

## **Chanakya's Mantras for Best Teaching-Learning Process**

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### **Abstract**

The author has taken a keen interest in reviving back the best techniques of the Teaching-Learning process of ancient India. In doing this, Chanakya's best mantras were borrowed. The paper speaks of the beauty of teaching-learning practices uniquely existed during ancient times. The best mantras included Prayer, Thinking Process, Time-Table, Self-Study and Continuous Learning. These are not unique terms, only the shape given to these components by Chanakya has its own uniqueness. Tracing the history, Chanakya was found to stress on the significance of prayer as a part of teaching-learning process. It is not necessarily a feature of teaching-learning practice of the contemporary formal education system. Chanakya saw prayer as a strong force for building good relationships between teachers and the students, igniting love and respect for each other. Regarding the thinking process, Chanakya talked about five aspects of thinking which include, logical thinking, reasoning, scientific thinking, strategic thinking, and critical thinking. He put emphasis on the correct thinking process in the light of displaying characteristics of both science and art. Another mantra according to Chanakya was preparation of a perfect time-table, a time-table which works best for the individual. To him, planning the work was important to begin with preparing a time-table. Self-study is another mantra designed, specifically for three phases. First, study from textbooks/scriptures by the self. Second, hearing and understanding from the teachers. Finally, achieving of the self-reflection or thought processing. In addition, the idea of continuous learning is visible even in the contemporary scene. The difference is when Chanakya guided his students towards development of learning habits such as teacher-like thinking, going beyond the interest area, traveling to new places, being curious, and the writing practices.

**Keywords:** Chanakya; Mantras; Teaching-Learning Process.

### **Introduction**

The contemporary world is heading towards Mechanical ways in solution to various problems of education. The progress of the so-called Mechanical system is visible, but the spirituality is missing. Spirituality is not always related to following a religion but speaking to your being/self or concerning the human spirit and soul. In line with this, Chanakya, the Indian teacher, had beautiful mantras for solutions to various problems associated with the education system in general and the teaching-learning process in particular. The paper aims to revive the mantras of Chanakya for the best teaching-learning process.

### **Chanakya: The Indian Teacher**

Chanakya was a Philosopher and a Hindu statesman who flourished in 300 BCE. He was also called Vishnugupta and Kautilya. Born into a Brahman family and having received education from Taxila, he was well-versed in medicine and astrology. He is best known for his contribution to Arthashastra. In Indian history, he was seen as a counselor and an adviser to Chandragupta, the founder of the Mauryan Empire in Northern India, who reigned during C 321 – C 297. The decorated teacher of Politics and Diplomacy, Chanakya was educated at revered university and was employed there as Professor. He was one of the great teachers of ancient times. He taught Arthashastra, an ancient treatise on statecraft, economic policy, and military strategy. Beyond comprehension, his life was an example of selflessness.

### **Chanakya's mantras for Best Teaching-Learning Process:**

Chanakya has wisely expressed his ideas on education and methods of learning. The following are some of the mantras of Chanakya for the best teaching-learning process.

**Prayer:** For an atheist who disbelieves in the existence of God or for the people who process in tune with the mechanical system, prayer would be a subject of unimportance. Chanakya was habitual of praying before teaching-learning tasks. He calls his students together and recites a peace invocation as a matter of seeking blessings from God. Prayer of blessings includes obstacles-free education, good memory, good health, and concentration. Teacher and students together recited Shanti Mantra.

“Om sahana Vavatu Sahanau Bhunaktu

Saheveeryam Karavavahai

Tejas Vinavati Tamastuma vidhwishavahai Om

Shanti Shanti Shantihi”

**Meaning:** May God protect us. May he nourish us; May we acquire capacity; May we have brilliant studies; May we refrain from arguments with each other.

Prayer for Chanakya had significance for another reason. He believed that prayer works in building a relationship between teachers and students. The practice of praying together ignites love and respect for each other. Such a compatible relationship between the student and teacher stand as backbone of the best teaching-learning process. As a piece of advice makes no sense until we build a cordial relationship with the one we advise, like the teaching-learning process that makes no sense without building a cordial relationship between the teacher and the taught.

**Thinking process:** The thinking process is a way of inquiry and reasoning along with processing and information evaluation in which one explores the perceptions and possibilities of phenomena or an occurrence. It is one of those emphases Chanakya has thought of for. He believed that before learning any content or subject matter, we need to possess the correct thinking process, which is both science and art. Indeed, he suggests that one should possess clear thinking since wake up in the morning. Aanvikshiki, the science of thinking, has its own method leading to progress. In this connection, Chanakya talked about five aspects of thinking. These include, logical thinking, reasoning, scientific thinking, strategic thinking, and critical thinking. These aspects are considered significant even in the present era only that the expression of the meaning of these aspects may seem different for Chanakya.

Nyaya, the logic to him was a significant piece without which his students were advised not to accept any information. It is something that is required for all subjects, not for mathematics alone. Reasoning assists an individual in igniting straight and clear thinking process. It is relevant to examine and arrive at your conclusions. Scientific thinking helps the students in the systematic thinking process. It assists in observation as well as in experimentation. Besides, for achieving the goals we set, aspect of strategic thinking comes into play. Another aspect of importance is critical thinking which aims to bring objective analysis and evaluation of phenomena or situations. It prevents us from forming any judgement before proper examination.

**Timetable:** Chanakya had a piece of interesting advice on preparing a time table. For him, the time table was less about sleeping or being lazy and more about work. He had a great value of time. Most commonly today, in educational institutions, we have time tables that are common to all the students. According to Chanakya, the perfect time table is the one working best for the

individual. One single time table cannot be a perfect one for all. To begin with, preparing a time table, one has to plan the work. Take a pen, a piece of paper and list important subjects then, make a schedule from morning to evening considering the availability of time.

**Self - Study:** There are three types of education such as formal, informal, and non-formal. The formal education emphasizes having a proper uniform, fixed timetables, formal classes, and activities. Unlike the formal education, informal education is a kind of education which can be received even outside the educational institutions such as home, religious places, public gatherings and the like. Apart from these two kinds, non-formal education has a connecting institute, but this refrains from setting strict rules and regulations. The best example is Open and Distance Learning Institutes like IGNOU, which is a pivotal to self-study.

The practice of self-study has started from the olden period; the evidence is visible when we saw Chanakya guiding his students toward self-study. In Indian scriptures, it is called, swadhaya. According to Chanakya, it is irreplaceable by any other method for study. It is a way of giving you to yourself. However, the process of self-study had three steps. First, study from textbooks/scriptures by the self. Second, hearing and understanding from the teachers. The teacher is to explain what is understood from the scriptures. Finally comes self-reflection or the thought processing. Learners are to develop their thoughts.

**Continuous Learning:** Chanakya was a strict teacher who said the king or a leader is a person of wisdom and who has no choice but to know everything. He suggests his students to follow the same path. One may question the individual difference in learning as some learn quickly and some slowly. In response to this, Chanakya put forward his idea of never stopping learning which may also mean that students have to learn all but at their pace. The idea is that learning is a continuous process that ends only with the death of humankind. In this respect, Chanakya suggested various ways of developing learning habits which includes; teacher-like thinking process, going beyond the interest area, traveling to new places, being curious, and writing.

**Conclusion:** Ideas of Chanakya on education and learning are accepted and followed by people worldwide but discarded by few. He believed, “Learning is like a cow of desire. It, like her, yields in all seasons. Like a mother, it feeds you on your journey. Therefore, learning is a hidden treasure”. The objective of this work was to bring forth the best techniques of the Teaching-Learning process in the contemporary scenario concerning Chanakya’s ideology. Living in a

context of life which is clearly different from today, his ideas are of great significance as its footprint is measurable. Although because of social change, the order of society, education and learning has changed, but his writings and teachings are remarkably relevant till date.

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