

# Dialogic Wisdom: Integrating Upanishadic Debate Technique into 21st-Century Education Systems

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** *The purpose of this study is to examine the relevance of the Upanishadic dialogic method of teaching and learning in contemporary education systems and to explore its applicability in modern classrooms to foster critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and reflective inquiry.*

**Methodology:** *The research adopts a mixed-method design combining conceptual analysis of ancient Indian pedagogical traditions with an empirical survey conducted among teachers from high schools, pre-university institutions, and undergraduate colleges. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analysed through descriptive statistical methods along with thematic interpretation of qualitative responses.*

**Results/Analysis:** *The findings indicate that while teachers demonstrate moderate awareness of the Upanishadic dialogic approach, most respondents believe that discussion-based learning can significantly enhance critical thinking, student engagement, and reflective reasoning. The study also reveals that dialogic pedagogies align closely with contemporary educational frameworks such as constructivist learning theory and inquiry-based education.*

**Originality/Value:** *This study bridges ancient Indian educational philosophy and modern pedagogy by examining how the Upanishadic debate technique can contribute to learner-centered educational reforms, particularly in light of policy frameworks such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.*

**Type of Paper:** Empirical Research paper.

**Keywords:** Upanishads, dialogic learning, Socratic dialogue, NEP 2020, constructivism, ancient Indian knowledge systems, education reform, guru-shishya tradition

### 1. INTRODUCTION :

Education systems around the world are increasingly shifting from teacher-centered approaches toward learner-centered pedagogies that emphasize critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and reflective learning (Parekh (2026). [1]). Contemporary scholars argue that effective learning environments must encourage students to actively participate in knowledge construction rather than passively receiving information (Easwaran (2007). [2]).

One pedagogical approach gaining renewed attention is **dialogic teaching**, which promotes learning through discussion, questioning, and reflective inquiry (Gupta & Dhingra (2025). [3]). Dialogic methods encourage students to engage in reasoning processes, examine different perspectives, and develop analytical skills that are essential for modern education systems.

Ancient Indian educational traditions offer a rich example of dialogic pedagogy through the philosophical dialogues found in the Upanishads. These texts depict conversations between teachers and students in which knowledge is revealed through questioning, debate, and reflective inquiry (Jana & Singh (2025). [4]). Such dialogue-based instruction forms the core of the **guru-śiṣya tradition**, where learning occurs through interactive engagement between teacher and learner.

The Upanishadic teaching method emphasizes experiential learning, ethical inquiry, and self-realization. Unlike conventional lecture-based education, the teacher does not simply transmit information but guides students toward discovering knowledge through inquiry (Kanat, K & Temel (2025). [5]). This approach bears striking similarities to the **Socratic method** of teaching in Western

philosophy, where instructors stimulate critical thinking by posing questions that challenge assumptions and encourage reasoning (Kumar & Downey (2018). [6]).

Research in educational psychology has demonstrated that dialogue-based learning environments significantly improve students' reasoning abilities and conceptual understanding which has been incorporated into the New Education Policy (NEP (2020). [7]). Socratic dialogue has been widely recognized as an effective teaching method for developing critical thinking and reflective judgment among students (Peters & Besley (2021). [8]). Similarly, studies on collaborative and inquiry-based learning suggest that students learn more effectively when they participate in discussions and problem-solving activities rather than memorizing information (Piaget & Inhelder (2008). [9]).

Despite the philosophical significance of dialogic pedagogy in Indian educational heritage, modern educational systems have largely neglected these traditions. Many classrooms still rely heavily on lecture-based instruction, leaving little room for reflective dialogue and intellectual debate (Park, Lee & Sung (2025). [10]). Consequently, there is a growing need to explore how ancient dialogic traditions can inform contemporary educational practices.

This study examines the pedagogical relevance of the Upanishadic debate technique in modern education systems. By analysing both theoretical perspectives and empirical teacher perceptions, the research aims to evaluate whether integrating dialogic learning strategies derived from the Upanishads can enhance critical thinking and learner engagement in contemporary classrooms.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) To examine the philosophical foundations of the Upanishadic dialogic method of teaching and learning.
- (2) To analyze similarities between Upanishadic dialogue and modern pedagogical approaches such as the Socratic method and constructivism.
- (3) To assess teachers' awareness and perceptions regarding dialogic pedagogy in contemporary classrooms.
- (4) To evaluate the relevance of the Upanishadic debate technique within modern educational frameworks.
- (5) To identify the benefits and challenges associated with implementing dialogic learning strategies.
- (6) To propose practical strategies for integrating the Upanishadic teaching approach into 21st-century education systems.

## 3. LITERATURE SURVEY:

Education systems across cultures have historically relied on dialogic traditions to cultivate knowledge, critical thinking, and intellectual inquiry. Dialogic learning refers to a pedagogical approach in which knowledge emerges through interaction, questioning, and collaborative reasoning between teachers and learners. In both Western and Eastern educational traditions, dialogue has been recognized as a central method for stimulating reflection and developing intellectual autonomy.

### 3.1 Dialogic Pedagogy in Classical and Modern Education:

Dialogic pedagogy has its roots in ancient philosophical traditions. The Socratic method, attributed to the Greek philosopher Socrates, involves guiding students through a sequence of questions that challenge assumptions and encourage deeper reflection. According to educational theorists, this method enables learners to construct knowledge through reasoning rather than passive memorization (Hews, Beligatamulla & McNamara (2013). [11]). Research on Socratic pedagogy demonstrates that dialogue-based learning encourages the development of critical thinking and collaborative reasoning skills among students (Srinivasan & Aithal (2025). [12]).

In contemporary educational theory, dialogic learning is closely connected with constructivist perspectives. Constructivist scholars argue that knowledge is actively constructed through social interaction and reflective inquiry rather than transmitted directly from teacher to student (Tang et.al (2023). [13]). Educational psychologists have emphasized the importance of social interaction in cognitive development and learning processes (Vygotsky (1978). [14]).

The concept of dialogic teaching has been further developed by modern education researchers who emphasize the role of classroom discourse in promoting deeper understanding. Dialogic classrooms encourage students to articulate ideas, question assumptions, and respond critically to others' perspectives (Wang & McLaughlin (2025). [15]). Such learning environments promote analytical reasoning and creativity, which are essential competencies in modern education systems.

### 3.2 Socratic Dialogue and Critical Thinking:

Several empirical studies have explored the effectiveness of the Socratic method in educational settings. Research has shown that Socratic dialogue enhances students' reasoning abilities by encouraging them to examine underlying assumptions and evaluate alternative viewpoints (Watkins (2003). [16]). In teacher education programs, Socratic dialogue has been found to improve interpersonal sensitivity and reflective thinking among student teachers (Wilberding (2021). [17]).

Similarly, classroom interventions based on Socratic dialogue have demonstrated improvements in creativity and collaborative problem-solving. For instance, research examining dialogic learning interventions in European schools found that students who participated in Socratic dialogue sessions developed stronger analytical reasoning and creative thinking skills (Yilmaz (2025). [18]).

Further research indicates that dialogic teaching can also support inclusive learning environments. Studies on dialogic pedagogy for students with special educational needs have shown that structured dialogue can improve communication skills, social interaction, and self-reflection among learners (Umarusman & Ergül (2026). [19]).

### 3.3 Upanishadic Dialogic Pedagogy:

While the Socratic method is widely recognized in Western educational philosophy, dialogic teaching also has deep roots in ancient Indian intellectual traditions. The Upanishads, which form part of the Vedic corpus, present philosophical knowledge through dialogues between teachers and students. These dialogues often involve questions about the nature of reality, self, and knowledge, guiding the learner toward deeper understanding through inquiry and reflection (Murthy (1994). [20]).

Research on Indian educational philosophy highlights that the **Upanishadic method of teaching is fundamentally dialogic**. Knowledge is transmitted through conversations between the guru and the disciple, emphasizing questioning, reflection, and experiential understanding rather than rote memorization (Ferrer (2018). [21]). Scholars argue that this dialogic pedagogy promotes intellectual humility and encourages learners to discover knowledge through personal inquiry.

Studies analyzing pedagogical narratives in texts such as the **Chândogya Upanishad** show that teachers frequently used analogies, stories, and question-answer dialogues to guide students toward philosophical insights (Baindur (2019). [22]). These pedagogical methods emphasize the gradual unfolding of knowledge through guided questioning, which closely resembles modern inquiry-based learning approaches.

Moreover, research on indigenous knowledge systems suggests that dialogic traditions such as **sañvāda (dialogue)** and **vāda (debate)** were integral to ancient Indian education. These traditions encouraged intellectual debate and multiple perspectives, fostering critical thinking and philosophical exploration (Brieron et. Al (2016). [23]).

### 3.4 Dialogic Learning and Modern Educational Theory:

Modern educational research increasingly supports dialogic learning approaches. Collaborative learning studies demonstrate that students working in discussion-based environments develop stronger problem-solving skills compared to those learning through traditional lectures (Pedaste et.al (2015). [24]). Similarly, inquiry-based learning models emphasize questioning and exploration as essential elements of effective education (Murphy et.al (2009). [25]).

Contemporary studies have also explored the role of dialogic teaching in developing higher-order thinking skills. Researchers have found that discussion-based classrooms enable students to engage in analytical reasoning, reflective thinking, and metacognitive processes (Linn, Davis & Eylon, (2013). [26]). These findings align closely with the principles of dialogic pedagogy found in both Socratic and Upanishadic traditions.

Recent interdisciplinary research has also examined the role of dialogic learning in digital and technology-enhanced education. Studies suggest that structured dialogue frameworks can enhance

guided learning and support knowledge integration in complex educational contexts (Kumari & Niyogi (2025). [27]).

### 3.5 Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Educational Reform:

In recent years, scholars have increasingly emphasized the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge systems into contemporary education. Research on the Indian Knowledge System highlights that ancient Indian pedagogical traditions offer valuable insights for modern educational reforms (Kumari & Niyogi (2025). [28]).

Educational policy initiatives such as the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** encourage the integration of Indian knowledge traditions into modern curricula. Scholars argue that incorporating dialogic traditions from classical Indian texts could enrich contemporary pedagogical practices and promote holistic education (Pandey (2024). [29]).

The Upanishadic teaching tradition in particular offers a model for integrating ethical reflection, philosophical inquiry, and experiential learning. By emphasizing dialogue, self-inquiry, and critical reasoning, this approach aligns closely with modern educational goals of fostering independent thinking and lifelong learning.

**Table 1:** Summary of major themes in Literature Review

No.	Author(s)	Year	Focus of Study	Methodology / Approach	Key Findings / Contribution
1	Srinivasan & Aithal	2025	Philosophical teachings of the Upanishads and their connection with Stoic philosophy	Conceptual and comparative analysis	The study highlights that Upanishadic wisdom promotes introspection, dialogue, and ethical reasoning, which remain relevant for modern philosophical and educational discourse.
2	Murthy	1994	Inquiry systems in the Upanishads	Systems analysis of philosophical texts	The Upanishadic tradition emphasizes inquiry, reflective dialogue, and teacher–student interaction as fundamental mechanisms of knowledge acquisition.
3	Ferrer	2018	Integral education in ancient Indian traditions	Historical and philosophical analysis	Vedic and Upanishadic educational systems integrated intellectual, ethical, and spiritual development through dialogic pedagogy.
4	Baindur	2019	Concept of <i>Vāda</i> (dialogue and debate) in Indian philosophical traditions	Philosophical discourse analysis	Dialogue and debate were essential components of intellectual engagement in classical Indian knowledge systems.
5	Vygotsky	1978	Social constructivism and collaborative learning	Developmental psychology theory	Learning occurs through social interaction and dialogue, highlighting the role of communication in cognitive development.
6	Murphy et al.	2009	Classroom discussion and student comprehension	Meta-analysis of empirical studies	Structured classroom discussions significantly improve comprehension and higher-order thinking skills.
7	Wilberding	2021	Socratic method in classroom teaching	Pedagogical framework	Socratic questioning fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical reasoning among students.

No.	Author(s)	Year	Focus of Study	Methodology / Approach	Key Findings / Contribution
8	Buchanan et al.	2015	Inquiry-based learning cycle	Systematic literature review	Inquiry-based learning promotes active exploration, questioning, and conceptual understanding in learners.
9	Oancea et al.	2021	Research capacity building in teacher education	Policy and institutional research	Strengthening teachers' research skills enhances pedagogical innovation and the adoption of dialogic teaching practices.
10	Brand & Moore	2011	Professional development for inquiry-based teaching	Experimental educational research	Constructivist professional development programs improve teachers' ability to implement inquiry-based learning strategies.
11	Ratnam-Lim & Tan	2015	Implementation of formative assessment in examination-oriented systems	Educational policy analysis	Formative assessment practices support dialogic learning by encouraging feedback, reflection, and continuous improvement.
12	Miquel & Duran	2017	Peer learning networks and cooperative learning	Educational case study	Collaborative learning networks among teachers enhance classroom dialogue and student engagement.

### 3.6 Summary of Literature and Research Gap

Table 3.1 demonstrates that dialogic pedagogy has deep roots in both classical philosophical traditions and contemporary educational theory. Ancient Indian educational systems, particularly the Upanishadic tradition, emphasized inquiry, debate, and reflective dialogue as core teaching methods. Similarly, modern educational research highlights the importance of social interaction, classroom discussion, and inquiry-based learning in promoting critical thinking and conceptual understanding. Studies on teacher professional development and formative assessment further indicate that institutional support and pedagogical training are essential for implementing dialogic learning environments. However, despite these theoretical and empirical insights, limited research has examined how Upanishadic dialogic methods can be systematically integrated into contemporary educational practices. This gap provides the foundation for the present study.

We find that, modern educational research strongly supports discussion-based learning environments (Hamad & Al-Harrasi (2026). [30]). Empirical studies demonstrate that dialogic teaching improves student engagement, creativity, and analytical reasoning.

However, despite the growing interest in dialogic pedagogy, the Upanishadic debate technique remains underexplored in contemporary educational research, particularly in empirical studies examining its relevance for modern classrooms.

Most existing research focuses on either Western dialogic pedagogy or philosophical interpretations of Indian texts (Meghwal (2025). [31]). Few studies investigate how the dialogic traditions of the Upanishads can be systematically integrated into modern educational practices.

Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining the pedagogical relevance of the Upanishadic debate technique and evaluating teachers' perceptions regarding its application in contemporary education systems.

### 4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY :

A descriptive mixed-methods design was used to capture teachers' perspectives. A structured Google Form questionnaire was circulated among high school, pre-university (PUC), and undergraduate college teachers. A total of 51 valid responses were received. The questionnaire comprised both closed-ended Likert-scale questions and open-ended prompts related to perceived benefits, challenges, and support needs in implementing the Upanishadic or dialogue-based teaching method. Quantitative data are represented in graphs and charts while open-ended responses are subjected to thematic analysis using frequency and interpretive coding.

The key Likert items assessed agreement with statements regarding time constraints, student preferences, institutional support, training needs, and moral dialogue. Descriptive statistics were computed using Excel, and visualizations were generated to illustrate familiarity, relevance, and perceived challenges. Thematic clustering was applied to identify recurrent patterns in qualitative responses across four domains: perceived benefits, integration ideas, challenges, and support required.

## 5. RESULTS AND FINDINGS :

### 5.1 Quantitative Findings:

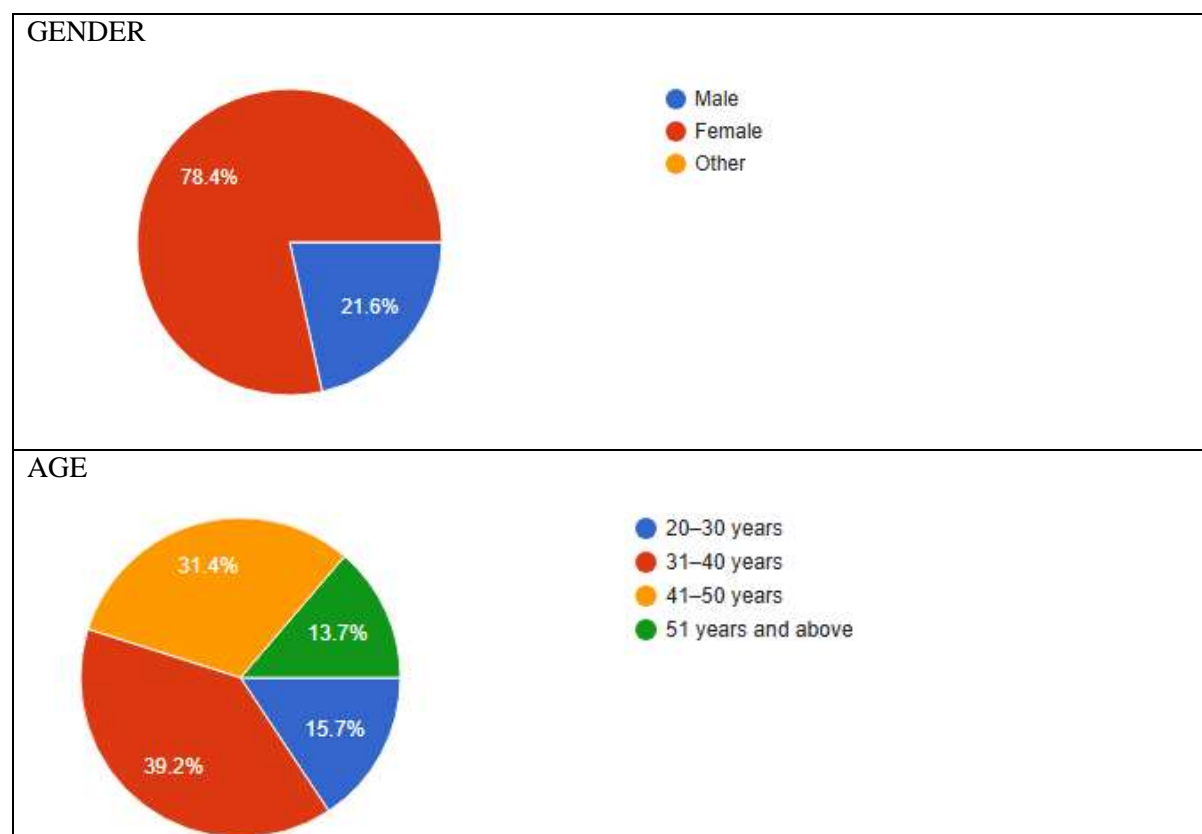
The demographic data displayed in Figure 1 provides insight into the diversity of participants in terms of gender, teaching level, experience, and institutional background, thereby strengthening the contextual interpretation of their perspectives on the Upanishadic dialogue method.

#### 5.1.1 Gender Distribution:

Among the respondents, a majority were female teachers (approximately two-thirds), while male teachers accounted for about one-third of the sample. This gender distribution reflects the broader composition of the Indian teaching workforce at the school level, where female educators constitute a significant proportion. The balanced participation from both genders adds validity to the study's exploration of pedagogical perspectives.

#### 5.1.2 Age and Experience:

The age of respondents ranged primarily between 25 and 55 years, indicating representation from both early-career and senior educators. In terms of professional experience, around 23.5% had over 21 years of experience, 41.2% of the teachers had over 10 years of teaching experience, 17.6% had 5–10 years, and the remaining 17.6% were relatively new entrants with less than five years of service. This mix of experience levels ensured a comprehensive understanding of both the enthusiasm of newer teachers and the reflective insights of seasoned educators.



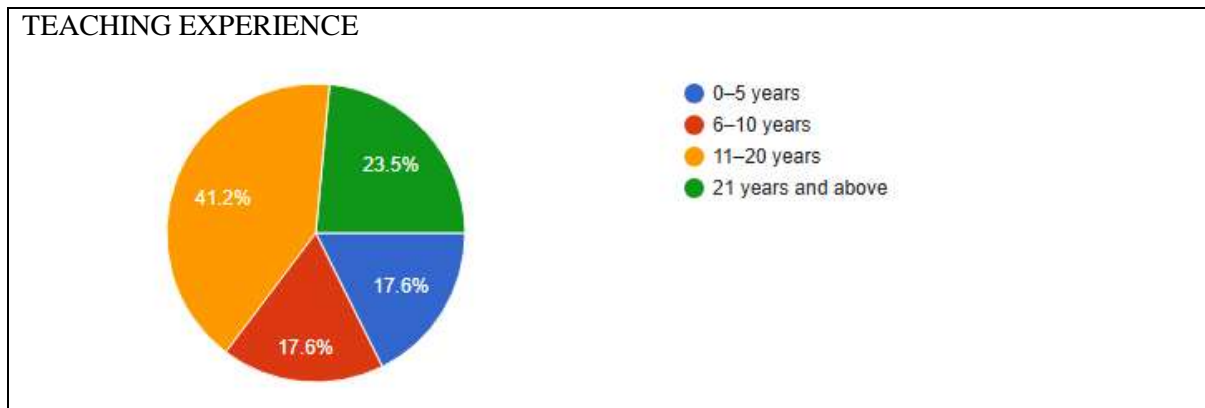


Fig. 1: Demographic Profile

**5.1.3: Familiarity with the Upanishadic Dialogue Method:**

The survey results indicate varied levels of familiarity among teachers with the Upanishadic dialogue or debate method. As shown in Figure 2, nearly half of the respondents (49%) reported being “somewhat familiar” with the concept, suggesting that many educators have an awareness of dialogic teaching rooted in Indian philosophical traditions but may lack in-depth understanding or exposure. About one-fifth (20.4%) indicated being “very familiar”, reflecting a smaller segment of teachers—possibly those with backgrounds in humanities or Indian philosophy—who actively recognize or apply such methods in their classrooms.

Interestingly, 22.4% of participants mentioned that they had “heard of it” but were not conversant with its principles, while 8.2% reported being “not familiar” at all. This pattern reveals that while the Upanishadic method holds conceptual appeal, practical awareness and structured training remain limited. The findings highlight a clear need for capacity-building programs (Oancea et.al (2021). [32]) to help teachers translate this ancient dialogic wisdom into contemporary pedagogical practices aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes reflective and discussion-based learning.

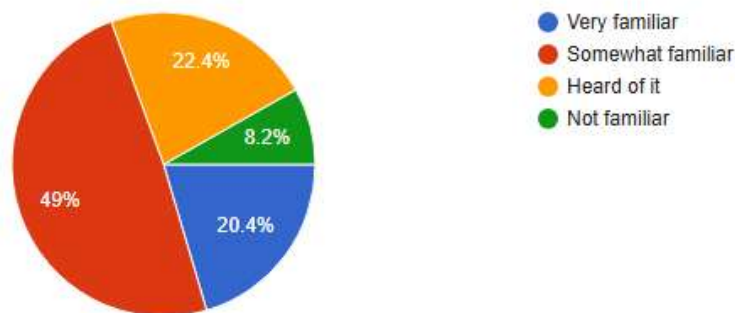


Fig. 2: Familiarity with the Upanishadic Dialogue Method

**5.1.4: Frequency of Using the Upanishadic or Dialogic Method in Teaching:**

As illustrated in Figure 3, only a limited proportion of teachers reported consistent application of the Upanishadic or dialogue-based method in their teaching practice. Approximately 27.5% of respondents stated that they use such dialogic techniques regularly, while a majority (51%) indicated using them occasionally. This suggests that although educators recognize the value of reflective and discussion-oriented pedagogy, its application remains intermittent and context-dependent—often influenced by subject matter, time constraints, and curricular demands.

Furthermore, 15.7% of teachers mentioned that they use the approach rarely, and a small fraction reported that they never employ it in their classrooms. These findings imply that the Upanishadic

method is conceptually appreciated but inconsistently implemented. Factors such as syllabus rigidity, exam-oriented systems, and limited exposure to training in dialogic or inquiry-based learning may hinder its regular practice. The overall trend points to a latent readiness among teachers (Bahaw et.al (2025) [33], suggesting that structured professional development initiatives could help them integrate dialogic principles more systematically into their classroom teaching.

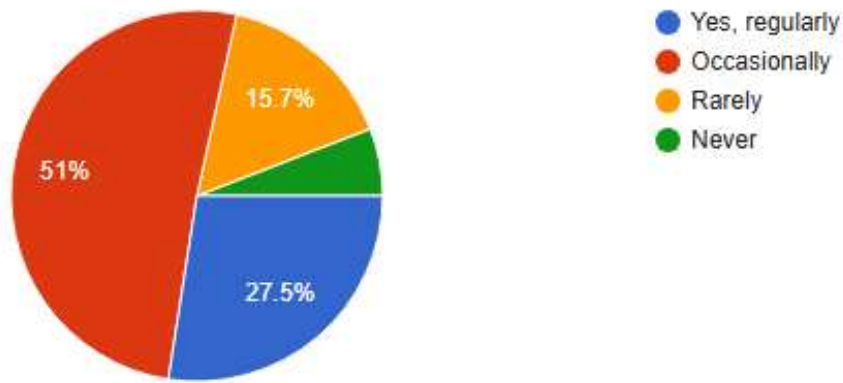


Fig. 3: Frequency of Using the Upanishadic or Dialogic Method in Teaching

**5.1.5: Perceived Learning Outcomes of the Upanishadic Dialogue Method:**

As shown in Figure 4, teachers identified multiple pedagogical benefits associated with the Upanishadic dialogue method. The most frequently cited outcomes were the enhancement of critical thinking (47.1%) and ethical reflection (47.1%), indicating that educators view dialogic inquiry as a means of fostering higher-order cognition and moral reasoning among students. These findings resonate strongly with the philosophical essence of the Upanishadic tradition, which emphasizes questioning, discernment, and self-realization over rote acceptance (Mane (2023). [34]).

A considerable proportion of respondents (41.2%) also linked the method to experiential learning, highlighting that students learn more effectively when they engage actively in dialogue and reflection rather than passively receiving information. Conversely, fewer teachers (27.5%) associated the method with memorization and accuracy, reaffirming that dialogic techniques shift the focus from mechanical recall to conceptual understanding. Only one respondent (2%) cited increased respect toward teachers or improved discipline, suggesting that while interpersonal respect may emerge as a by-product of open dialogue, it is not perceived as a primary learning outcome.

Overall, the results underscore that educators primarily value the Upanishadic method for its potential to cultivate critical inquiry, moral sensitivity, and experiential engagement, aligning closely with the learner-centric goals envisioned in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 (Kumar (2025). [35]).

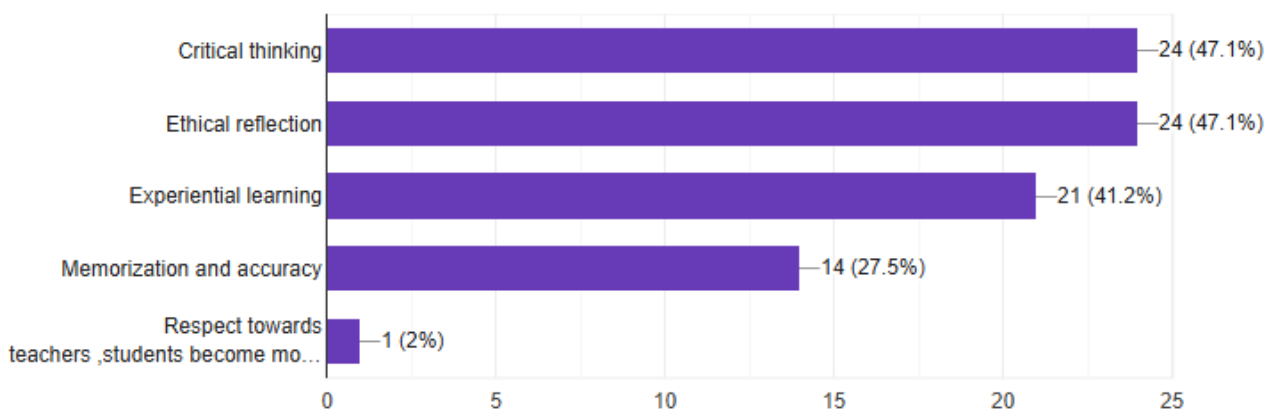


Fig. 4: Perceived Learning Outcomes of the Upanishadic Dialogue Method

### 5.1.6: Alignment of the Upanishadic Dialogue Method with NEP 2020 Principles:

As illustrated in Figure 5, most teachers perceive a strong conceptual harmony between the Upanishadic dialogue method and the pedagogical vision articulated in India’s National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. About 40 percent of respondents believed that the method strongly aligns with NEP 2020, while an additional 44 percent felt it partially aligns. Together, these groups represent a substantial 84 percent consensus that dialogic and contemplative teaching approaches are compatible with the policy’s emphasis on holistic, multidisciplinary, and inquiry-based learning.

A smaller segment (16 percent) expressed uncertainty, possibly reflecting limited familiarity with the philosophical underpinnings of NEP 2020 or the Upanishadic model itself. Notably, none of the respondents indicated that the method does not align with policy objectives. This broad agreement suggests that educators recognize the Upanishadic pedagogy as a timeless framework that can meaningfully advance NEP 2020 goals such as fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and experiential learning.

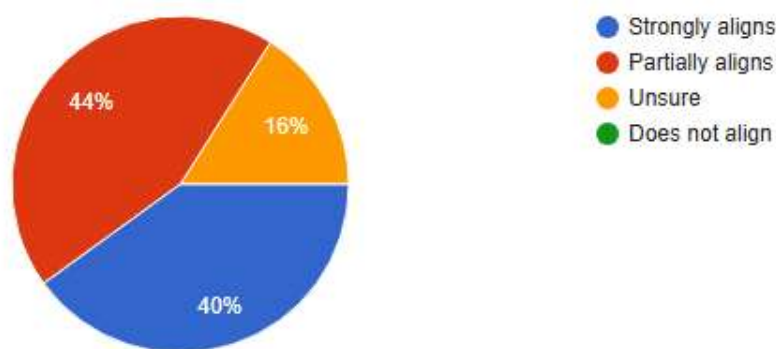


Fig. 5: Alignment of the Upanishadic Dialogue Method with NEP 2020 Principles

### 5.1.7: Teachers’ Willingness to Receive Training in the Upanishadic Dialogue Method:

As depicted in Figure 6, a majority of respondents expressed openness toward professional development in the Upanishadic or dialogue-based method. Approximately 40.4 percent of teachers affirmed that they would definitely participate in training programs designed to integrate this pedagogical approach into their teaching practices. A larger group, constituting 53.8 percent, responded with “maybe”, indicating a conditional interest that might depend on factors such as training duration, institutional support, or perceived applicability to their subject areas.

Only a small fraction (5.8 percent) expressed no interest in undergoing such training. These results suggest that while teachers acknowledge the potential value of the Upanishadic model, many are seeking clearer guidance and institutional endorsement before fully committing to its adoption. The overall trend reflects a readiness for pedagogical innovation, provided that systemic encouragement, time allocation, and practical demonstrations accompany theoretical orientation. This finding highlights the importance of capacity-building workshops and curriculum-linked training modules to facilitate the translation of dialogic ideals into everyday teaching contexts. The observation echoes the need for standardized adoption criteria, structured professional development, implementation incentives for the success of pedagogical innovations in classroom teaching (Lei & Morrow (2010). [36]).

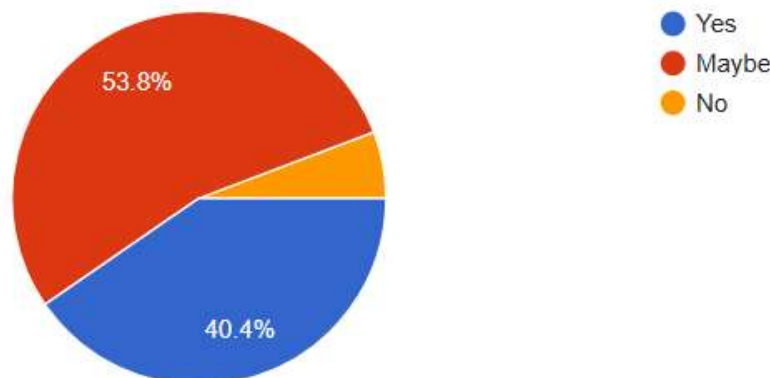


Fig. 6: Teachers' Willingness to Receive Training in the Upanishadic Dialogue Method

### 5.2 Qualitative Findings:

Thematic analysis of the open-ended responses identified four major themes, which are consistent with findings reported in the existing literature in the field:

- (1) Perceived Benefits,
- (2) Integration into Contemporary Classrooms,
- (3) Challenges, and
- (4) Support and Resources Needed.

1. Perceived Benefits – Teachers viewed the Upanishadic dialogue method as a means of promoting critical thinking, moral awareness, empathy, and teacher-student connection. It was described as fostering curiosity and reflection, leading to holistic student development.

2. Integration into Contemporary Classrooms – Respondents proposed blending traditional dialogue with modern pedagogies, such as ICT-enabled discussions, project-based learning, and reflective classroom dialogues. This shows readiness to adapt ancient principles within modern frameworks (Tomar (2025). [37]), (Gupta et.al (2021). [38]), (Hadyaoui & Cheniti-Belcadhi (2025). [39]).

3. Challenges – Major barriers included large class sizes, rigid syllabi, time constraints, lack of training, and limited institutional encouragement (Cuseo (2007). [40]), (Nyagope (2023). [41]), (Das, Haque & Majumder (2025). [42]). Teachers highlighted that examination-oriented culture and workload prevent the space for meaningful dialogue (Ghaleb (2024). [43]), (Carless (2012). [44]), (Ratnam-Lim & Tan (2015). [45]).

4. Support and Resources Needed – Teachers emphasized the need for professional development, administrative backing, and model lesson plans (Knapp (2003). [46]), (Honig (2012). [47]), (McLaughlin & Marsh (1978). [48]), (Foulger, Wetzel & Buss (2019). [49]). Workshops and peer-learning networks were viewed as essential for building capacity and confidence (Miquel & Duran (2017). [50]), (Aminu, Hamdan & Russell (2021). [51]).

Overall, teachers exhibit a strong philosophical alignment with dialogic pedagogy but face structural and systemic limitations in its execution.

### 6. DISCUSSION :

The results indicate strong potential for integrating the Upanishadic debate technique into modern education systems. The dialogic nature of Upanishadic teaching encourages reflective inquiry and intellectual exploration, both of which are essential for developing critical thinking skills.

Modern pedagogical frameworks such as constructivism emphasize active learning, where students build knowledge through interaction and reflection (Rusche & Jason (2011). [52]). The Upanishadic method closely aligns with this perspective because it encourages students to question assumptions and explore philosophical ideas through dialogue.

Moreover, dialogue-based learning environments promote collaborative learning and mutual respect among students. By engaging in thoughtful discussions, learners develop communication skills and ethical reasoning.

However, implementing dialogic pedagogy requires structural changes within educational institutions. Teachers must receive training in facilitating discussions, designing inquiry-based activities, and encouraging open intellectual debate.

## 7. SUGGESTIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS :

Based on the analysis of teacher responses and the objectives of the study, several recommendations are proposed for effectively integrating dialogic pedagogical approaches derived from the Upanishadic tradition into contemporary education systems. These recommendations are grounded in the empirical findings of the survey and aligned with the objectives of the research.

### 7.1 Strengthening Teacher Awareness and Training in Dialogic Pedagogy:

One of the key findings of the survey indicated that although teachers recognized the benefits of dialogue-based learning, many respondents reported **moderate or limited familiarity with the Upanishadic dialogic method**. This finding directly relates to **Objective 3**, which aimed to assess teachers' awareness and perceptions regarding dialogic pedagogy.

To address this gap, teacher education programs should incorporate specialized training modules that focus on dialogic teaching techniques. Workshops and professional development programs can introduce educators to strategies such as questioning techniques, philosophical dialogue, and guided inquiry (Brand & Moore (2011). [53]), (Zohar & Resnick (2021). [54]). Such training would equip teachers with the skills required to facilitate meaningful discussions and encourage critical thinking among students.

Teacher training institutions should also integrate dialogic pedagogical frameworks into their curriculum so that future educators become familiar with discussion-based learning methods during their initial training. By strengthening teacher awareness and pedagogical competence, educational institutions can create classrooms that promote intellectual inquiry and collaborative learning.

### 7.2 Integration of Dialogic Learning into Curriculum Design:

Another significant finding from the survey revealed that teachers believe dialogue-based learning improves **student engagement and conceptual understanding**. This observation supports **Objective 2**, which sought to analyze the similarities between Upanishadic dialogic teaching and modern learner-centered pedagogies.

Educational institutions should therefore incorporate structured dialogic activities into curriculum design (Chang et.al (2015). [55]). For example, classroom practices such as seminar discussions, debate sessions, and inquiry-based projects can encourage students to actively engage with learning materials. These activities enable students to articulate their perspectives, evaluate arguments, and develop analytical reasoning skills.

Curriculum planners should also include philosophical dialogues and reflective discussions inspired by classical Indian texts to foster interdisciplinary learning. Such integration would allow students to explore ethical and philosophical questions while simultaneously developing critical thinking skills.

### 7.3 Encouraging Inquiry-Based and Experiential Learning:

The survey findings indicate that teachers view dialogic learning as a powerful method for fostering **critical thinking and reflective inquiry among students**. This result aligns with **Objective 1**, which examines the philosophical foundations of the Upanishadic teaching method.

Educational institutions should promote inquiry-based learning models where students actively explore ideas through questioning and investigation (Buchanan et.al (2016). [56]), (Öztürk, Kaya & Demir (2022). [57]), (Acar & Tuncdogan (2019). [58]). Teachers can adopt instructional strategies such as problem-based learning, case-study discussions, and guided philosophical dialogues. These approaches encourage students to analyse complex problems and develop independent reasoning abilities.

Such learning environments mirror the pedagogical principles found in ancient Indian educational traditions, where knowledge was transmitted through dialogue and experiential exploration rather than rote memorization.

#### 7.4 Aligning Indigenous Pedagogical Traditions with Contemporary Educational Policies:

Another important objective of the study was to evaluate the relevance of the Upanishadic dialogic method within contemporary educational frameworks. The survey findings suggest that teachers perceive strong alignment between dialogic pedagogy and the learner-centered educational reforms promoted by the National Education Policy 2020.

Educational policymakers should therefore consider integrating indigenous knowledge traditions into modern teaching practices. Incorporating dialogic pedagogies derived from classical Indian texts can enrich the curriculum and provide students with culturally relevant learning experiences. By connecting traditional knowledge systems with contemporary pedagogical approaches, educational institutions can create a more holistic and inclusive learning environment.

#### 7.5 Creating Collaborative Learning Environments in Classrooms:

Survey responses also highlighted that teachers believe dialogue-based learning improves **communication skills and collaborative learning among students**. This observation supports **Objective 5**, which seeks to identify the benefits and challenges associated with implementing dialogic pedagogy.

To maximize these benefits, educational institutions should create classroom environments that encourage collaborative discussion and peer interaction (Staarman et.al (2005). [59]). Small-group discussions, peer-led seminars, and student-facilitated debates can promote active participation and mutual learning. These practices allow students to engage with diverse perspectives and refine their reasoning abilities.

Additionally, teachers should adopt facilitation strategies that encourage respectful dialogue and constructive debate among students. Such practices can cultivate an academic culture that values intellectual curiosity and open exchange of ideas.

#### 7.6 Addressing Practical Barriers to Implementation:

While teachers expressed strong support for dialogic pedagogy, the survey findings also identified several practical challenges, including **large classroom sizes, limited instructional time, and lack of training**. These challenges relate to **Objective 6**, which aims to propose strategies for implementing dialogic teaching methods effectively.

Educational institutions should address these barriers by adopting flexible instructional strategies (Sadler-Smith & Smith (2004). [60]), (Barua & Lockee (2024). [61]). For example, teachers can incorporate short dialogue sessions within lectures, use digital discussion platforms for extended dialogue, and divide large classes into smaller discussion groups.

Institutional support is also essential for promoting dialogic teaching practices. Administrators should provide resources such as training workshops, teaching guides, and discussion-based learning materials that enable teachers to implement dialogic pedagogy effectively.

#### 7.7 Encouraging Future Research on Dialogic Pedagogy:

Although the present study provides valuable insights into teacher perceptions regarding the Upanishadic debate technique, further research is required to examine its practical impact on student learning outcomes. Future studies should conduct experimental or longitudinal research to measure how dialogic teaching methods influence students' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities.

Researchers may also explore the integration of dialogic pedagogy with digital learning environments and interdisciplinary education models. Such studies would contribute to a deeper understanding of how ancient educational traditions can inform contemporary pedagogical innovation.

### 8. CONCLUSION :

The study reaffirms the contemporary relevance of the Upanishadic debate method as a reflective and dialogic pedagogical model that promotes deep learning and ethical inquiry. Survey findings reveal that both high school and college-level teachers acknowledge its potential to foster critical thinking, self-awareness, and value-based education — core aspirations of India's NEP 2020. Educators perceive the Upanishadic approach as a culturally grounded yet forward-looking framework capable of bridging traditional wisdom with modern educational needs.

However, the study also identifies significant challenges to implementation, including rigid curricula, exam-oriented systems, and limited institutional flexibility. Teachers expressed the need for training, supportive policies, and pedagogical resources to meaningfully adopt dialogic and contemplative methods in classrooms.

Overall, the research underscores that the Upanishadic dialogue is not merely a return to the past but a progressive model that harmonizes reflection, ethics, and experiential learning. Embedding this approach within modern education can nurture wisdom (prajñā), critical consciousness, and humane values — essential foundations for a sustainable and enlightened learning ecosystem.

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