

Indian Knowledge System in Indian Education: A Holistic Approach to Academic Innovation

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Abstract: India and its vast knowledge system have the potential to improve the quality of life drastically. The policy push towards incorporating India and Indian knowledge system into Indian education system should be taken forward to the individual and household level. The National Education Policies has the major role to play in this regard. The promotion of Indian arts and culture is seen very important and it could be effectively imparted through integrating Indian Education System into the main curriculum which would not only infuse Indian values in the education system but also develop strong sense of identity and enhance creative and cognitive skills among the youths. This paper highlights on understanding of Indian Knowledge System and its integration in the modern education system. Integrating IKS in the modern education system is a groundbreaking move in building a holistic education system which connected to India's rich cultural root and still relevant at global stage.

Key Words: Indian Knowledge System, Indian Education, Holistic Education, National Education Policy, Indian Philosophy.

1. INTRODUCTION: The Indian Knowledge System represents an incredibly rich and ancient collection of wisdom that spans many different areas like philosophy, science, art, and literature. This system has its roots in sacred texts like the Vedas and Upanishads, along with other ancient writings that offer deep understanding about nature of reality, human life, and the universe. This knowledge has had a huge impact on Indian culture and keeps inspiring people around the world with its enduring wisdom and holistic approach to life. The Indian civilization being one of the oldest in the world has made enormous contributions to indigenous knowledge that's gradually gaining worldwide recognition. This knowledge system brings together wisdom and practices that have grown in India over many thousands of years, touching on various areas including science, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, education, cosmology, architecture, metalworking, visual and performing arts, and agriculture. (Subhashree Mishra, Atal Bihari Tripathy, P. Rashmita Patro, 2024)

The Vedas serve as the foundation for India's extensive and valuable knowledge systems. These systems are incredible sources of evolving knowledge, made up of six main Darshans (philosophies), fourteen Vidyas (knowledge sources), and 64 kalas (specialized arts and skills). The six Darshanas provide different perspectives as open knowledge systems that encourage thoughtful discussion and use sophisticated reasoning for understanding and experiencing life. The 14 Vidyas include the 4 main Vedas (Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda), 4 subsidiary Vedas (Ayurveda for medicine, Dhanurveda for archery, Gandharvaveda for music, and Shilpaveda for crafts), and 6 supporting disciplines called Vedangas (Shiksha for phonetics, Chhanda for poetry meter, Vyakarana for grammar, Nirukta for word meanings, Jyotisha for astronomy, and Kalpa for rituals). Kala refers to performing arts and represents specialized skills. In ancient India, people believed these skills were essential for the holistic development of an individual. The Indian Knowledge System, which includes Jnan, Vijnan and Jeevan Darshan, that is, theoretical knowledge, practical science, and life philosophy, developed through hands-on experience, observation, experimentation, and rigorous study. (Mandavkar, 2025)

The philosophy of values and the philosophy of life go hand in hand. So the Indian Knowledge System is essentially all about understanding values at its core. So they naturally suggest a way of life. The National Education Policy 2020 focused on making education more learner centric, for which the consciousness of the students must be awoken first. Knowledge is always organized in consciousness. The prevailing education system puts all its energy into giving students facts and information, but it doesn't do much to help grow and develop their consciousness. The vision

of NEP 2020 is to instill among students a deep rooted pride of being Indian - not just in thoughts, but also in spirit, intellect and actions. At the same time, the policy wants to build up their knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes so that they can be truly committed to things like human rights, sustainable development, and global well being, thereby becoming truly global citizen. ((Acharya, 2024)

2. OBJECTIVES: This paper is formulated with objective of understanding the ancient Indian Knowledge System and its inculcation in the present day education system of the country.

3. BHARATIYA JNAN PARAMPARA- (INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM):

India's Knowledge System represents how ancient wisdom and modern insights get passed down from one generation to another. It brings together ancient wisdom from different fields to help address current problems and prepare for future challenges. This knowledge comes in two main forms - literary and non-literary works. The literary work includes the Vedas and related texts mostly in Sanskrit, along with Buddhist and Jain teachings, and also knowledge recorded in various Indian languages and local dialects. The non literary resources are in the form of oral traditions that people across India have kept alive through word of mouth in their communities. (Rahman, 2024)

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) comprises three words namely: Indian, Knowledge, and System.

Indian: It refers to Akhanda Bharata i.e. undivided Indian subcontinent.

Knowledge: Knowledge represents the unstated understanding that exists in the wisdom of those who seek knowledge. People acquire this understanding by reflecting on their own life experiences, observations, encountering real life challenges and working through solutions to overcome them.

System: System means a well-organized methodology and classification scheme used to access a body of knowledge (Chandel and Parashar, 2024).

In the view of Kautilya, Education should aim at three outcomes such as,
Vidya-Creation of new Knowledge.

Vivek-Wisdom to use the right knowledge in right time and place for right purpose.

Vichashaknata –the skill set to get the proper results of knowledge in real life.

These kinds of outcomes only emerge when educational institutions strike the perfect balance between delivering knowledge and developing real-world skills. In today's education, organization of knowledge content "what to know" has taken over the best of knowledge seeking "inquiry" i.e; "how to know". The entire Indian Knowledge System has always focused on "how" rather "what".

In ancient India, education took place in institutions called Gurukuls. Back then, children were sent to these Gurukuls or to the houses of teachers known as "Acharayas" to get their education. Once there, these children became known as Shishyas and would follow the guidance and principles of Guru. Their the students led the life of chastity and purity, served the Acharaya and gained knowledge. These Gurukuls operated independently, without any interference from rulers or kings. The Shishyas would study sacred texts like the Vedas and Upanishads, along with important stories and teachings from the Gita, Ramayan, and Mahabharata. But learning wasn't just about books -Shishyas also had responsibilities. They had to take care of their Guru and keep the Gurukul clean and tidy. This approach meant that shishyas undergoes a multidisciplinary education that included both academic knowledge and practical life skills. Famous ancient Indian learning centers like Takshashila and Nalanda were essentially multidisciplinary hubs, offering many different subjects and specialized areas of study all in one place. The quality, variety, and depth of education at these ancient Indian institutions was truly remarkable.

Some of the eminent scholars of ancient India are

Charaka: He introduced systematic perspectives for understanding biological change, cause and effect relationships and evidence based approach to medicine.

Sushruta: He is the pioneer of surgical tradition all over the world.

Kautilya: He was a Teacher, Philosopher, Economist, Jurist and Royal Advisor whose Arthashastra is considered a classic in political economy.

Panini: He wrote Astadhayee which even today recognised to carry the most ambiguous rules of grammar for machine translation.

Aryabhatta: His most significant and well known contribution is the concept of zero.

These are just small glimpses that show the intellectual heritage that Indian civilization has left behind.

The Vedic literature stands as one of the foundational elements of India's ancient knowledge traditions. The Vedic scriptures comprising the Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda carry tremendous significance in Indian culture and spiritual life. These ancient texts are like treasure troves packed with knowledge that spans many different areas, from philosophy and science to math, language studies, astronomy, and beyond. The Vedic literature serves as a beacon that illuminates the deep thinking and wisdom of ancient Indian sages. It offers meaningful

philosophical teaching, moral principles, and practical knowledge that has been shaping Indian way of life for thousands of years. The hymns, rituals, and philosophical ideas in the Vedas have influenced diverse fields, including literature, arts, music, architecture, and governance. ((Acharya, 2024)

The Upanishads are like the foundation stones of Indian philosophical thought. That's why so many Indian thinkers have spent time writing their own interpretations of different Upanishads. There are some philosophers who actually see the Upanishads as Vedant itself. Upanishad means that wisdom which dispels ignorance and brings people who want spiritual freedom closer to the divine. It is that knowledge which wipes out human ignorance, breaks the chains that tie man to material life, and guides him toward the ultimate state of divine happiness. The Gita represents vedic tradition and literature. It's like a summary of all religious works. It can be said that Gita brings together all scriptures into one place. It is a unique treasure of limitless ideas and feelings.

4. SCHOOLS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Samkhya (Kapil): This is the **oldest school** of philosophy. It postulates that everything, in reality, stems from Purusha (self or soul or mind) and Prakriti (matter, creative agency, energy).

Yoga (Patanjali): Yoga literally means the union of two principal entities. Yogic techniques control body, mind & sense organs, thus considered as a means of achieving salvation or mukti.

Nyaya (Gautama Muni): Nyaya Philosophy states that nothing is acceptable unless it is in accordance with reason and experience (scientific approach). Nyaya is considered as a technique of logical thinking.

Vaisheshika (Kanada): The basis of the school's philosophy is that all objects in the physical universe are reducible to a finite number of atoms and Brahman is regarded as the fundamental force that causes consciousness in these atoms.

Purva Mimamsa (Jaimini): This philosophy encompasses the Nyaya-vaisheshika systems and emphasises the concept of valid knowledge. According to Purva Mimamsa, Vedas are eternal and possess all knowledge.

Vedanta: The Vedanta, or Uttara Mimamsa, school concentrates on the philosophical teachings of the Upanishads (mystic or spiritual contemplations within the Vedas), rather than the Brahmanas (instructions for ritual and sacrifice).

5. VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM

It is a philosophy that inculcate an understanding that whole world is one family. It is a philosophy that tries to foster an understanding that the whole of humanity is one family. The original verse appears in Chapter 6 of Maha Upanishad and is also found in the Rig Veda. It was the motto of India's G20 Presidency.

6. NEP 2020 AND INTEGRATION OF IKS:

The National Education Policy 2020 emphasized the inclusion of Indian Knowledge Systems into curriculums of all level of education in the country. In line of this, the National Credit Framework made it possible for the students to earn credit for taking courses on ancient Indian sciences and arts. IKS is also being included in the Vision 2047 plan for the Bharatiya Rasayanasastra initiative. The University Grants Commission suggests that about 5 percent of total credit earned by the students should be from from IKS-related courses, at undergraduate and post graduate level. The UGC wants to get 1.5 million teachers trained up in IKS by 2025, and has launched online IKS MOOC course. Integrating IKS into higher education has the potential to bridge the gap between traditional and modern knowledge systems. This kind of integration can help keep India's cultural traditions alive and make people feel proud of their heritage. (Mishra, Tripathy and patro, 2024)

In October 2020, the Ministry of Education set up a special IKS division. This division runs 29 research centers that focus on preserving traditional Indian knowledge and disseminate it for further research and societal application. They also have 17 Teacher Training Centers where teachers learn about indigenous and traditional knowledge, and 7 IKS Bhasha Kendra. These research centers are interdisciplinary in nature and they undertake interdisciplinary research on IKS, while the teacher training centers help educators get up to speed on traditional knowledge. The IKS Bhasha Kendras are for promoting language and literary knowledge. (Chandel and Parashar, 2024).

The National Education Policy, 2020 has emphasized that Indian Knowledge Systems will be a part of curriculum, and will be introduced scientifically. In the secondary school level IKS will be taught as an elective course. These courses will delivered through modern technologies, gamming and cultural exchange program among students of different states . The policy also emphasized that students should learn in their native language, and everyone will be taught Sanskrit the most ancient language. This way, students can really appreciate the rich and diverse civilization of the country. In designing teaching methodologies for Indian Knowledge Systems, it is important to draw insight from India's chronological methods of knowledge distribution. An ideal model is probably the Gurukula system, where there was a deep and meaningful relationship between the teacher (Guru) and student (Shishya) that really helped with learning and growing as a person. Such an approach could develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and holistic understanding in students, which would help them confront challenges of modern world.

7. IKS IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

Bringing Indian Knowledge Systems into higher education is really important for our country's overall growth. This approach not only revitalizes the education system, but it also helps to preserve and thrive Indian languages, arts, and culture. The National Education Policy, 2020 emphasizes the importance of these knowledge systems and advocates for their integration into higher education institutions. By doing this, the country nurtures a new generation of students possessing deep understanding of their culture and tradition. These students can then apply this knowledge to effectively address modern challenges, thereby contributing to the progress and development of the nation. Many Indian Universities and Higher Education Institutions have established centres for Indian Knowledge Systems. There is a Centre for Indian Knowledge System at IIT Guwahati. It is an academic center involving multi-disciplinary research for preserving, documenting, and building upon a philosophic and scientific understanding of Indian Traditional Knowledge Systems. Centre for Indian Knowledge System is also established at Royal Global University with the objective of bringing synergy between ancient wisdom and modern innovation. Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University set up Banikanta Kakoti Centre for Indian Knowledge System in November 2024 which marks a significant step towards promoting indigenous knowledge systems and preserving the rich heritage of Indian philosophy, culture, and traditions. Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centre of Gauhati University has conducted a series of Faculty Development Programme on Indian Knowledge System. Moreover affiliated colleges are also conducting workshops and seminars at national and international level on Indian Knowledge System.

8. OPPORTUNITIES:

Integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the mainstream education system can have numerous benefits, including fostering a better understanding of India's rich cultural heritage and providing innovative solutions to contemporary challenges faced by the country. It creates opportunities for cultural pride, holistic development of students, and interdisciplinary learning by connecting traditional wisdom with modern curriculum. The main objective of integrating IKS into the education system is to ensure that India's ancient knowledge systems, such as Ayurveda, Yoga, and traditional arts, culture, literature and heritage are preserved and promoted for future generations. By revitalizing the Indian education system through the inclusion of IKS, students can develop a deeper appreciation for their nation's unique history and cultural identity.

IKS leads to holistic development of students. It promotes a balanced approach to education that includes cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being, which can lead to emotional health and inner stability. IKS promotes interdisciplinary learning. It encourages the integration of traditional knowledge with modern curriculum, creating a more holistic and well-rounded understanding of complex topics. Skill-based IKS programs can create new employment opportunities in fields like Ayurveda, traditional arts, and heritage tourism. Incorporating traditional ecological practices from IKS can provide sustainable solutions for modern environmental challenges. IKS can develop strong moral values especially among students. IKS gives importance to values like truth, discipline, respect, and harmony. These are essential for building good character and leading a responsible life. Many Indian philosophies encourage logical thinking and self-reflection. Learning these philosophies can boost critical and creative thinking of students and improve their problem solving and decision making skill. (Puri, 2025)

9. CHALLENGES:

- One of the primary challenges is the lack of adequate resources and infrastructure to support the integration of IKS into the curriculum.
- Resistance from educators and policymakers who may be doubtful about the significance and value of traditional knowledge in the modern world can create a major obstacle in the successful implementation of IKS in the education system. (Pandey, 2024)
- There is Lack of awareness and understanding of the significance of IKS among many people including academics and college administrators. This lack of knowledge makes it tough to bring IKS into modern classrooms and teaching methods. (Desk, 2023)
- There is a lack of documented knowledge about IKS which hinders to promote IKS in modern education. (Vageeshan, 2025).
- IKS is generally present in non-literary form and it has been passed orally from one generation to another. It makes challenging to develop and realize IKS-based courses and programs in educational institutions. (Desk, 2023)
- There is no clear-cut curriculum about IKS. Many stakeholders may see it as irrelevant or outdated. As IKS is available in different languages it may create barriers to those who are not well-versed with these languages.

10. MEASURES CAN BE TAKEN FOR INTEGRATION OF IKS:

Several measures can be adopted to promote Indian Knowledge System (IKS) through education:

- Teacher education program should be transformed to incorporate IKS. Teachers must be equipped not only with pedagogical tools but also with a deep philosophical understanding of IKS, enabling them to engage with these systems and teach these systems meaningfully and effectively.
- Policy structures need to encourage collaborative and interdisciplinary research on Indian knowledge systems, by establishing institutions and allocating funds that are really focused to this cause. Setting up research centers dedicated to studying ancient Indian Knowledge Systems, digital repositories, and networks that connect communities will be key to helping knowledge flow between generations and across different areas of study. These kinds of efforts are really important for building a dynamic and sustainable ecosystem that preserves indigenous knowledge and transmit it to future generations.
- Pedagogical reforms rooted in Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems (IKS) must be guided by the principles of inclusivity and social justice
- Compulsory courses on Indian history, philosophy, arts, and literature should be offered at undergraduate and postgraduate level. For instance, Dibrugarh University introduced Value Added Course of 'Understanding India' and 'Yoga' at undergraduate level as a part of IKS. Study of regional languages should be encouraged from school level to college level.
- Cultural events and activities should be organized in the educational institutions that celebrate Indian traditions.
- Providing funding and support for projects exploring the practical applications of Indian Knowledge System across various fields.

11. CONCLUSION:

IKS covers the age-old knowledge and insights that have grown in India for centuries. It gives students an opportunity to connect with their roots, pick up meaningful principles, boost their creative thinking, and find harmony in their daily lives. India renews itself by drawing from its own knowledge traditions, which are like a goldmine of wisdom and understanding. These knowledge traditions have shaped Indian culture and society in profound ways over time. Bringing these traditional ways of knowing into modern education system is a groundbreaking move toward building an educational approach that stays true to India's rich cultural roots while still being relevant on the world stage. This blend could create a more inclusive and holistic education system that draws from multiple fields of study. Over the past few years, colleges and universities throughout India have been bringing Indian Knowledge Systems into their curricula, hoping to give students a more holistic education. This change reflects that people are starting to realize that fair and equal learning opportunities can be created by giving true value and include diverse theory of knowledge in regular education. Adding these traditional knowledge systems could really improve human well being. By drawing upon ancient wisdom from texts like the Vedas and Upanishads, IKS help students learn across different subjects and provide deep understanding of sustainable development, ethical thinking and holistic development. The comeback of IKS—especially sparked by policy initiatives like India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020—shows a fresh dedication to valuing indigenous knowledge as an important part of today's education and social development. Working with Indigenous Knowledge Systems needs to happen in a way that's fair, respectful, and honest. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are setting up special IKS Centers that act as meeting places where people can reach out to communities, do research, and share what they learn. These centers aim to foster national pride, promote cultural awareness on a global stage, create employment opportunities, and make sure the authentic knowledge gets passed down to future generation.

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