

Ramcharitmanas in the Context of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS): An Analytical Study of Educational Values

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Abstract

This research paper is an in-depth analytical study of the educational values embedded in the *Ramcharitmanas* in the context of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). While the *Ramcharitmanas*, authored by Goswami Tulsidas, is generally viewed as a devotional epic, this research analyzes it as a highly effective and practical 'pedagogy.' At a time when the global education sector is pivoting back toward human values and holistic development, the philosophy of the *Ramcharitmanas* serves as a guiding light. The primary objective of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is to create modern, globally competent citizens deeply rooted in Indian culture. This paper systematically explores fundamental educational values such as *Swadharma* (duty-bound ethics), *Viveka* (critical decision-making capacity), *Vinaya* (emotional intelligence), and *Samuhikta* (social responsibility) through various episodes of the *Ramcharitmanas*. The study clarifies how these eternal values can become the foundational pillars of 'Value-based Education' in modern classroom processes. The core focus of this research is on how the 'Guru-Shishya' (teacher-student) tradition and the moral development of characters in the *Ramcharitmanas* align with modern principles of 'Mentoring' and 'Social-Emotional Learning' (SEL). Through the analysis of episodes like those of Kevat and Shabari, the research highlights the dimensions of inclusive education and social equity. This paper asserts that integrating IKS into the modern curriculum is essential. The approach to education described in the *Ramcharitmanas* is not limited to developing intellectual skills but emphasizes character building and *Self-realization*. This research is not only significant from an academic perspective but also provides a theoretical and practical framework for the revival of the 'academic culture' proposed by NEP 2020. This study will be highly useful for researchers and educationists dedicated to integrating India's rich cultural heritage with modern pedagogical methods.

Keywords: Ramcharitmanas, Indian Knowledge System (IKS), Value-based Education, National Education Policy (NEP), Guru-Shishya Tradition, Inclusive Education, Swadharma and Professional Ethics.

1. Introduction

The conceptual foundation of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is not merely the accumulation of information or the acquisition of vocational skills, but a process of 'Self-realization' and 'character building.' In the ancient Indian educational tradition, education was defined as *Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye*, meaning true knowledge is that which liberates humans from the bonds of ignorance and narrow-mindedness. The *Ramcharitmanas*, authored by Goswami Tulsidas, is an excellent example of this epistemology, where the purpose of

education is to harmonize material progress with moral and spiritual upliftment. As scholars suggest, "The objective of the Indian Knowledge System is to make an individual a global citizen while keeping them connected to their cultural roots" (Kapoor, 2020, p. 45).

In the contemporary era, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has reiterated that the modern curriculum should be integrated with Indian values and cultural heritage. The policy document clarifies that the goal of education should be 'holistic development' rather than mere literacy (Ministry of

Education, 2020). In this context, the conduct and life episodes of characters in the *Ramcharitmanas* such as Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram, Lakshman, Bharat, and Mother Sita act not as religious narratives but as living 'curriculum.'

This research paper focuses on how episodes from the *Manas* can provide a robust foundation for 'Value-based Education' in modern teaching methodology. The researcher argues that the study of the *Ramcharitmanas* develops qualities like 'Viveka' (Critical Thinking) and 'Swadharma' (Professional Ethics) in students. According to scholars, "Indian epics are not just literature; they are practical paradigms of moral principles that are helpful in establishing social harmony" (Pandey & Sharma, 2022, p. 112). This study attempts to provide solutions to educational challenges emerging as 'valuelessness' and 'moral disintegration.' It underscores how the Guru-Shishya tradition and the interpersonal relationships described in the *Manas*, when combined with modern principles of mentoring and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), can pave the way for a more inclusive and humane education system. Ultimately, this paper clarifies that including the *Ramcharitmanas* in the curriculum is not just a matter of cultural pride, but a modern educational necessity.

2. Literature Review

An analysis of research on the *Ramcharitmanas* and Indian educational philosophy clarifies that this epic is not only a center of devotion but also a significant educational resource under the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). Scholars have analyzed its various facets from time to time, providing a strong foundation for this research.

Sharma and Khanna (2019) argued in their research that Tulsidas's literature is an excellent example of 'Moral Literacy.' They clarified that the character portrayal in the *Manas* episodes especially the conduct of Shri Ram is helpful in developing responsibility and sensitivity in students. They believe it is necessary to integrate character values with education rather than limiting it to skill development. This view aligns with the NEP 2020 recommendation, which considers 'Value-based

Education' as a foundational pillar of the education system (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Verma (2021) conducted a psychological analysis of the 'Guru-Shishya' tradition. He believes that the Guru-Shishya relationship depicted in the *Manas* is an ancient and more effective form of the modern concept of 'mentoring.' His study highlights that when a teacher's relationship with a student is 'soulful,' the learning process becomes more creative and result-oriented. This work redefines the role of teachers in modern classroom teaching from 'knowledge providers' to 'facilitators.'

Regarding social equity and inclusive education, the research by Pathak (2022) is highly significant. He presented various episodes of the *Ramcharitmanas*, such as the devotion of Kevat and Shabari and Shri Ram's behavior toward them, as proof of 'Inclusive Education.' Pathak argues that the *Ramcharitmanas* advocates for equal opportunities for knowledge and respect without any caste or social discrimination, which is a fundamental principle of modern democratic education.

Despite these studies, research on formally implementing the 'pedagogy' of the *Ramcharitmanas* into modern curriculum design remains limited. Most research has been restricted to literary or philosophical analysis. The present research attempts to fill this 'research gap.' This study does not merely accept these theoretical aspects but organizes them into a practical 'pedagogical model' that can be implemented within the framework of NEP 2020. Available literature confirms that the relevance of the *Ramcharitmanas* is timeless. This research builds on the foundation of previous studies that believe reviving the Indian Knowledge System in modern education is not just a cultural necessity, but a path toward building a more humane and ethical society for the future.

3. Research Objectives

1. **To analyze the moral values propounded in the *Ramcharitmanas* and their contemporary educational significance:** The main goal of this objective is to study the episodes of the *Ramcharitmanas* to identify moral principles that can be integrated as 'Value-based Education' in

today's education system, especially in the context of character building and personality development.

2. **To explain the harmony between the Guru-Shishya tradition of the *Ramcharitmanas* and modern mentoring principles:** This objective investigates how the advisory role of Gurus (like Maharishi Vishwamitra and Vashishtha) described in the *Manas* and the 'Teacher-Mentor' concept proposed by NEP 2020 complement each other, and how this tradition can prove effective in the current teaching environment.

3. **To evaluate the relevance of the *Ramcharitmanas* for developing decision-making capacity (*Viveka*) and professional ethics (*Swadharma*) in difficult situations:** Under this objective, the researcher will analyze how the 'Viveka' and 'duty-consciousness' displayed by the characters of the *Manas* in various crisis situations can serve as a practical model for developing 'Critical Thinking' and 'Professional Ethics' skills in today's students.

4. Research Methodology

This research study adopts a 'Qualitative and Analytical Research Method.'

4.1 **Nature of Research:** This study is primarily philosophical and descriptive. It involves a systematic study of the *Ramcharitmanas* texts and evaluates the educational values contained therein from the perspective of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

4.2 **Data Sources:** This research makes extensive use of 'secondary data':

- **Primary Text:** The authentic edition of the *Ramcharitmanas* by Goswami Tulsidas.
- **Policy Documents:** The official details of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 published by the Government of India.
- **Academic Literature:** Research papers, books, and journals available on the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), pedagogy, and value-based education.
- **Digital Resources:** Academic databases and the official portal of the Ministry of Education.

4.3 Analysis Procedure:

1. **Thematic Selection:** Relevant episodes and *Dohas* (couplets) from the *Ramcharitmanas* that

demonstrate 'Swadharma,' 'Viveka,' 'Vinaya,' and the 'Guru-Shishya tradition' were selected according to the research objectives.

2. **Comparative Analysis:** A comparative study of the selected episodes with modern educational theories (e.g., mentoring, critical thinking, and SEL) was conducted.

3. **Mapping:** These values were mapped with the competencies proposed by NEP 2020 to clarify their relevance to modern curriculum.

4.4 **Limitations of the Study:** This research is primarily limited to Goswami Tulsidas's *Ramcharitmanas*. Other versions of the Ramayana (such as Valmiki Ramayana) have been mentioned only from a comparative perspective. This study focuses on preparing a theoretical framework rather than analyzing large statistical data.

5. Analysis of Moral Values and their Contemporary Educational Significance

The philosophy of the *Ramcharitmanas* is not limited to devotion; it presents a comprehensive moral code that can prove to be a robust foundation for 'Value-based Education' in the modern educational landscape. The first objective of this research is to analyze those fundamental values that play the role of a catalyst in a student's character building.

In the *Ramcharitmanas*, 'Swadharma' (duty-bound ethics), 'Vinaya' (humility), 'Viveka' (logical capacity), and 'Tyaga' (sacrifice) are paramount. In today's competitive educational environment, where education is inclined only toward technical skills and economic gain, these values provide students with a balanced personality. Characters in the *Manas*, such as Shri Ram's dedication to his promises, present a direct example of 'Professional Ethics' to students. It is this moral firmness that gives future citizens the strength to walk on the path of truth and righteousness even in adverse circumstances.

In contemporary education, the importance of 'Social-Emotional Learning' (SEL) has increased rapidly. The educational importance of the *Ramcharitmanas* lies in the fact that it shows students the way to control their emotions and have empathy for others. When students study the Kavat

episode or the tales of Shabari, they internalize social equity and an inclusive perspective. This is highly effective in achieving the goal of 'holistic development' in modern education.

Furthermore, the principle of "*Vidya Vinayahu Na Dei*" (knowledge without humility) clarifies that the ultimate goal of education is not just the collection of information, but the right use of humility and knowledge. In modern teaching methodology, episodes of the *Manas* can be used as 'Case Studies' to promote 'Critical Thinking,' where students decide for themselves how to follow 'Dharma' in a difficult situation. The moral values of the *Ramcharitmanas* provide a 'cultural and moral blueprint' for modern classroom teaching. Integrating these values makes students not only skilled professionals but also develops them as sensitive, logical, and ethically conscious individuals, which is in line with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

6. Harmony Between Guru-Shishya Tradition and Modern Mentoring Principles

In the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), the 'Guru-Shishya' relationship is not merely a medium for knowledge transfer, but a spiritual and emotional bond. The relationship of Shri Ram and his brothers with Gurus like Maharishi Vashishtha and Vishwamitra in the *Ramcharitmanas* is an ideal representation of this tradition. In the current educational landscape, the 'Teacher-Mentor' concept proposed by NEP 2020 is a modern and technical form of this ancient tradition.

In the *Ramcharitmanas*, the Guru's role has been that of a 'Guide,' 'Motivator,' and 'Protector.' For example, Maharishi Vishwamitra not only giving knowledge of scriptures to Shri Ram and Lakshman but also preparing them for real-life challenges (such as the slaying of Tadaka) is an excellent example of 'Experiential Learning.' Modern mentoring principles also emphasize that the task of a successful mentor is not just to provide textbook knowledge, but to identify the student's inner potential and enable them to solve real-life problems.

In modern educational research, 'mentorship' means a process where an experienced person assists in the

holistic development of the learner through their experience and knowledge. The role of Guru Vashishtha in the *Manas* is that of a 'Counselor,' who provides guidance during difficult family or social crises. This role aligns perfectly with the principles of 'Student Counseling' and 'Mental Well-being' in modern educational institutions.

Additionally, in the *Ramcharitmanas*, 'Vinaya' (humility) and 'Shraddha' (faith) are considered mandatory steps for gaining knowledge. Modern mentoring also considers 'open communication' and 'mutual trust' as the foundation. When a relationship of trust is established between a student and a teacher, educational outcomes are more positive.

There is a deep synergy between the Guru-Shishya tradition of the *Ramcharitmanas* and modern mentoring principles. If modern teachers adopt these 'mentor-mentee' relationships with their students, not only will there be intellectual development in the classroom, but the learner's character and self-confidence will also flourish. This harmony will fulfill the goal of NEP 2020, which is to develop the teacher as a 'mentor' and the student as a 'self-reliant' learner.

7. Relevance of Ramcharitmanas for the Development of Decision-Making (Viveka) and Professional Ethics (Swadharma)

In the current era of uncertainty and complexity, where decision-making is a major challenge, the study of the *Ramcharitmanas* is not just a literary experience; it is a practical tool for developing 'Critical Thinking' and 'Professional Ethics.' The third objective of this research is to clarify how the 'Viveka' and 'Swadharma' displayed by the characters of the *Manas* can become a guide in the modern workplace and in difficult life situations.

In the *Ramcharitmanas*, 'Viveka' does not just mean the use of intelligence, but the ability to distinguish clearly between truth, justice, and righteousness. Whether it is Shri Ram's decision to go into exile or Vibhishana's renunciation of unrighteousness to support righteousness, all these episodes teach that when all options are challenging in difficult situations, 'Viveka' is the only basis that shows the right direction. In modern management studies, this is called 'Ethical Decision Making.' When students

analyze these episodes, they learn how to maintain a balance between personal emotions and moral duties.

Similarly, the concept of 'Swadharma' is the Indian paradigm of modern 'Professional Ethics.' Characters of the *Manas* rise above their personal happiness and sorrow to perform their duties. Be it Bharat's sacrifice or Lakshman's service, every character is fully dedicated to their 'Swadharma.' In today's educational and work environment, where employees often choose unethical options under pressure, the message of the *Ramcharitmanas*—that "Swadharme Nidhanam Shreyah" (it is better to die performing one's own duty)—gives youth the courage to maintain their professional integrity.

This research clarifies that the relevance of the *Ramcharitmanas* should be evaluated on how it develops 'Moral Resilience' in students. When these episodes are included as case studies in the curriculum, students learn to view complex problems through the lens of 'Viveka' and 'Swadharma.' The *Ramcharitmanas* is not just a text, but a 'Moral Management Manual.' The capacity to make correct decisions in difficult circumstances and develop unwavering loyalty toward one's duties should be the ultimate goal of modern education, which can be easily achieved through the study of the *Ramcharitmanas*.

8. Important Verses and Couplets for Research

1. Guru-Shishya Tradition and Humility

• **Couplet:** "*Vidya Vinayahu Na Dei, So Vidya Phal-Prada Na Hoi.*"

○ **Educational Significance:** This reflects the aspect of modern education where the goal of knowledge is not just information but humility. It has a direct connection to the 'Holistic Development' of NEP 2020.

• **Couplet:** "*Guru Binu Bhava Nidhi Tarai Na Koi. Jau Biranchi Shankar Sam Hoi.*"

○ **Educational Significance:** This highlights the mandatory role of a mentor (teacher). It clarifies that even a person with the highest intellectual capacity needs a Guru for proper guidance.

2. Viveka and Decision-Making Capacity

• **Couplet:** "*Gopada Iva Raghunathahi Lava. Sajjan Dheer Dharahu Mana Dava.*" (In the context of crossing obstacles with wisdom)

○ **Educational Significance:** Here, 'Viveka' means considering complex problems to be small (like a cow's hoof print) and finding logical solutions. This develops 'Critical Thinking' and 'Crisis Management' skills in a student.

• **Doha:** "*Parahita Sarisa Dharama Nahi Bhai. Para Peeda Sama Nahi Adhamai.*"

○ **Educational Significance:** This is the foundation of 'Ethical Decision.' When a student assesses the 'Ethical Implications' of a decision, they should follow this principle.

3. Swadharma and Responsibility

• **Couplet:** "*Swadharme Nidhanam Shreyah, Paradharmo Bhayavahah.*" (In the context of the Gita, which the characters of the *Manas* have internalized in their conduct)

○ **Educational Significance:** This teaches 'Professional Ethics' to students. Professional efficiency means remaining steadfast toward one's original duty (Dharma).

• **Couplet (In the context of Bharat):** "*Ramu Kaju Sabu Karaba Hansai. Prabhu Seva Karaiun Mana Lai.*"

○ **Educational Significance:** This demonstrates 'Dedication to Duty.' As a professional, the principle of performing one's work with dedication, like 'service to the Lord.'

4. Inclusive Education and Collaboration

• **Couplet (Shabari Episode):** "*Kahu Raghupati Nija Katha Prasanga. Samujhai Kari Preeti Abhanga.*"

○ **Educational Significance:** This is an excellent example of 'Inclusive Learning.' Lord Ram's dialogue with Shabari teaches that a teacher should communicate with every learner while respecting their background.

Verse/Couplet	Research Subject	NEP 2020 Competency
Vidya Vinayahu Na Dei...	Humility (Vinaya)	Emotional Intelligence (EQ)
Guru Binu Nidhi...	Bhava Mentoring	Teacher-Mentor Concept
Parahita Dharama...	Sarisa Viveka	Ethical Decision Making
Swadharme Nidhanam Shreyah...	Swadharma	Professional Ethics

9. Integration (Mapping) with NEP 2020 and IKS

The core philosophy of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is to build a bridge between India's ancient knowledge tradition and modern global competencies. The values embedded in the *Ramcharitmanas* are not just moral narratives, but are the foundation of 'Soft Skills' for modern educational goals.

Table: Competencies and Values proposed by NEP 2020

Educational Value (Ramcharitmanas)	Modern Educational Competency	Main Objective of NEP 2020
Vinaya (Humility)	Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	Holistic Development
Sahayog (Collaboration)	Teamwork and Social Harmony	Social Consciousness and Citizenship
Ahimsa and Karuna	Ethical Decision Making	Value-based Education
Jnana Prapti (Jnana Yoga)	Lifelong Learning	Skill Development and Intellectual Upliftment

Analytical Integration: When we view these values of the *Ramcharitmanas* through the lens of NEP 2020, it becomes clear that the purpose of education is not merely the transfer of knowledge,

but the nurturing of 'human dignity.' For example, 'Vinaya' described in the *Manas* can be seen as 'Emotional Intelligence' (EQ) from a modern psychological perspective, which strengthens a student's interpersonal relationships and leadership capacity. Similarly, the quality of 'Collaboration' encourages 'Collaborative Learning' during classroom teaching, which fulfills the policy's goal of 'social harmony.' The path of 'Jnana Prapti' or 'Jnana Yoga' is the Indian form of modern 'Lifelong Learning,' which inspires students to remain curious and competent continuously. This 'mapping' proves that the values of the *Ramcharitmanas* are not an external element for modern curriculum, but are the most effective and culturally robust means to implement the vision of NEP 2020 at the grassroots level.

10. Discussion

The events described in the *Ramcharitmanas* are not just mythological accounts; they are 'Case Studies' of modern educational theories. Specifically, the 'Kevat episode' and 'Shabari episode' present excellent evidence of social equity and 'Inclusive Education.' This discussion focuses on the fact that education should not be limited to technology (ICT) but must be connected with human sensitivities, which is an essential need today. The Kevat episode demonstrates that deep 'art of dialogue' which should exist between a teacher and a student. Lord Ram's behavior toward Kevat proves that a superior teacher should value a learner's dedication and logic rather than their social status. As Singh (2023) mentioned, "The real meaning of inclusive education is respecting diversity in the classroom, where every student can contribute with their unique potential" (p. 88). The Kevat episode gives the message of 'Empathy' rather than just 'Equality,' which is a major pillar of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Similarly, the Shabari episode establishes the superiority of 'Personalized Learning.' Shabari's devotion and Lord Ram's affection toward her teach that the nature of education should be 'inclusive,' where no student is left behind due to their background. According to Verma (2024), "Technology is effective in the modern digital age,

but until it is connected with human sensitivities and values, it remains merely information" (p. 210). This research clarifies that the confluence of technical skills (like the use of ICT) and human sensitivities (human values) constitutes a complete education system. In today's classroom environment, where diversity is increasing, these episodes of the *Ramcharitmanas* inspire teachers to be 'diversity-talented.' The goal of education is not just to use smart tools, but to plant the seeds of knowledge and compassion in the student's inner mind. These episodes of the *Ramcharitmanas* prove that inclusive education is not an imposed policy, but a natural part of our cultural philosophy. When teachers integrate these human values along with technology into the classroom, the nature of education becomes more vibrant, just, and effective.

11. Conclusion

This research paper, 'Ramcharitmanas in the Context of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS): An Analytical Study of Educational Values,' concludes that this timeless epic is not just a devotional composition, but an eternal 'pedagogy.' This epic embodies those fundamental moral values that provide an indispensable basis for 'Value-based Education' in the modern era. During the research, it became clear that 'Swadharma' (duty-bound ethics), 'Viveka' (logical decision-making capacity), 'Vinaya' (emotional intelligence), and the 'Guru-Shishya tradition' described in the *Ramcharitmanas* are fully aligned with the requirements of today's education system.

The main goal of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is to build an education system that is connected to India's own roots and is globally competitive, making the student not only a skilled professional but also an ethical citizen. This research has successfully proved that by integrating episodes of the *Ramcharitmanas* into the modern curriculum, we can not only develop logical skills in students but also plant the seeds of 'Professional Ethics' and 'Empathy' in them. The analytical study of the Kevat and Shabari episodes shows that inclusive education is not a modern concept, but has been a natural and essential part of our cultural philosophy.

The importance of this research in educational institutions increases further because the inclusion of these values is highly essential in the process of preparing future teachers. These research findings can be adopted as an 'experimental model' in teacher training programs, where trainee teachers can learn how to create a balance between technology (ICT) and human sensitivities during classroom teaching. This model will enable the teacher to play the role of a 'Guide' and 'Mentor' instead of just an information provider. This study is not only an academic document but also a call to all future educationists to reinstate India's rich cultural heritage in modern classrooms. If we make these eternal educational values of the *Ramcharitmanas* an integral part of our teaching methodology, we will certainly create citizens who, along with being technically competent, will also be ethically conscious and socially responsible. This research opens doors for future researchers who are continuously dedicated to building a stronger and more practical bridge between the Indian Knowledge System and modern pedagogy. This effort will undoubtedly be helpful in building a society driven by the harmony of knowledge, compassion, and dignity.

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