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# Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in Indian higher education at the Backdrop of NEP 2020

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**Abstract:** The main objective of drawing from our past and integrating the Indian Knowledge Systems is to ensure that our ancient systems of knowledge represented by unbroken tradition of knowledge transmission and providing a unique perspective (Bhartiya Drishti) is used to solve the current and emerging challenges of India and the world. The IKS must be scientifically integrated into curricula at schools and universities. The Ministry of Education, Regulatory Bodies (UGC & AICTE), and HEIs have carried out a number of initiatives to achieve these NEP 2020 objectives. Guidelines for integrating Indian knowledge in higher education are among the Ministry's initiatives. Curricula emphasizes on the promotion of Indian Languages, Arts and Culture, and tries to remove the discontinuity in the flow of Indian Knowledge System (lKS) by integrating IKS into curriculums at all levels of education. There is a rising push in Indian higher education today to include Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into academic programs. Significant changes must be made to the way IKS is viewed and taught, and society as a whole must change to acknowledge the importance of ancient knowledge in solving modern problems.

**Introduction:** This rich legacy of timeless Indian knowledge and philosophy is acknowledged as a guiding element in the NEP, 2020. Jna Vignan and Jeevan Darshan make up the Indian Knowledge Systems, which have developed from experience, observation, experimentation, and thorough analysis. Education, the arts, administration, law, justice, health, manufacturing, and commerce have all been touched by this history of verifying and putting into practice. This has had an impact on Bharati's classical and other languages that were passed down through oral, written, and artistic traditions. According to Bill Ashcroft et al. (2007), "knowledge of India" in this sense encompasses information about ancient India, its achievements and difficulties, as well as an understanding of India's future goals with regard to education, health, the environment, and really all facets of life.

The Indian Knowledge System's primary goal is to ensure that our ancient knowledge systems, which are represented by an uninterrupted tradition of knowledge transmission and offer a distinctive perspective (Bhāratiya Drishti), are used to address India's and the world's current and emerging challenges. The IKS must be scientifically integrated into curricula at schools and universities. Mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, yoga, architecture, medicine, agriculture, engineering, linguistics, literature, sports, games, governance, politics, and conservation will all be covered, along with indigenous and traditional learning methods and tribal wisdom. There are specialized courses offered in forest management, traditional (organic) agricultural production, natural farming, tribal ethno-medical practices, etc.

Secondary school students can take an interesting option on Indian Knowledge Systems (J. Daniel Elam, 2024).

**IKS Implementation via NEP:** The policy acknowledges that students should learn about India's rich diversity firsthand. This would entail including straightforward activities, such as student tours of various regions of the nation, which will not only increase tourism but also foster an awareness of variety, culture, customs, and knowledge of many regions of India. The Ministry of Education, Regulatory Bodies (UGC & AICTE), and HEIs have carried out a number of initiatives to achieve these NEP 2020 objectives. It mandates that all students enrolled in undergraduate or graduate programs be encouraged to enroll in IKS credit courses totaling at least 5% of the total required credits (interested students may be permitted to take a larger fraction of the total required credits). The major discipline should account for at least half of the credits allotted to the IKS. Any Indian language could be used as the medium of instruction for the IKS courses, according to Jasbir Jain (2012).

**Objectives:**

1. To examine how uninterrupted traditions of knowledge transfer reflect old systems of knowledge
2. To offer a distinctive viewpoint to address India's and the world's present and future problems.

3. Guidelines for integrating Indian knowledge into higher education curricula are among the Ministry's endeavours.
4. To draw attention to the necessity of significant changes in the way IKS is taught and seen.
5. To lead a larger social movement that acknowledges the importance of traditional wisdom in solving modern problems.

**Hypothesis:**

The uninterrupted legacy of knowledge transmission represents the ancient systems of knowledge and offers a distinctive viewpoint (Bhāratiya Drishti) to address India's and the world's present and future problems. measures implemented by the Ministry, such as recommendations for integrating Indian knowledge into curricula for higher education. Significant changes in the way IKS is taught and viewed are required. There has to be a more widespread social change to acknowledge the importance of traditional wisdom in solving modern problems.

**Research Methodology:** This study, "Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in Indian Higher Education at the Backdrop of NEP 2020," aims to analyze the integration of IKS in Indian higher education against the backdrop of NEP 2020. With IKS serving as the focal point, the NEP's reference to the Indian educational system is examined. As a result, conclusions were reached.

**Training/Orientation of Faculty**: Through induction programs and refresher courses, training/orientation of faculty helps them to develop a good attitude toward IKS and foster enthusiasm in learning more. Additionally, cooperation between artists and HEIs to create an efficient framework for art education that regularly involves knowledgeable Kala Gurus in teaching, research, and other academic pursuits will combine the artistic experience with traditional education to make it more fruitful and advantageous for the students. Introduction of courses based on Indian heritage and culture made people familiar with the rich cultural and intellectual heritage of India and offer short term multi-tier credit based modular programme with multiple entry and exit based on Indian heritage and culture. In the areas of universal human values, Vedic mathematics, yoga, Ayurveda, Sanskrit, Indian languages, sacred religious regions on the Indian subcontinent, archaeological sites and monuments, Indian heritage, Indian literature, Indian sculpture, Indian music and dance forms, drama, visual arts, performing arts, crafts and craftsmanship, and more, Jasbir Jain (2012).

**IKS Integration in the Current Educational System**: Students who finish 18 to 20 credits in IKS are eligible to receive a minor degree. To promote original research, instruction, and IKS dissemination, 32 IKS Centers have been established. Ancient metallurgy, ancient town planning, water resource management, ancient rasayanshastra, and other high-end interdisciplinary research facilities are currently under construction. There have been about 5200 internships available on IKS. There were fifty workshops, national and international conferences, and faculty development programs. Over 8000 HEIs have begun incorporating IKS into their curricula and have managed to digitize 1.5 lakh books. Through the Dhara Conference series, the IKS Division of the Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and partner institutions, has been able to directly and indirectly reach at least 6Cr+ citizens of this country regarding the various contributions of ancient Indian Knowledge Systems, taking into consideration their relevance in the present and exploring their scope for the future.

In order to create Vision 2047, which outlines a plan for creating a prosperous Bhāratīya Gnana Paramparā, the IKS Division has assembled top scholars and professionals from a variety of fields. It would be simpler to encourage and facilitate additional study to address the issues of our day by utilizing our extensive knowledge. These courses would inspire and restore the legacy of our knowledge systems if they were incorporated into regular schooling. Students can increase their confidence, widen their intellectual horizons, and gain a deeper understanding of their cultural ethos by being exposed to both old and modern ideas. www.financialexpress.com (2023).

**Difficulties in Implementing IKS:** The First National Conference of Chief Secretaries, which took place in June 2022, made the decision to guarantee "Research and Dissemination of Indian Knowledge System / traditional medicines to make it globally accepted as science / medicine and to develop appropriate protocol." In order to provide individualized instruction, interesting content, and "Divyang"-friendly content in Indian languages, Project FIT—Technology for Language, In Language, Through Language and Learning Experience platforms—is also intended to guarantee the availability of courses and content in 22 scheduled Indian languages.

Finding ways to achieve "Janbhagidari" for the development and propagation of IKS Duncan Ivison (2024), identifying mechanisms for evolving appropriate protocols for IKS studies and methodologies to integrate with research in contemporary knowledge systems in ways that are globally acceptable, identifying mechanisms for incentivizing HEIs and students to perform serious scholarly inter-disciplinary research, and identifying subjects related to IKS that will not only attract Indian students but also foreign students will serve the goal of internationalization at home.

**Discussion and Analysis**: In order to instill traditional knowledge and pride in students across all fields, universities in all States and UTs may implement learner credits or IKS electives in all courses. The inclusion of 5% of the total credits in the curriculum for the IKS courses has already been mandated by UGC. IKS is a new course offered by AICTE to first-year engineering college students.

1. To provide specialised courses for students, states and UTs may chronicle their own national cultures, arts, crafts, customs, architecture, dietary preferences, languages, etc.
2. Given India's globalised past, university-designed multidisciplinary courses may take international cooperation into account wherever feasible. For instance, NCERT is working to incorporate literature at the school level that highlights the historical connections between Indonesia and India.
3. Current IKS courses can be synchronised with online learning environments (ODL) and digital learning platforms (SWAYAM, NPTEL) for learners worldwide.
4. Recruitment: To develop a cadre of specialised IKS faculty and researchers, the entrance exam syllabus may be introduced as a subject for testing under UGC-NET.
5. To enhance the quality of instruction on IKS courses, modules for teacher orientation and training could be created.
6. The creation of specialised teacher training facilities where specialised IKS faculty can instruct instructors in specific Indian Knowledge System subjects.
7. IKS Internships: In conjunction with BG Samvahan Karyakram, the internship program started by the MoE's IKS Division, offer opportunities for student internships and apprenticeships as well as counselling to IKS students.
8. Practical workshops: Give students the chance to learn a variety of skills from professionals in practical workshops.
9. Hackathons: Hold specialised hackathons with an IKS theme and incorporate IKS-related subjects into the Smart India Hackathon in harmony with the subjects provided by the MoE's IKS Division.
10. Academic content translation: To engage different learners and maintain indigenous identity, IKS Centres may translate teaching and learning materials for all disciplines into local languages. Ashcroft, Bill, and others (2007).

**Support Research and Innovation in IKS**: In the future, NRF may provide dedicated research grants to support IKS-related research initiatives. IKS research in India may be revitalised by catalytic grants that support unique, serious, and in-depth scholarly study in the field. By incorporating IKS into prestigious programs like PMRF, the organisation hopes to draw top talent to its interdisciplinary IKS research and innovation through a variety of big national challenges, national contests, hackathons, and incentives for innovation promotion.

For study focused on India, organisations like the Indian Council of Historical study (ICHR) provide access to international collaborations. The ASEAN fellowships may use IKS as a theme to encourage scholarly exchange and develop the next generation of scholars. The creation of IKS centres, which will serve as catalysts for starting outreach, teaching, and research initiatives around the nation, may provide institutional support mechanisms.

The development of IKS Centres in different HEIs will get initial seed financing, and further funding will be given to establish worldwide Centres of Excellence in targeted fields. interacting with the public via a variety of channels (MyGOV contests, conferences, exhibits, radio and television shows, social media, etc.) to spread and popularise genuine IKS knowledge in order to create knowledgeable and self-assured citizens. Individuals may participate in different IKS projects through Jan Bhagidari programs that are comparable to citizen science projects (J. Daniel Elam, 2024).

**Creating Employment Opportunities :** Creating job prospects for young people through skill-based IKS programs, such as training programs for beauticians and cosmeticians, Ayurvedic dietician programs, Gandhashastra-based perfumes, and many more special IKS- based abilities. By

introducing technological solutions to highlight Indian heritage to Indians and the globe, heritage technology can be encouraged. 10% of the global tourism sector, valued at $10.5 trillion in 2022, will be grabbed, and our young will have access to enormous employment prospects (Jasbir Jain, 2012).

**IKS and Indian Higher Education:** The link between Indian higher education and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) is complicated and historically charged, impacted by modernity, colonialism, and the drive for academic global competitiveness. The significance of incorporating Indigenous Knowledge Systems into higher education has become increasingly apparent as India enters the twenty-first century, particularly in a country with a rich and varied cultural legacy. But there have been difficulties along the way, both in terms of social perceptions and academic frameworks. The Indian educational system was largely influenced by Western institutions and ideals during British colonial control. Indigenous knowledge systems and practices were marginalised as a result of colonialism in favour of Western languages, sciences, and philosophies. Indigenous languages and knowledge were relegated to secondary status with the advent of the English language and Western-style educational systems, and many ancient methods of knowing were viewed as "primitive" or "unscientific." Even though they are significant in and of themselves, Indian universities such as the University of Calcutta, Aligarh Muslim University, and Banaras Hindu University were founded with colonial educational objectives in mind. Local knowledge, spiritual practices, and vernacular languages that were essential to India's rich cultural diversity were mostly left out of the curricula, which were initially controlled by British colonial objectives. This historical legacy made it more difficult for Indigenous knowledge to be acknowledged and incorporated into academic contexts by creating a gap between traditional learning systems and official, Westernised schooling. Indigenous ways of knowing are frequently overshadowed by Western-oriented pedagogies and academic frameworks that nonetheless predominate in Indian colleges today.

There is a rising push in Indian higher education today to include Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into academic programs. The main topic of discussion is how to maintain and revitalise Indigenous knowledge while making sure it advances contemporary educational objectives. A number of academic institutions, academics, and activists are pushing for a more inclusive curriculum that acknowledges the cultural and practical importance of IKS. Even if IKS is becoming more widely acknowledged, Western knowledge systems continue to be heavily favoured in higher education. Many Indian colleges place a strong emphasis on Western sciences, mathematics, philosophy, and technology while frequently ignoring indigenous knowledge systems that are thought to be less significant academically or scientifically. IKS is ingrained in regional traditions, rituals, and practices and is typically passed down orally. Because of this, formalising or documenting in written formats appropriate for conventional academic systems is challenging. Furthermore, it is difficult to teach IKS within the confines of formal education systems because it frequently lacks a standardised curriculum. In academia, there is still a widespread belief that IKS is not "scientific" or "objective" enough to meet the demanding requirements of higher education. This perspective ignores the factual knowledge and real-world applications found in IKS, such as environmental stewardship, traditional medicine, and sustainable agriculture methods.

Local languages, which are frequently not the languages of teaching in Indian higher education (which are mostly Hindi or English), are used to encode many Indigenous knowledge systems. Because cultural concepts and knowledge systems frequently lose important significance when translated into academic languages, this makes it difficult to integrate IKS into formal education. Jain Jasbir (2012).

Localised knowledge is frequently neglected in Indian higher education due to the push for internationalisation and standardised academic methods. The importance of traditional Indigenous knowledge, which may not always fit cleanly into international academic frameworks, may be overshadowed by the Indian education system's emphasis on worldwide rankings, research funding, and technological innovation. Despite these obstacles, a number of programs and movements are working to integrate Indigenous Knowledge Systems into higher education in India. Some Indian institutions have started to include elements of IKS in their curricula, particularly in states with sizable Indigenous populations. For example, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) have started offering courses related to tribal studies, Indigenous languages, and traditional ecological knowledge. Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Management (IIMs) are also exploring the role of Indigenous knowledge in areas like sustainable

development, natural resource management, and alternative medicine.
The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), for instance, conducts research on the scientific foundation of Ayurveda and its potential application in modern medicine. Institutions are beginning to value traditional agricultural knowledge (such as organic farming methods and water management systems like rainwater harvesting) for their potential to address contemporary challenges like climate change and sustainable agriculture. The growing recognition of Indigenous knowledge in ecology, such as sustainable forest management, agroforestry, and biodiversity conservation, is starting to have an impact on university environmental science programs (2023).

**Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Languages in the National Educational Curriculum:** In order to preserve tribal legacy, revitalise Indigenous languages, and incorporate elements of IKS into educational frameworks, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched a number of initiatives. More Indigenous languages and knowledge should be incorporated into the national curriculum, according to the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). Indigenous art, language, and knowledge have been documented, preserved, and promoted in academic contexts by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and other cultural institutions. The idea that Indigenous languages constitute archives of cultural knowledge is becoming more widely acknowledged. The continuation of IKS in both its intellectual and cultural aspects is ensured by university-level initiatives to teach and maintain Indigenous languages through local language classes or departments of tribal studies. The documentation of endangered languages and its function in passing down traditional knowledge has also been a focus of language programs at universities like JNU and BHU. Jain Jasbir (2012).

IKS has become a more popular source of solutions for the expanding sustainable development movement. Whether it is in agriculture, water management, or disaster resilience, local knowledge is gradually being incorporated into sustainable development models through the efforts of grassroots organisations and academic institutions. "Bottom-up development" is a major focus, where local, Indigenous knowledge is considered essential to creating development strategies that are suitable for the region. An essential chance to develop a more comprehensive and inclusive educational system is the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems into Indian higher education. There is a growing recognition that Western education is insufficient to tackle the complex issues of the contemporary world as India negotiates its post-colonial identity and accepts globalisation. Ashcroft, Bill, and others (2007).

**Conclusion:** There are several advantages of incorporating IKS into higher education. It enables India to recover and revitalise its Indigenous traditions' enormous diversity. It supports ecologically friendly methods based on knowledge systems that date back hundreds of years. By incorporating various worldviews and methods of knowledge, it enhances scholarly and intellectual conversations. However, significant changes in the way IKS is viewed and taught are required for this integration to be successful, as is a wider cultural shift that acknowledges the importance of old knowledge in solving modern problems. A truly inclusive higher education system in India will need empowering Indigenous groups and providing them with a platform to share their expertise while upholding their intellectual property rights.

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