



Swami Vivekananda Advanced Journal for Research and Studies

Online Copy of Document Available on: www.svajrs.com

ISSN:2584-105X

Pg. 26-36



The Teacher as Acharya: Reinterpreting the Indian Ideal of Teaching in Contemporary Teacher Education

Shrutika Sahu

M.Ed. Student Bethesda Women Teachers' Training College, Ranchi,
Affiliated to Ranchi University, Jharkhand, India

Accepted: 06/08/2026**Published: 11/08/2026****DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21886289>**

Abstract

Teacher education across the world is increasingly expected to prepare educators who are not only professionally competent but also ethically grounded, socially responsible, and capable of fostering holistic human development. Contemporary educational systems, however, often prioritize pedagogical skills, technological proficiency, and measurable learning outcomes while giving comparatively less attention to the moral, reflective, and transformative dimensions of teaching. The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) offers a rich philosophical tradition that conceptualizes the teacher as an Acharya—a mentor who embodies knowledge, ethical conduct, wisdom, compassion, and lifelong learning. This paper revisits the traditional concept of the Acharya and reinterprets its relevance within contemporary teacher education. Employing a qualitative conceptual research design based on document analysis, the study examines classical Indian sources, including the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, alongside the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and recent scholarly literature. The findings reveal that the Acharya model extends beyond subject instruction to encompass value-based education, character formation, reflective practice, mentorship, community engagement, and self-development. Building on these insights, the paper proposes an Acharya Competency Framework consisting of seven interrelated competencies: ethical leadership, self-reflection, subject mastery, compassionate mentoring, lifelong learning, social responsibility, and digital responsibility. The framework demonstrates strong alignment with the vision of NEP 2020, which advocates holistic, multidisciplinary, and value-oriented teacher preparation. The paper concludes that integrating the Acharya ideal into teacher education programs can strengthen professional ethics, improve teacher identity, and contribute to the preparation of educators capable of addressing the educational and societal challenges of the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Acharya, Indian Knowledge System, Teacher Education, NEP 2020, Professional Ethics, Holistic Education, Reflective Practice

1. INTRODUCTION

Education has long been regarded as one of the most influential instruments for individual transformation and societal development. At the heart of every educational system stands the teacher, whose knowledge, values, and professional conduct significantly influence learners and the broader educational environment. Across cultures, teachers have been recognized not merely as transmitters of information but as guides who shape intellectual abilities, moral character, and social responsibility. In the twenty-first century, however, rapid technological advancements, globalization, digital learning environments, and changing societal expectations have transformed the nature of teaching. While contemporary teacher education emphasizes pedagogical competence, technological integration, assessment literacy, and professional skills, concerns have emerged regarding the declining emphasis on ethical values, mentorship, reflective practice, and holistic human development.

These concerns have prompted educators and policymakers to revisit indigenous educational philosophies that offer more comprehensive understandings of the teacher's role. In India, the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) represents a rich intellectual and cultural heritage encompassing philosophy, education, ethics, science, language, and social thought. Rather than viewing education solely as the acquisition of information or vocational skills, IKS conceptualizes education as a lifelong process aimed at the development of wisdom, character, self-realization, and social harmony. Central to this tradition is the concept of the Acharya, an ideal teacher who exemplifies knowledge through personal conduct and inspires learners by integrating intellectual excellence with ethical living.

The Sanskrit term Acharya derives from the root *achar*, meaning "to practice" or "to conduct oneself." Unlike a teacher who merely imparts knowledge, an Acharya is one who teaches through both instruction and exemplary behaviour. Classical Indian texts consistently emphasize that true education requires the teacher to embody the principles they seek to cultivate in students. The Acharya therefore functions simultaneously as a scholar, mentor, moral guide, counsellor, and community leader. This multidimensional role distinguishes the Acharya from contemporary conceptions of teaching that often focus primarily on curriculum delivery and measurable learning outcomes.

Ancient Indian educational institutions such as the Gurukula system were founded upon close teacher–student relationships characterized by mutual respect, trust, discipline, and experiential learning. Learning extended beyond classrooms to include daily life, ethical conduct, community service, critical inquiry, self-reflection, and spiritual growth. The objective was not merely intellectual achievement but the cultivation of responsible, compassionate, and self-disciplined individuals capable of contributing positively to society. Although contemporary educational contexts differ substantially from ancient Gurukulas, many of the foundational principles underlying the Acharya tradition remain highly relevant for modern teacher education.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 acknowledges this relevance by advocating the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems into educational curricula while emphasizing holistic education, ethical reasoning, multidisciplinary learning, experiential pedagogy, and value-based teacher preparation. The policy recognizes that future educators must possess not only subject expertise but also empathy, reflective thinking, cultural awareness, leadership, and professional integrity. These expectations closely resonate with the classical characteristics associated with the Acharya tradition.

Despite increasing scholarly interest in Indian Knowledge Systems, relatively limited research has examined the concept of the Acharya specifically within the context of contemporary teacher education. Existing literature frequently discusses the Guru–Shishya tradition, value education, or holistic learning, yet fewer studies systematically reinterpret the Acharya as a modern professional identity capable of informing teacher preparation programs. Consequently, there exists a conceptual gap between classical educational philosophy and present-day teacher education frameworks.

This paper seeks to bridge that gap by reinterpreting the traditional ideal of the Acharya within the context of twenty-first-century teacher education. Rather than advocating a return to ancient educational structures, the study argues that the philosophical principles underlying the Acharya model can be meaningfully adapted to contemporary educational institutions. Through a qualitative conceptual analysis of classical Indian texts, policy documents, and recent educational scholarship, the paper identifies key characteristics of the Acharya and proposes an Acharya Competency Framework aligned

with the goals of NEP 2020. By integrating ethical leadership, reflective practice, lifelong learning, compassionate mentorship, and social responsibility into teacher education, the framework seeks to contribute to the preparation of educators who are not only professionally competent but also morally grounded and socially transformative.

Ultimately, reimagining the teacher as an Acharya offers an opportunity to strengthen the humanistic foundations of teacher education while preserving the enduring educational wisdom of India's intellectual traditions. Such an approach has the potential to prepare teachers capable of nurturing knowledgeable, ethical, resilient, and responsible citizens in an increasingly complex global society.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative conceptual research design to reinterpret the traditional Indian concept of the Acharya within the context of contemporary teacher education. Rather than collecting primary empirical data, the research relies on the systematic examination, interpretation, and synthesis of existing textual and documentary sources. A conceptual approach is appropriate because the study seeks to explore philosophical ideas, educational values, and theoretical perspectives that can inform present-day teacher education rather than measure variables through quantitative methods.

Research Design

The study is descriptive, analytical, and conceptual in nature. It describes the historical and philosophical foundations of the Acharya tradition, analyses its educational significance, and develops a conceptual framework applicable to contemporary teacher education. The research integrates insights from Indian philosophical traditions with modern educational discourse to construct a coherent understanding of the teacher's evolving professional role.

Data Sources

The study is based entirely on secondary sources obtained from authentic academic and policy documents. These sources include:

- Classical Indian texts such as the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and selected educational concepts from ancient Indian literature.
- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, particularly its provisions concerning teacher

education, holistic learning, ethics, and the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems.

- Peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, edited volumes, and conference papers on teacher education, Indian Knowledge Systems, educational philosophy, and professional ethics.
- Publications from national and international organizations related to teacher education, value-based education, and educational reforms.
- Relevant reports, policy documents, and academic literature published primarily between 2015 and 2026, supplemented by foundational classical sources where necessary.

The use of diverse academic sources enables a comprehensive understanding of both the historical meaning of the Acharya and its relevance within current educational contexts.

Data Collection Procedure

Relevant literature was identified through systematic searches of academic databases, institutional repositories, government publications, and scholarly books using keywords such as Acharya, Indian Knowledge System, teacher education, professional ethics, holistic education, Guru-Shishya tradition, NEP 2020, and value-based education. Sources were selected based on their relevance, academic credibility, and contribution to the conceptual understanding of the research topic.

Method of Analysis

The collected literature was analysed using document analysis and thematic analysis.

Document analysis involved critically examining policy documents, classical texts, and scholarly publications to identify recurring educational principles related to the role of the Acharya. Subsequently, thematic analysis was employed to organize these principles into meaningful categories. Themes such as ethical leadership, subject mastery, reflective practice, compassionate mentoring, lifelong learning, social responsibility, and holistic development emerged through repeated examination and comparison of the selected literature.

The findings from these themes were then synthesized to develop an Acharya Competency Framework, which demonstrates how traditional Indian educational ideals can be meaningfully

reinterpreted within contemporary teacher education programmes.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To enhance the credibility of the study, information was triangulated across multiple categories of sources, including classical Indian scriptures, contemporary educational policies, peer-reviewed research articles, and scholarly books. Cross-referencing these sources helped ensure consistency in interpretation while minimizing reliance on a single perspective. Furthermore, preference was given to authoritative publications and recent academic literature to maintain both historical authenticity and contemporary relevance.

Scope and Limitations

The study is conceptual in nature and therefore does not include empirical data collected from teachers, teacher educators, or student teachers. Consequently, the proposed Acharya Competency Framework should be viewed as a theoretical model requiring future empirical validation in different teacher education contexts. Nevertheless, the framework provides a valuable philosophical and pedagogical foundation for integrating Indian Knowledge System principles into teacher education and offers practical directions for curriculum development, professional training, and educational policy.

3. RESULTS / FINDINGS

The analysis of classical Indian educational literature, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and contemporary research on teacher education reveals that the traditional concept of the Acharya extends far beyond the conventional role of a classroom instructor. Rather than functioning solely as a transmitter of knowledge, the Acharya represents a holistic educator who integrates intellectual excellence, ethical conduct, reflective practice, and social responsibility. The thematic analysis identified seven major competencies that collectively define the Acharya model and demonstrate its relevance for contemporary teacher education.

Finding 1: The Acharya Embodies Knowledge Through Conduct

One of the most significant findings of this study is that the defining characteristic of an Acharya is the unity of knowledge and conduct. Classical Indian educational philosophy consistently emphasizes that authentic teaching requires educators to practice the

values they teach. The Sanskrit derivation of the word Acharya from achar (conduct) reflects this expectation.

Unlike a teacher whose primary responsibility may be limited to delivering subject content, the Acharya serves as a living example of ethical behaviour, discipline, honesty, humility, and integrity. Students learn not only from formal instruction but also by observing the teacher's daily actions, interpersonal relationships, and professional commitment.

Within contemporary teacher education, this principle highlights the importance of preparing teachers who demonstrate professionalism through responsible decision-making, fairness, respect for diversity, and commitment to lifelong ethical conduct. Professional identity is therefore shaped not merely by qualifications but by consistent alignment between educational values and everyday practice.

Finding 2: The Acharya Promotes Holistic Human Development

A second major finding is that the Acharya tradition views education as a process of holistic human development rather than simply academic achievement. Ancient Indian educational philosophy sought to nurture intellectual, emotional, moral, physical, social, and spiritual dimensions of learners.

Contemporary education often emphasizes measurable academic outcomes, examination performance, and employability skills. While these remain important, the analysis indicates that excessive emphasis on cognitive achievement may overlook equally significant dimensions such as emotional intelligence, resilience, empathy, ethical reasoning, and responsible citizenship.

The Acharya model therefore encourages teacher education programmes to prepare educators capable of fostering:

- Critical thinking
- Emotional maturity
- Moral reasoning
- Social responsibility
- Self-discipline
- Lifelong learning
- Compassionate citizenship

These dimensions closely correspond with the holistic vision articulated in NEP 2020.

Finding 3: The Teacher Functions as a Mentor Rather Than Only an Instructor

The literature consistently portrays the Acharya as a mentor whose responsibilities extend beyond classroom teaching. In the traditional Gurukula system, the teacher guided learners academically, emotionally, socially, and personally.

This mentoring relationship was characterized by:

- Trust
- Mutual respect
- Individual attention
- Continuous guidance
- Character formation
- Personal counselling

Modern educational institutions frequently operate within large classrooms, standardized curricula, and limited teacher-student interaction. Consequently, opportunities for mentorship may be reduced.

The present analysis suggests that reinterpreting the Acharya model can strengthen mentoring practices within teacher education by encouraging future teachers to recognize learners as individuals with diverse needs, aspirations, and backgrounds.

Finding 4: Ethical Leadership is Central to the Acharya Tradition

A recurring theme across the analysed literature is the concept of ethical leadership.

The Acharya does not exercise authority through power or hierarchy but through wisdom, integrity, fairness, and service. Leadership is demonstrated through moral example rather than institutional position.

In contemporary teacher education, ethical leadership includes:

- Academic honesty
- Professional accountability
- Inclusive classroom practices
- Respect for diversity
- Democratic decision-making
- Responsible use of technology
- Commitment to social justice

The analysis indicates that strengthening ethical leadership within teacher education can improve institutional culture while preparing teachers capable

of responding responsibly to contemporary educational challenges.

Finding 5: Reflective Practice and Lifelong Learning are Essential Characteristics

Another important finding concerns the Acharya's commitment to continuous self-improvement.

Ancient Indian educational philosophy never regarded learning as complete. Instead, teachers themselves remained lifelong learners engaged in self-study (Swadhyaya), reflection (Manana), dialogue, and intellectual inquiry.

Similarly, contemporary teachers must continuously update their:

- Subject knowledge
- Pedagogical skills
- Digital competencies
- Research abilities
- Professional ethics

The analysis demonstrates that reflective practice enables teachers to evaluate classroom experiences, identify strengths and weaknesses, and improve instructional effectiveness over time.

This aligns strongly with international perspectives on teacher professionalism, which emphasize continuous professional development throughout a teacher's career.

Finding 6: Social Responsibility Extends Beyond Classroom Teaching

The findings further indicate that the Acharya assumes responsibility not only for students but also for society.

Traditional Indian educational thought regarded education as a means of promoting:

- Social harmony
- Justice
- Community welfare
- Environmental responsibility
- National development

Accordingly, teachers were expected to contribute actively to societal well-being.

Within contemporary teacher education, this principle supports:

- Community engagement
- Service-learning

- Environmental education
- Inclusive education
- Civic participation
- Sustainable development

The Acharya model therefore expands the professional role of teachers beyond instructional responsibilities toward broader social transformation.

Finding 7: The Acharya Ideal Aligns Closely with the Vision of NEP 2020

The final finding demonstrates substantial alignment between the Acharya tradition and the educational philosophy of NEP 2020.

The policy advocates:

- Holistic education
- Multidisciplinary learning
- Ethical reasoning
- Experiential learning

- Indian Knowledge Systems
- Teacher autonomy
- Reflective practice
- Inclusive education
- Professional excellence

These principles closely mirror the educational values associated with the Acharya tradition.

Rather than representing competing educational paradigms, the analysis suggests that the Acharya model provides a philosophical foundation capable of strengthening the implementation of NEP 2020 within teacher education institutions.

Proposed Acharya Competency Framework

Based on the thematic analysis, the study proposes the following Acharya Competency Framework for contemporary teacher education.

Figure 1. Proposed Acharya Competency Framework for Contemporary Teacher Education (Developed by the Author).

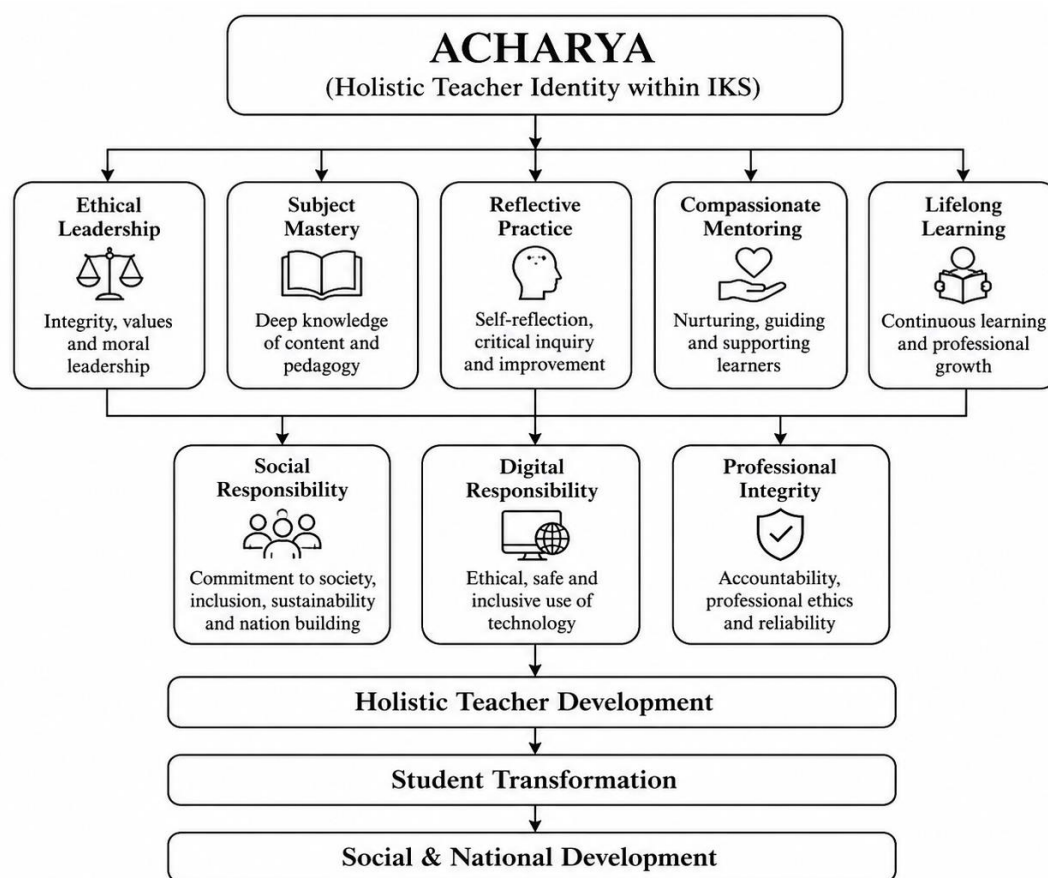


Figure 1. Acharya Competency Framework for Contemporary Teacher Education

Interpretation of the Framework

The proposed framework conceptualizes the Acharya as a holistic professional identity composed of seven interconnected competencies:

- Ethical Leadership – Demonstrating integrity, fairness, and value-based decision-making.
- Subject Mastery – Possessing deep disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical expertise.
- Reflective Practice – Continuously evaluating and improving teaching practices.
- Compassionate Mentoring – Supporting students' academic, emotional, and personal growth.
- Lifelong Learning – Engaging in continuous professional and intellectual development.
- Social Responsibility – Contributing to community development, inclusion, and sustainability.
- Digital Responsibility – Using educational technologies ethically, responsibly, and inclusively.

Together, these competencies create a balanced model of teacher education that integrates professional competence with ethical values, humanistic education, and the philosophical principles of the Indian Knowledge System. The framework illustrates that becoming an Acharya is not simply acquiring pedagogical skills but cultivating a professional identity grounded in knowledge, character, service, and lifelong learning.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the traditional Indian concept of the Acharya offers a comprehensive and value-oriented perspective on teaching that remains highly relevant to contemporary teacher education. While modern teacher education has made significant progress in strengthening pedagogical competence, assessment literacy, digital proficiency, and research skills, the analysis suggests that these professional competencies alone are insufficient for preparing teachers capable of addressing the complex educational, ethical, and social challenges of the twenty-first century. The Acharya model complements these competencies by emphasizing moral leadership, holistic development, reflective practice, compassionate mentorship, and lifelong learning.

One of the most significant contributions of the Acharya concept is its emphasis on the unity of knowledge and conduct. Contemporary educational systems often evaluate teachers through measurable indicators such as academic qualifications, instructional performance, classroom management, and student achievement. Although these indicators are essential, they do not fully capture the ethical and human dimensions of teaching. Classical Indian educational philosophy argues that a teacher's personal conduct is itself a powerful educational resource because students learn not only through formal instruction but also through observation, interaction, and lived experience. This understanding is consistent with contemporary theories of social learning, which recognize modelling as a significant influence on learner behaviour. Therefore, the Acharya ideal reinforces the importance of teachers serving as ethical role models whose professional actions reflect the values they seek to cultivate in students.

The study also highlights the relevance of the Acharya tradition for promoting holistic education, a central objective of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The policy advocates the development of learners' cognitive, emotional, ethical, creative, and social capacities rather than focusing exclusively on academic performance. Similarly, the Acharya tradition conceptualizes education as a lifelong process of intellectual, moral, emotional, and spiritual growth. Rather than limiting education to knowledge transmission, it seeks to prepare individuals capable of responsible citizenship, self-discipline, compassion, and social contribution. Consequently, integrating Acharya-based principles into teacher education can strengthen the implementation of NEP 2020 by preparing educators who are equipped to facilitate holistic student development.

Another important implication concerns the transformation of the teacher's role from instructor to mentor and facilitator. Modern educational research increasingly recognizes the significance of mentoring relationships in promoting learner motivation, emotional well-being, academic success, and professional identity. The Acharya tradition anticipated this understanding by positioning the teacher as a guide who accompanies learners throughout their intellectual and personal journeys. Unlike transactional models of education, where teaching is confined to curriculum delivery, the Acharya model encourages sustained interaction, individualized guidance, and character formation. In

teacher education programs, adopting this perspective may encourage future teachers to develop stronger interpersonal relationships with learners while recognizing the diverse emotional, social, and cultural contexts that influence learning.

The findings further demonstrate that ethical leadership constitutes a foundational dimension of the Acharya identity. Educational institutions increasingly face challenges related to academic dishonesty, discrimination, digital misuse, mental health concerns, and declining public trust. Addressing these issues requires teachers who possess not only professional expertise but also strong ethical judgement. The Acharya model proposes that leadership emerges through integrity, fairness, humility, accountability, and service rather than authority alone. Such leadership aligns closely with contemporary discussions on teacher professionalism, educational leadership, and democratic school culture. Integrating ethical leadership into teacher education curricula could therefore strengthen institutional values while preparing teachers to make responsible decisions in increasingly complex educational environments.

The proposed Acharya Competency Framework extends existing teacher competency models by integrating ethical, reflective, and social dimensions alongside professional knowledge and pedagogical skills. Conventional teacher competency frameworks frequently emphasize content knowledge, instructional strategies, classroom management, assessment practices, and technological competence. Although these remain indispensable, the present framework introduces additional competencies including compassionate mentoring, lifelong learning, social responsibility, and digital responsibility. These competencies acknowledge that effective teaching involves not only instructional expertise but also the capacity to nurture human relationships, promote inclusive education, contribute to community development, and engage responsibly with emerging technologies.

The inclusion of digital responsibility within the framework reflects the changing realities of contemporary education. Digital technologies have transformed teaching and learning by expanding access to educational resources, enabling online instruction, and supporting collaborative learning. At the same time, they have generated new ethical challenges related to artificial intelligence, misinformation, academic integrity, cyber safety, privacy, and equitable access. The Acharya tradition

does not reject technological advancement; rather, its emphasis on wisdom, ethical reasoning, and self-discipline provides valuable principles for guiding the responsible use of educational technologies. Consequently, digital competence in teacher education should be complemented by ethical awareness and reflective decision-making.

The study also underscores the importance of lifelong learning and reflective practice in sustaining professional growth. Ancient Indian educational thought viewed both teachers and learners as continuous seekers of knowledge. This perspective closely parallels current understandings of continuous professional development, action research, reflective teaching, and evidence-based educational practice. Teachers operating in rapidly changing educational contexts must continually update their disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical approaches, technological skills, and cultural understanding. By encouraging self-reflection and continuous learning, the Acharya model supports adaptive professionalism capable of responding effectively to changing educational needs.

Furthermore, the findings emphasize the social responsibility of teachers. Contemporary societies confront multiple challenges, including educational inequality, environmental degradation, social polarization, and mental health concerns. Teachers are increasingly expected to contribute to solutions by promoting inclusion, sustainability, democratic citizenship, and community engagement. The Acharya tradition similarly positions education as a means of advancing collective well-being rather than individual achievement alone. Teacher education informed by this philosophy can therefore prepare educators who actively participate in community development and encourage students to become socially responsible citizens.

Despite these significant contributions, the reinterpretation of the Acharya concept should not be understood as an attempt to replicate the ancient Gurukula system in its original form. Educational institutions today operate within democratic, multicultural, technologically advanced, and globally interconnected societies that differ substantially from ancient contexts. Therefore, the value of the Acharya tradition lies not in reproducing historical educational structures but in adapting its enduring philosophical principles to contemporary realities. Principles such as integrity, compassion, reflective inquiry, mentorship, and holistic development remain universally relevant and can be integrated into modern teacher education

without compromising scientific inquiry, inclusivity, or technological innovation.

The conceptual nature of this study also provides opportunities for future research. Empirical investigations may examine the applicability of the proposed Acharya Competency Framework among pre-service teachers, teacher educators, and educational institutions. Future studies could develop standardized instruments to measure Acharya-related competencies, evaluate their relationship with teacher effectiveness, or explore their influence on student learning, professional identity, and institutional culture. Comparative research involving different educational systems may further contribute to understanding how indigenous educational philosophies can enrich global teacher education practices.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that the Acharya ideal offers more than a historical or cultural concept; it represents a dynamic educational philosophy capable of informing contemporary teacher preparation. By integrating ethical leadership, holistic education, reflective practice, compassionate mentoring, lifelong learning, social responsibility, and responsible technology use, the Acharya model contributes to a more balanced understanding of teacher professionalism. Such an approach aligns closely with the aspirations of NEP 2020 and supports the development of educators who are not only competent professionals but also responsible citizens, ethical leaders, and transformative agents of educational and social change.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study reinterpreted the traditional Indian concept of the Acharya within the context of contemporary teacher education and demonstrated its continuing relevance in addressing the educational demands of the twenty-first century. Through a qualitative conceptual analysis of classical Indian educational thought, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and contemporary scholarly literature, the study argued that the Acharya represents a holistic model of teacher professionalism that extends beyond subject instruction to encompass ethical leadership, reflective practice, compassionate mentorship, lifelong learning, and social responsibility.

The findings indicate that while contemporary teacher education has successfully strengthened pedagogical knowledge, technological competence, and professional skills, there remains a growing need

to reinforce the ethical, humanistic, and value-oriented dimensions of teaching. The Acharya tradition provides a philosophical foundation for addressing this need by emphasizing that effective teachers should not merely impart knowledge but also inspire learners through exemplary conduct, integrity, empathy, and commitment to the common good. Such an understanding broadens the role of teachers from information providers to facilitators of intellectual, moral, emotional, and social development.

A major contribution of this study is the development of the Acharya Competency Framework, which identifies seven interrelated competencies essential for contemporary teacher education: ethical leadership, subject mastery, reflective practice, compassionate mentoring, lifelong learning, social responsibility, and digital responsibility. Together, these competencies provide a comprehensive model of teacher preparation that integrates professional excellence with ethical values and holistic education. The framework demonstrates that traditional Indian educational philosophy can meaningfully complement contemporary competency-based teacher education rather than replace it.

The study further establishes a strong conceptual alignment between the Acharya model and the vision articulated in NEP 2020. Both advocate holistic development, experiential learning, value-based education, multidisciplinary approaches, professional autonomy, and the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems into educational practice. Consequently, incorporating Acharya-inspired principles into teacher education curricula can support the effective implementation of national educational reforms while preserving India's rich intellectual and pedagogical heritage.

The implications of this study extend to teacher education institutions, curriculum developers, educational policymakers, and teacher educators. Teacher education programmes may consider integrating courses on professional ethics, reflective practice, mentorship, Indian educational philosophy, and community engagement alongside conventional pedagogical training. Similarly, continuous professional development initiatives may encourage practicing teachers to cultivate reflective habits, ethical leadership, and lifelong learning as integral components of professional identity. Such initiatives can contribute to the preparation of educators who are academically competent, emotionally resilient, culturally responsive, and socially responsible.

Although the study offers a comprehensive conceptual interpretation, it is limited by its reliance on secondary sources and the absence of empirical validation. Future research should examine the practical applicability of the proposed Acharya Competency Framework through quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method studies involving pre-service teachers, teacher educators, and educational institutions. Researchers may also develop standardized assessment tools to evaluate Acharya-related competencies and investigate their influence on teacher effectiveness, professional identity, student engagement, and educational outcomes across diverse institutional contexts.

In conclusion, the Acharya should not be viewed merely as a historical figure associated with ancient Indian education but as a timeless educational ideal capable of enriching contemporary teacher education. Reinterpreted within modern educational contexts, the Acharya embodies a balanced integration of knowledge, ethics, compassion, reflection, and service. By embracing these principles, teacher education can move beyond the preparation of technically competent instructors toward the development of educators who serve as ethical leaders, lifelong learners, mentors, and agents of positive social transformation. Such a vision is essential for realizing the broader goals of sustainable, inclusive, and value-based education envisioned in the twenty-first century.

References

- Aurobindo, S. (1990). *The foundations of Indian culture*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram. (Original work published 1953)
- Bhattacharya, M. (2022). Indian Knowledge Systems and higher education: Opportunities and challenges. *University News*, 60(22), 15–22.
- Central Sanskrit University. (2022). *Introduction to Indian Knowledge Systems*. Central Sanskrit University.
- Government of India. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. Ministry of Education. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
- Kane, P. V. (2011). *History of Dharmasāstra* (Vol. 2). Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
- Krishnamachari, M. (2019). Value-based education in Indian philosophical traditions. *Journal of Indian Education*, 45(2), 24–38.
- Mascaró, J. (Trans.). (1965). *The Upanishads*. Penguin Books.
- Ministry of Education. (2021). *Guidelines for implementing Indian Knowledge Systems in higher education*. Government of India.
- Mishra, S., & Sharma, R. (2023). Indian Knowledge System and teacher education: Reimagining educational practices under NEP 2020. *Journal of Indian Education*, 49(1), 35–49.
- Mukherjee, R. K. (1947). *Ancient Indian education*. Macmillan.
- National Council for Teacher Education. (2009). *National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education: Towards preparing professional and humane teachers*. <https://ncte.gov.in>
- National Council for Teacher Education. (2021). *National Professional Standards for Teachers (Draft)*. <https://ncte.gov.in>
- Pandey, A. (2022). Holistic teacher education through Indian Knowledge Systems. *Educational Quest*, 13(3), 185–193.
- Radhakrishnan, S. (Ed. & Trans.). (1953). *The principal Upanishads*. HarperCollins. (Reprint edition)
- Radhakrishnan, S. (Trans.). (1948). *The Bhagavadgita*. George Allen & Unwin.
- Rao, P. (2023). Teacher identity and Indian Knowledge System: Relevance for teacher education reforms. *Journal of Educational Culture and Society*, 14(2), 210–224. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2023.2.210.224>
- Saraswati, S. (1998). *Four chapters on freedom*. Yoga Publications Trust.
- Sharma, A. (2007). *Indian philosophy of education*. APH Publishing.
- Sharma, S., & Singh, P. (2024). Reimagining teacher education through Indian Knowledge Systems: Policy perspectives and pedagogical implications. *Education and Self Development*, 19(1), 84–99. <https://doi.org/10.26907/esd.19.1.07>
- Singh, B. (2021). Indian educational philosophy and the relevance of the Guru–Shishya tradition in contemporary education. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 12(18), 44–53.
- Singh, M. (2022). Ethics and professionalism in teacher education under NEP 2020. *Journal of Indian Education*, 48(3), 56–69.
- Sri Aurobindo. (1995). *The human cycle*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram.
- Swami Vivekananda. (2006). *Complete works of Swami Vivekananda* (Vol. 4). Advaita Ashrama.

-
- UNESCO. (2015). Rethinking education: Towards a global common good? <https://unesdoc.unesco.org>
- UNESCO. (2021). Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org>
- Vivekananda, S. (2013). Education for character building. Advaita Ashrama.
- Yajurveda. (2014). The Yajurveda (R. T. H. Griffith, Trans.). Forgotten Books. (Original work published 1899)

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The views, findings, conclusions, and opinions expressed in articles published in this journal are exclusively those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s). The publisher and/or editorial team neither endorse nor necessarily share these viewpoints. The publisher and/or editors assume no responsibility or liability for any damage, harm, loss, or injury, whether personal or otherwise, that might occur from the use, interpretation, or reliance upon the information, methods, instructions, or products discussed in the journal's content.
