
INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM IN THE LIGHT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

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INTRODUCTION

India has a very rich and versatile knowledge system and cultural heritage. It has a long-standing tradition of knowledge and education, dating back to ancient universities like Nalanda and Takshashila. These institutions were renowned for their diverse curriculum, attracting scholars from across the globe. Indian civilization has always attached great value to knowledge — witness its amazingly large body of intellectual texts, the world's largest collection of manuscripts, its attested tradition of texts, thinkers and schools in so many domains of knowledge.

The Indian Knowledge System is a rich and diverse collection of knowledge, beliefs, and practices developed over thousands of years in the India. It has ancient roots dating back to the Indus Valley Civilization (around 3300–1300 BC) and Vedic period (around 1500–500 BC). The Vedas, which are among the oldest sacred texts in the world, form the foundation of Indian philosophical and spiritual thought. The four Vedas - Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda - contain hymns, rituals, and philosophical discussions.

This knowledge system encompasses a wide range of subjects including philosophy, religion, science, mathematics, medicine, astrology, Ayurveda, Yoga, Sanskrit, Classical Arts, and ancient Indian mathematics and literature. It is based on a holistic approach that integrates different aspects of human life, such as mind, body, and spirit. One of the key characteristics of the Indian Knowledge System is its emphasis on the interconnectedness and interdependence of all beings and the universe. IKS has profoundly influenced Indian society and global knowledge paradigms. These systems and traditions have been integral to the

cultural fabric of India and continue to play a significant role in shaping its society, thought processes, and way of life.

Indian knowledge systems encompass a wide array of philosophical schools of thought, collectively known as *Darshanas* which comprises of following six prominent philosophies.

1. Nyaya: it focuses on logical reasoning and epistemology.
2. Vaisheshika: It deals with atomism and metaphysics.
3. Samkhya: It explores the duality of purusha (consciousness) and prakriti (matter).
4. Yoga: It emphasizes spiritual practices and self-realization.
5. Mimamsa: It concentrates on rituals and scriptural exegesis.
6. Vedanta: It investigates the essence of the Vedas and the nature of reality.

Core Components of Indian Knowledge System

The core components of the Indian Knowledge Systems— *Darshan, Jnana, and Vidya* — These three components are closely connected. *Darshan*, (philosophy) is the "system," the point of view, which yields/leads to *Jnana*, (knowledge). When knowledge gathered about a particular domain is organized and systematized for purposes of, say, reflection and pedagogy, it is called *Vidya*, "discipline." The entire body of organized knowledge is divided into two sets — Para Vidya and Apra Vidya.

The knowledge is constituted, stored, and maintained in the framework of the oral culture. The knowledge is constituted in our inner self. There is the *Antarjnana*, constituted by the input of the senses (*Indriya*), processed by the mind (*Manan*) and the intellect (*Buddhi*), and finally constituted knowledge exists as our transformed, alert self, (*Chita*). Therefore, while both perception and inference are given primacy as epistemologies, *Tarka* (argumentation) is also accorded an important place; the Indian mind has not relied completely on mind and senses and has accorded the central role in knowledge formation to meditation and deep reflection, *chintan and manana*.

In the Indian context of orality, literature has been an act of public communication, a performance. The word used for literature, *Vanmaya*, underlines the orality of all compositions. India has the world's earliest poetry (Rigveda) and the earliest prose (Brahmanas) and the largest body of literature ranging from lyrics to philosophy, astronomy, Mathematics and myths. This massive body of literature has in turn generated considerable theoretical thinking about verbal discourse

In Indian thought, there being no imperative of One Given Truth, a plurality of "truths" is allowed. While allowing for the fact that some truth is always there, the Indian thinkers are skeptical about the possibility of accessing or recognizing it. They allow therefore "several/multiple paths" to truth. The great differentia of world-views, of ontologies and epistemologies stems from this foundational principle.

Further, the goal of knowledge is not promotion of man's material comfort but the enhancement of mental and physical well-being of all. Knowledge, thus, has never been divorced from justice. In fact, it has always been imbricated with ethics, with the dominant ethical value of dharma. All disciplines of knowledge, vidya, have this social-ethical imperative.

In the Indian thought system, the goal of knowledge is not exercise of power over others but power over one self, moksha, liberation of the self from its own limitations and constraints.

These components have evolved through a dynamic interplay of knowledge, observation, investigation, and rigorous analysis. This custom of validation and practical application has left a profound impact on diverse fields such as education, administration, law, justice, manufacturing, and commerce.

NEP 2020 and Indian Knowledge System

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) promotes integrating Indian Knowledge System into mainstream education for cultural pride and holistic development. Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) encompass a vast array of disciplines, including Ayurveda, Yoga, Sanskrit, classical arts, and ancient Indian mathematics and sciences. NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of these systems and proposes their integration into the modern curriculum. This policy aims to rejuvenate India's rich educational heritage while promoting a more inclusive and diverse learning framework.

The National Education Policy 2020 lays special emphasis on the promotion of Indian Languages, Arts and Culture, and tries to remove this discontinuity in the flow of Indian Knowledge System by integrating IKS into curriculums at all levels of education.

NEP 2020 proposes several strategies to achieve its objectives concerning the Indian knowledge system which include:

1. **Curriculum Reforms:** Revision of school and higher education curricula to include modules on Indian Knowledge System and promote a holistic understanding of India's cultural and intellectual diversity.
2. **Teacher Training:** Training programs for teachers to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to teach Indian Knowledge System effectively.
3. **Resource Mobilization:** Allocation of resources for the documentation, preservation, and dissemination of traditional knowledge systems.
4. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Collaboration with academic institutions, research organizations, and traditional knowledge holders to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognizes India's ancient knowledge and thought as a guiding principle. Para 4.27 of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 refers to the traditional knowledge of India that is both sustainable and strives for the welfare of all. In order to become the Knowledge power in this century, it is imperative that we understand our heritage and teach the world the 'Indian way' of doing things. Ministry of Education has established Indian Knowledge System (IKS) Division in AICTE in 2020 with a vision to promote interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research on all aspects of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), preserve and disseminate IKS knowledge for further research and societal applications.

The IKS Division's objectives include:

- **Research:** Promoting interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research on IKS.
- **Dissemination:** Preserving and sharing IKS knowledge for research and societal applications.
- **Integration:** Integrating IKS into the education research ecosystem and mainstreaming it.
- **Bridging:** Bridging the gap between traditional and contemporary knowledge systems.

Teachers' Training for Promoting Indian Knowledge System

The success of NEP 2020 and its special component on Indian Knowledge System lies heavily on the shoulder of the faculty of Higher Education Institutions. Most of the faculty in

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the country, although experts in their respective fields, may require additional familiarization efforts for the Indian Knowledge Systems.

In order to facilitate a seamless integration of Indian traditional knowledge with modern subjects, UGC has come up with 'Guidelines for Training of Faculty on IKS'. These guidelines have been developed keeping in mind the need to make our youth aware of the vast repositories of ancient traditional knowledge in India and clearly map this knowledge with modern scientific advancements and technologies.

Separate guidelines have been specified for induction programme and refresher courses, given the different needs and approaches required for training faculty at different stages of career development.

The Indian Knowledge System guidelines will be a part of the training modules under "Malviya Mission" and will be considered under CAS scheme as per the UGC regulations. Indian Knowledge System based Teacher training/orientation in the Higher Education Institutes is typically conducted by various agencies such as HRDCs and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers Training (PMMMNTT) named as Malviya Mission. The faculty are required to attend a mandatory induction program and periodic refresher courses for their continued professional advancement.

CONCLUSION

Indian Knowledge System comprises of diverse traditional knowledge systems and practices that have been developed and transmitted over centuries within various communities and regions across India. These systems encompass a wide range of disciplines including but not limited to medicine, agriculture, astronomy, philosophy, linguistics, and arts, often rooted in indigenous cultures and practices. The NEP 2020 recommends the incorporation of the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into curriculums at all levels of education. The success of the policy relies heavily on the shoulders of inspired teachers. The Government of India formed the IKS division within the Ministry of Education with the goal of advancing multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research on all facets of IKS and sharing IKS knowledge for future innovations and societal applications.

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