

SHISHU VATIKA- AN AMAZING CONCEPT OF VIDYA BHARTI

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Abstract

Relevant results of education of a country can be achieved only when the education is based on its culture and life philosophy. Then only the character of the generations may be modified which will be harmonized to the culture of the country. Vidya Bharati has outlined the system of child education based on our Bhartiya philosophy, which is, in turn, the basis of the overall development of one's personality. According to ECCE of National Education Policy-2020-“Over 85% of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in the early years in order to ensure healthy brain development and growth”. A ‘Shishu’ (child) is first like the seed of the human. As all opportunities of the development of a tree lies in its seed, so is about human too. As per Bhartiya thought, a Shishu is the purest form of the ‘Brahma’. The parents are the means of bringing this ‘Brahma’ on earth. Vidya Bharti has adopted the program “Shishu Vatika” to train and educate the babies along with their parents and families. It is the responsibility of the family, especially the mother, for the proper development of the child. Efforts are being made to awaken this sense of responsibility and create an environment of humanity with the values of Bharat through “Shishu Vatika” across the country.



Introduction

- **Shishu Vatika**

An indigenous pre-primary education system based on Bhartiya Samskriti and our country's environment has been developed and given the name : 'Shishu Vatika'.

- **Who is 'SHISHU' (child)?**

A 'Shishu' (child) is like the seed of the human being. As all panoramas of the enhancement of a tree lies in its seed, so is about human too. Only a healthy seed can be grown into a fruitful and healthy tree.

- **Bhartiya Life Philosophy and Education:**

Bhartiya philosophy is endless and balanced just like the process of human development. In the present scenario, education is fragmented according to class, ideally which should not be like child education, primary education, secondary education, and higher education. It should be consistent and continuous. Child education is the basis of holistic education as it continues for the whole life.

- **The educationists have divided the categories according to age, such as:**

1. Before Insemination till 5 years i.e. Child education which is performed mainly at home and inspired by parents.
2. Development during 6-16 years i.e. primary and secondary education which is school-centered and source of inspiration are facilitators.
3. Development from 16 years onwards for the lifetime i.e. higher studies and self-studies.

- **Age of Child:**

According to the Indian thought process, the phase of Shishu is 0-5 years. At this age their soul and mind are pure and free from all evils, the plantation of samskaar becomes quick. Therefore, the atmosphere where the child resides like the home, the surrounding environment, the behaviour of the members of the family plays a vital role in, imbibing values in the child. The values inculcated during at this age become the life-long asset of the person. If we need good fruits, we have to think about good quality seeds too. Hence, the education for the child commences even before its arrival in the mother's womb.

- **Bhartiya History of child education:**

In the age-long Bhartiya history, there was no word as 'child education', only 'child development' was there. Its main source was home only. Child development used to be done by parent's guidance. Child psychologists around the world also believe that small children should not be separated from affectionate family. Therefore, if we talk of the right education for children, the education must start from the time a couple gets married.

- **Elements of Child development:**

1. **Love and Security:** The child understands the language of love. True development of the children can be done only through love and affection. They identify the true love. Wherever they don't find love, they refuse to go. The child feels protection in a loving atmosphere. In this age, as much as the family will love them, they will become fearless. They will also love everyone when they grow up.
2. **Joy:** Joy is the biggest medium of development. Whatever they enjoy, they do it repeatedly which brings considerable development of children. They enjoy doing new and creative things. Children always enjoy creativity and such an environment should be provided for them to grow in the right way.
3. **Naturality:** It is necessary to carry out activities in accordance with the nature of the child. Natural development also happens with the ease of action and there is no pressure on any means of learning. For instance, children like to stay close to nature like trees, plants, animals & birds, etc. But nowadays there is an artificial scenario, so the child development also turns into artificial growth which leads to loss of natural essence in them.
4. **Freedom:** A child is born free. Every child knows naturally how to develop, but the schools and parents force them to adhere to a fixed particular curriculum, which gives an adverse effect on the child. As a result, the child may start to revolt against the undesired discipline.
5. **Aesthetic/Sense:** At this stage, the sensory organs should find the best taste, elaborate word, affectionate touch, superior aroma, and superior sight. Any child, who will be aesthetic in sense from a young age, will go ahead and do great things and will be useful for society.

The epic center of the above five elements can only be home. Parents must be the first facilitators for children up to 5 years for their development. It is the duty of the facilitator that parents should be informed of the proper procedure for the development of a child in the house. But in today's era of commercialization, the school is wandering from its right direction and taking the work of the family in their hands. They are freeing the parents of their duties. They must be corrected.

- **Vidya Bharati's Concept of Child Education**

Vidya Bharati has been working since 1980 in the field of Shishu Vatika. As an independent unit and has formulated its policy on Bhartiya thought process elaborated above, which includes:

1. Education for couples: This part is mainly for Couples who are willing to have an ideal child through an ideal way of conception with an ideal seed. Here 'Seed' indicates the baby. The ideal time to have a superior seed is three months prior to conception. The purity of intention and thought of the couple has a clear impact on the quality of seed in the Samskars of the child.

2. Education of the would-be mothers: During the pregnancy, the formation and development of the body parts of the child take place. The diet, daily routine, yogabhyasa, meditation, the atmosphere in the family, etc. of the would-be mother plays an important role in proper development. This needs to be made clear to the would-be parents and their family members. This syllabus aims at addressing this need.

3. Education of the mothers of the children up to 1 year of age: Under this, these newly blessed mothers are told about the conditions of the child's place of sleeping, the proper way of feeding to the child, his care and looking after by parents and the samskars performed during this first year of their life which include Jatakarna, Naamkaran, Nishkramana, Annaprashana, and Karnabedha.

4. Education of the mothers of the age group of 1-3 years of their child: During this age, the child starts learning various activities in order to become self-dependent in his routine work. As because, this is the best part of life for habit formation, so it's necessary that the child is provided the freedom to perform activities on his own and the plentiful of love and affection from the parents. Therefore parents should be taught this.

5. **Education of the mothers of the age group of 3-5 years of their child:** The child comes to a Shishu Vatika in this age. Their sensory organs are very active during this age. Hence, activities to provide sufficient freedom to work with their hands in order to get first-hand experience through their sensory organs. Vidya Bharati has drafted a special syllabus for them which is not only for the children but also for their parents, teachers, and society as a whole.

- **Important Points on Child Development:**

⇒ The child learns on its own and cannot be taught anything.

⇒ The child learns by own experience. We need to provide them an environment where they can learn by doing things themselves.

⇒ Children learn by imitating others. They should have such an atmosphere in the family that they can learn good things by imitation.

Keeping the above points in mind, Vidya Bharati has prepared the concept of "Shishu Vatika", with twelve dimensions.

The Twelve dimensions of Shishu Vatika are –

1. **Kridangan (Playground):** This dimension helps in the physical development of a child and help to keep them happily active.

2. **Rangmanch (Theatre):** A place where they can perform the dramatization of any story and can learn a lot.

3. **Taran Taal (Swimming Pool):** Their favourite place where they can enjoy a lot with water and learn swimming.

4. **Pradarshani (Exhibition house):** Over here they can easily explore so many things and learn a lot naturally by observation and experiencing.

5. **Chiryaghar (Zoo):** This zoo is completely artificial and contains dummy birds and trees. This dimension is to develop love towards nature and its creatures. With the help of this concept children learn to take proper care of birds and other animals. Every day during the lunch time they take out a small bite of their lunch for Gaw Mata as Gaw Grass. They also keep water for the birds and feed them too.

6. **Prayogshala (Science Laboratory):** A place where they can learn by doing the activity. They can experience a lot of things which are related to daily life's science.

7. **Vastu Sangrahalaya (Object Museum):** Here they experience about various materials by observing and touching them.

- 8. Karyashala (Workshop):** Over here they experience all the skill education and learn a lot without having burden.
- 9. Chitra Pustakalaya (Picture Library):** At this age they see various pictures and picture books and learn a lot.
- 10. Kalashala (Art Gallery):** Here they do and display their various art and experience the joy and beauty of art.
- 11. Ghar (Home):** This dimension help them to understand the life inside home and the relationship among society and how to keep the home neat and clean. They will completely understand the housekeeping concept naturally according to ideal Bhartiya home.
- 12. Baghwani (Plantation and Horticulture):** They do gardening and take proper care of plants. They also plant seeds of various crops to understand the basic farming using play way method. With the help of this concept they learn the skill of plantation and cultivation.

- **Agnihotra(Hawan):** Vidya Bharti believe in Bhartiya Samskriti so the day starts with Agnihotra and aacharyas take part in this ritual positively. The Vedas are divine knowledge. If we study the Vedas, it is known that God has commanded humans to perform Agnihotra. There are many verses and sentences of performing Agnihotra in the Vedas. Similarly, the first mantra of the third chapter of Yajurveda is 'Samidhaagnim duvasat ghrithairbodhayattithim'. Asmin havya juhota || It means to illuminate the Samidhas with fire and increase them by sacrificing gruel therein. Consume fire as a guest, as we do when learned sannyasins come home without notice and satisfy them by presenting them with the substances they need, etc.
- **Suvarnprashan :** Apart from the above dimensions there is also a concept of building the child's strong immune system. Because a child's overall development is impossible without good health so the concept of Suvarnprashan is also there. It is an effective immune modulator treatment that enhances the strength, appetite, complexion and health of the child. Its standard dosage should be 1.25 mg/kg of body weight of standard Suvarna Bhasma, mixed with unequal amounts of medicinal ghee and honey and allowed to lick it at least on Pushyankshatra with the chanting of the holy mantra.

Summary:

In our country, generally, after completing 6 years of age, a child starts his formal education by taking admission in class I in primary schools. His time from 3 to 6 years is mostly spent in the family. In ancient times, when the family institution was culturally strong, the child used to develop by living in the loving environment of the family and acquiring good values. Mother was the first teacher. But in modern times, industrial development and western civilization, especially in cities, had an impact on families as well and as a result, the need to send a child to school as soon as he turns 2 years of age is felt. In cities, the number of schools for children of this age group in the name of "Montessori", "Kindergarten" or nursery schools started increasing. These schools opened in every nook and corner of the cities and metros and became a means for the operators to earn.

In these schools running in the name of Montessori or Kindergarten, tender children are subjected to severe torture in terms of education. The burden of heavy bags took away their childhood. The process of westernization is going on at a rapid pace in the name of English medium.

Seeing this fatal situation for the country, Vidya Bharti focused especially on pre-primary education. Developed child education system "Shishu Vatika" according to Bhartiya culture and indigenous environment. The informal education system of child's physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual development became popular in the name of "Shishu Vatika". The child got freedom from the burden of books and notebooks for knowledge of alphabets and numbers. Through informal activities like games, songs, storytelling, sensory development, language skills, science experience, creative work, free trade, painting-crafts, daily life behaviour etc., "Shishu Vatika" classes echo with the joyful laughter of babies. And children develop naturally by receiving education and values. At Shishu Vatika children call the male facilitators, Acharyaji and female facilitators, Didiji instead of Sir and Madam. Facilitators also call them Bhaiya- Bahan not students or anything else.

Vidya Bharti has adopted the program "Shishu Vatika" to train and educate the babies along with their parents and families. It is necessary to create an environment for holistic growth and development of the child. It is also the responsibility of the family, especially the mother, for the overall development of the child. Efforts are being made to awaken this sense of responsibility and create an environment of Bhartiya through "Shishu Vatika" across the country.

Siksha Ka Samskriti Se Nata, Jai Janani Jai Bharat Mata!

Jai Hind Jai Bharat !

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