

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

Debasish Sarkar ¹, Dr. Prasanta Gayen ¹  & Dr. Brotati Chakraborty ² 

¹Research Scholar, Department of Education, School of Education, Adamas University, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Education, School of Education, Adamas University, India

³Head of the Department, Department of Education, School of Education, Adamas University, India

Abstract: The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) represents the rich intellectual, cultural, scientific, and philosophical traditions developed in the Indian subcontinent over centuries. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has emphasized the revival and integration of IKS into mainstream education to promote holistic and value-based learning. The present study examines the concept and significance of IKS, analyses the role of NEP 2020 in promoting indigenous knowledge traditions, and explores the educational benefits of integrating IKS into modern education. The study follows a qualitative research design based on secondary sources such as books, policy documents, and research articles. The findings reveal that IKS contributes to ethical development, critical thinking, environmental awareness, cultural identity, and interdisciplinary learning. NEP 2020 plays a significant role in revitalizing traditional knowledge through curriculum reforms, promotion of Indian languages, and research initiatives. The study concludes that integrating IKS into contemporary education can foster culturally rooted, socially responsible, and globally competent learners while preserving India's rich heritage and promoting sustainable educational development.

Introduction

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) has gained institutional recognition through the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the integration of India's intellectual, cultural, and scientific traditions at all levels of education (Ministry of Education, 2020). IKS is rooted in Vedic, Upanishadic, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, along with classical Sanskrit and regional knowledge systems encompassing disciplines such as philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, Ayurveda, linguistics, ecology, performing arts, and education (Kapoor & Sharma, 2021). Historically, indigenous educational institutions such as Gurukuls, Pathshalas, monasteries, and renowned universities like Nalanda and Takshashila contributed significantly to India's epistemological and socio-cultural development (Altekar, 2009). However, during the colonial era, Macaulay's Minute on Education in 1835 promoted an English-based curriculum that marginalized indigenous knowledge traditions by labeling them as unscientific (Macaulay, 1952). This led to the decline of traditional learning institutions and indigenous epistemologies (Dharampal, 1983). Although post-independence India developed a national education system, a structured policy for reviving IKS was largely absent until the introduction of NEP 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Meaning and significance of Indian Knowledge System (IKS)

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) refers to the rich body of indigenous knowledge developed in the Indian subcontinent over thousands of years through traditions such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Buddhist and Jain philosophies, and regional practices. It includes diverse fields such as philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, Ayurveda, linguistics, agriculture, ecology, performing arts, and education (Kapoor & Sharma, 2021). IKS emphasizes holistic learning by integrating intellectual, spiritual, ethical, and practical dimensions of life. Unlike fragmented approaches to knowledge, it promotes harmony between humans, nature, and society (Radhakrishnan, 2009). The significance of IKS lies in its ability to provide value-based and sustainable approaches to contemporary challenges. It contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage, ethical living, environmental consciousness, and holistic well-being. In the educational context, IKS encourages critical thinking, self-discipline, experiential learning, and moral development.

(Ministry of Education, 2020). The National Education Policy 2020 highlights the importance of integrating IKS into mainstream education to strengthen cultural rootedness and promote multidisciplinary learning. Thus, IKS serves as an important foundation for building a balanced, inclusive, and culturally connected society.

Literature Review

The reviewed literature highlights the growing importance of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) within the framework of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Rajput et al. (2025) found that awareness, perception, and attitudes toward IKS did not significantly differ across educational qualifications, whereas cultural, ethical, and interdisciplinary relevance showed significant variation. Their study emphasized that higher education enhances understanding of the ethical and transdisciplinary potential of IKS. Similarly, Dei (2025) stressed the importance of reviving India's heritage knowledge traditions in higher education under NEP 2020. Dixit et al. (2025) discussed the strengths and challenges of integrating IKS into higher education, noting that such integration requires gradual implementation. Mandavkar (2025) highlighted that NEP 2020 aims to bridge educational gaps, promote language resources, technology, and research in IKS, though challenges remain in effective implementation. Das (2024) emphasized India's traditional values and the inclusion of value-added courses such as Yoga education in universities. The literature also reflects the therapeutic and ecological dimensions of traditional Indian knowledge. Ancient texts such as Nāṭyaśāstra, Caraka Samhita, and Saṃgītaratnākara recognize the medicinal and holistic benefits of music. Furthermore, environmental studies highlighted the importance of sacred groves, biodiversity conservation, and ecological awareness in response to global environmental challenges (Das, 2023; Kumar, 2021; Patra, 2016).

Research Questions

- What is the significance of Indian Knowledge System in the context of NEP 2020?
- How does NEP 2020 promote the integration of IKS into education?
- What are the educational benefits of incorporating IKS in modern educational practices?

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the concept and significance of Indian Knowledge System.
- To examine the role of NEP 2020 in promoting Indian Knowledge System.
- To analyze the educational benefits of integrating IKS into modern education.

Methodology: The present study follows a qualitative research design. The study is based on secondary data sources specifically books and research article.

Results and Discussion

Concept and Significance of Indian Knowledge System: Indian Knowledge System refers to the accumulated wisdom, practices, and intellectual traditions developed in the Indian subcontinent through sources such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Buddhist and Jain philosophies, Ayurveda, Yoga, astronomy, mathematics, linguistics, ecology, and performing arts (Kapoor & Sharma, 2021). IKS emphasizes holistic development by integrating intellectual, moral, spiritual, and practical dimensions of life. Understanding the concept of IKS is significant because it helps learners recognize the richness of India's cultural and intellectual heritage. It promotes value-based education, ethical living, environmental consciousness, and harmony between human beings and nature (Radhakrishnan, 2009). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 strongly advocates the integration of IKS into mainstream education to develop culturally rooted, globally competent, and socially responsible individuals (Ministry of Education, 2020). Through this objective, learners can critically examine how traditional Indian wisdom contributes to sustainable development, mental well-being, and interdisciplinary learning. Moreover, studying the significance of IKS encourages the preservation and revitalization of indigenous knowledge traditions that were marginalized during the colonial period.

It also helps bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and modern scientific approaches, thereby fostering innovation and holistic education in contemporary society (Dharampal, 1983).

Role of NEP 2020 in Promoting Indian Knowledge System: The NEP 2020 recognizes India's rich intellectual and cultural heritage and advocates incorporating Indian traditions, languages, arts, philosophy, Yoga, Ayurveda, and indigenous practices into the curriculum at different levels of education (Ministry of Education, 2020). The policy seeks to develop an education system that is rooted in Indian ethos while maintaining global standards of quality and innovation. Examining the role of NEP 2020 is significant because it highlights the policy's efforts to create holistic, multidisciplinary, and value-based education. The policy encourages experiential learning, critical thinking, ethical development, and environmental consciousness, which are deeply embedded in the Indian Knowledge System (Kapoor & Sharma, 2021). NEP 2020 also promotes the use of Indian languages, traditional arts, and research on indigenous knowledge to strengthen cultural identity and national pride. Furthermore, the policy plays an important role in bridging the gap between traditional wisdom and contemporary education by encouraging research, innovation, and interdisciplinary approaches. It attempts to restore the relevance of indigenous knowledge traditions that were marginalized during colonial rule (Dharampal, 1983). Thus, the implementation of NEP 2020 can contribute significantly to the revitalization of Indian Knowledge Systems and the development of culturally grounded and socially responsible learners.

Educational Benefits of Integrating IKS into Modern Education: The integration of IKS into modern education promotes a balanced approach that combines intellectual, ethical, spiritual, cultural, and practical dimensions of knowledge (Kapoor & Sharma, 2021). Indian Knowledge System includes diverse disciplines such as Yoga, Ayurveda, philosophy, mathematics, ecology, linguistics, and performing arts, which collectively support the all-round development of learners. Analyzing the educational benefits of IKS is important because it enhances value-based education, critical thinking, creativity, and experiential learning. Traditional Indian educational practices emphasized self-discipline, moral values, teacher-student relationships, and learning through observation and practice, which remain relevant in present-day education (Radhakrishnan, 2009). The integration of IKS also helps learners develop environmental awareness, cultural identity, emotional well-being, and social responsibility. Furthermore, it encourages interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary learning, which aligns with the vision of the National Education Policy 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020). Incorporating IKS into modern education can also bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and scientific knowledge, fostering innovation and sustainable development. It provides learners with culturally rooted perspectives while preparing them to address contemporary global challenges. Therefore, integrating IKS into education contributes significantly to holistic, inclusive, and sustainable educational development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) represents a rich and holistic tradition of knowledge that integrates intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and practical dimensions of life. The National Education Policy 2020 has played a significant role in reviving and promoting IKS by encouraging its integration into mainstream education. The inclusion of indigenous knowledge traditions in modern education helps foster value-based learning, critical thinking, cultural awareness, environmental consciousness, and holistic development among learners (Ministry of Education, 2020). Furthermore, integrating IKS into contemporary educational practices bridges the gap between traditional wisdom and modern scientific approaches, thereby supporting interdisciplinary learning and sustainable development. The educational relevance of IKS lies in its ability to nurture culturally rooted, socially responsible, and globally competent individuals. Therefore, the revival and implementation of IKS through education can contribute significantly to preserving India's heritage while addressing contemporary educational and societal needs.

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