

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF SELF-REGULATED LEARNING IN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS: A CASE STUDY OF EKLAVYA

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Abstract:

This research explores the historical and cultural foundations of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) within Indian knowledge systems by analyzing traditional narratives, particularly the story of Eklavya. By examining the influence of ancient teachings on modern educational practices, this study aims to highlight the potential benefits of integrating traditional wisdom into contemporary learning approaches. Through a case study of Eklavya, the research investigates the relevance of SRL principles in Indian cultural contexts and their implications for educational pedagogy.

Keywords: *Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), Indian knowledge systems, Traditional narratives, Ancient teachings.*

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Introduction:

Self-regulated learning (SRL) is a pivotal aspect of education, enabling students to take control of their learning processes, set goals, monitor their progress, and adjust strategies to achieve academic success. Within the context of Indian knowledge systems, traditional narratives such as the story of Eklavya offer valuable insights into the principles of SRL embedded in ancient teachings. By analyzing these narratives, we can uncover SRL's historical and cultural foundations in Indian education and explore their potential influence on contemporary educational practices. This examination provides perspectives on the evolution of SRL in Indian education and suggests ways to integrate these historical and cultural foundations into modern teaching methodologies.

This article aims to investigate the historical and cultural origins of SRL within Indian knowledge systems, with a particular focus on the character of Eklavya. The scope of this research includes a thorough examination of SRL, its significance in educational psychology, and its presence in Indian cultural and philosophical traditions.

Self-Regulated Learning:

Self-regulated learning (SRL) is a proactive process in which learners actively manage their learning through planning, monitoring, and reflection. It involves cyclical periods of foresight, achievement, and self-reflection (Torre & Daley, 2023). Self-regulated learning (SRL) is an intricate process that engages various parts of the brain. It demands full attention, self-awareness, introspection, honest self-evaluation, openness to change, self-discipline, and personal responsibility for one's learning (Zimmerman, 2001, 2002; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). These qualities resemble personal traits more than cognitive skills. Research indicates that self-regulation is not closely linked to intelligence, suggesting that nearly anyone can develop these abilities (Davidson, 2003). SRL involves metacognition, motivation, and behavior (Williamson, 2015), whereby learners set goals, monitor progress, and adjust strategies accordingly. Yankulova (2020) discusses the psychological aspects of SRL models, focusing on initiative and persistence as critical characteristics that contribute to effective learning. A

feature of most definitions of self-regulation is a self-oriented feedback loop during learning (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Zimmerman, 1989, 2000a). This loop refers to a cyclical process in which students monitor the effectiveness of their learning methods or strategies and respond to this feedback in different ways, ranging from hidden changes in self-perception to overt behavioral changes, such as replacing a learning strategy with, another is enough. Researchers who favor phenomenological views represent this feedback loop in covert perceptual terms such as self-esteem, self-concepts, and self-actualization. In contrast, researchers who hold operant views prefer overt descriptions regarding self-recording, self-reinforcement, and self-controlling actions. Another common feature of all definitions of self-regulated learning is the description of how and why students choose to use a particular self-regulated process, strategy, or response (Zimmerman & Schunk 2008, p. 9).

Indian Knowledge System:

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) has its origins in ancient Vedic literature and seeks to address contemporary societal challenges through research and innovation (Mandavkar, 2023). It encompasses traditional wisdom, cultural values, and spiritual teachings from sources such as the Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, and Mahabharata, offering valuable lessons for business management and personal development (Rajoura & Rajoura, 2022).

IKS has deep historical roots, having developed through ancient universities like Nalanda and Takshashila, which emphasized holistic education across various disciplines (Mahesh K.M. et al., 2023). This system is characterized by its focus on moral values and human well-being, with philosophical foundations that include concepts such as Jnana (knowledge) and Ajnana (ignorance) (Vijaya Laxmi K & Dr. Shripathi Kalluraya, 2024). Indigenous knowledge (IK) is also a significant component of IKS, representing local, culturally unique knowledge that supports social development. This knowledge requires better protection through intellectual property systems (Siriginidi SubbaRao, 2006).

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 acknowledges the rich heritage of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) as a guiding principle, highlighting its influence on education, art, and various other aspects of life. This tradition validates and implements knowledge through textual, oral, and artistic traditions, shaping the classical and other languages of Bharat. The IKS not only reflects the successes and challenges of ancient India but also guides future endeavors in education, health, the environment, and all facets of life.

Historical Context of Eklavya's Story:

To understand the environment in which self-learning was fostered or challenged in ancient India, it is essential to examine the socio-cultural backdrop of Eklavya's narrative, including the caste system and the Gurukul system of education. Drawing from the narrative of Eklavya, a character from the Indian epic Mahabharata, we can gain insights into the importance of self-directed learning, dedication, and the transmission of knowledge across generations.

Eklavya's story exemplifies the pursuit of knowledge and mastery through self-regulated learning. He diligently practiced archery under a self-imposed guru, Lord Drona, by crafting a statue of his guru and learning from it. The ancient Indian educational system, as reflected in Eklavya's narrative, emphasizes the role of dedication,

discipline, and self-motivation in the pursuit of knowledge. Eklavya's unwavering commitment to learning, despite facing challenges and limitations, underscores the resilience and resourcefulness inherent in traditional Indian education.

Eklavya's story serves as a profound case study that encapsulates the complexities of the Guru-Shishya tradition, where the relationship between a teacher and student is pivotal for knowledge transfer. His experience with Drona highlights significant ethical dilemmas, particularly regarding fairness and access to education, as Drona's rejection of Eklavya raises questions about the responsibilities of mentors in fostering equitable learning environments (Tapasya et al., 2024). Despite being denied formal training, Eklavya's dedication to self-study and relentless practice exemplifies the power of self-motivation, showcasing that personal commitment can lead to mastery even in the face of adversity.

Ultimately, Eklavya's journey is a testament to resilience, inspiring individuals to persist against challenges and pursue their goals with determination. His story not only reflects historical injustices but also resembles self-regulated learning, serving as a motivational narrative for contemporary learners navigating their educational paths.

This narrative highlights the value of mentorship, self-discipline, and the transfer of knowledge through oral traditions and experiential learning. Moreover, Eklavya's story resonates with the broader cultural and historical foundations of Indian knowledge systems, where traditional wisdom is passed down through storytelling, folklore, and ancient texts. The integration of Indian traditional knowledge, as seen in practices like Ayurveda and Vedic concepts of the mind, reflects a holistic approach to education that combines theoretical learning with practical application.

Eklavya's educational journey symbolizes the timeless principles of self-regulated learning, dedication to knowledge acquisition, and the intergenerational transmission of wisdom in Indian knowledge systems. By delving into narratives like Eklavya's, we gain a deeper understanding of how ancient teachings continue to inform and inspire modern educational practices, emphasizing the enduring relevance of traditional Indian knowledge in contemporary learning environments.

Eklavya's narrative is a powerful example of self-regulated learning in the face of sociocultural barriers. Eklavya, who was denied formal education by Guru Dronacharya due to his caste, showed remarkable self-discipline and determination by creating a clay idol of Dronacharya and practicing archery himself. His story highlights the potential for self-learning and self-regulation, even in restrictive environments.

Analyzing Eklavya's Story through the Lens of SRL:

- **Goal Setting and Self-Motivation:** Eklavya's decision to master archery in the absence of a formal teacher shows his intrinsic motivation and goal-directed behavior, which are critical elements of the forethought phase of SRL.
- **Self-instruction and Learning Strategies:** Discuss how Eklavya taught himself archery, which strategies he might have employed (e.g., mimicking imagined or observed techniques, practicing with self-made targets), and how this reflects the performance phase of SRL.

- Self-reflection and Self-assessment: Reflect on how Eklavya would have evaluated his learning, adjusted his techniques, and the role of self-assessment in his journey without external feedback, tying it to the self-reflection phase of SRL.

Eklavya's tale underscores the importance of determination, resilience, and the quest for excellence in education, resonating with themes of self-regulated learning and individual agency in acquiring knowledge Joseph & Voeks (2021).

Table 1: Comparing Aspects of Eklavya’s Story to Self-Regulated Learning

Aspect	Eklavya’s Story	Self-Regulated Learning
Independence	Eklavya learns archery independently in the forest, away from formal education systems.	Self-regulated learning emphasizes autonomy and self-direction in acquiring knowledge and skills.
Dedication	Eklavya dedicates himself to mastering archery, crafting a statue of his guru for guidance.	Self-regulated learning requires dedication and commitment to the learning process.
Self-Directed Learning	Eklavya practices diligently in solitude, driven by his motivation to excel.	Self-regulated learning involves setting goals, managing time effectively, and monitoring progress
Resourcefulness	Eklavya overcomes challenges through resourcefulness and determination in pursuing his education.	Self-regulated learners adapt to obstacles, seek solutions, and utilize various learning resources.
Persistence	Eklavya persists in his pursuit of knowledge and skill development despite obstacles and limitations	Self-regulated learners demonstrate resilience and perseverance in overcoming challenges in learning.

Discussion:

Eklavya’s story exemplifies self-regulated learning (SRL) amidst societal and cultural challenges. Despite being denied formal education by Guru Dronacharya due to his caste, Eklavya displayed remarkable self-discipline and determination by crafting a clay idol of Dronacharya and independently honing his archery skills (Singhal, 2024). His narrative illustrates the potential for autonomous learning and self-regulation, even under restrictive circumstances, aligning with the principles of SRL where learners actively control their learning process (Zimmerman, 2002).

Eklavya’s narrative offers valuable insights into contemporary educational methodologies, highlighting the importance of storytelling and experiential learning in creating a comprehensive educational journey. By exploring narratives like Eklavya’s, we gain a deeper understanding of how ancient teachings continue to inform and inspire modern educational practices, emphasizing the enduring relevance of traditional Indian knowledge in contemporary learning environments.

Limitations:

Scope of Historical Analysis:

The paper primarily focuses on the narrative of Eklavya from the Mahabharata, which may limit the breadth of historical and cultural contexts explored. Other significant figures and stories from Indian epics and texts could provide additional insights into self-regulated learning (SRL).

Cultural Specificity:

The study is deeply rooted in Indian cultural and historical contexts, which may limit its generalizability to other cultural settings. While the principles of SRL are universal, the specific examples and narratives used may not resonate with or apply to learners from different cultural backgrounds.

Lack of Empirical Data:

The paper relies heavily on qualitative analysis and historical narratives. The absence of empirical data or contemporary case studies may limit the ability to draw concrete conclusions about the effectiveness of integrating traditional Indian knowledge systems into modern educational practices.

Potential Biases:

The interpretation of Eklavya's story and its application to SRL may be influenced by the author's cultural and academic perspectives. This could introduce biases in the analysis and conclusions drawn.

Future Directions:

- Future research could compare the principles of SRL as demonstrated in Eklavya's story with those found in other cultural and historical contexts. This would provide a broader understanding of how different cultures approach self-regulated learning.
- Broader Historical Context: Expanding the scope to include other historical figures and narratives from Indian epics and texts could enrich the analysis. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the historical and cultural foundations of SRL in Indian knowledge systems.

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