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### Prohibited Days Of Study And Teaching Practices: Indian Perspective

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#### Abstract

Academic holidays throughout the world are decided as per the modern English calendar on Saturday / Sunday or only Sundays. But in ancient India academic programs conducted in *gurukulas* have their own method of selecting days to be considered as academic holidays as per the lunar and solar months. These decisions of venerable seers of ancient India based on their divine visions laid down some specific principles for regulating academic activities of human beings for controlling their intellectual growth. The prohibited days are related very much with the influence of the Moon and the Sun. So, the students and teachers should avoid these days for study and teaching in their own interest. The present study is a humble attempt to discuss some significant thoughts on ancient Indian study and teaching practices.

**Keywords:** Gurukulas, Lunar month, Ashram, Chaturdashi, Astami, Pratipada, Tidal waves

#### 1. Introduction:

Around the year, Weekends, Saturdays and Sundays or only Sundays are mostly considered as academic holidays, but in ancient India, academic activities conducted in “*Gurukulas*” had their own method of selecting the holidays.

The venerable seers of ancient India used their divine vision and specific principles to choose academic holidays. They used to consider both lunar and solar calendars for this purpose. According to them selection of days for academic practice in this method was helpful in facilitating intellectual growth in human beings and specifically students.

This is one of the many unexplored fields in research of cognitive development of human beings.

#### 2. Relevance of the present study:

In this context<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Dr. Sadashiva Praharaj has studied the wonderful principles of our sages and described in his treatise. In ancient India, sages have been profound wisdom had put much effort and logics to bring out their principles so that scholars as well as teachers would be benefited immensely. The logic behind setting these restrictions is mainly on the principle that our intellectual growth is governed more by the sun and moon. So, for this purpose, both the lunar and solar calendars have been followed. Scholars and teachers should try to understand this logic and follow these principles for their own benefit. Saturdays and Sundays were declared holidays randomly no basis or logic on academic performance was taken into consideration.

#### 3. Historical background of the present study:

Our all time great sage “*Maharshi Manu*” had also given his valuable inputs mentioned in “*Manusmṛti*”.

The Clarion Call of Sage Manu to the World

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सुप्रसिद्धस्यस्मृतिकारस्यमहर्षे-र्मनोःपृथिव्याविदुषांकृतेतूर्यघोषः -

इमान्नित्यमनध्यायानधीयानोविवर्जयेत्।

अध्यापनंचकुर्वाणःशिष्याणांविधि-पूर्वकम्॥<sup>2</sup>

अमावास्यागुरुहन्तिशिष्यंहन्तिचतुर्दशी।

ब्रह्माष्टकापौर्णमास्यौतस्मात्ताःपरिवर्जयेत्॥<sup>3</sup>

The students as well as the teachers, who teach students following certain rules must completely avoid these prohibited days, places and times and study and teaching. The new moon day kills the teacher i.e. lessens his intelligence (if he teaches), the fourteenth day kills the student i.e. lessens his intelligence (if he studies), the eighth day and the full moon day destroy knowledge i.e. lessen knowledge (if he studies or teaches). So, one should completely avoid these days for study and teaching.

(a) The new moon day (*Amāvāshyā*)

(b) 8<sup>th</sup> day of both the fortnights (*Astami*)

(c) 14<sup>th</sup> day of both the fortnights (*Chaturdaśī*)

(d) The full moon day (*Pūrṇimā*)

According to Visnu Purāna,

चतुर्दश्यष्टमीचैनअमावास्याथपूर्णिमा।

पर्वण्येतानिराजेन्द्र! रविसंक्रान्तिरेवच॥<sup>4</sup>

The connecting days are the 8<sup>th</sup>, the 14<sup>th</sup>, the 15<sup>th</sup> days of the fort-nights, the first day of a solar month (and also the first day of a fort-night.)

(a) The 8<sup>th</sup> day (*Astami*)

(b) 14<sup>th</sup> day (*Chaturdaśī*)

(c) The 15<sup>th</sup> day (*Panchadaśī*) (*Amāvāshyā Purnima ca*)

(d) The 1<sup>st</sup> day of a solar month (*Sankrānti*)

In KūrmaPurāna ,

पञ्चदश्यांचतुर्दश्यामष्टम्याराहुसूतके।<sup>5</sup>

One should neither study (nor teach) on the 8<sup>th</sup>, the 14<sup>th</sup>, the 15<sup>th</sup> days of a fort-night and on the days of lunar eclipse and solar eclipse.

पर्वण्येतानिवर्जयेत्॥<sup>6</sup>

One should neither study (nor teach) any subject on the connecting days.

(a) The 8<sup>th</sup> day (*Astami*)

(b) 14<sup>th</sup> day (*Chaturdaśī*)

(c) The 15<sup>th</sup> day (*Panchadaśī*) (*Amāvāshyā Purnima ca*)

(d) The lunar eclipse (*Chandra Grahan*)

(e) The solar eclipse (*Surya Parāga*)

According to Krutya Kalpataru,

प्रतिपत्सुचतुर्दश्यामष्टम्यार्वर्तौर्द्वयोः।

श्वोऽनध्यायेऽद्यशर्वर्यानाधीयीतकदाचन।<sup>7</sup>

One should never study on the 1<sup>st</sup>, the 8<sup>th</sup>, the 14<sup>th</sup> days of a fort-night, on the full moon and the new moon days and on the nights, proceeding the above-mentioned days.

(a) The 1<sup>st</sup> day of both the fortnights (*Pratipadā*)

(b) The 8<sup>th</sup> day of both the fortnights (*Astami*)

(c) The 14<sup>th</sup> day of both the fortnights (*Chaturdaśī*)

(d) The full moon day (*Purnimā*)

(e) The new moon day (*Amāvāsyā*)

Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior. The Moon has intimate relation with the mind which controls human behavior. So the Moon has greater psychological influence on all the beings including all human beings. Scriptures have forbidden nine days in a month for study and teaching and consequently all the intellectual activities. Out of these nine days, eight days are related to the Moon whereas only Sankranti, the first day of a solar month is related to the sun. These eight days are: the 14<sup>th</sup> day of a fortnight, the full Moon day, the next day, the 14<sup>th</sup> day, the new Moon day the next day and the two 8<sup>th</sup> days of both the fort-nights.

#### 4. Influence of the Moon and Sun on study and Teaching

We see the influence of the Moon on the full Moon and new Moon days on the sea. Huge tides rise on these two days because of the gravitational pull of the Moon. The influence of the Moon on the preceding two days and the following two days of the full Moon day and the new Moon day is almost the same or a bit less. This influence of the Moon is not only on the sea but also on all of us who are living on the earth.

The water content of the human body exceeds 50% to 60% and some tidal waves are generated by the gravitational pull of the Moon. The human tidal waves may cause physical, psychological and bio-chemical changes in the body. The brain might also be affected observes Dr. C.P. Thakur.

The two eighth days stand just in the middle of both the fort-nights. On these two days, there is the half-Moon and its influence on earth is less. So low tides rise on the sea known as the Neap tides. Similar is the influence of the Moon on all of us. It adversely affects the minds of all of us.

These are in brief the psychological, medical and scientific reasons for which these eight days are perhaps forbidden in the scriptures for study, teaching and consequently all the intellectual activities.

On this particular day the quality of intellectual thought flow get disturbed. As a result of which the quality of intellectual practice in terms of speech, oration, analysis, decision get disturbed which gives impression about the normal performer to be suddenly disappearing. if he is a teacher while giving oration or speech it is not found to be impressive & focused even though as a matter of fact they said teacher usual speech is normally extremely impressive. Similarly, if he is an analytical teacher, expert in

mathematics or physics, his power of analysis is not found to be of dark level as it is found on other days.

In case of teachers or performers who are usual found to be taking decision quickly, sharply and accurately, they also found failing to take decision in the same way. In case of students those who are suppose to memorize a lot of things in their discipline, they also fail in memorizing things as compared to their normal power of capability for memorization.

### 5. Research Trends on prohibition of study and teachings

Prof. S. Praharaj highlights in his research having such significant topic like prohibition of study and teaching practices. In Indian scriptures provides valuable insights into the concept of *anadhyayana* "prohibition of study and teaching practices". His study rephrased for clarity and conclusion of this concept. Prof. Dr. Sadashiva Praharaj has appealed to the world of scholars and teachers to verify the scientific connections to these rules and regulations suggested by our great ancient seers. He has derived a very important and valid point which can be of great benefit to mankind.

Weekends are considered as a break for both academic and official activities to get some rest and have a change to a monotonous lifestyle.

In contrary to this our ancient Indian seers / gurus of our "Gurukula Ashrama" has studied about the cognitive effect and academic performance variations depending on the sun and moon. Our venerable seers had observed that our physical, mental, emotional as well as intellectual growth directly gets affected as governed by the energy we get from the sun and moon. Hence, they had given a clarion call to the whole world to study and understand the effects of these celestial energy sources on our academic performance and hence on our intellectual growth. On the basis of this research we all should be aware of the prohibited days for studying and teaching.

### 6. Findings of the present study:

In present days, if such things happen on any day for anyone, his surrounding gives remarks as if his intellectual capability has died or vanished on those days.

When the practice of study was getting affected badly those days are considered the cause of killing the intelligence of the teacher or student. So these days are declared for prohibition of academic activities. These days are not only selected by "seers" but also those are some days which repeat as per the position of sun and moon in every month of solar and lunar calendar.

### 7. Conclusion:

Practice of study and teaching in those days are done without the gazettes like the use of books, pens, papers,

computers, monitors, screens and writing pads. The practice of teaching and learning was completely based on oration and listening on those ancient days. So the academic performance was completely related to the power of mind to focus without fickleness. That is completely based on the power of brain and control of mind. So, the performance on these nine days likes:

- 1) The 14<sup>th</sup> day of Suklapaksa (*Chaturdashi*)
- 2) The full moon day (*Pūrṇimā*)
- 3) The next day of the full moon day (*Pratipadā*)
- 4) The 14<sup>th</sup> day of a fort-night (*Kṛṣṇapaksa*)
- 5) The new moon day (*Amābāsyā*)
- 6) The next day of the new moon day (*Pratipadā*)
- 7) The 8<sup>th</sup> day (*Suklapaksa*)
- 8) The other 8<sup>th</sup> day (*Kṛṣṇapaksa*)
- 9) 1<sup>st</sup> day of Solar month (*Sankrānti*)

These above mentioned days are considered to be the days of prohibition should be scientifically established, that is what Prof. S. Praharaj had mentioned in his treatise.

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### Foot note

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4. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 3.11.118
5. *Kūrma Purāṇa*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vol. 14.83
6. Ibid.2<sup>nd</sup> Vol. 14.83
7. See, Prohibited days of study and teachings, p. 20