



Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems into the School Curriculum: Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is one of the most important frameworks that has shaped the philosophy and science of India in the world. As the country's education in India is becoming more science- and technology-based, we are moving away from cultural backgrounds, and the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) will fill in this gap by bringing "knowledge, science and culture together." In this paper, we consider how IKS should be incorporated into the school curriculum. IKS is proven to promote self-preservation, ethics and cultural awareness for students, but also to provide a more contextual, sensitive and holistic education. There are teachers, authentic materials, linguistic diversity and resources. In addition to others, we can create teacher resources for research, research centres, and respect local traditions to support IKS.

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INTRODUCTION

Indian civilisation is the product of culture and knowledge in philosophy, science, spirituality and literature for over a thousand years, from ancient times to the present day. Vedas and Upanishads are some of the most beautiful writings in the world, and mathematics, astronomy and knowledge systems have evolved over centuries of intellectual development. IKS is not to be confused with logic or experiment and practical application to knowledge as much as it is to understand that knowledge is based on a person's feelings and experiences. Education in India was not only intellectual but also social and spiritual in the Gurukul system, where knowledge was paired with wisdom.

The colonial era caused major disruption to Indian education when Macaulay's Education Policy (1835) ended, and indigenous knowledge traditions were ignored, and English models were promoted. Education was once seen as an employment activity and not a way of life, but now NEP 2020 will attempt to change that as it calls for a school system which is both Indian and global.

In the long run, we need to incorporate IKS into school curricula to enhance students' self-confidence and scientific and cultural literacy. Historical influences did not significantly affect Indian educational practices (Mukherjee 2009). Deshmukh (2022), in "Reimagining Curriculum through Indian Knowledge Systems", argues that the aim is not only to develop culturally aware young people but also to understand knowledge in context.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2023), published by NCERT (2023), offers strategies to integrate IKS into different subjects (science and mathematics) while addressing critical issues such as insufficient teacher training (Sharma 2021) necessary for successful implementation.

2. Potential for Integrating IKS into School Education

Indian knowledge systems not only help in the revival of culture but also make a connection between knowledge and lived experiences:

(a) Holistic Education:

The foundation for IKS is balanced growth through body, mind, intellect and spirit. Schools are now so divided up in some areas in terms of subjects; IKS would be a more holistic approach (as in the "Panchkosha" theory) to nurture human qualities in the five dimensions of life. Yoga or moral education would be even better.

(b) Scientific Approach:

While Indian knowledge systems are spiritual in our education system, they also have scientific elements like Aryabhatta's decimal system or Charaka's medical theories and can inspire students towards inquiry-driven learning in classroom settings.

(c) Environmental Perspective:

Ancient philosophies view nature with reverence, and concepts like "Mother Earth" help students to think about the environment and integrate traditional ecological wisdom with today's environmental studies to enhance their academic learning.

(d) Locality & Cultural Diversity:

Local customs in IKS foster an identity of belonging for students, as exposure to regional art and agricultural practices strengthens social ties to their own heritage.

(e) Values & Ethics:

The ethos of "May all be happy" is the core moral teaching of IKS that transcends discipline and is more about character building in human behaviour and can only be realised when education brings "knowledge" together with ethics.

3. Challenges of Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems

In pursuing such a mission, but necessary to bring back the roots of Indian education; integration of IKS has not been without challenges when it comes to practice:

- **Lack of Teacher Training:** The biggest problem at the school level is that most teachers are not familiar with the idea or philosophy behind the IKS teaching practices, and textbooks primarily focus on examinations, as they do not encourage creativity or cultural enrichment.
- **Curriculum Overload & Structural Imbalance:** India is filled with so many disciplines that there is little space for students to expand and learn not only the material on the other side of the curriculum but also the whole curriculum. Education in NEP 2020 is about exploration and not too much subject matter.
- **Authentic Teaching Materials:** Authenticity is hard because so many foundational texts are unpublished or incomplete. So, it is important to have standardised materials for all states.
- **Linguistic & Cultural Diversity Challenges:** It is still very important to represent India's linguistic diversity; a lack of representation that does not dilute the richness inherent in a diverse society is a threat.
- **Institutional & Research Support Deficiency:** In our current field, we don't have institutional support at the school level, so centres that would focus on disseminating full information about the IKS will help bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks of academia and the practical applications we are seeing today.
- But tackling these challenges would demand a rethinking of educational paradigms to take on a more holistic approach— not just adding courses but also restructuring the way teaching takes place so that modern teaching methods can be brought back in the cultural contexts, and not just about employment effects but also the intersection of knowledge, science, and culture that it is about; NEP 2020 talks about that with "Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamay."

4. Policy Recommendations

1. Design an "IKS Teaching Framework": NCERT should work with NCTE & SCERT to design subject-specific training modules.

2. Establish "Indian Knowledge Research Centres": Every state should document local traditions scientifically and

research them with the help of the National Information and Science Education Board (NITE & SCERT).

3. Reform the curricula for NEP: The content should be deep but accessible.

4. Ensure the development of multilingual content: Make a local language resource through Bhashini& DIKSHA and other platforms.

5. Ensure social inclusion: Traditional knowledge from diverse communities (like tribal groups) should be included.

6. Technology integration: Show IKS with animation, podcasts and virtual museums.

5. CONCLUSION

When Indian knowledge systems are integrated into school curricula, education is relevant to our lives and ethical and meaningful. This is such a match between good education and India's cultural heritage. Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) promote self-respect in education and social responsibility and environmental awareness in students. The implementation of policy measures that are implemented in practice will help to make this vision come to fruition. So there will be training for teachers in each and every language and access to multilingual resources and research-based curricula to ensure integration is successful.

In the end, turning education from being job-based to enriching personal lives is about finding that balance between knowledge acquisition, scientific inquiry and cultural appreciation, which NEP 2020 captures - "Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamay."

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