

Role of the Indian Knowledge System in Shaping Contemporary Education in IndiaDr. Ashvaneer Kumar¹DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18995481>

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Abstract:

Knowledge is the most crucial resource for development. Any nation's Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is the foundation of its knowledge system. Traditional or local knowledge are referred as People's abilities, experiences, and insights that are used to preserve or enhance their standard of living. The IKS seeks to promote additional research to address current societal problems. The Vedas and Upanishads are the foundation of IKS. IK Centers are being established at different Indian educational institutions with initial seed financing. It also seeks to give our young people a wide range of job options. Youth employment opportunities are being generated through skill-based programs based on traditional Indian knowledge. IKS promotes heritage technology by providing solutions that enable Indians and people around the world to see their heritage. India has a long history of applying alternative systems and traditional knowledge in a variety of disciplines. In India, for instance, alternative medicine, including the AYUSH stream (Ayurveda, Unani, Yoga, Naturopathy, Siddha, and Homoeopathy), has recently gained significant political support. To improve learning effectiveness, the National Education Policy-2020 emphasizes integrating the IKS into contemporary education. Instead of rote memorization, NEP-2020 of India encourages deeper conceptual understanding through conversation, debate (Shastrartha), and observation. NEP-2020 also promotes the use of regional and classical languages, such as Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit, so that students can access authentic works in philosophy, science, mathematics, medicine, and ethics. Previous studies on Indian Education often regard traditional knowledge systems as historical or cultural artifacts rather than as dynamic, functional knowledge systems that could improve students' critical thinking, ethical reasoning, sustainability, and overall development. There is a lack of Studies that sufficiently examine the integration of indigenous pedagogical traditions, value systems, and epistemologies into contemporary educational frameworks. The impact of IKS on contemporary education needs to be critically analyzed. This study uses a qualitative research approach based solely on the content analysis of the pertinent research article and secondary data analysis. Academic databases and institutional repositories are systematic sources of government-relevant reports, published reviews, policy frameworks (such as NEP-2020), and scholarly research publications. Patterns, themes, and gaps in the body of literature on IKS integration in education are identified through content analysis and thematic synthesis. The study's conclusion offers both broad and detailed suggestions for improving IKS's integration into the current Indian educational landscape.

Keywords: Indian knowledge system, IKSs, NEP-2020, Contemporary Education**Introduction**

It is often acknowledged that knowledge is the most important resource for growth. Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is the foundation of any nation's knowledge system. IK, also known as traditional or local knowledge, includes people's abilities, insights, and experiences used to preserve or enhance their standard of living. About 5,000 distinct tribes make up the world's indigenous population, which accounts for 4% of the global population and roughly one-third of the 900 million rural poor worldwide. They are spread across more than 70 nations, with 70% residing in Asia (Emery, 2000). Indigenous peoples have created and maintained beneficial systems of behavior and knowledge across thousands of years.

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IKS refers to the methodical transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next. Instead of being a tradition, it is a methodical system and a process of knowledge transfer. The Upanishads, Vedas, and Upavedas are among the works of Vedic literature that form the foundation of the IKS. As a guiding principle, the National Education Policy (NEP-2020) acknowledges the rich legacy of timeless Indian knowledge and philosophy. The three IKSs—Jnan, Vignan, and Jeevan Darshan—have developed from experimentation, observation, experience, and thorough study. In the fields of education, the arts, administration, law, justice, health, manufacturing, and commerce, this legacy of validation and practice has had an impact (Sarkar, P. S., 2025). This has influenced classical and other languages of India, which were transmitted through textual, oral, and artistic traditions. It includes knowledge from ancient India, its successes and challenges, and a sense of India's future aspirations in education, health, the environment, and, indeed, all aspects of life (Sarkar, P. S., 2025).

IKSs cover India's historical traditional knowledge and methods in a number of disciplines, such as engineering, medicine, philosophy, agriculture, mathematics, and yoga. The most prominent manifestation of India's indigenous medical knowledge systems today is AYUSH, which encompasses Ayurveda, Unani, Yoga, Naturopathy, Siddha, and Homeopathy. Since the Ministry of AYUSH was established in 2014, the industry has benefited from increased funding, participation in the Ayushman Bharat program, and the development of institutional and regulatory frameworks, all of which are backed by robust government policy.

Key Disciplines within the IKS:

The IKS integrates science, spirituality, and culture through a variety of fields. By harmonizing the body, mind, and spirit through herbal medication, diet, and healthy habits, Ayurveda encourages holistic healing. Yoga's postures, breathing exercises, and meditation improve both mental and physical health. Early mathematical ideas, such as zero, and planetary theories developed by academics like Aryabhata were strongly influenced by Vedic mathematics and astronomy. India's rich intellectual and cultural legacy is further reflected in philosophy, spirituality, and traditional arts like dance and song.

India is still one of the only nations with an intact, highly pluralistic heritage of knowledge-making, known as the IKS. IKS is a multi-thousand-year-old field of knowledge that includes philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine (especially Ayurveda), architecture, the arts, and spirituality (including yoga). These realistic systems, which provide insights into health, education, the environment, and human development more broadly, are truly startling (Shanwal, V. K, 2025). IKS has been necessary for advancement throughout human history (Shanwal, V. K, 2025). The efforts to recover and reintegrate ancient knowledge systems into the 21st-century educational setting, however, have recently stepped up. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has emerged as a methodical strategy in this regard. The main goal of NEP 2020 is to create an interdisciplinary, multinational educational system based in India but aligned with global standards (Shanwal, V. K, 2025). Thus, there is every justification for integrating IKS into education in order to support kids' healthy development. IKS offers a holistic view of the universe that is lacking in most contemporary educational perspectives. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a major step towards reforming India's education system. On July 29, 2020, the Union Cabinet approved reforming the National Policy on Education, implemented in 1986. NEP 2020 has provided an elaborate structure poised to improve the quality and facilities of education across various locations in the country. The policy is based on the concept of integrating and diversifying education, which is relevant to the Indian education scenario and also reflects Indian cultural heritage (Shanwal, V. K, 2025).. The fundamental idea behind NEP

2020 is to introduce flexible, liberal learning practices for both teachers and students. It seeks to educate students not only but also to develop their minds, stimulate their creativity, and inculcate moral principles (Shanwal, V. K, 2025).. This policy seeks to cultivate intellectually and culturally personality-oriented persons. Respect for India's intellectual wealth and its aggressive promotion of IKS integration into the curriculum across all subject areas, from elementary school to higher education, are two distinctive features of NEP 2020.

Review of Literature And The Need for The Study

Mukherjee, K. (2025) writes that IK is not limited to indigenous peoples; over many centuries, every community has created its own body of knowledge. IK, or indigenous knowledge, is the foundation for local decision-making in a variety of rural communities' activities. It provides communities with ways to solve problems and is typically held by communities rather than individuals.

The University Grants Commission (2023) report discusses how colleges and universities have a defined approach, thanks to the UGC recommendations for incorporating IKSs in higher education. They recommend introducing transdisciplinary subjects, tying IKS to research, developing appropriate evaluation methods, and offering credit-bearing courses on IKS. In the guidelines, IKS is primarily treated as an extra heritage-related course. They also point out crucial prerequisites for effective adoption, like qualified instructors, appropriate study guides, and institutional preparedness. According to the rules, IKS should be implemented gradually and its quality should be periodically assessed.

Pant, A., & Moorthy, A. L. (2013) states that India has one of the world's oldest knowledge systems, with a history of over 5,000 years, combining traditional medicine, philosophy, science, and culture. Nearly 80% of the population in Asian and African nations relies on traditional medicine, particularly Ayurveda, for their basic medical requirements, demonstrating the continued importance of this practice in healthcare. For generations, healthcare, education, and intellectual thought have been impacted by the rich, comprehensive, and scientific legacy reflected in the IKS.

Shanwal, V. K., (2025) states that Schooling where they outlined the integration of IKSs in the educational system The NEP 2020: It is one of the many tenets of reformist education in India that provides an ideal opportunity to develop culturally appropriate, comprehensive, and 21st-century abilities. With the help of the given, thorough, and systematic strategy that emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and critical evaluation, India's priceless intellectual heritage can be preserved and even strengthened by aligning it with contemporary trends in educational planning.

Bharatiyu Drishti states that the primary goal of utilizing and integrating IKSs is to address current and upcoming issues in India and beyond. It focuses on addressing contemporary issues by drawing on knowledge passed down through the ages and the distinct viewpoints of our ancient traditions.

Efforts to incorporate the IKS into modern education have been gaining momentum, with policymakers and educators advocating for an integrated curriculum that highlights Indian philosophies and scientific contributions (Shanwal, V. K, 2025). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes including IKS across subjects to

cultivate pride and understanding of India's intellectual heritage (Shanwal, V. K, 2025). Scholars argue that integrating IKS can broaden students' perspectives and foster creativity and problem-solving rooted in a rich cultural context. While IKS holds immense value, its preservation and integration face challenges, including the loss of traditional knowledge bearers and limited documentation of oral traditions. The influence of colonial narratives has also contributed to underestimating the scientific merit of these systems (Shanwal, V. K, 2025). According to contemporary scholars, modern science can benefit from the recognition and documentation of IKS, especially in fields like ecology, healthcare, and sustainable development. IKS's principles are in line with NEP 2020's mission to encourage respect for cultural heritage and critical thinking. Moving beyond strict disciplinary lines and embracing a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach is one of NEP 2020's main goals. Because IKS is by its very nature integrative, it helps achieve this goal by showing how different domains of knowledge are interrelated. For instance, Ayurveda emphasizes ethics and spirituality while fusing aspects of biology, botany, and chemistry. Students can better grasp knowledge as an interrelated whole and be better equipped to handle challenging global issues by being introduced to such holistic systems within an interdisciplinary framework. IKS implementation in contemporary educational frameworks is fraught with difficulties, notwithstanding its potential advantages. Significant obstacles include inadequate teacher preparation, a lack of consistent curricula, and a dearth of academic resources.

Objectives And Methodology of The Study:

1. To study Indian knowledge system in currently educational system.
2. To study the potential impact of IKSs on contemporary education, especially in enhancing critical thinking, ethical reasoning, sustainability, and holistic student development.

IKS in Indian Education

Indian knowledge encompasses all disciplines, including the consequences for policy, and is derived from indigenous and traditional teaching methods as well as tribal knowledge. Additionally, specialized courses in natural farming, traditional (organic) crop production, forest management, tribal ethno-medical practices, etc. are covered. Students in secondary school may also be able to take an interesting course on IKSs as an option. The policy acknowledges that students should gain firsthand knowledge of India's vast variety. Simple activities, such as student tour to different parts of the nation, would fall under this category. In addition to promoting travel, it fosters knowledge of India's many regions and raises understanding and appreciation of the country's variety, culture, and customs. In IKS, roaming and hard work are two ways for an individual to learn on their own. Rahul Sankrityayan, for instance, was a renowned writer, thinker, and itinerant scholar of Hindi literature. He was known as "Mahapandit" because, despite not having received a formal education, he gained a thorough understanding of a wide range of languages and disciplines via independent study. To gain knowledge, he traveled widely, both domestically and overseas, and studied on his own. He published significant works on history, philosophy, Buddhism, and society in addition to learning other languages, such as Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, and Russian. The IKS has been included into the curricula of over 8000 HEIs, and 1.5 lakh books have been digitized. In order to create Vision 2047, which documents a plan for creating a prosperous Bharatiya Gyana Parampara, the IKS Division brought together top scholars and practitioners from a variety of knowledge disciplines. Including these classes in regular education would inspire students while preserving the legacy of our educational systems. Students can improve their confidence, broaden their intellectual horizons, and better comprehend their culture by being exposed to both old and modern ideas (Sarkar, P. S., 2025).

Initiatives To Protect India's Knowledge

IKS Cell: IKS is an innovation cell of AICTE, New Delhi, that is part of the Ministry of Education (MoE). Its functions include preserving and disseminating IKS for future research and societal applications, as well as fostering multidisciplinary research on all facets of the IKS. It will aggressively disseminate our nation's rich cultural legacy and traditional knowledge across engineering and technology, architecture, management, economics, agriculture, the arts, and literature, among other fields. Ancient Indian wisdom and modern knowledge systems are intended to be reconciled by these cells. Implementing IKS into the curriculum with the goal of at least 5% of credits in undergraduate and graduate programs is one of this cell's core objectives in order to fulfill the National Education Policy 2020. as well as to explore applicability to contemporary societal concerns, including sustainability, health, and wellbeing by fusing traditional wisdom with contemporary scientific investigation. The organization has been working on curriculum development, training and workshop planning, digitization and documentation of ancient scriptures, and cultural involvement ever since. The following is the cell's primary area of focus:

1. Holistic Health: promoting Ayurveda, yoga, and awareness research, for example.
2. Sustainable practices, including traditional ecological knowledge exploration, agriculture, and water management.
3. Philosophy and Logic: Examining Vedanta, Nyaya, and other schools of thought.

To achieve the goals of NEP 2020, the Ministry, regulatory bodies such as UGC & AICTE, and HEIs have undertaken activities. Guidelines for Incorporating Indian Knowledge in Higher Education Curriculum were issued in June 2023. By incorporating IKS into curricula at all educational levels, it aims to eliminate gaps in the flow of IKS and to promote Indian languages, arts, and culture. At least 5% of the total required credits must be taken by all students enrolled in undergraduate or graduate programs in IKS, according to the recommendation (interested students may be allowed to take a larger fraction of the total mandatory credits). The major discipline shall account for at least half of the credits allotted to the IKS, and the major discipline should be related to the IKS. Any Indian language could be used as the teaching medium for the IKS courses.

In April 2023, guidelines were released for faculty orientation and training on the IKS. They facilitate the faculty's favorable attitude toward the IKS and encourage curiosity through refresher courses and introduction workshops. Guidelines for Empanelment of Artists/Artisans-in-Residence in Higher Educational Institutions were released in May 2023 with the goal of fostering collaboration between artists and HEIs (Sahoo, P., 2024). Through regular engagement of skilled Kala Gurus in teaching, research, and other academic activities, the guidelines aim to develop an effective structure for art education that will benefit students by combining the artistic experience with traditional education. To provide a short-term, multi-tier, credit-based modular program with multiple entry and exit points grounded in Indian heritage and culture, and to familiarize people with India's rich cultural and intellectual heritage, guidelines for introducing courses based on Indian heritage and culture were issued in May 2023 (Sahoo, P., 2024). In the areas of universal human values, there come many contribution from india, like Vedic mathematics, yoga, Ayurveda, Sanskrit, Indian languages, sacred religious sites on the Indian subcontinent, Indian heritage, Indian literature, sculpture, music and dance forms, drama, visual arts, performing arts, crafts, and craftsmanship, among other things. it involves disseminating and imparting knowledge of various learning dimensions. The IKS has established provisions for awarding a minor degree to students who complete 18 to 20 credits in the IKS.

To develop traditional knowledge and cultural pride, universities are also urged to offer IKS electives or learner credits in a variety of subject areas. States and UTs are required to document their original cultures, arts, crafts, customs, architecture, cuisine, languages, and other aspects in order to create specialized learning programs. Wherever possible, additional

universities are being asked to consider the potential for international collaboration with IKS. For instance, at the school level, NCERT is attempting to incorporate literature that highlights the historical connections between Indonesia and India. These courses might be offered to students worldwide via ODL and integrated with digital learning platforms like SWAYAM and NPTEL. IKS Jobs: As part of the Division of MoE's internship program, BG-Samvahan Karyakram offers opportunities for student internships and apprenticeships and provides guidance to IKS students (Sahoo, P., 2024). Through skill-based programs such as IKS-based beautician and cosmetician training, Ayurvedic dietitian programs, Gandhashastra-based perfumery, and many other distinctively IKS-based abilities, IKS is generating employment opportunities for young people (Sahoo, P., 2024). Encourage heritage technology by introducing technological solutions that allow Indians and others around the world to see their heritage.

Learning Outcomes Related To The IKS In Alignment With The Key Features of NEP 2020 Or Implications of NEP 2020 For IKS

1. NEP 2020 calls for increasing IKS integration at all levels of the educational system. This also includes goods from knowledge systems grounded in unconventional curricula, such as yoga, Ayurveda, Vedic mathematics, and traditional arts and crafts. The policy advocates for an integrated educational system that combines advanced educational systems with traditional traditions.
2. The integrated subject approach to learning, which enables students to study a variety of subjects from different faculties, is supported by the policy. When combined with other disciplines, IKS helps students understand the connections among university subject areas. In this sense, this method fosters creativity and critical thinking in children while also honoring culture as a means of problem-solving.
3. NEP 2020 emphasizes more than just preserving and advancing India's cultural legacy. It encourages the study of regional languages and dead languages like Sanskrit, which can be useful for creative cultural and knowledge research. In the case of India, the goal is to promote tolerance and awareness of the nation's diversity.
4. To properly incorporate IKS into the educational system as suggested by the NEP 2020, improved professional development programs for teachers are required. In addition to conventional practices that are significant in today's environment, teachers must be aware of their expectations and the knowledge needed to implement IKS in the classroom.
5. Establishing research institutes aimed at IKSs is recommended under the policy. This program aims to promote the identification, recording, preservation, and innovative use of indigenous practices in the modern world. To bridge the gap between old knowledge and the current world, the NEP 2020 encourages research.
6. NEP 2020 also promotes real-world task scenarios that establish links with cultural and community contexts. Encouraging students to engage with local practitioners, craftspeople, and knowledge holders exposes them to real-world applications of IKS. It gives the students a useful method to help them feel proud of their cultural heritage. Students are empowered to incorporate their cultural values into their learning, which helps them become more engaged with their curriculum. As a result, they are able to lead healthier lives and serve as positive social role models.
7. The emphasis on IKS to promote India's cultural and indigenous wisdom supports the NEP-2020's aim of heritage preservation. Knowledge can be transmitted to future generations when these disciplines are taught in educational institutions.
8. IKS will also have the capacity to raise awareness of India's abundant educational scholarship in other countries (Shanwal, V. K, 2025). This might promote collaborative efforts in areas such as yoga, Ayurveda, and—above all—environmental awareness.
9. IKS improves students' overall growth by cultivating not just their academic skills but also their moral and emotional character.

10. The Inter-disciplinary Learning Approach is implemented in NEP 2020, which provides a clear vision for integrating IKS into various learning systems. It has been recommended in policy that knowledge systems like yoga and Ayurveda be taught as distinct courses in addition to being included into all topic areas.
11. NEP-2020 develops a comprehensive curriculum that includes IKS elements pertinent to the courses taught in schools, thereby creating a strong and cohesive work plan. Professional consultations and thorough research on the scope and diversity of IKS should accomplish this.
12. Create a particular COE for IKS practice that might serve as a resource for IKS knowledge and practice research, education, and dissemination. These centers could help improve IKS in educational programs by interacting with academic institutions, community organizations, and policymakers. increasing the use of IKS-integrated knowledge content in places with weak infrastructures and as widely as possible by utilizing elements of information technology, such as virtual laboratories, online courses, and other multimedia.

Challenges to Integrating IKSs in NEP-2020

There are several practical challenges that need to be addressed to successfully integrate IKS into modern education. These consist of teacher preparation, resource distribution, and general curriculum development. It is challenging to create curricula that strike a balance between traditional and modern knowledge, as well as to train teachers to properly teach IKS-based subjects. Additionally, the strategy must ensure that incorporating IKS does not result in prejudice or the marginalization of particular communities (Shanwal, V. K, 2025). To ensure that IKS is recognized as a valid and worthwhile topic of study alongside contemporary subjects, academic rigor and inclusivity of all kinds must be upheld.

1. There are inexperienced teachers who possess both disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge of IKS. The faculty at most Indian universities is insufficient to teach IKS-based courses with academic rigor. The same knowledge is still held by traditional academics (pandits, vaidyas, artisans, gurus) who are not part of the mainstream academic community, creating a gap between the skill and the knowledge.
2. There is a disagreement over epistemology between conventional knowledge and modern scientific models. Many IKS concepts are grounded in holistic, non-linear ontologies that differ from Western empiricism. Without epistemological bridges, IKS could be dismissed as non-scientific or mindlessly adored.
3. The curriculum creation is further complicated by the size, diversity, and decentralization of IKS. Standardizing it into curricula while avoiding politicization and oversimplification is a pedagogical problem. Multidisciplinary study is still in its infancy when it comes to translating Sanskrit or other locally relevant literatures with scientific relevance into modules.
4. Cultural romanticism also poses a threat. When taught in a national or ideological tone, IKS may not withstand scrutiny from the scientific and international academic communities unless it is based on academically validated research.
5. Implementation is also complicated by ideological and political criticisms. Other stakeholders fear that, particularly in a pluralistic nation like India, IKS participation will come across as a cultural imposition or revivalist goal rather than a scholarly enrichment.
6. The most difficult aspect of creating curricula that incorporate IKS with contemporary knowledge forms is this. It is necessary to portray both historical and contemporary methods in a balanced and connected manner.

7. Training programs that focus on traditional knowledge domains must be developed to properly prepare teachers for integrating and successfully applying IKS in their classrooms. As these training programs are developed, it is essential to ensure that educators are prepared to lead them.
8. There is a disadvantage; any prejudice that could lead someone to believe that "IKS, well, not so important anymore" must be eliminated. Both students and teachers should, in my opinion, change their perspectives and accept IKS as a legitimate field of study.
9. Integrating civic, cultural, and human studies with traditional teaching methods with the latest in education, science, technology, and mathematics can occasionally be challenging. To ensure that students are prepared for both traditional and modern challenges, these sectors need to work in tandem with one another.
10. It's critical that no child from any social, cultural, or religious background suffers because of IKS integration. Due to the fact that these kids are members of society, inclusion promotes educational equity.
11. It is also essential to achieve the same level of academic achievement when studying IKS. Initiatives pertaining to IKS best practices must be more closely examined, researched, and continuously adjusted as needed.

Conclusion

In India, a number of indigenous groups have developed and improved their own knowledge systems. The capture of parts of this IK into private knowledge for the financial gain of a select few is under threat due to globalization. IKS seeks to encourage and promote additional research across a range of areas, including psychology, neuroscience, holistic health, nature, the environment, and sustainable development, to address today's societal problems. IKS is a cutting-edge cell founded to support multidisciplinary research across all facets of IKS and to preserve and distribute IKS for future study and societal applications. IKS not only encourages travel but also fosters an understanding and admiration of India's customs, variety, and culture. An understanding of different regions of the country. Universities are incorporating IKS electives or learner credits into all courses to instill traditional knowledge and pride in students from all fields. Five percent of the curriculum's total credits must be devoted to IKS courses, as mandated by UGC. The creation of IKS centers, which serve as catalysts for the start of outreach, education, and research initiatives around the nation, will provide institutional support mechanisms.

Incorporating IKSs into both higher education and schools is encouraged under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. In order to foster general growth, it encourages the teaching of traditional Indian knowledge, languages, arts, and sciences. The policy's emphasis on experiential and transdisciplinary learning aligns with IKS's interconnectedness. But there are certain difficulties. Clear instructions on how to apply IKS in various educational contexts are lacking. The scientific significance of classical knowledge is also questioned by some contemporary academic communities, and there are insufficiently prepared professors and study resources. Positive outcomes are shown by early programs in spite of these obstacles. Students who study using IKS techniques become more creative, critical thinkers, and problem solvers. They also grow to appreciate India's heritage and feel more connected to their culture. IKS is very valuable in many fields. It can assist in addressing global concerns such as ethical decision-making, healthcare, and sustainable agriculture. For instance, ancient farming methods can teach sustainability, and Ayurvedic concepts can be applied to wellness education. All things considered, IKS integration fosters a comprehensive way of thinking in students and equips them to tackle challenging real-world issues.

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