

Necessity of Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems in Value Education: A Pedagogical Study for Primary School Students in Tripura

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Abstract: *There was a time when the Western world was enveloped in a dark age, but Bharat, our motherland, held her head high across every sector, from business to education to science and technology. Nevertheless, these thousand-year-old knowledge systems gradually fell into disrepair for many reasons, particularly during the medieval invasion. Whatever was left behind, the British looted and indirectly imposed their culture and traditions on us, and in many cases, by copying original texts and inventions, they renamed them. This study illustrates how the teachings and messages of the Great Indian Epics and folklore can help young pupils build inclusive knowledge for a better future in which Western and Indigenous knowledge systems are synchronised. Qualitative and quantitative methods, along with a child-centric approach, were adopted for the study. It has been observed that students are more interested in Moral and Value Courses than the Language Groups. Even outside their class, they motivate others to embrace ethical practices. Furthermore, those who scored highly in the Value Education Course exhibited greater social adaptability and were more polite and cooperative than others. However, in the modern educational system, language-learning groups are equally important for language acquisition. Hence, a balanced integration of Eastern and Western knowledge is necessary for holistic educational development.*

Keywords: Dark Age, Holistic Development, Indigenous Knowledge System, Western World

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS), or Bhârâtîya Jñâna Paramparâ, refers to the body of ancient Indian knowledge spanning thousands of years across subjects related to life and education in India. India was the mother of all knowledge in the world when, in modern times, a newborn superpower like America did not even exist on the map as a proper nation. In Tripura's primary schools, students are compelled to learn English, almost neglecting their mother tongue. Of course, there is an outlet for inclusion in the syllabus, but starting with parents and guardians, teachers, and everyone else, it is emphasised that children should learn a foreign language such as English. There is no harm in learning a foreign language, but one should not give it more priority than one's mother tongue. In contrast, our motherland, Bharat, has a glorious past that surpasses that of other countries worldwide in science, education, and knowledge. Some of the reasons are discussed below. Carpue (1816) acknowledged that Indigenous peoples developed a reliable nasal reconstruction method using a forehead skin flap for rhinoplasty before Europeans did. It was the great Sushruta from ancient India, around 600 BC, who first discovered the surgical system and was celebrated as the "Father of Indian Medicine" and "Father of Plastic Surgery" (Mark, 2018). In the 7th century, Brahmagupta formalised the notion of zero as a number, a concept first used by Aryabhata in the 5th century. (Gupta, 2025). Yoga and Ayurveda are ancient Indian traditions of life and health that date back 5000 years. Sangale (2023) used the term "divine elixir", a healing fire for the cure of multiple diseases, in reference to yoga. Ancient people used it to treat mental and physical disorders. In fact, innumerable inventions originated in India and have impacted the world. Indian epics and long narrative poems, such as the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Gita, encompass moral, ethical, and philosophical teachings about life and the world. In the primary class, it can easily instil valuable lessons from the Kurukshetra war into the delicate minds of the apprentices. The Indian subcontinent, for the first time, conveyed a universal prayer for peace and well-being, not only to Indians but also to the world. The whole world is narrated as a neighbour, irrespective of religion, caste, and creed.

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः

सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु

मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत् ।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

The English translation of the above verse is as follows:

May all be happy.

May all be free from illnesses.

May all see what is auspicious.

May no one suffer.

Om Peace, Peace, Peace.(Veda,2021). Hence, in addition to foreign language learning, Indian values should also be taught in schools.

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The value-added course offers multiple rereading benefits for primary school students, as this stage is a character-building one in which a pupil visits and interacts with their teacher or Guru. It is a golden opportunity for teachers to mould students' moral character for the country and life. Some great values in life need to be instilled in children at the primary level to make their lives fruitful for them and for their country. These are like Dharma (duty), Satya (truth), Ahimsa (nonviolence), and Karma (action), which can be easily inculcated in a young child and prepare him for the nation's future. (Kapoor, 2018). However, the researchers could not identify a clear, authoritative source that discusses the integration of the great Indian Epics with Tripuri Folk Tales, which could help impart knowledge at the primary level in Tripura. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommended the inclusion of IKS in the school curriculum to support children's holistic development. (NEP 2020, MHRD). However, clear instructions for implementing this vision have not been provided. Radhakrishnan (2015) and Krishna (2019) argue that the moral lessons of these epics can be incorporated into the primary school curriculum through storytelling, dramatisation, and reflective discussion, with the expected outcomes observed among students. Nevertheless, none of them appear to argue specifically for pairing the epics with Tripura's local folk tales in their published work. However, this study will examine how the combination of the great Indian Epics and the Folk Tales of Tripura motivates learners to reflect on the glorious past of the motherland. Simultaneously, he will be able to identify with his own declining culture and traditions, as well as his role in protecting them. Tripura, one of the eight states in Northeast India, does not have epics as vast as the Ramayana and Mahabharata. However, it still has thousands of years of oral traditions that a small state like Tripura maintains. The state guided and protected the people of the soil from evil when no education or knowledge had reached the land until recently. People depended on their mother, Nature, for survival, and everything they relied on was their mother. Hence, their lives and stories revolve around the jungle, river, forest, and animals. Oral stories are treasures of the land, and they have survived the Test of Time and have been passed down from one generation to the next, preserving valuable traditions such as ethical transmission in tribal and rural communities. Some important animal fables, such as The Fox and the Monkey and The Tortoise and the Tiger, which convey values and lessons, can be taught in primary education, thereby facilitating communication and connection with the majority of rural boys in the state.

3.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following methods were applied to determine the probable interest in the active participation of the two different subject groups among the learners at the primary stages in Tripura. These are,

- (i) Qualitative Method
- (ii) Quantitative Method
- (iii) Child -centric Approach, and
- (iv) NEP framework.

3.1. Tools and Source of Data Collection:

Two types of data were collected for the above pedagogical study from primary school students in Tripura. These are (i) Primary Data and (ii) Secondary Data. The source of the Primary Data is feedback from Questionnaires completed by students, Teachers, and Guardians; classroom observations; participation logs; Focus groups, etc. The sources of secondary data are the TBSE Curriculum documents and the 2020 NEP guidelines.

3.2 Objectives of the Study: The study on the subject of the necessity of integrating Indian knowledge systems in value education: A pedagogical study for primary school students in Tripura has the following research objectives. These are:(i)To compare the effectiveness of value education across two subject groups—Language and Environmental Studies—using epics and folklores in the primary schools in Tripura.(ii) To examine the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the Tripura Board of Secondary Education (TBSE) at the primary curriculum level and classroom practices.(iii)To identify the combined role of Indian epics and folklores in imparting value and ethics education among primary school students in Tripura.

3. 3. Primary School Students and the Epics and Folk Tales Taught in Class:

The School Education Curriculum in Tripura, under the Tripura Board of Secondary Education, follows a 5+3 educational structure. (NEP-2020, model for the TBSE in Tripura) as follows:

Table 1: Educational Structure of Primary School Students in Tripura under the NEP-2020 Curriculum.

Stage	Classes	Age Group	Focus Areas
Foundational Stage	Pre-primary – II	3–8 years	Play-based learning, basic literacy and numeracy
Preparatory Stage	III – V	8–11 years	Language, math, environmental studies, and moral

The Foundational and Preparatory stages are the most crucial in the lives of young schoolchildren. The syllabus for these students, prepared by the TBSE in Tripura, was well selected. Knowledge of Value Education and Moral knowledge is embedded in the curriculum to support the development of their all-round education, especially by fostering students' emotional well-being. It is vital to create and disseminate knowledge about the Indian Knowledge System, a treasure of our country. The moral teachings of these great epics, such as the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Jataka Tales, Panchatantra, and Hitopadesha. All these treasures

are complete with excellent Indian Knowledge, which can attract the delicate minds of young hearts. These create and strengthen moral values, such as honesty, truth, compassion, empathy, and benevolence, across all aspects of life among primary stage students in Tripura. A comparative study was conducted among students in the language, Maths, and Value Education subjects to determine the interests of primary and pre-primary students in Tripura. A total of 250 students from ten government degree schools in the Gomati District of Tripura participated in the survey. The following clustered chart has been used to indicate the tentative percentage of subject interest to assess the usefulness and necessity of imparting Indian Knowledge to little learners for character and soul-building in the future at the primary level (Classes I-V) in Tripura. Tripura, one of the lovely sisters of Northeast India, is enriched with natural beauty and oral traditions. Here, oral traditions are not merely mythical or fabricated; rather, these narratives recount the lives and cultures of the 19 tribes of the state. Each clan has a distinct culture, reflecting the Indian variety. Tripura is a microcosm of India in terms of cultural diversity. (Dutta, P. (2023, April 15). *Tripura: A mini-India in cultural diversity*.) However, a commonality across all tales is that when the ancient people of the land faced problems in their lives and customs, they immediately turned to nature for solutions. For example, the popular Reang Folk tale, "Two Brothers and the Banana Tree", is suitable for primary school students and illustrates the consequences of selfishness. No society, God, or man came for justice; it was only Mother Nature who punished the elder brother for his extreme greed. This type of folk tale teaches moral and ethical lessons for tender hearts across the state, beyond the prescribed curriculum.

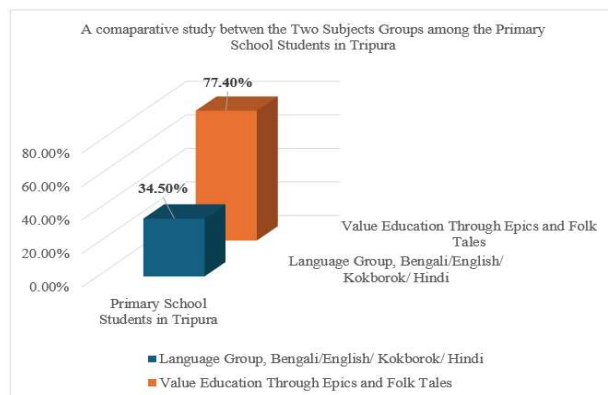


Figure No. 1: Illustrates the tentative Percentage of interest in the active participation of Primary School Students in the Gomati District of Tripura.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

A comparative study was conducted to determine the subjects that students are more interested in at the primary level in Tripura. Accordingly, a sample of the above-mentioned has been collected, and it has been observed that approximately 77.40% of the students have shown eager interest in participating in value education through the teaching of Epics and Folk Tales in Tripura, compared to the subjects of the Language Group, such as Bengali, English, Kokborok, and Hindi. From the above study, it seems that students are more interested in listening to and learning from epics and folk stories than from the prescribed

books in their syllabus. Hence, it is essential to provide primary-level learners with access to the storytelling method. The study employed the following key parameters: test scores, project outcomes, and students' active interest. The research gap between the two percentages, 74.40% and 34.50%, suggests that implementing value-added courses in epics and folk tales enhances young learners' interest and participation. Teaching through epics and folk tales is easier and more engaging than traditional language instruction. The high level of feedback in the value-added courses is attributable to their practical relevance and diverse learning materials. The students in the language group demonstrated greater linguistic proficiency, whereas those in the value-added course demonstrated a broader range of life experiences. The students in the value-added group were found to possess strong virtues, such as greater sociability, gentleness, cooperation, and empathy, which may benefit society and the country. Moreover, students in the value-added group retained moral lessons longer and disseminated these values among their peers upon returning home. However, it was rarely observed that students in the language group developed linguistic competence among themselves. Even primary-level students reported higher satisfaction with the subject and content of the value-added group than those in the language group.

Moral & Ethical Knowledge from The Mahabharata, The Ramayana

• Dharma (Righteous Duty Above All)

In both epics, dharma is the guiding principle. Lord Rama sacrifices his personal happiness to uphold his duty as a son and king. In the Mahabharata, Arjuna learns from Krishna that fulfilling one's duty without attachment is the path to righteousness.

• Consequences of Ego and Greed

The Mahabharata illustrates how unchecked ambition and pride, especially in characters such as Duryodhana, lead to destruction. Similarly, Ravana's arrogance and desire for Sita in Ramayana result in his downfall.

• Compassion and Forgiveness

Despite this injustice, Rama shows no anger toward Kaikeyi. He accepts exile with grace and continues to honour her as his mother.

In a fit of vengeance, Ashwatthama kills the sleeping sons of the Pandavas after the war.

Act of Forgiveness: Though deeply hurt, Yudhishtira chooses not to kill Ashwatthama. He respects Krishna's counsel and upholds the principle of mercy (ahimsa).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above findings, it is highly recommended that the importance of value-added courses be emphasised at the primary level in state schools. This is the age of character building, a crucial time for moulding the delicate minds of primary-class students with the greatest treasures from the teachings of the Great Indian Epics and local folk tales and treasures of the state. However, teachers should be selective in choosing the

subject matter of the value-added course that aligns with their future careers. What is right or wrong in life A language teacher cannot convey a message of great value and importance in their class. However, the same teacher can easily instil the message of human values in value education classes, thereby enriching the knowledge acquired in the language class.

6. CONCLUSION

Finally, it is important to remember that linguistic competence in subjects such as Bengali, English, Hindi, and Kokborok is also essential for students to compete in national and international arenas in modern times. In addition to linguistic competence, students require social and moral virtues in life, which are cultivated through subjects such as Environmental Studies and Value-Added Courses. In the environmental study, the aim was to convey the social and natural surroundings in which they lived. The value-added course instils strong moral and ethical values in students, who will be the future of India. Hence, the contributions of all courses to the child's holistic development, given the modern teaching system's child-centric motto, are equally important.

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