamic.

Teacher as a Model of Ethical Values

Ethical Pedagogy: IKS emphasizes **dharma**—moral duty or right conduct—which can guide teachers to model ethical behaviour in their relationships with students. Teachers who embody these ethical values not only teach subject matter but also **moral lessons**, helping students to develop a strong character.

- **Impact:** This ethical foundation can help students develop a sense of responsibility, honesty, and integrity, both within the classroom and in their lives outside. It fosters an environment where respect, humility, and empathy are paramount.

Promoting Mutual Respect through the Teacher's Role as a Learner

- **Teacher as a Lifelong Learner:** In IKS, the teacher is not seen as an infallible authority but as someone who is also learning alongside the students. **Vidya** (knowledge) is regarded as infinite, and teachers are encouraged to continuously seek wisdom.
- **Impact:** This approach breaks down hierarchical barriers, making the teacher more approachable and human in the eyes of the student. It promotes **mutual respect**, where both teacher and student are seen as co-learners in the process of education.

Developing a Connection Between Tradition and Contemporary Needs

- **Bridging the Past and Present:** By integrating IKS into modern education, teachers can help students appreciate the **relevance** of ancient wisdom in solving contemporary issues, whether in fields like health, technology, or social dynamics.
- **Impact:** This connection not only enhances the teacher-student bond but also encourages students to value and engage with both traditional knowledge and modern scientific advancements.

Focus on Mindfulness and Self-Reflection

- **Meditative Practices;** IKS emphasizes the incorporation of meditative practices such as Yoga and Meditation, which teachers can use to help students develop mindfulness, self-awareness, and emotional regulation in Education.
- **Impact:** Teachers who incorporate mindfulness practices into their teaching can help students manage stress, focus better, and develop a more respectful and claim demeanor in their relationships with others.

Conclusion:

By incorporating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the teacher-student relationship, educators can create a nurturing, respectful, and dynamic learning environment that values the holistic growth of the individual. The principles of Guru-Shishya Parampara, Dṛṣṭi, and Laukika-Prayojana, along with the holistic and ethical framework of IKS, offer a powerful foundation for improving not just academic performance but also emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. This approach encourages teachers and students to evolve together in a mutually respectful and enriching relationship.

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