

"India's Epistemic Tapestry: Exploring the Richness of the Indigenous Knowledge System"

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Abstract - The implementation of NEP2020 has reached its third anniversary. Several recommended modifications, particularly in the realm of higher education (HE), are already being implemented. Various initiatives like as the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), Multiple Exit and Multiple Entry (MEME), National Credit Framework, National Curriculum Framework, Professor of Practice, and four-year undergraduate programs are currently being widely adopted at institutions. The integration of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) at all levels and in all subjects has recently gained significant interest among academics. The UGC has recently published two sets of guidelines: "Guidelines for incorporating Indian Knowledge in Higher Education" and "Guidelines for introduction of courses based on Indian heritage and culture." In Maharashtra, independent institutions have implemented microcredit courses on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) starting this academic year. All colleges will adopt comparable courses in the next academic year. The author has engaged with many educators from autonomous colleges who have developed curricula for Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) at their institutions. Additionally, the author has also spoken with over 500 instructors from 45 colleges on the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP2020), its execution, and the forthcoming problems and prospects in the realm of higher education. This article emphasizes the significance, pertinence, and influence of integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in Higher Education (HE).

Index Terms - National Knowledge System (IKS), globalization, New Education System, Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), Multiple Exit and Multiple Entry (MEME)

1. INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

India's Knowledge System is evidence of the nation's rich intellectual history, which is ingrained in a variety of customs and age-old knowledge. The Indian Knowledge System, which covers a wide range of fields including philosophy, science, the arts, and spirituality, is a mosaic of understanding that has developed over millennia.

This system's fundamental quality is its holistic approach, which emphasizes how different aspects of life and knowledge are interrelated. The Indian Knowledge System, which has its roots in antiquated texts like the Upanishads, Vedas, and other treatises, has influenced the subcontinent's social, cultural, and scientific environment. This system stands out for its inclusiveness, which accepts a wide range of viewpoints and knowledge pathways. The profound ideas of Ayurveda and the mathematical genius of manuscripts such as the Sulba Sutras are only two examples of how India's intellectual legacy has profoundly influenced world philosophy.

We explore the depths of the Indian Knowledge System in this investigation, revealing its facets and appreciating its applicability to the modern world. This voyage attempts to highlight the depth and enduring value of India's intellectual heritage, from the deep realizations of the country's ancient sages to the applications in contemporary sectors. Accompany us as we explore the halls of antiquated knowledge and modern significance, revealing the many layers of the Indian Knowledge System.

1.2 HISTORY OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

“The rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought has been a guiding light for this Policy” (NEP2020, Pg 5).

The history of the Indian Knowledge System is a captivating journey through the annals of time, tracing its roots to ancient civilizations that flourished along the banks of the sacred rivers. This rich intellectual tradition encompasses a vast array of disciplines, from philosophy and mathematics to medicine and astronomy, shaping the cultural and scientific heritage of the subcontinent. The Vedas, composed between 1500 and 500 BCE, serve as the cornerstone of the Indian Knowledge System. Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda contain hymns, rituals, and philosophical discussions, providing profound insights into the understanding of the cosmos, the self, and the interconnectedness of all existence. The Upanishads, emerging around 800 BCE, delve deeper into metaphysical questions, elucidating the concept of Brahman and Atman, laying the groundwork for philosophical inquiry.

Around 600 BCE, the era of systematic philosophical thought commenced with the advent of schools of philosophy known as Darshanas. Six classical schools, including Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta, explored diverse aspects of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. The dialectical debates between these schools enriched the intellectual landscape, fostering a culture of open inquiry and critical thinking. During the Maurya and Gupta periods (circa 322 BCE to 550 CE), India witnessed an efflorescence of scientific and mathematical advancements. Aryabhata's "Aryabhatiya," composed in the 5th century, provided groundbreaking contributions to mathematics and astronomy, introducing the concept of zero and accurately calculating astronomical parameters. Brahmagupta, another luminary of this era, made significant strides in algebra and formulated rules for arithmetic operations.

The Gupta Empire also witnessed the compilation of the "Susruta Samhita" and the "Charaka Samhita," foundational texts in Ayurveda, offering comprehensive insights into medicine, surgery, and holistic well-being. These treatises continue to influence traditional healthcare practices in India and beyond. The classical period also witnessed monumental literary achievements, exemplified by Kalidasa's timeless works like "Shakuntala" and "Meghaduta." These literary masterpieces not only showcased the aesthetic prowess of Indian literature but also embedded profound philosophical and cultural insights. The medieval period saw the flourishing of Islamic scholarship in India, leading to a synthesis of diverse intellectual traditions. The Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire became centers of learning, fostering a rich intellectual exchange known as the "Indo-Islamic synthesis." Scholars like Al-Biruni and Ibn Battuta made significant contributions to the study of Indian sciences, further enriching the Indian Knowledge System. The Bhakti and Sufi movements during this period emphasized experiential spirituality and a direct connection with the divine, transcending religious boundaries. The compositions of saint poets like Kabir, Mirabai, and Tulsidas reflected a deep synthesis of spiritual and social insights, contributing to the cultural tapestry of the Indian subcontinent.

The colonial era brought both challenges and opportunities for the Indian Knowledge System. The translation and codification of Indian texts by British scholars facilitated their accessibility to a wider audience but often through a Eurocentric lens. The establishment of institutions like the Asiatic Society and the introduction of Western education systems had a transformative impact, influencing the trajectory of modern education in India. Post-independence, India sought to revive and celebrate its indigenous knowledge systems. The establishment of institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) aimed to integrate traditional wisdom with modern scientific and technological advancements. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) was formed to harness the vast intellectual potential of the nation and promote a knowledge-centric society. In recent times, there has been a renewed interest in traditional practices such as yoga and Ayurveda, both within India and globally. These ancient systems are being explored for their holistic approach to health and well-being, aligning with contemporary trends toward sustainable and mindful living.

History of the Indian Knowledge System is a fascinating narrative of intellectual exploration, resilience, and adaptation. From the hymns of the Vedas to the mathematical formulations of ancient scholars, from the philosophical inquiries of the classical period to the synthesis of diverse traditions in the medieval era, India's intellectual journey has been characterized by a dynamic interplay of continuity and change. Today, as India embraces the challenges of the 21st century, its rich legacy of knowledge serves as a source of inspiration and guidance, fostering a harmonious integration of tradition and modernity.

1.3 MYTHS ABOUT IKS

At the outset, it is essential to address the prevailing misconceptions around IKS subjects. First and foremost, IKS is not concerned with mythology. The term "mythology" derives from the term "myth," which refers to a narrative or belief that is not based on real evidence or truth. All information originating from India was never mythical. Indeed, in India, there has always been a seamless integration of theory and practice. All the theoretical concepts presented in Indian scriptures were pragmatic, and all practical applications were firmly grounded in well-established principles. IKS adheres to religious beliefs, debunking the notion of being non-secular. If someone recites the phrase "Astō ma sadgamaya..." aloud, how can it acquire religious connotations and cease to be secular? Society and scholars must comprehend the true essence of the material inside old writings and transmit it in its most unadulterated form to future generations. Allow the kids to choose the relevance and significance of it. IKS is not only the act of praising the past and our forefathers. The objective is to instill a sense of pride among young people about the academic and scientific achievements of Indians, and to continue the tradition of knowledge production in order to address the challenges of the 21st century. The assertion that IKS themes are difficult to comprehend or no longer relevant, and hence not worth studying, is not supported by real evidence. For almost 180 years, we have ceased to engage in reading and acquiring information in many disciplines that originated from India. If not acquired now, it is possible that in the coming years, foreigners would arrive in India to instruct us in Sanskrit and other disciplines related to Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

1.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is firmly grounded in the rich cultural and intellectual traditions of the Indian subcontinent. The goals and objectives of this endeavor are diverse, including a comprehensive approach to comprehending and navigating the intricacies of existence. IKS aims to cultivate a holistic comprehension of the universe, which includes both the tangible and visible components as well as the more nuanced and metaphysical facets of life.

The main goal of the Indian Knowledge System is to encourage the quest for knowledge and self-actualization. Contrary to several educational approaches in the Western world that prioritize the acquisition of knowledge and abilities, IKS focuses a notable emphasis on nurturing inner wisdom and attaining self-realization. This entails delving into the profound realms of consciousness via activities such as meditation, yoga, and contemplation. The ultimate objective is to achieve a level of self-awareness and spiritual enlightenment, beyond the constraints of the ego and establishing a connection with the global consciousness.

In addition, IKS strives to provide a comprehensive education that incorporates several fields of study, such as arts, sciences, philosophy, and ethics. The significance of the interconnections across many fields is highlighted, mirroring the age-old Indian conviction that genuine knowledge cannot be segregated into separate compartments. This multidisciplinary approach promotes the cultivation of a comprehensive viewpoint, nurturing creativity, analytical thinking, and a feeling of connectivity with the world.

Preserving and transmitting ancient knowledge systems are also essential goals of IKS. India has a wealth of ancient literature, including the Vedas, Upanishads, and other traditions, that provide deep insights into the nature of reality, human life, and the universe. IKS aims to preserve the ongoing legacy of intellectual knowledge, transmitting it throughout generations and adapting it to modern circumstances. This encompasses not just the academic examination of historical writings but also the incorporation of conventional knowledge into contemporary educational programs.

One of the main objectives of the Indian Knowledge System is to encourage sustainable and harmonious life. IKS promotes a morally upright and ecologically aware lifestyle, drawing inspiration from the concepts of dharma (righteousness) and ahimsa (non-violence). The importance of the interdependence between all living organisms and the environment is highlighted, promoting the idea of people living in a way that positively impacts the overall health of the ecosystem. This comprehensive approach encompasses several disciplines like agriculture, architecture, and healthcare, where ancient Indian methods are harmoniously integrated with ecological sustainability.

IKS also aims to promote a strong sense of social responsibility and inclusiveness. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, an ancient Indian philosophy, emphasizes the interdependence of mankind and the notion that the universe is a unified family. IKS promotes the acknowledgment and acceptance of difference, cultivating an atmosphere of

Chola rulers to the Iron pillar in Delhi, and from the impressive architectural marvels of temples to sculptures, historic ports, and contemporary excavations, all demonstrate the vastness of Indian knowledge. During the early 19th century, the British forcibly initiated the closure of these centers of knowledge formation, resulting in Indians being disconnected from their knowledge legacy for almost 180 years. The NEP2020 is urging the current generation to restore and incorporate indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) into contemporary educational curricula and teaching methods. Rote learning is a prime illustration of conventional education. Despite widespread criticism, consulting your grandma will reveal that she still retains knowledge of both whole number and fraction tables from her early education. Marathi medium schools traditionally taught multiplication tables for numbers such as pavki, nimki, didki, and savvaki. An individual who memorizes this information will possess a higher level of practical intelligence in all practical computations compared to any graduate of the current educational system who would otherwise rely on a calculator. Memorization-based studying for tests, which just focuses on memory retention, is unquestionably inadequate. As a society, it is imperative that we acknowledge, if belatedly, the hidden gem we have neglected for an extensive duration in the pursuit of contemporary education.

1.9 CONCLUSION

Academics should first engage in reading materials pertaining to their respective fields from credible sources. Translations are sometimes inadequate since many Indic words cannot be accurately rendered in English. There is no direct English equivalent for terms like dharma and bhakti. Literary translations sometimes fail to capture their precise meaning within the appropriate context. Research on topics connected to Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) should be conducted in partnership with persons and organizations who specialize in the field of IKS and Indic studies. It is essential for all instructors to get training and then pass on their knowledge to others.

The next crucial challenge for academics is to create and implement courses on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), particularly in an online format, in various Indian languages. Ultimately, the distribution of material under IKS should be done in a way that is engaging and appealing to the students. Excessive inundation of knowledge, inflexible, and conventional methods of teaching history should be avoided. Enhance the appeal of the subjects via the use of various educational techniques and creative teaching methodologies. The clarity of the purpose of IKS is crucial not only during the design and development of IKS courses, but also throughout the implementation and assessment phase. The IKS course should potentially suffer the same fate as the Foundation Course or EVS course. Let us collectively foster a profound feeling of national pride among the next generation via IKS courses, enabling them to recognize their responsibility as Indian citizens to transform our country into a leading knowledge powerhouse, as envisioned in NEP2020.

1.10 References

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