

Lecture Method in Ancient India and Its Changing Scenario

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Abstract

This paper intends to explore the contribution of Lecture Method in the teaching learning process from ancient Indian period to modern period. It also tries to study its modified style of application in present teaching learning process.

Introduction:

One of the significant methods of teaching is lecture method of teaching. This method of teaching is not merely speaking about something, rather it is known as informative speaking. It is a planned way of presenting some information which requires lot of preparation.¹ This important method of teaching is present in Indian education since the time immemorial. If we see the historical basis of the lecture method then we can say that it is present even in the ancient Indian education i.e. in the Vedic and Upanisadic period. In Goutam Buddha's teaching also we find the oral method of discussion. Though this method of teaching is present in ancient India still, if we comparatively discuss the ancient Indian and modern Indian lecture method, we can easily see some important developments in the lecture method uses in modern India. In the modern age along with the development of science and technology, educational process have been changed or developed in different angles. In the present work, we will try to show the nature of lecture method used in ancient India and how modern Indian lecture method is getting developed.

Objectives:

1. To study the knowledge about lecture method of teaching.
2. To make aware of various advantages of lecture method.
3. To show the differences between the lecture method of ancient Indian education and modern Indian education.
4. To explore the extent of shifting in pedagogical practice from traditional methods to modern methods.
5. To show the effectiveness of modern lecture method of teaching.

Lecture method in ancient Indian teaching:

In ancient India by educational institution we understand *Gurukul* where the children or student used to stay in the residence of *Guru* (Teacher) for a certain period of his life for taking education. At that age there was no written text. Then the *Guru* (Teacher)-*Shisya*

¹ Agrawal, Rashmi, *Educational Technology Management and Evaluation*, Delhi, Shipra Publications, 2010, P. 183.

(Disciple or student) relation was the purest and most unique. *Guru* is considered as the person who is full of knowledge. Teaching process was oral and oral teaching was the only process of teaching. The student or the so called disciples used to learn by hearing the matter from *Gurus* lecture or discussion. That means good memory building was one important task of student as well as teacher. In the teaching learning process the students used to start their daily study by prayer. After the prayer is over the *Guru* used to start teaching by oral discussion where the teacher would use different important words and sound for making the subject matter understandable to the disciples or students. After listening the words of *Guru* the disciples or the *Shisya* one by one used to recite them. Along with this recitation there was tradition of discussion, and emphasis would have been put on proper pronunciation. As long as a student could not recite the matter properly, he or she would have to continue the recitation. At the end, there was also tradition of questioning, answer, debate and discussion. But memorization without proper understanding was blamable. Then mere memorization without understanding would not have been counted as recitation.

Basically in the ancient period there was different steps of learning process viz *Sravana* (hearing), *Manana* (Contemplating) and *Nididhyasana* (Living and breathing) which are also known as three pillars of Vedantic practice which lead the students to complete awakening and realization.

Thus, in the ancient India, in the educational system importance would have been put on memorization, recollection, and recitation etc. at that time, the teacher or *Guru* sometime used to teach personally and sometime collectively. The *Guru* personally used to take the care of every disciples or students. The teacher also used to teach the children as per their capacity, because the ultimate aim of education was the all-round development of the student.

In the ancient period, sometime by story telling the teacher used to teach the students by which the teacher would try to make different rules and principle easier which are in fact very complex. In the Buddhists period also we see that the process of education is oral. Though at that period the scriptures have been already discovered, still uses of scriptures were very less. It means in Buddhists period also memorization, recitation were the important tools of education.

Thus, in the ancient India, lecture method or oral teaching method was the most significant method of teaching. While discussing lecture method Rashmi Agrawal points out that, "Since time immemorial, lecture method is being used to teach. Instruction in ancient hermitages was basically through oral discourses only."² Another important issue is that at that time along with oral teaching or lecture method of teaching the teacher also used to take the help of other methods like, discussion method, inductive method, logical method, conference method, mediation method, debate method, memory method and story method etc.³

² Ibid.

³ Ranjan, Rajkumar, Khanna and Manuj Kumar Sharma, *Development of Education System in India*, Patiala, Twenty Century Publications, 2012, P. 6.

Difference between ancient Indian and modern Indian lecture method of teaching:

Due to the development of society, and science and technology the tools and method of teaching also have been developed. We can very easily identify many differences exists between ancient Indian and modern Indian lecture method of teaching. Though modern Indian teaching process is developing day by day, still we cannot deny the role of ancient Indian teaching process which is the foundation of modern teaching process. Here we have tried to identify what are the basic differences exist between the ancient Indian and modern Indian lecture method of teaching.

1. In the ancient era there was no printed materials, the teacher could not use any readymade materials to teach the students. Where as in the present era, due to the discovery of printed materials the teacher any time can use them as reference. So, earlier teaching method was verbal or oral but in the modern age while delivering lecture, the teacher can very easily take the help of the printed material.
2. In the ancient time, in the teaching learning process the students were depended only on their teacher, because during that time the student did not have the facility to access library materials and internet which are the great discoveries of the modern science. The students of present time can use internet or book for different important purposes so they are not only depended on their teachers rather sometimes they can go beyond the periphery of classroom discussion by using modern technology.
3. In the traditional period the teacher couldn't show any direct materials as reference. So, traditional didactic lecture tend to be forgotten quickly.⁴ Whereas in the modern period the teacher can show different technological tools like PPT, Internet and also different written text, slide and audio-visual aids etc. which are very much helpful in long time memory.
4. In the ancient period writing technology was not so developed. So after hearing the lecture students use to recite the matter again and again and that was the method of learning.⁵ But in the modern age with the development of science and technology student can note down the subject matter and even they can record the classroom lecture, if necessary.
5. In traditional didactic lectures, students were put in a passive rather than active role⁶ and their mind were considered as blank slate. But in the modern lecture method it has been suggested not to consider students mind to be blank slate.⁷
6. In the ancient Indian system of education normally every teacher used to take the responsibility for about 15 to 20 students only. For this reason it was possible for the teacher to give individual attention to the needs of each student.⁸ That means the nature of the instructions were more personal guidance than of lectures present. But in the present age, as the number of student is high, so to give personal guidance to the students is not possible like the ancient age.

⁴ Mishra, R.C., *Teaching Style*, New Delhi, APH Publishing Corporation, 1916, P.43.

⁵ Mandra, InderDev Sing, *Education and Development*, Patiala, Twenty First Century Publication 2012, P. 66.

⁶ Mishra, R.C., *Teaching Style*, 1916, P.43.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Altekar, A.S., *Education in Ancient India*, Delhi, Isha Publication, 2012, P. 151.

7. In ancient India generally classes are subordinate by lecture or direct instruction. During lecture, traditional teachers would try to teach the knowledge or the concept to their students instead of helping them to learn the subject matter. But now in 21st century the role of the teacher has been changed. Now his role is not only to teach the knowledge or the concept but also the teacher helps his or her children to identify problems in learning and helps them to solve their problems and make them learn the subject matter properly. Inder Dev Singh Mandra points out that, “Most of the traditional teachers try to teach the concept to their children. But teacher of 21st century helps the child to learn.”⁹
8. In the traditional system lecture method of teaching was teacher centered and where the students were considered as passive listeners and discussions were pushed over them¹⁰, which also comprise that all students have the same level of knowledge. So, they are all able to receive subject knowledge on materials at the same order or sequence.¹¹
But now this concept has been changed. Now education is totally child centric, where students' need, ability, interest etc. are given more importance. So in present teaching method child centered approach has been taken, where the focus has been transferred to the learners.

Importance of lecture method of teaching in the modern education:

Among different methods of teaching this lecture method of teaching has a great significance in the modern educational process. Some of its advantages and importance have been discussed below:

1. In this method teacher presents his or her lecture orally and it brings a personal contact between teacher and students. The language may be made suitable to all the students of the class so that by hearing the lectures students can understand language properly. That ultimately means it is also helpful to learn language.
2. If a teacher uses questioning or discussion during the process of lecturing, then the students remain more active in the class and it can increase the co-operation and interaction between the teacher and students.
3. If we are able to record the whole lecture then it will be very helpful for both students those who are present in the classroom and who are not. But the students who are present in the class, after completing the lecture if they have any problem about the understanding of that topic, they can make their concept clear by hearing that repeatedly. Side by side the students who were not present during the lectures if they want to listen the same, then they also can hear it at any time.
4. A good lecture includes the teacher's expression, use of pauses and silence, verbal qualities. It also includes definitions, explanations, examples, comments, feedback and appropriate medium for delivering the message etc. all of these make the lecture more flexible, effective and attractive to the students. Here in this method according to the needs, abilities, interest and aptitude of the student a

⁹Mandra, Inder Dev Sing, Patiala, *Education and Development*, 2012, P. 67.

¹⁰Ibid., P. 72.

¹¹Ibid., 66.

teacher can adjust his lecture or technique, that reduce the rigidity of this method.

5. Whatever information the teacher want to provide by his lecture, all these may or may not be perceivable properly by the students. But the attention of the students may fluctuate at the time of lecture. So it is necessary to attract the attention of the students and increase it by intellectual technique of the teacher. For this, in the lecture if we include some short of activities for students such as dividing them into some small groups for discussion or by giving some simple problem for solving, then it can be done properly. Not only this but also this process may encourage the students to imagine, read, discuss and share ideas with others which may change a student's perception of that topic or given enhancement a student's insight.
6. If we compare lecture method with other methods then we can say that in lecture method there is no need of apparatus and laboratory. So we can conduct lecture method in a general classroom and thus it is very economical.
7. A good lecture can stimulate the students, creates interest among the students and it also lasts for a long time in their imagination. It motivates the student to become a good lecturer.
8. One important advantage of this method is that students directly or indirectly get information from different sources, because a teacher reads different types of books, journal and also he or she accesses internet by which teachers get versatile knowledge on a particular matter.
9. Lecture Method is type of audio-visual method where the student can see the teacher's way of teaching and he also hears the voice of the teacher properly. In this process student can note down the important point on the delivered topic and also rectify his doubt by asking question to the teacher wherever he want. So, this method is very essential to make the topic clear among the students.
10. In this method maintaining logical arrangement or sequence of the materials and manner of presentation proceed from simple to complex which helps the student to understand the topic easily. In this process of teaching the teacher gradually and firmly takes part in a topic with his enthusiasm.
11. In this teaching process if a teacher wants to make the lecture interesting and useful to the students then he can use several techniques. At the beginning of the class the teacher can share the importance of the lesson, he can show the personal or social context of the given lesson, after all he can create the necessity of that lesson among the students, and for making the concept clear the teacher can link the previous knowledge of the student with the new topic.
12. It gives an indirect training to the students to enhance their learning capacity and ultimately develop students listening skill.
13. In this process while teaching, the teacher uses not only a single information or book, but also he tries to include other important information from other materials or books whatever is suitable for his lecture, and thus, make the class very interesting and informative. In the process teacher also brings other discipline's example which make the study interdisciplinary where students come to know about different parts of the same topic. From this process students also can learn how to co-relate his known topic with other topic which is new to him. For

example, educational implication of Buddha philosophy is new for the students in the classroom, what will be taught, but the students might have known about Buddha philosophy what they have learned from philosophy classes. In this situation, while teaching educational implication of Buddha philosophy, if the teacher takes the reference of Buddha philosophy first what is well known to students and then if he teaches about the educational implication of the same then the student can understand it very easily and at the same time they come to know about how to co-relate other topics to one new theory or topic. As such, lecture method of teaching enhances the interdisciplinary knowledge of the student.

Disadvantages of lecture method:

Though, lecture method of teaching is very effective in the modern age for teaching in various educational institutions like College, University, different research institution etc., still it has some disadvantages. Some of them have been mentioned below:

- I) In the lecture method students are passive and do not participate in the development of the lesson, thus, it places students in a passive role which can be counterproductive to learning. Since students are passive the students' progress cannot be evaluated while the lesson is being taught.
- II) In the lecture method the teacher may become biased while delivering the lecture. Because, he may be biased with one particular idea and thus, the students may not get the actual idea about the particular topic taught in the class room and the teacher may try to impose his own idea about the subject.¹²
- III) In lecture method the teacher cannot teach the students individually, because here due to the large number of students the teacher cannot properly look after the individual development of the student. Effective interaction is also not possible due to large number of students in this teaching process.
- IV) Lecture method does not furnish immediate feedback that how well students have performed and learned. Though at the end of the lecture the teacher can interact with the students still in this method teacher cannot realize properly whether students have understood the matter completely or not.
- V) Sometime lecture method of teaching decreases students' concentration because of length of the lecture. Therefore, sometime it becomes boring and students lose their interest in the studies.
- VI) For effectiveness of lecture the teacher should be a good communicator. It requires in-depth knowledge about the subject or topics.
- VII) This method of teaching is not much suitable for developing material skills. For developing the material skill we need to use the practical tools and working with them according to the proper rules and principles.

Though, lecture method of teaching is the oldest method of teaching and it encourages one way communication, still it remains the most common teaching method in many educational institutions today. This method will be more effective if along with lecture we can use different favorable tools like, chalk board or power point etc. Many educational institutions are adopting new tools of teaching along with lecture in order to

¹²Goswami, Dr.Marami, *Pedagogy of Education*, Hyderabad, Neelkamal Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2017, P. 184.

make teaching more effective, interesting and informative. Thus, we can say though this method of teaching has some drawbacks still, we have to accept it that, it is the only method of teaching by which maximum students can be benefited in the class room.

Conclusion:

From the comparative discussion of ancient and modern Indian lecture method of teaching, it can be said that, lecture method of teaching is the fundamental method of teaching. Though there are some disadvantages in this teaching method, still lecture method is used even today as the most preferred method of teaching. But for the all-round development of the students, we will have to accept the value of other teaching methods also. For the better understanding and practical work if other method is require then for that purpose the necessary method can be adopted along with lecture method. In education, for the development of the students' modern lecture method is very helpful because, it gives a type of training to the students to enhance their learning capacity and ultimately develop students listening skill. During the course of lecture as the students listen different types of references, data and examples, these also help student in their personality development. Thus, lecture method of teaching is helpful for the all-round development of the students in various educational institutions. Though modern Indian lecture method is developing day by day, still we can say that ancient Indian lecture method or oral teaching method is the basis on which modern Indian lecture method has been established.

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