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## **INTEGRATING INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS IN EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES FROM NEP 2020**

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### **Abstract**

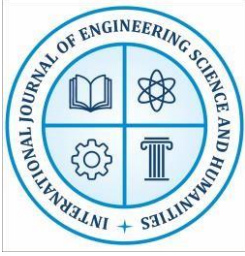
The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) represents a rich intellectual tradition that has evolved in India over centuries. Rooted in ancient philosophical thought, cultural practices, and indigenous scientific understanding, it offers valuable perspectives for holistic learning and sustainable development. In recent years, there has been growing interest in integrating traditional knowledge with contemporary education, particularly with the introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the inclusion of Indian knowledge traditions in curricula and pedagogical practices. The integration of IKS in modern education can promote value-based learning, critical thinking, environmental awareness, and cultural understanding among learners. This paper examines the conceptual foundations of the Indian Knowledge System and its relevance in contemporary education while highlighting the role of NEP-2020 in encouraging its integration within the educational framework. The discussion also emphasizes that the incorporation of Indian Knowledge Systems in education can contribute to holistic learning by promoting interdisciplinary thinking, ethical values, and awareness of sustainable living practices. Furthermore, the paper highlights the importance of curriculum development, teacher preparation, and institutional support for the effective integration of traditional knowledge systems in modern education.

**Keywords:**-Indian Knowledge System, Traditional Knowledge, NEP-2020, Holistic Education, Sustainable Development.

### **Introduction**

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) represents one of the oldest and most comprehensive traditions of knowledge in the world. Rooted in the rich intellectual heritage of ancient Indian civilization, it reflects a deep integration of philosophy, culture, science, and social values. Unlike many modern education systems that emphasize specialized and discipline-specific learning, traditional Indian education followed a holistic approach that focused on the intellectual, moral, spiritual, and physical development of individuals. Knowledge in ancient India was considered a means not only for intellectual advancement but also for achieving harmony between the individual, society, and nature (Sharma, 2019).

In ancient India, the process of education was largely conducted through the Gurukul system, which represented a unique form of teacher–student interaction. In this system, students lived



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with their teachers and learned through observation, discussion, and practical engagement with everyday life. The educational process emphasized discipline, ethical conduct, social responsibility, and character building along with academic learning. Students were introduced to diverse branches of knowledge including philosophy, language, arts, medicine, and social practices, which helped in shaping well-rounded individuals capable of contributing meaningfully to society (Gupta & Singh, 2021).

Historically, India was recognized as an important center of learning and intellectual exchange. Renowned ancient universities such as Takshashila and Nalanda attracted scholars from different regions of the world and offered education in subjects like mathematics, astronomy, medicine, linguistics, and philosophy. These institutions demonstrated the advanced state of knowledge traditions in ancient India. However, during the colonial period, indigenous educational systems gradually declined as Western models of education were introduced and institutionalized, resulting in the marginalization of many traditional knowledge traditions within formal education structures (Government of India, 2020).

In recent years, there has been renewed interest in revitalizing traditional knowledge systems and integrating them within contemporary educational frameworks. The growing recognition of cultural heritage and indigenous intellectual traditions has encouraged educators and policymakers to explore ways of reconnecting modern education with India's historical knowledge systems. Integrating traditional knowledge with modern disciplines can promote interdisciplinary learning, value-based education, and culturally relevant pedagogy that strengthens learners' understanding of their intellectual heritage (Maheshwari, 2024).

Furthermore, the revival of Indian Knowledge Systems is increasingly viewed as important for addressing contemporary social and environmental challenges. Traditional knowledge emphasizes harmony with nature, sustainable living practices, and ethical responsibility toward society. These principles are particularly relevant in the present global context, where education systems are expected to promote sustainability, social responsibility, and inclusive development. Therefore, understanding the significance of Indian Knowledge Systems and exploring their role within modern education becomes essential for building a balanced and culturally grounded educational framework.

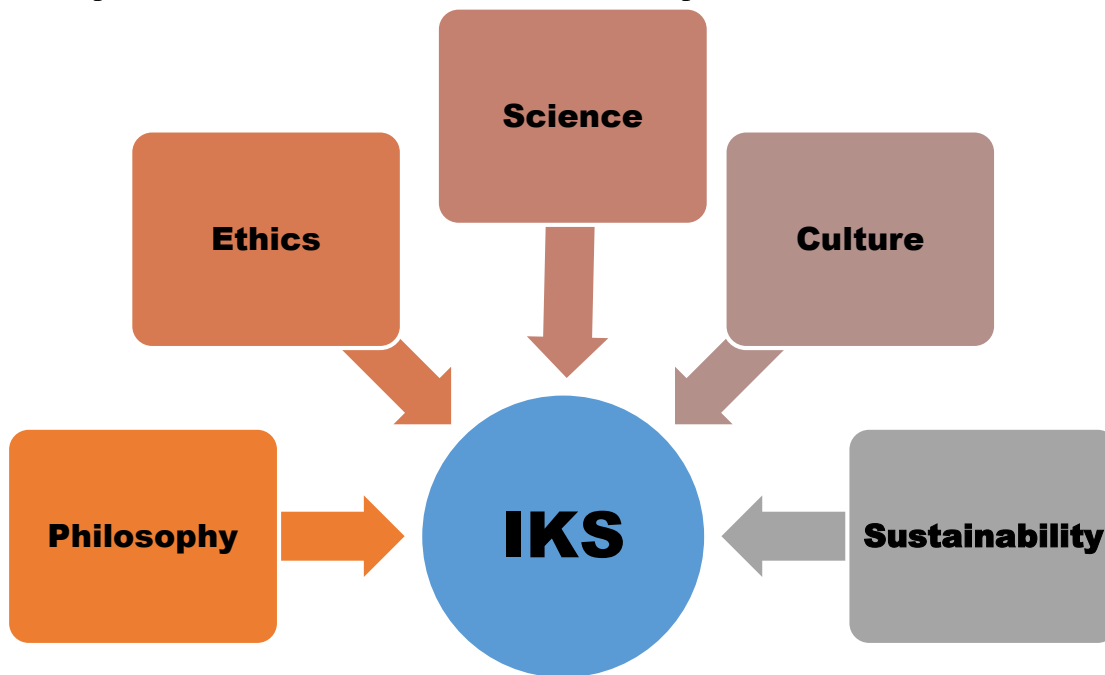
## Research Objectives

1. To understand the concept of the Indian Knowledge System in the context of education.
2. To examine the role of the National Education Policy (NEP-2020) in promoting and integrating the Indian Knowledge System in the modern educational framework.
3. To analyze the educational significance of the Indian Knowledge System in promoting holistic and multidisciplinary learning.
4. To identify the major challenges in implementing the Indian Knowledge System in contemporary education.

5. To suggest strategies for the effective integration of Indian Knowledge Systems into the present educational structure.

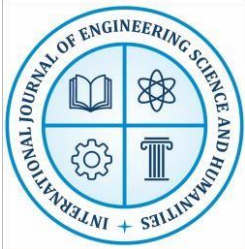
## Concept of Indian Knowledge System (IKS)

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) refers to the vast and diverse body of knowledge that has evolved in the Indian subcontinent over thousands of years through philosophical inquiry, cultural practices, scientific observations, and experiential learning. It represents a comprehensive approach to knowledge that integrates intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and practical aspects of life. Unlike many modern systems of knowledge that focus mainly on specialization and disciplinary boundaries, the Indian Knowledge System emphasizes interconnectedness among different domains of knowledge and promotes harmony between individuals, society, and nature. This knowledge tradition has been preserved through classical texts, oral traditions, cultural practices, and educational institutions that shaped ancient Indian civilization.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Representation of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS)**

Historically, the roots of the Indian Knowledge System can be traced to the Vedic period, which laid the foundation for intellectual and philosophical thought in ancient India. Classical texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, and other scholarly works contributed significantly to the development of diverse branches of knowledge. Over time, various disciplines such as philosophy, linguistics, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine evolved within this intellectual framework. These fields not only enriched theoretical knowledge but also provided practical applications that influenced social and cultural life in ancient India (Rao, 2018).



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A distinctive characteristic of the Indian Knowledge System is its emphasis on holistic and value-based education. In the traditional educational framework, knowledge was not merely associated with intellectual growth but was closely connected with ethical conduct, discipline, and social responsibility. Educational practices aimed at developing balanced individuals who possessed intellectual competence along with moral awareness and social sensitivity. This perspective reflects the broader educational philosophy that knowledge should contribute to the overall well-being of individuals and society.

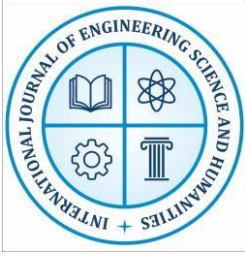
Another important dimension of IKS is its close relationship with nature and sustainable living practices. Many traditional practices related to agriculture, architecture, water management, and healthcare reflect a deep ecological understanding developed by ancient communities. Knowledge systems such as Ayurveda and traditional environmental practices demonstrate how ancient societies maintained balance between human activities and natural ecosystems. These examples highlight the practical orientation of Indian knowledge traditions and their relevance for contemporary discussions on sustainability and environmental responsibility (Kumar, 2016). In the contemporary context, there is increasing recognition of the need to revive and reinterpret traditional knowledge systems in modern education. Integrating the Indian Knowledge System with contemporary disciplines can promote interdisciplinary learning, encourage cultural awareness, and strengthen the connection between historical knowledge traditions and present-day educational practices. Such integration helps create a more inclusive and culturally grounded approach to knowledge that acknowledges the contributions of indigenous intellectual traditions (Mishra, 2018).

## NEP-2020 and Integration of Indian Knowledge System

The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes the importance of integrating the Indian Knowledge System within the modern education framework. The policy highlights several provisions such as multidisciplinary learning, promotion of Indian languages, experiential education, and value-based learning, which support the inclusion of traditional knowledge in contemporary education. These initiatives aim to reconnect students with India's intellectual heritage while preparing them for global knowledge systems.

**Table 1: Key Provisions of NEP-2020 Supporting the Integration of Indian Knowledge System**

NEP-2020 Focus Area	Description	Role in Integrating IKS
<b>Multidisciplinary and Holistic Education</b>	Encourages integration of different disciplines in education.	Supports inclusion of Indian philosophy, arts, and traditional knowledge in modern curricula.
<b>Promotion of Indian Languages</b>	Emphasizes teaching through regional and	Helps preserve traditional knowledge found in



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	classical Indian languages.	indigenous texts and traditions.
<b>Development of Critical Thinking and Values</b>	Focus on creativity, logical reasoning, and ethical values.	Reflects intellectual traditions of IKS such as Nyaya, Yoga, and Ayurveda.
<b>Experiential Learning and Community Engagement</b>	Encourages practical learning through local crafts, traditions, and community knowledge.	Connects students with indigenous practices and real-life applications of traditional wisdom.
<b>Curriculum Reform and Teacher Training</b>	Promotes curriculum development and teacher capacity building.	Enables educators to effectively incorporate IKS in teaching and learning.

## Significance of Indian Knowledge System in Education

The Indian Knowledge System plays an important role in promoting a holistic approach to education. Unlike conventional education systems that often emphasize examination-oriented learning and fragmented disciplinary knowledge, IKS focuses on the balanced development of intellectual, ethical, emotional, and social aspects of learners. Integrating these principles into contemporary education can contribute to value-based learning and encourage the development of responsible and socially aware individuals. Such an approach also promotes critical thinking and reflective learning, which are essential for addressing complex challenges in modern society (Biswas, 2021).

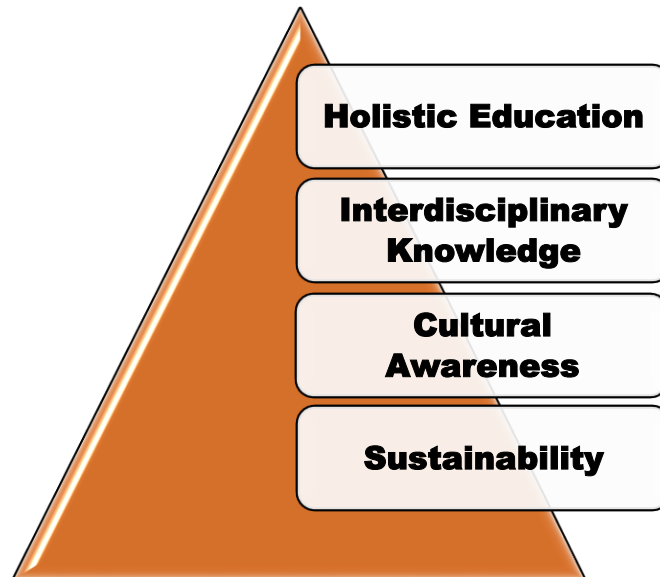


Figure 2: Educational Significance of the Indian Knowledge System



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Another significant contribution of IKS lies in its interdisciplinary nature. Traditional Indian knowledge traditions include a wide range of fields such as Ayurveda, Yoga, mathematics, astronomy, arts, architecture, and environmental practices. These fields demonstrate the interconnectedness of knowledge and highlight the importance of understanding relationships between science, culture, and everyday life. Incorporating these traditions into modern education can help learners develop analytical abilities, creativity, and problem-solving skills while encouraging them to appreciate diverse sources of knowledge (Agrawal, 1995).

The integration of Indian Knowledge Systems in education also strengthens cultural awareness and appreciation of India's intellectual heritage. In the context of globalization, education systems often focus primarily on universal or Western knowledge frameworks while giving limited attention to indigenous traditions. Introducing learners to Indian philosophical thought, classical literature, and traditional scientific contributions helps them recognize the historical achievements of Indian scholars and encourages respect for cultural diversity. Such awareness contributes to the development of culturally rooted yet globally aware learners (Chakraborty, 2019).

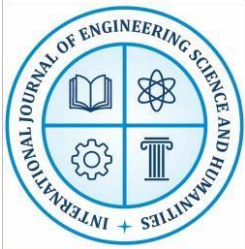
Furthermore, many principles embedded within the Indian Knowledge System emphasize harmony with nature and sustainable living practices. Traditional knowledge related to agriculture, environmental management, and healthcare reflects a deep understanding of ecological balance. Integrating such knowledge into modern education can promote environmental awareness among students and encourage responsible attitudes toward natural resources. This perspective is particularly important in the contemporary era, where sustainable development has become a central global concern.

## Challenges in Implementing Indian Knowledge System in Education

Although the integration of the Indian Knowledge System in modern education offers several benefits, its effective implementation faces certain challenges. These challenges are related to curriculum development, teacher preparedness, availability of academic resources, and the adaptation of traditional knowledge within contemporary educational frameworks. Addressing these issues is essential to ensure the meaningful integration of IKS in educational institutions.

**Table 2: Major Challenges in Integrating Indian Knowledge System in Education**

Challenge	Explanation
<b>Lack of Trained Faculty</b>	Many educators and teacher trainers have limited exposure to Indian Knowledge Systems, making it difficult to effectively teach traditional knowledge concepts in classrooms.



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<b>Limited Academic Resources</b>	There is a shortage of structured textbooks, research materials, and digital resources related to IKS, which restricts its systematic inclusion in the curriculum.
<b>Language Barriers</b>	A large portion of classical Indian knowledge is preserved in languages such as Sanskrit, which may not be easily accessible to modern learners and educators.
<b>Curriculum Integration</b>	Integrating traditional knowledge with modern scientific curricula requires careful academic planning and interdisciplinary approaches.
<b>Institutional Support</b>	Effective implementation of IKS requires policy support, teacher training programs, and institutional commitment from educational organizations.

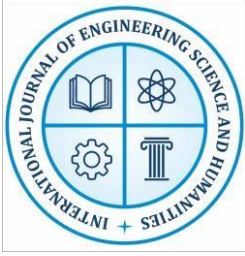
## Case Study: Integration of Indian Knowledge Systems at Banaras Hindu University

Banaras Hindu University has taken significant academic initiatives to promote the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems within higher education. In recent years, the university has introduced various certificate courses and value-added programs that focus on traditional knowledge domains, providing students with opportunities to explore indigenous intellectual traditions alongside their regular academic curriculum. These programs are designed to create an interdisciplinary learning environment where elements of Indian knowledge are meaningfully connected with contemporary subjects across humanities, social sciences, and other academic disciplines.

In addition to curriculum-based initiatives, the university actively organizes seminars, guest lectures, and academic discussions that encourage engagement with traditional knowledge systems. Such activities provide a platform for scholars and students to critically examine classical ideas and their relevance in modern contexts. The university also promotes research in the field of Indian Knowledge Systems by motivating students and researchers to undertake studies related to indigenous knowledge traditions. Through these efforts, learners develop a deeper understanding of cultural heritage, along with enhanced analytical and reflective thinking skills, thereby contributing to a more holistic educational experience.

## Suggestions / Way Forward

The effective integration of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in modern education requires systematic planning and collaboration among policymakers, educational institutions, and academic communities. Some important suggestions are as follows:



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- **Curriculum Development:** - Educational institutions should develop well-structured curricula that integrate relevant aspects of traditional knowledge within different disciplines. Instead of treating IKS as a separate subject, its principles can be incorporated across fields such as environmental studies, philosophy, science, and social sciences to highlight its contemporary relevance.
- **Teacher Training and Capacity Building:** - Teacher education programs should include modules that introduce the philosophical foundations and practical aspects of Indian Knowledge Systems. Proper training will enable educators to effectively integrate traditional knowledge with modern educational practices.
- **Promotion of Academic Research:** - Universities and research institutions should encourage research related to Indian Knowledge Systems and support the development of textbooks, research publications, and digital learning resources to facilitate its systematic inclusion in education.

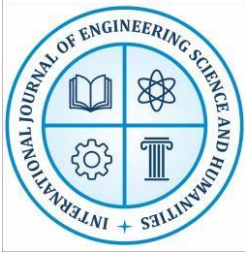
## Conclusion

The Indian Knowledge System represents a valuable intellectual tradition that has developed through centuries of philosophical thought, scientific inquiry, and cultural practices. The integration of IKS within contemporary education can contribute to holistic learning, interdisciplinary understanding, and the development of ethical awareness among learners. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has provided significant policy support for incorporating traditional knowledge traditions into modern education.

However, the successful implementation of IKS requires curriculum development, teacher preparation, and the availability of academic resources. By encouraging research, interdisciplinary learning, and institutional support, educational institutions can effectively bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and modern education. Such efforts can contribute to the development of an education system that is culturally grounded, inclusive, and responsive to contemporary challenges.

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