



From *Guru-Shishya* Paradigm of Mentoring in the Indian Knowledge System

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Abstract

Mentoring is said to be one of the integral components for the overall development of an individual. It is a guiding power where mentor and mentee share balance. The principle of Mentoring or *Guru Shishya* Parampara is one of the most ancient concepts of Indian Knowledge System. This has been an integral part of the book like *Ramayana*, *Bhagavad Gita* and *Upanishads*. In today's day and age, the mentorship is more dominant and diverse. What Can I Give? Life Lessons from My Teacher. Unlike many contemporary approaches that prioritize career-driven goals, the Indian tradition views mentoring as a transformative journey of inner growth—rooted in values, humility, experiential learning, and dharma.

This paper investigates the essence of mentoring from IKS and connects it to contemporary academic and professional environments. With a mixed-method research approach comprising textual interpretation, literature review, and empirical case studies, the paper outlines how integrating IKS principles into modern mentorship models can foster resilience, wisdom, empathy, and self-realization. The paper will focus on rejuvenating the guru-shishya parampara through contextualized education policies and institutional frameworks.

Research Objective: This paper aims to examine the philosophical foundations of the *guru-shishya parampara* within the Indian knowledge system and analyze its relevance in contemporary mentoring practices across academic and professional settings.

Keywords

Mentoring, Indian Knowledge System, Guru-Shishya Parampara, Bhagavad Gita, Srimad Bhagavatam, Leadership, Spiritual Intelligence, Pedagogy, Dharma, Reflective Practice

1. Introduction

In the present time, Mentoring is considered to be transferring skills and holistic development of the individual. As per the traditional system of Indian ancient *guru-shishya parampara*, it is a process of transmitting the knowledge. It is a part of the Dharmic duty to transfer the skills to the *Shishya* without any bias; it develops the transformative relationship. The traditional *guru-shishya parampara* is a vibrant example where the Guru or Mentor is not only concerned about intellectual development but also evolved the emotional, ethical, and spiritual quotient too. .

For instance, Lord Krishna as a mentor to Arjuna did not just teach him battle strategies; he mentored him to attain clarity, inner strength, and commitment to righteous action. Such examples illustrate how ancient India nurtured a mentoring culture that was holistic in nature.

“The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is the systematic transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next generation. It is a structured system and a process of knowledge transfer rather than a tradition. The Indian Knowledge System is based on the Vedic literature, the Upanishads, the Vedas, and the Upvedas. The NEP-2020 (National Education Policy) recognizes this rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought as a guiding principle. The Indian Knowledge Systems comprise of Jnan, Vignan, and Jeevan Darshan that have evolved out of experience, observation, experimentation, and rigorous analysis” writes Pavan.

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Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is a rich and deep pool of intellectual, spiritual, and educational wisdom that has informed Indian civilization for centuries. Perhaps its greatest contribution to the world is the way of mentoring. Contrary to contemporary understanding of mentoring that usually concentrates on professional guidance or acquisition of skills, IKS mentorship is an integral, life-transforming involvement involving character building, moral orientation, and spiritual realization. This traditional knowledge of being validating and applying into practice has influences our administration, law, justice, education, arts, health, manufacturing, and commerce. Mentoring also plays a vital role in influencing the classical and other languages of Bharat, they are passed on vis a vis orally and textually.

1.1 Philosophical Origins of Mentorship in IKS

Mentorship in IKS is best seen in the guru-shishya (teacher-disciple) tradition, a hallowed and personal relationship that goes beyond academic teaching. The guru's role was not merely one of imparting knowledge; it was one of moulding the very existence of the shishya (disciple). The Upanishads, which are the early scriptures of Indian philosophy, depict the guru as the one who takes the pupil from darkness to light—*tamasomājyotirgamaya* (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 1.3.28). This path is not intellectual but spiritual, and it demands trust, letting go, and profound personal change (Tiwari, 2002).

The Bhagavad Gita provides one of the greatest examples of mentorship in Indian literature. Lord Krishna, acting as the charioteer and guide to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, is the ultimate mentor. He does not assert his will but instead calls for self-inquiry, presenting Arjuna with reason, discussion, and moral understanding to lead him to illumination. Krishna's mentorship style captures the central IKS principle that wisdom must be internally discovered and not imposed (Nikhilananda, 2003). This dialogical and transformatory model is contrasted with memorization and transactional mentoring common in many contemporary systems.

1.2 The Ashram Model: Institutionalizing Mentorship

Ancient Indian education was organized around the ashram system, in which students resided with their gurus in residential communities. This model, commonly compared to today's "learning communities," stressed immersive learning, self-discipline, and personal responsibility. The curriculum consisted not just of the study of scriptures and sciences but also physical labor, arts, ethical debates, and service. The ashram was a miniature of life, meant to encourage inner growth and social responsibility (Radhakrishnan, 1948). In such a culture, mentorship was not a sporadic contact but a lifestyle. The guru watched the students in all situations—intellectual, emotional, physical—and taught them accordingly. Such mentorship developed not just knowledge but also wisdom (*viveka*), self-control (*dama*), and empathy (*karuna*)—qualities that are essential in leadership and public life (Bhavanani, Sanjay & Madanmohan, 2013).

1.3 Human Psychology and Mentorship in IKS

Indian philosophical traditions are highly sensitive to human psychology. The Samkhya philosophy's idea of the *trigunas* (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) is a manifestation of early knowledge of personality types. The IKS model would require a mentor to identify these innate tendencies in learners and nudge them toward equilibrium and balance (Feuerstein, 2003). In the same vein, Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* map out the process of mental growth and hindrances to learning (*kleshas*) as sources of insight for teachers of guiding students to overcome stress, distraction, and self-doubt (Iyengar, 2005). Contemporary neuroscience and education psychology increasingly validate some of these classical observations. Research demonstrates that mentorship focused on emotional intelligence, moral reasoning, and self-regulation produces improved learning and individual growth (Khalsa et al., 2012; Ross & Thomas, 2010). This compatibility reaffirms the applicability of IKS-based mentorship in the modern setting.

1.4 From Skill-Building to Character Formation

Perhaps the most important contribution of IKS to mentorship is its focus on character development. Ancient Indian education was not just for economic gain but for self-realization (*moksha*). A mentor's function was to develop the student's inner

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world and inculcate values such as truth (satya), non-violence (ahimsa), self-control (brahmacharya), and respect for all life. These ethical lessons, in texts such as the Manusmriti and Buddhist and Jain teachings, were a moral guidance for students (UNESCO, 2016).

Education systems worldwide are now confronted with moral confusion among the young. Reports of cheating in school, civic irresponsiveness, and emotional turmoil are all signs of a system that favours performance over principles. The IKS model corrects this by reasserting mentorship as a sacred trust where the mentor is not a mere skill-giver but a life-giver.

1.5 Relevance to Contemporary Education Systems

Umesh recommends a more than just cultural- nostalgia-based integration of IKS principles into contemporary education. It involves structural rethinking—educating teachers as mentors, devising space for conversation and reflection, and harmonizing curricula to address ethical and emotional learning. Organizations such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 have realized this necessity, focusing on holistic education, value education, and mentorship initiatives (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Yoga, mindfulness, and arts-based programs grounded in IKS have been found to demonstrate quantifiable gains in student well-being and academic achievement (Woodyard, 2011; Telles & Naveen, 2008). When mentorship incorporates contemplative practices like pranayama and dhyana, it fosters self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience—qualities increasingly desired in today's world.

2. Research Methodology

A qualitative approach has been adopted. The study combines primary textual analysis of Indian scriptures with secondary sources such as academic journals and scholarly interpretations. Case studies and thematic analysis of personal mentoring experiences enrich the study further.

Method Used	Details
Textual Analysis	Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Srimad Bhagavatam
Literature Review	Modern mentoring frameworks, pedagogy, emotional intelligence
Case Studies	From educators, spiritual mentors, and mentees in Indian settings
Thematic Comparative Analysis	Between Indian and Western mentorship practices

Table 1: Research Methods

3. Literature Review

3.1 Western Mentoring Approaches

Western mentorship models (Kram, 1985; Clutterbuck, 2004) focus on developmental relationships with career progression, goal orientation, and skill improvement at their core. These models are widely adopted in corporate and educational environments. However, they often miss the soul-centered focus seen in IKS.

3.2 Indian Knowledge System (IKS) View

IKS treats mentoring as a spiritual journey. The mentor, or guru, is someone who has not just mastered a subject but also attained inner wisdom. Mentorship is a means

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of attaining self-knowledge (Atma-jnana) and fulfilling one's dharma (righteous duty).

“Acharya Devo Bhava” – The teacher is God-like.
(Taittiriya Upanishad) “tad viddhipraṇipātena paripraśnenasevayā...”
(Bhagavad Gita 4.34) – Surrender, question sincerely, and serve to attain knowledge.

4. Indian Mentoring Archetypes and Philosophies

4.1 Krishna and Arjuna – The Ideal Mentor-Mentee Dynamic

Discussion

The Bhagavad Gītā, India's most sacred philosophical work, begins in the midst of the thundering battlefield of Kurukshetra. Conch shells are blown, armies stand ready for battle, when suddenly the action shifts to an inward, reflective focus. Arjuna, brave Pandava prince and matchless warrior, stands ready to command his troops into battle. Instead, what transpires is not a battle of swords, but a climactic internal struggle that halts the epic in its tracks and carries the dialogue to spiritual and philosophical levels.

Mounted in his chariot, Arjuna looks out over the enemy army. He recognizes faces—his respected instructor Dronacharya, his darling grandfather Bhishma, cousins, uncles, and friends—all against him. The realization comes to him with overwhelming significance- he would win this type of war by killing himself. His hands tremble, his lips dry, and his storied Gāṇḍīva bow drops from his grasp. In a moment of raw vulnerability, the great warrior becomes a figure of human doubt and despair. He, suddenly, becomes the embodiment of uncertainty and hesitation. He is forced to take a step back and think. This moral dilemma will end up being the monumental deciding factor for the victory of this Great War.

Arjuna's crisis is not merely an emotional one, but of profoundly ethical and spiritual dimensions. He questions the worth of power and kingdom based on bloodshed. He questions whether the destruction of family units and traditions, as he

foresees that it will become a necessary element in war, is worth the price. His intellect struggles with karmic issues of violence even if committed for righteousness. He finally articulates these ideas to lord Krishna, his charioteer and also his friend, mentor, and divine instructor.

This moment is one that everyone can identify with—it is a representation of the internal conflict one experiences when faced with difficult moral choices. Arjuna's immobility symbolizes the juncture at which action and conscience cross, obligation and compassion meet, and the soul longs for guidance amid the chaos of worldly obligation. In layman's language, Arjuna is the guy at a fork in the road asking himself what his role is, whether or not the decisions he makes are right, and what the result of his actions is going to be. He is unable to decide what road to choose and determine the long-term consequences of his immediate actions.

Rather than offering direct answers, Krishna listens, thus creating a model of the process of the first step of empathetic presence in mentoring. The conversation that follows is an expedition of self-awareness, where Lord Krishna is taking Arjuna from despair to enlightenment. The meeting at Kurukshetra turns into an everlasting learning place of life, ethics, and mission. Krishna did not tell him the exact steps. Rather, he created a space where Arjuna could think and re-think about his decisions. Krishna enabled Arujna to take his own decision which is the classic example of true mentoring.

Mentor's Role (Krishna)

As Arjuna's charioteer and the guru, Krishna instead of telling Arjuna the answers, enters into deep philosophical discussion so that Arjuna can contemplate and discover his inner strength. He guides Arjuna to shift his attention from feelings to duty (dharma), and introduces him to the practice of action without self (karma yoga) and from results (anavasthayatana). In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna patiently and lovingly teaches Arjuna timeless truths about the self (Atman), the impermanence of life, and the path of inner peace, while helping him face and deal with his fear without judgment. The Krishna–Arjuna relationship is an eternal model of mentor–mentee based on

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values, demonstrating that mentorship is a process of empowerment based on self-inquiry, not blind obedience; a process of guidance, not control; a process to help mentees find their inner compass again; a process of action based on dharma, not on victory, but on fulfillment. Compassion and patience are also required, particularly by mentees who are humble and motivated to be of service to society.

4.2 Dronacharya and Eklavya – Ethical Dilemmas in Mentorship

The Mahabharata tale of Eklavya is a tale of determination, self-learning and the ethical twists and turns of a mentor's role and the nature of social hierarchy. One poor boy Eklavya of Nishada tribe wanted to learn to shoot. He went to royal teacher Dronacharya for help. Dronacharya was loyal towards the royal family and was bound by the caste system to refuse, and he had the power to do so, stating that he would make Arjuna the best archer. Instead of being discouraged, this rejection spurred Eklavya to further determination. He went back to the forest, and after much practice and self-discipline, he became as adept as Arjuna was in the art of chiselling clay idols of Drona; he became an example of *ātma-guru*, or self-mentorship, whereby the seeker calls into mind his/her inner guide to find out knowledge.

It was when Drona saw Eklavya's ability that he demanded his guru *dakṣiṇā*, which is the right thumb that is required in archery. Eklavya, modest and unselfish, did as he was told, but also improved in his character, and ended his career. This is an act that challenges deeply the notion of absolute mentorship, caste and education, and the cost of loyalty in hierarchical societies. His narrative is a testament to self-education, perseverance, and the power of marginalized voices challenging exclusionary systems.

Drona's Role (Mentor): Mentor's role (Dronacharya) is ethically complex. The fact that he refuses to teach Eklavya is an example of exclusionary gatekeeping and institutional bias, where considerations of

caste and political allegiance come before merit. Although he was never a formal teacher, Drona was a symbol of inspiration that could exist outside of physical contact. But his need for Eklavya's thumb is a choice for compromise – for fidelity over justice, for hierarchy over potential.

Outcome

The Eklavya episode has also seen that mentorship is not equally available, and social barriers can hinder the deserving learners, highlighting the need for inclusive systems today. It proves that self-directed learning is as effective or more than formal learning, if one is dedicated. It also emphasizes that mentors should have integrity over loyalty, that is, instead of exploiting their mentees they should defend them. Overall, mentorship is socially responsible – when the mentor is unfair, they are not giving an opportunity and they are also excluding from their lives and from their community.

4.3 Chanakya and Chandragupta – Political and Strategic Mentorship

After the retreat of Alexander, the Indian subcontinent went through a period of political instability in the 4th century BCE. The Nandas, kings of Pataliputra, were all the more notorious for their tyranny, heavy taxation and corruption. During this state of disrepair, the great scholar of Takshashila, Chanakya or Kautilya or Vishnugupta, conceived the idea of a single and righteous kingdom, a kingdom of Dharma and Nīti (statecraft). He realized that scholarship alone will not bring change; he wanted a courageous, upright leader. This he discovered in Chandragupta Maurya, a young man of low birth, but of superior intelligence and leadership.

Chanakya's mentorship went beyond the traditional guru-shishya model, evolving into a partnership of shared vision and strategic brilliance. He educated Chandragupta in Economics, Defence, Diplomacy, Philosophy and Administration, which were later written in the Arthashastra, one of the greatest works on Political Science of Antiquity. Under the guidance of Chanakya, Chandragupta mobilized an army of support, garnered allegiance, and defeated the Nanda Empire to begin the most important period in Indian history, the Mauryan dynasty. They have a relationship

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that is an example of mentorship as transformation, of changing leaders, societies, and destinies.

Chanakya's Mentorship (Mentor): Chanakya's mentorship was a multidimensional and visionary suggestion. He brought in strategic foresight and not revenge but a united and sustainable Bharat. He imparted knowledge of statecraft, coached Chandragupta in military engagements, negotiations, administration and diplomacy, through the *Arthashastra*. He emphasized character building and molded his mentee using discipline, resilience, and emotional intelligence. Last but not least, he instilled a spirit of empowerment in leadership, thus preparing Chandragupta to rule independently and create a powerful and ethically strong empire.

Outcome

The relationship between Chanakya and Chandragupta is a prime example of visionary mentoring. It shows that mentoring is not a one-off event, or a short-term commitment, but a long-term process and a long-term strategy—one that takes perseverance and foresight to ensure those mentees have successful futures. It demonstrates the need for the combination of ethics and strategy in governance, being realistic yet moral. It emphasizes the fact that discipline creates greatness, and Chandragupta developed into a strong leader because of his hard work in discipline. Most importantly, it shows that mentorship can transform nations – not just give knowledge, but impact on societal behavior and leadership. Like Chanakya, great mentors make successors, not followers, and their mentee is empowered to lead on her own and to leave a lasting legacy.

4.4 Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Srijan Pal Singh

The objective was to enhance the existing institutions. The goal was to improve the institutions that are already in place.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam met Srijan Pal Singh, the gold medalist who has a passion for doing good in the society and rural development during his visit to IIM Ahmedabad in 2008. India was faced with a growing urban–rural gap at the time and Dr. Kalam was promoting his visionary PURA (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas) program. Recognizing Singh's willingness to serve, Kalam invited him to join

in with the national development initiatives, and began a mentor/mentee relationship that continued until Kalam's death in 2015.

Dr. Kalam's Mentorship (Dr. Kalam): Visionary, Empowering and Value based Mentorship. He highlighted that vision-sharing was not just about policy, but about a movement that was technology, caring, and sustainable, and that is what PURA was. He treated Singh as a partner and was the co-creator of Target 3 Billion to advocate entrepreneurial rural development. He was inspirational, imparting values of integrity, modesty and service, which he considered to be key leadership qualities. Kalam has given Singh ample responsibilities, such as Officer on Special Duty and advising on projects like Space Based Solar Power, which shows that he trusts and cares for Singh. Last but not least, he was a man of action—a role model to the students of humility, nationalism, and sacrifice. Singh was absorbing these traits by watching others, particularly during his school years.

Lesson: The Kalam-Singh mentorship has shown to be a model of guidance that transcends the idea of success for the individual to that of the community. Kalam's approach to mentorship was partnership, not hierarchy, focusing on collaboration and mutual development. He made it his mission to correct the perception of leadership as authority, seeing it instead as a way to solve problems in the service of society. His style emphasized the power of combining values with knowledge; technical knowledge should be accompanied by ethics and compassion. This approach works extremely well as Singh rose from a protégé to an independent leader.

The impact of Kalam's mentorship is palpable in Singh's current role as a leader in Kalam's Centre, where he actively supports young leaders, innovation, and rural development. This legacy has been the case, showing that mentorship is not just about the transfer of knowledge but about building leaders to carry on the ideals and inspire societal change beyond the mentor's time.

Dr. Kalam's mentorship is a true model of guidance: the synthesis of knowledge, value and action. His partnership with Singh exemplifies how these principles of co-creation, ethics, and civic duty can cultivate leaders who are

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reflective and impactful in shaping the future. Singh's experience from mentee to leader is a testament to the impact of purposeful mentorship.

The situation happened in the year 2008, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who was then a visiting professor at top institutions like IIM Ahmedabad, where he met Srijan Pal Singh, who was a gold medalist with a strong passion for social impact and rural development. It was the time when India was grappling with a growing urban-rural divide, and Dr. Kalam was championing his visionary PURA (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas) inventiveness.

Recognizing Singh's fervor and understanding, Kalam invited him to team up on national development efforts—thus beginning a thoughtful mentor-mentee relationship that lasted until Dr. Kalam's passing in 2015.

Dr. Kalam planted in Mr. Singh the values of contributing back to society, specifically rural development and youth empowerment. The emphasis was always on doing something, not merely to climb a career ladder. Mr. Singh learned that leadership is doing good and making a good difference in people's lives, purpose being the inner driver behind every action and decision.

Impact = Values + Knowledge

Table 2: Mentorship Models: Comparative Framework

Mentorship Models & Their Connection to Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Mentor	Mentee	Situation	Mentor's Role	Lesson	IKS Connection
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Krishna	Arjuna	Arjuna's moral and existential crisis on the battlefield.	Offers guidance via dialogue (Gita); leads Arjuna to clarity and duty (dharma) through inner inquiry.	Empowerment through inner strength and dharma-aligned action.	Bhagavad Gita as a core IKS text; example of Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, and guru-shishya parampara.
Dronacharya	Eklavya	Eklavya denied formal education due to caste-based exclusion.	Becomes symbolic mentor; reinforces social hierarchy by asking for guru dakshina.	Raises ethical questions about access, justice, and symbolic learning.	Highlights social structures, varna system, and complex ethics within traditional Indian education.

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Dr. A.P.J. Kalam	Srijan Pal Singh	Srijan seeks purpose and mentorship for societal transformation.	Guides with inclusivity and vision; co-creates knowledge and social projects (like PURA).	Mentorship should be value-driven, inclusive, and aimed at societal betterment.	Reflects modern Gurukul spirit ; integrates IKS values like lokkalyan (public good) , ethics , and innovation .
Chanakya	Chandragupta Maurya	India under foreign threats and corrupt rule; rise of Mauryan Empire needed.	Strategic mentor; imparts knowledge of politics, warfare, and governance via Arthashastra .	Mentorship builds leadership for national transformation.	Core example of Rajadharma , Arthashastra , Niti Shastra , and long-term vision as per IKS principles.

Table 3: Integration of Indian Knowledge Systems in Modern Education

Area of Integration	Modern Educational Practice	IKS Element Used
Policy & Curriculum	NEP 2020 includes IKS in syllabi, promotes classical texts, values education.	Incorporation of Vedas, Upanishads, Dharma texts, value systems, and multidisciplinary learning.
Academic Programs	IKS centers in IITs, UGC courses on ancient Indian sciences, minor degrees in IKS.	Study of astronomy, metallurgy, architecture, Sanskrit grammar, Ayurveda, and Niti.
Teaching Methodologies	Dialogue-based learning, mentoring models, reflection practices in classrooms.	Inspired by Samvada (dialogue), Guru–Shishya, Svadhyaya (self-study).
Research & Innovation	Projects merging Ayurveda with pharmacology, water systems, traditional agriculture.	Reviving applied sciences, holistic healthcare, and sustainable technology from IKS.
Character & Value Education	Life skills education through epics and storytelling; focus on ethics, empathy, resilience.	Stories from Mahabharata, Ramayana, Panchatantra ; emphasis on dharma, karma, leadership.
Technology Integration	IKS content on platforms like SWAYAM, e-Pathshala; digital heritage projects.	Use of digital tools to preserve and teach ancient texts, crafts, rituals, and philosophies.

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5. The *Guru-Shishya* Parampara: An Institutionalized Mentorship Model

Elements	IKS (<i>Guru-Shishya</i>)	Modern Mentoring Equivalent
Learning Model	Oral Tradition, Experiential Wisdom	Classroom, Online, Hybrid Modes
Communication	Dialogue-based, Reflective	Email, Scheduled Meetings
Space	Ashram (living-learning model)	Schools, Universities, Corporates
Purpose	Self-realization, Dharma	Career Growth, Skill Acquisition

Table 4: The ashram system

The ashram system institutionalized mentorship. The Brahmacharya Ashrama was particularly focused on life-long learning with the guru residing and practicing with the shishyas.

6. Case Studies

Case Study 1: A Modern Educator's Transformation

A college professor mentoring first-year students in Jaipur realized that despite high academic performance, students lacked emotional resilience. Drawing from the Bhagavad Gita, she began weekly reflective sessions based on karma yoga and detachment. Over a semester, students showed better mental health, time management, and motivation. The educator reported personal transformation as well—mentoring became an act of *seva* (service), not obligation.

Case Study 2: Chinmaya Yuva Kendra

Chinmaya Mission runs youth mentorship programs rooted in Vedantic thought. Teens are mentored through satsangs, meditation, and project-based learning. The programs not only address academic challenges but also foster character building and ethical leadership. It helps in building mentorship among the youth that leads to the 2047 vision of Viksit Bharat.

Case Study 3: Student Startup Founder Inspired by IKS

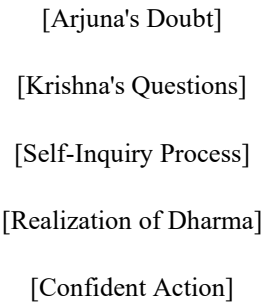
A student entrepreneur mentored by a retired spiritual teacher implemented principles of nishkama karma (work without selfish motive) in his start-up model. This helps in the improvement of employee engagement and satisfaction, resulting in the organizational culture going hand in hand with collective growth of both the organisation and the individual rather than competition. This gives an end number of opportunities to the students who go and look up in the traditional knowledge system with the blend of the modern tools and aids.

7. Tables and Figures

Table 5: Core Differences between Western and Indian Mentorship Models

Criteria	Western Model	Indian Model (IKS)
Objective	Goal Completion	Self-Realization + Dharma
Relationship Type	Transactional/Strategic	Spiritual & Emotional
Key Traits	Guidance, Feedback	Compassion, Wisdom, Surrender
Duration	Project-based/Short-term	Lifelong

Figure 1: Krishna-Arjuna Mentorship Arc (Concept Map)



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8. Implications of Mentoring Skills in Higher Education

Mentoring plays an important role in developing the academic, professional, and personal trajectories of students in higher education. With advancements in the educational skills globally it is very important to have effective mentoring skills for the holistic development of the students some of the features are discussed below:

8.1. Enhancement of Student Learning and Academic Performance

To develop the academic performances of the students, mentors play a very important role . They give personalized advice that helps in locating individual strengths and weaknesses which result in enhanced academic outcomes. Mentoring develops one on one counselling that induces a learning environment where students feel valued, stimulated, and empowered to achieve academic excellence. Mentors assist students in navigating academic pathways, refining learning strategies, and overcoming academic challenges. This personalized attention boosts academic outcomes and aligns with NEP 2020's focus on learner-centric education and individualized mentoring support (NEP, 2020, p. 14).

8.2. Development of Critical Thinking and Research Orientation

To develop inquisitive learning skills among the learners, Mentors developed inquiry-based learning. With their guidance and discussion, mentors assist students in developing critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and research capabilities. Mentoring and tutoring learners aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which stressed on the concept of experiential learning and multidisciplinary thinking, making mentoring crucial for knowledge creation and scholarly contributions. Mentoring encourages reflective thinking and inquiry-based learning. Students mentored under research-driven guidance are more likely to pursue innovation and contribute to knowledge creation—central to India's vision of becoming a knowledge superpower (NEP, 2020, p. 45)

8.3. Support for Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing

There are challenges in the Higher education reason being academic pressures, career uncertainties, and social challenges. Mentors played a very important role as empathetic listeners and as ideal for their students in the case of Abdul Kalam and Srikanth. They acted as emotional healers for their students. By developing trust and providing reassurance, mentors reduce dropout rates and encourage resilience, helping students overcome challenges constructively. In high-pressure environments, mentors act as emotional anchors. Studies have shown that supportive mentoring relationships significantly reduce student stress and foster psychological resilience (Kumar, 2022, p. 112).

8.4. Career Planning and Skill Development

In contemporary times the required Mentoring fulfills the gap between academic learning and industry expectations. Mentors guide students in identifying career paths aligned with their aptitudes, interests, and market trends. Mentors give insights into soft skills, leadership, time management, and entrepreneurship. This career-focused mentoring creates and prepares students for dynamic marketism. Mentoring bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and industry relevance. By offering insights into career options, market trends, and skill enhancement, mentors promote employability and entrepreneurship, both emphasized in NEP 2020 (p. 36)

8.5. Promotion of Values and Ethical Conduct

Drawing from the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), traditional models of mentoring like the guru-shishyaparampara emphasize character building, humility, and lifelong learning. Mentoring also works as a medium for transmitting institutional values, ethics, and professional codes of conduct. These values nurture socially responsible citizens and professionals. Drawing from the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), mentoring reflects the ancient guru-shishya tradition that values character-building, ethical conduct, and holistic development (Sharma, 2023, p. 89)

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8.6. Inclusivity and Student Retention

A capable and effective mentoring caters the needs of the students belonging to various socio-cultural backgrounds. They are the one who helps them in bringing an inclusive environment. It helps them to cope up with the alien environment. Mentoring for the women and marginalized bring wonderful results. It creates a nurturing environment that leads to improved engagement and reduced dropout rates (Sen & Verma, 2021, p. 71)

8.7. Empowerment through Autonomy and Self-Efficacy

The students who get the support of the mentors bring a forwarding mindset they are capable of facing challenges and secure high level pressure. They tend to take up accountability of the things and credibility to it. It helps them in decision making skills. Effective mentorship is very important in the present century. Effective mentors guide students toward self-awareness and autonomy. This builds confidence and the ability to make independent decisions—an essential skill in both academic and real-world contexts (Joshi, 2021, p. 53).

8.8. Faculty Development and Institutional Growth

It is a direct skill which aims for the fostering of the faculty as well as the learners . They faculty redefine their own pedagogical and resilience skills while working with their mentees. It cultivates the harmonious relationship better between the Mentor and Mentee. It helps for the development of alumni relations. It helps in the development of the overall institutional reputation and effectiveness. It is a two way process where both the receiver and sender develop. Faculty mentors develop leadership, empathy, and reflective teaching practices. Institutions that embed mentoring in their culture often experience enhanced academic environments and increased alumni engagement (Banerjee, 2020, p. 65)

8.9. Adaptability in the Era of Digital and Blended Learning

We are working in the post Covid era where the chat GPT has taken the place of Mind GPT but to it also one cannot ignore the role of the mentors. The hybrid system works effectively with the E mentoring. Blended learning modals became successful in the present time. This digital mentoring gives real time mentoring and access to the mentee at its ease. Many apps related to health and tutorials are doing a great job in this dimension.. In the digital age, mentoring extends beyond traditional face-to-face interactions. E-mentoring allows flexibility and continuity, especially important in hybrid and online learning models (Patel & Mehta, 2022, p. 44).

8.10. Integration with National Educational Goals

NEP 2020 fosters and gives emphasis on the Mentoring skills. It is important to accomplish the goal of holistic education, multidisciplinary learning and personalized guidance. The policy encourages mentorship relationships beyond classroom teaching, It makes a proposal that gives mentoring a strategic tool for policy implementation in higher education institutions. Mentoring supports NEP 2020's vision of holistic and multidisciplinary education by enabling personalized learning and lifelong guidance. Structured mentoring frameworks are thus critical for achieving educational transformation (NEP, 2020, p. 12).

9. Conclusion

The Indian Knowledge System offers timeless wisdom on mentorship that remains deeply relevant today. From Krishna's philosophical mentoring to the structured ashram model, the IKS reflects a profound understanding of human psychology, ethics, and purpose. Modern education systems can benefit immensely by adapting these principles to develop mentoring cultures that go beyond skill-building to character formation. The mentor is not only a guide but a mirror, a motivator, and a moral compass—a role that has been glorified in India for centuries. Indian Knowledge System's mentorship is a rich, multi-dimensional practice rooted in human values and psychological insight. It envisions the mentor as a guide, yes, but also as a mirror, a motivator, and a moral compass. Such imagination is very much needed for the 21st century where education systems are set to prepare learners not just for

From *Guru-Shishya* Paradigm of Mentoring in the IKS

profession but for living. Reclaiming and reimagining the IKS model of mentorship can restore life to our classrooms, regain meaning to learning, and produce a generation of moral, compassionate, and enlightened human beings.

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