

Mitigating Youth's Problems through Vedic Approach with Reference to Pedagogical Quest

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ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to examine the problems of youth people in Nepalese societies. Most of the youth people are suffering from various types of problems like addiction, stress, anxiety, and depression. The main theme of this study is to find out the Vedic ways to make problem free youths of today. I applied relational narrative & ethnographic qualitative research design because this research is underpinning the human behavior and attributes. Data was collected through using different tools like observation, interviews, focus group discussion, preparing case studies and document analysis. Data analysis and interpretation was based on field narratives, research documents and Vedic scholar's inputs. The findings of this study were interpreted to relate with psychological, socio cultural, intergenerational and youth representative theories. I drew the Nature Based Education System (NBES), for the implication of this research; teachers can revisit the existing curriculum for bridging with Vedic knowledge while teaching. So, it requires teachers' reorientation about Vedic pedagogy and the ways to blend this pedagogy with that of the training that the teachers' obtain. This implies that there are many avenues of research to link Vedic wisdom with the current youth problems and the ways to mitigate them through orientation, discussion & reflection, short term Yoga sessions between teachers, parents and youths.

Keywords: Sravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasana. Vedic approach: Taapatraya, Vedic pedagogy: Sound therapy, Yajna therapy and Yoga therapy, Youth's problem.

Introduction

Youths are significant groups of people for two reasons. First, they hold about 50% of the country's population of Nepal (CBS, 2021). According to operational definition of youth between 13-24 years, they hold about 22% of the country (Ibid). Secondly, they are the creator and change agents of society. According to human development psychology, youth are categorized into puberty, adolescence, and early adulthood due to various ages (Hurluck, 2002). Puberty (13 to 15 yrs) means the age of the human hood. It refers to the physical rather than the behavioral changes which occur when the individual becomes sexually mature and can produce offspring. In the above context, adolescence (16 to 18) refers to growth to maturity which includes physical, mental, emotional, and social maturity. Early adulthood is the longest life span of humans which means "grown to full size and strength" or matured who have completed their growth and are

ready to assume their status in society along with other adults (Ibid). Hence, the operational definition of youth is the groups of people aged between 13 to 24 only.

Youth problem

During the local and global context, I found out that youths are facing problems like stress, restlessness, drug addiction, theft, crime, violence, alienation, frustration, depression, etc. The literature that I came across also e.g. (AASSREC, 1988, 2005; Nugent, 2006) showed that larger groups of youth's encounters unemployment, restlessness, alienation, smoking, frustration, depression, drug use, and HIV/AIDS. Hence, I reviewed and analyzed youth problems from the lence of Asia and beyond Asia.

Vedic approach: *Taapatraya*

Taapatraya is a Vedic term *Taapatraya* (*Sachchidanandarupaya Viswotpatyadihetave, Taapatraya vinashaya Shreekrishnaya vayam numah'* (*Shreemad Bhagavat Mahapurana*, 1); *Hathayoga Pradipika* (1.10); and *Durgasaptasati* (12.8) means three types of sufferings i.e. *Adhibhautic*, *Aadhidaiwic* & *Aadhyatmic*. These three folded afflictions, *Adhibhautic* means the sufferings belonging to the body; *Aadhidaiwic* refers to the suffering of mana or mind and *Aadhyatmic* means the suffering belonging to the spirit or self ; for instance injury of hands, stress and unhappiness respectively.

Vedic approach is based on Veda which is sources of knowledge. *Vedas* are the most celebrated possessions of the civilization which reflect the growth and development of human thought and show a picture of the transformation of a *Prakrit* man into a *Sanskrit* man (Kumar & Aristotle, 2013). *Prakrit* man means covering with three types of sufferings or pain (*Taapatraya*) with ignorance and *Sanskrit* man means purified or enlightened person who can free from three types of sufferings. Hence, *Taapatraya* means three folded sufferings: *Aadhibhautic*, *Aadhidaiwic* and *Aadhyatmic* types. Regarding this study present youths are also suffered these three folded sufferings.

Vedic Pedagogy

The method of teaching learning process was teacher based on psychological principles. There was utmost respect for the teacher. It was oral teaching method takes place at three stages: *Shravana* or listening to the teacher *Manana* or recalling or memorization which trains the mind and generates neural pathways

through meditation and *Nididhyasana* or realization through meditation (Kumari, 2017). Other methods were question-answer method and self enquiry method. The questions-answer method and discussion were common. The pupil asked questions and Guru then explains. Through this method, the students have to learn their subjects. Students were encouraged to ask questions and to interrogate the teacher respectfully. In self enquiry method students ideas and views are constantly challenged in order to cultivate critical thinking. Students are taught about the real world with all the good, the bad and the ugly and exposed to debates and arguments to sharpen their intellects. *Agra-shishya* or pupil-teacher system was normal practice in Ashrams and *Gurukulams* that intelligent senior pupil was deputed by the Gurus to teach junior students (Ibid).

Students should follow a strict personal routine and strict classroom discipline like rising early, doing their personal jobs themselves, performing chores around the ashram/ school and generally participating in ashram/ school life (Kumari, 2017). Mutual respect, courtesy, cooperation and collaboration among the students were the major behavioral features. Bullying was never mentioned in any of the sacred texts and would not have been tolerated. Education was to prepare the students to live in the real world and to deal with all problems, to earn a living and to care for their families and to become benevolent and useful member of society (Ibid).

There is a gap between philosophical orientations of Vedic knowledge in Nepalese education system. No Vedic approaches are incorporated in teaching learning processes which are belongings to the everyday way of life of people. Working for two decades as school's teacher, I have encountered many youth problems and my experience as yoga teacher dragged me to study Vedic literature. But the readings of the *Vedas* gave me the *yajna*, *yoga* and *mantras* that can help address youth problems. This realization made me interested to undertake this study. I have been convinced that absence of orientation of Vedic knowledge cannot address youth problems (Timsina, 2023; Koirala, 2021; Gaire, 2018; Deo, 2016; Siven, 2011; Halpern, 2011; and Sharma, 2002). So, I became interested in finding out the answer to the youth problems in Vedic literature.

In the above connection, Timsina (2023) states that there is a need to rethink the philosophies that are prevalent in the world. Scientific revolution has brought the end of ideological division between human beings and end of differences between science and religion. It demands wide discussions about the common agendas which can bring integrity, co-operation and global welfare. All things which exist in the world are organic. So human ideology, philosophy, politics, and society

should be organic, which can be alternative and ultimate ways to solve the present problems of global issues (Ibid).

In the above discussion, he has suggested that the alternative ways like organic society on the place of liberalism, socialism and communism, meritocracy on the place of democracy and autocracy, middle way for rightist and leftist, organic right on the place of human right, patriotism and global fraternity for nationalism and internationalism, equal religious freedom for all religious people for secularism and one religious state, thought regarding present for regressive and progressive thought, love and peace for violence and non- violence and cooperation for revolution and agreement.

According to the above discussion, I came to know that present educational philosophy also needs to regenerate according to the present nature of society. Due to exposure of Vedic scientific education has not only provided people with skills and information, but it has also raised their expectations and facilitated the expression of demands (Rather (2015)). So, this research is carried out to achieve the following objectives: 1) to find out specific challenges and effects of Nepalese youth that face in present socio-cultural context, 2) to explore the crucial role of Vedic approaches in addressing youth's challenges and 3) to carry out the ways of the pedagogical strategies preferred by Vedic approaches address youth's problems.

Review of Literature

To find out the answer to the youth' problem, four sets of literature were reviewed related to depression, stress, poor health and anxiety. First, related to youth research found youth problems, strength, and prospects through AASSREC, (1988 & 2005), Kwong, (1994), Zhang's (2003), Kloet (2005), NGAI, (2009), Sasada (2006), Snellingra A. (ND) within Asia and beyond Asia and WHO(2021). According to study of WHO(2021) about risk factors and their effects exposed to youth stated that hyperactivity, irresponsibility, poor behavior control, problem of attention, history of early aggressive behavior and no education achievement found under individual risk factors (WHO,2021). Likewise, this study found that poor supervision of children by parent and abusiveness to discipline child, parental conflict in early childhood, lack of bonding between parents and children, a mother who had her first child at an early age, experiencing parental separation or divorce at a younger age, a low level of family cohesion and low socio-economic status of the family and association with delinquent peers has also been

linked to violence in young people under the causes of risk from family and peers(Ibid).

At last, this study exposed its effects that bad gangs and a local supply of guns and drugs are a negative potent mixture towards increasing possibilities to youth violence (WHO, 2021). low levels of social cohesion within a community have been linked to higher rates of youth, good governance and laws the extent to which they are enforced by a country, as well as policies for social protection has an important effect on violence, factors such as income inequality, rapid demographic changes in the youth population, and urbanization have all been positively linked with youth violence and cultural values that do not provide non-violent alternatives for resolving conflicts appear to have higher rates of youth violence(Ibid).

Second, Finlay & Evans, (2009), Blue-Banning et al. (2004), Creswell (2012), Denzin & Lincoln (2011), Merriam (2009) and Wike (2015) were reviewed for formation of methodology. This study explored youth problems from 193 teenagers through mini-survey using semi-structured questionnaire. I also gathered 24 above teenagers' (20- 24yrs.) problem through three focus group discussions. To get more information about the youth problems, I also did ethnographic case study with 3 youths who were suffered from critical and severe problems. The mini-survey, focus group discussion, and case study yielded 217 youth problems. In each occasion, I tried to find out their language, rituals, economic and political beliefs, life stages, interactions, and communication styles in a naturalistic way (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This took me a considerable time "in the field" interviewing, observing, and gathering documents about the youths to understand their culture-sharing behaviors, beliefs, and language (Creswell, 2012). This definition encompasses that culture is “everything having to do with human behavior and belief” (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993, p. 5).

Third, the studies of Erikson (1968), Merton (1964), were reviewed for Psychological and Sociological point of view. General sociological theories could provide the needed background concepts of youth as well as a segment of social reality, hence useful in making sense of the empirical world (Merton, 1964). From a psychological point of view, Erikson (1968) stated as 'identity crises' which describes eight stages of development through which every human was expected to undertake; from infancy to late adulthood. In each stage, the person confronts, and expectantly masters, new challenges.

Fourth, *Vedas: Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Atharva Veda* and *Sama Veda, Kathopanishad, Mandukyopanishad, Chhandagyopanishad, Bhagavad Gita, Sreemadbhagawat Mahapuran* and *Patanjal Yoga Darshan* and *Hathayoga Pradipika* and the research documents of Sharma (2014), Brawley (1955), Sharma (1990), Pandey (1992), Sharma (2002), Siven (2011), Halpern (2011), Rather (2015) and Gerety& McKean (2015) were reviewed under Vedic literature.

Reviewing the above literature, I drew the application of Vedic ways with reference to pedagogy to cultivate the healing energies to address youth problems (Rather, 2015). For instance, the application of mantras like Om chanting or Gayatri mantra chanting, *Satsanga*, music *Yoga, Yajna* and so on. They build the ability to change food habits-lifestyle, shifting from *Aparavidya* to *Paravidya*, changing the material mind into spiritual mind, activating pineal gland, activating energy points, knowing, attaining super consciousness and innovation in human personality.

These documents taught me that there is the existence of body, mind and soul with the connection of consciousness (Rather, 2015). This information helped me relate that *Taapatrya* is attached with body, mind and soul whereas *Adhibhautic Taapa* is attached with body; *Adhidaiwic Taapa* is attached with mind and *Adhyatmic Taapa* with soul (Ibid). It also helped me understand that knowledge of body, mind and soul gives the solution to *Taapatrya* problems faced by the youths.

Methodology

This study is narrative and ethnography (Finlay & Evans, 2009; Blue-Banning et al., 2004; Creswell, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Wike, 2015.) based on qualitative research design. It aims to seek answers for questions of “how, where, when who and why” with a perspective of achievement of the objectives with regarding the solutions to the youth problems. This research handles non-numerical information and their phenomenological interpretation, which inextricably tie in with human senses and subjectivity. While human emotions and perspectives from both subjects and researchers are considered undesirable biases confounding results in quantitative research, the same elements are considered essential and inevitable, if not treasonable, in qualitative research as they invariable add extra dimensions and colors to enrich the corpus of findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Data were generated through observations of the students’ behaviors, interviews about what problems were they facing during

those days, distributing questionnaires among the 193 students of teen age groups to state the problems of their own and 3 focus-group discussion with 24 students beyond teen ages, preparing of 3 case study, document analysis through content analysis and event analysis and focus-group discussion and in-depth interview with experts for validation.

Results and Discussion

This study found that youths have five major problems. They are: addiction, bullying, stress, anxiety and depression. The sources of youth problems were home environment, parents' behavior, society's environment, school environment, teachers' behavior and peers' behavior. The causes were family pressure/ torture, generation gap, poverty, illiteracy of parents, influence of friends, ego heart, influence of global media and unemployment. This surveyed information was reconfirmed through focus group discussion. Apart from it, there were some other problems like gang fight, deafness, speech disorder, groupism, poverty and identity problem. Major youth problems from the case analysis found addiction, stress & anxiety and depression. The effects of youth problems were anger, stress, anxiety, fear, tension, proud, theft, discrimination, poor health, restlessness, weak eye, sexual violence, crime, suicide, rape, gender violence, depression, drug addiction, over desires, too many thoughts, exam tension, over ambition, unsuccessful attempt, techno addiction, obesity, lack of socialization, individualism, love tragedy and so on.

Regarding objective number two, youth problems were observed on the lance of Vedic approach *Taapatraya : Adhibhautic Taapas* as I found were weak health, smoking, crime, rape, sexual abuse, weak eyes, domestic violence, addiction (smoking, drug, techno, alcohol), obesity, gang fight, groupism, bullying and theft. *Adhidaiwic Taapas* were bed wetting, impairment, deafness, speech disorder, dyslexia, blindness, slow learning, lie, stress, fear, anger, tension, anxiety, defenselessness and restlessness. The *Adhyatmic Taapas* were humiliation, frustration, depression, proud, over desires, too many thoughts, over ambitions, unsuccessful attempt, suicide, individualistic thinking and identity.

In the above context, Vedic mitigating approaches to the youth problems in the form of practice are parents' treatment, peers' treatment, teachers' treatment, psychotherapy (psycho counselor's treatment) and medical treatment for short term treatment. In the form of literatures' recommendation of long term pedagogical measures based on Nature Based Education System (NBES) are

sound therapy (*mantra*, *satsang* (conversation or dialogue) and music), *yajna* therapy (homa therapy), and *yoga* therapy (*asana*, *pranayama* and meditation) in school education system. According to objective number three, I found that Vedic methods of teaching are based on practical and psychologically sound. Teaching follows some strategies such as chanting or recitation (sound therapy) through simple to complex, activity based and skill-oriented procedures, conversation or dialogue with discussion (*satsang*), question- answer technique, problem solving, and illustration of stories mostly are used. *Swaadhyaya* (self-study with self enquiry) is considered more important. I figured out sound therapy (recitation of *mantra* or chanting), *yajna* therapy (*homa*), *yoga* therapy (*asana*, *pranayama*, and meditation), *panchakarma* therapy, game therapy, *satsanga*, and music therapy as Vedic pedagogues.

Regimwale (n.d.) the exploration of *Rig Veda* (1.164. 37), the research of Nader *et al.*, (2001), Sharma (2002), McLemore (2006), Siven(2011), Halpern(2011), (Rather, 2015), Moore (2015) ,Gaire (2018) and Nayef & Wahab (2018) have proved above statement of this study. Nader *et al.*, (2001) explored the recovery of arthritis disease and various problems through the application of determined *mantra* which produces such energy during certain period. This energy helps to reduce various problems of youth like anxiety, stress, and depression too. So, recitations of mantras are applicable to youth through sound therapy to overcome their problem as well as to enhance the *Sabda Brahma*.

In the above connection, Regimwale (n.d.) explored that *yajnas* are meant to secure progeny, a place in heaven, conjugal bliss, prevent or cure sickness and diseases, ward off death, ensure health and vitality, achieve name, fame and prosperity, cleanse sinful karma, repair relationships, help the ancestors, mark important occasions in the life of an individual such as birth, initiation, marriage are regarded as the main ascent of *Brahmana grantha* to get relief from sufferings, to preserve all human and other beings and to promote nature friendly environment in the world. Youth groups of people are directly linked with this environment to mitigate their problems by observation and application of *yajnas*.

Due to the production of Gamma-Amino Butyric Acid (GABA) and melatonin hormone (happy and sleep hormone) in the brain, it was found to decrease stress, anxiety and depression significantly after participating in a yoga class with mantra chanting (Siven,2011; Halpern,2011; Moore, 2015 and Gaire ,2018). From the above discussion, we came to find out that sound therapy, yoga therapy and *yajna therapy* are regarded as the main ascent of Vedic approach to get relief from

sufferings, to preserve all human and other beings and to promote nature friendly environment in the world. Ultimately, it is the most useful pedagogy to make free from all types of problems or miseries like *Adhibhautic*, *Adhidaiwic* and *Adhyatmic Taapa* and to get the happiness, prosperity and peace in youth's life.

Conclusions and Implications

The first conclusion is communication gap has been widening among parents, youths and teachers due to the most use of mass media, unemployment, poverty and generation gap etc resulting to youths' problems. The misunderstanding between generations is still manifested in the family and society. Youth groups are not recognized well as a mature person so that their participation is getting low in every activity of the society.

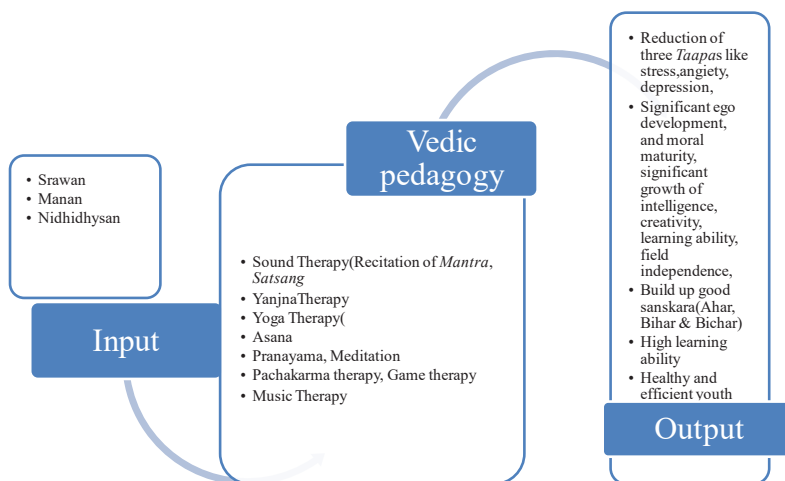
The second conclusion is this study explored Nature Based Education System (NBES) which is carried out through the Vedic *Taapatraya* model based on nature and teacher for addressing present youth problems. It embodies the social, moral and spiritual values based on the Vedic approaches of *Taapatraya*: three case studies were prepared. This study found two remedies for recovery of youth problem based on the Vedic approaches: 1. Short term treatment and 2. Long term treatment through NBES. Parents' treatment, peers' treatment, teachers' treatment, psychotherapy (psycho counselor's treatment) and medical treatment are suggested for short term remedy and sound therapy (recitation of mantra), *yanjna* therapy (*homa*), *yoga* therapy (*asana*, *pranayama*, and meditation), *panchakarma* therapy, game therapy, *satsang*, and music therapy are suggested to implement in pedagogic ways for long term remedy through NBES.

This study showed that parents, youths, and teachers have faced difficulties in understanding each other which led youths to problems. This implies that inter group discussion with reflection sessions is essential. School needs to create a forum where these three groups of the people with experts will get chance to discuss and sharing their experiences each other which helps to be nearer each other for minimization each others' misunderstandings.

This study also found that school teachers and youths are not well informed of the Vedic approach of *Tapatraya* and the ways to address accordingly. This implies that there is a need to reorient teachers about the connection of Vedic approach to *Tapatraya*, cultural practice and school texts to address youth problems. Digital and face to face programs can be developed by the youth related agencies. On the basis of the findings and the discussions,

youths use emotional mindset to deal with parents, home and school environment. Parents on the other hand foresee youths rationally and exceptionally. This mismatch derails youths for *Tapatraya* problem. For this propose, this study identified nature friendly pedagogy to implement in the Nepali school system and concluded the following Vedic ways for mitigating youths' problem.

Pedagogical implications to Nepali school system



In the case of this study, the application of yoga therapy with mantras and music therapy work well to recovery of the given three cases: addiction, stress/ anxiety and depression. The figure above shows the NBES which has three components: input, Vedic pedagogy and output. Hence, the process of imparting knowledge, skill and concept is beginning from *srawan* i.e. listening with recitation through sound therapy. After listening, through the process of explanation and discussion called *satsang*; one can recognize the subject and then s /he starts to think or recall about the subject called *manan*. Ultimately when s/he starts to do in practice, then it is called *nidhidhyasan*. The ways of pedagogy are chosen according to the need of the subject matter. In the case my study, for reducing the problem of addiction, stress/ anxiety and depression I applied the schedule of Yoga therapy for six months continuously along with the above Vedic ways.

Hence, the result or output starts to come when these processes are completed

such as reduction of three *Taapas*: addiction, stress, anxiety and depression, significant ego development, and moral maturity, significant growth of intelligence, creativity, learning ability, field independence, build up good *sanskara* (*aahar, bihar&bichar*) and healthy and efficient youth. The discussion over the conclusion yielded clues for different implications. Some of the implications are related to make Nepal as an educational hub in international arena, formulation of new curriculum bridging with Vedic knowledge, career development and others are related to classroom situation, teacher management and educational restructuring. These implications are categorically mentioned below:

1. Revising Curriculum according to *Taapatraya* approach

Teachers can revisit the existing curriculum for bridging with Vedic knowledge while teaching. This implication requires teachers' reorientation about Vedic pedagogy to *Taapatraya* approach and the ways to blend this pedagogy with that of the trainings that the teachers obtain.

2. Educational Hub in International Arena

Vedic pedagogy cultivates the creative capacity of human being. It works for physical, mental, spiritual growth and inspiration to do well to nature. It transforms a brute in a human being and makes him/her full of dynamic, healthy and creative activities as well as humanity. This study claims that the education running now has no connection with life, neither has it any relation with the society, to address the problem of present education. So, this recommends that the above three components which describes as three angles of a triangle. First angle is self building spiritual education, second is skill oriented vocational or professional education and third angle includes information. Hence this study explores the most essential elements in education system that addresses the problems of present youth according to the need of Nepal. Nepal is a country of diversities of language, ethnicity, culture, literature, topography, climate and natural beauties which are new learnings for the world. The Vedic pedagogy helps to prove as Nepal is new educational destination for international students as being the home of the sources of knowledge and unique natural diversities.

3. Preserving, Spreading Culture and Literature

The Vedic pedagogy can successful in preserving, spreading its culture and literature that was emerged from the Vedas. The Vedas urge upon men to assemble on a common platform, to think together, and to work together for

achieving a common goal. Education alone is the panacea for all social evils. The found pedagogues like spiritual story-telling, historical narratives of the lives, attributes and teachings of stalwart personalities, performance of yajna, etc from popular Vedic epics such as *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, *Sreemad Bhagavatam* etc are shared and discussed to better understand their relevance and application in contemporary everyday contexts. From the above discussion, I came to know that the children also look upon these stalwart personalities of their fore fathers as role models and imbibe their saintly qualities which helps to promote the preserving, spreading our culture and literature, they can feel and take their ownership.

4. Ethical Career Development Connecting with Vedic Knowledge

This study found a path to career development connecting with various disciplines of Vedic knowledge. The Vedic knowledge which was emerged from the Vedas such as *Upved: Arthaved, Dhanurved, Gandarvaved* and *Ayurveda, Vednag: Vyakaran, Jyotish, Nirukt, Shiksha, Chhanda, and Kalpa sutra, Smritis* like *Manusmriti, Darshans: Poorva mimansa, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshik, Sankhya* and *Uttar mimansa (Brahmasutra), Puranas* like *Bhagavatam, Itihasas* like *Mahabharat* and *Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita* etc. Many disciplines can be carried out to develop various professions for example from *Yoga* a lot of career can develop like physiotherapy based on *Asanas*, psycho-counseling based on *Yoga Darshana*, specialist in *Pranayama*, specialization in meditation based on *yantra, mantra* etc. Likewise, *Jyotish* and *Yajna* can be important disciplines to generate research based new career.

5. Creation of Employment Opportunity

Education needs a reliable means of developing students directly from within to learn, and their natural humanity which helps to choose their job themselves. These qualities help to create the new field for job creation like along with getting education according to his/ her interest can choose their job. Nepal there is not value given to agricultural and domestic jobs. It was because of job was not connected with education. If education connects job from the childhood, they can realize the value of work, in this regard, Vedic based 64 types skill-oriented job and this education connects with daily bases jobs like *yajna* based jobs, *Yoga* based jobs, *Ayurveda* related jobs, *Jyotish*, teachers for various discipline etc. which enhance the economic activities in the country as well.

6. Classroom Management, Teacher and Student Relationship

The Vedic pedagogy is based on homely learning environment where the

relationship between teacher and student seems as parents and children type. It helps significantly reduce student stress, boosts self-esteem, improves health, reduces substance use, and enhances interpersonal relationships through application of Vedic pedagogues like sound therapy, yajna /homa therapy, yoga therapy, music therapy and so on.

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