

Relevance, Integration and Challenges during Implementation of Indian Knowledge System in Contemporary Educational Institutions - A Sociological Study

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ABSTRACT

Guided by the mandates of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, contemporary Indian educational institutions are undergoing a significant structural and pedagogical shift to integrate the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into mainstream curricula (Badlakkanavar, 2026; Pathak, n.d.). This sociological study examines the institutional relevance, modes of systemic integration, and the socio-cultural challenges encountered during the operationalization of IKS within highly rationalized, modern academic frameworks. From a functionalist perspective, reviving indigenous frameworks—spanning classical sciences, epistemology (Gnyan, Vignyan, Jeevan Darshan), and traditional arts—is vital for constructing an India-centric educational ecosystem that fosters epistemic pluralism, cultural resilience, and sustainable development (Barbhuiya, 2025; Srivastava, 2026). However, a critical sociological evaluation reveals sharp institutional contradictions and systemic barriers. Utilizing secondary qualitative and empirical literature, this paper identifies severe administrative and operational hurdles. These include a widespread deficit in formal faculty training, a lack of standardized, age-appropriate curricular models, an acute scarcity of peer-reviewed, translated academic resources, and the persistent marginalization of IKS as an "auxiliary" elective rather than a core discipline (Bhunia, 2026; Patel, 2022, as cited in Shanwal, 2025). Furthermore, applying a critical sociological lens uncovers underlying structural tensions regarding epistemic equity. Skeptics point out the risk of ideological distortions, such as high-caste, localized hegemony, which may inadvertently marginalize subaltern and diverse multicultural knowledge traditions, while potentially validating pseudoscience within rigorous secular spaces (Dey, 2026). Ultimately, this study suggests comprehensive structural reforms: resolving tensions between modern regulatory frameworks and oral traditions, establishing robust cross-disciplinary research methodologies, and executing inclusive teacher-training frameworks (Sharma, 2024). Such balanced measures are essential to ensure that IKS serves as an democratic, progressive tool for national decolonization rather than an instrument of social stratification.

Keywords: *Indian Knowledge System (IKS), National Education Policy (NEP 2020), Sociology of Education, Epistemic Pluralism & Decolonization, Institutional Barriers, Curriculum Standardization, Social Stratification & Hegemony, Teacher Training & Pedagogy*

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Education is seen as a basic social institution of society. The Indian traditional education system has evolved based on a scientific perspective. The Indian knowledge system is a systematic and structured approach to transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next. The integration of the Indian knowledge system and modern education is not about going back to the past, but about building the future on the foundation of the past. For the successful implementation of NEP -2020, it is necessary that IKS is not just accepted as a subject but as a way of life. Studies show that NEP -2020 Indianization of basic education enhances moral values, creative thinking, and cultural pride among students.

If we look at the broad meaning of education, education is a lifelong process through which a human being can achieve all the goals of life. Education is indispensable for the all-round development of a human being, social and national progress and the upliftment of civilization and culture. In ancient India, knowledge was considered the best. That is why the ancient education system of India preserved the vast Vedic literature and gave birth to original ideas and scholars in various fields of knowledge. Due to this, the head of this country is elevated with fame and glory even today.

The Indian knowledge system is India's intellectual, scientific and cultural heritage that is thousands of years old. It is not just book knowledge, but a complete way of living that combines science, logic and spirituality. During ancient times, two education systems came into existence. In which the medium of Vedic education was Sanskrit and the medium of Buddhist education system was the local language Pali. In ancient times, education was given through the Vedas, Upanishads and Dharma Sutras. Information about primary education during the Buddhist period is available through Jataka stories. The centers of Buddhist education include Nalanda, Takshashila, Vallabhi, Jagdal, Udantapuri, Mithila and Nadia.

In the present times, the Indian knowledge system is not only sufficient to maintain tradition but is emerging as a solution to the complex problems of the contemporary world such as organic farming, environmental protection, mental health, intellectual development, social harmony, morality, erosion of values, etc. The revival of art and architecture which provides guidance to the engineer to create today's eco-friendly buildings.

Indian knowledge system does not have any backward ideology. But it is very modern and science-based. It teaches us to be proud of our culture and at the same time shows the path to the welfare of the world. If the characteristics of the Indian education system and its integration with the current education system are described in words, the situation of the contemporary times would plunge a person into despair. He does not feel like living in this world. Man, who constantly strives for development by destroying human and moral values and nature, forgets that he himself is also an integral part of nature. A person who only rushes towards development without cultivating harmony with nature invites destruction.

The flaws in the current education system are spreading all over the world today. Intolerance, negligence, insensitivity, indifference towards the environment, degradation of humanity, erosion of moral values, corruption, mental stress, lack of skills, commercialization, a uniform framework, emphasis on information only - the solutions to overcome these limitations lie in the Indian knowledge system. Hence NEP -2020 India's new education policy has been designed to overcome these limitations, emphasizing the integration of mother tongue education and the Indian knowledge system.

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Indian culture has a rich heritage of knowledge and science. In ancient times, world universities like Nalanda and Taxila served as global centers of knowledge, however, this fundamental knowledge was marginalized due to the colonial education system. Currently, there is a need to reconnect this knowledge with modern structures to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The purpose of the present study is to study the relevance, integration and challenges of the Indian knowledge system in the contemporary education system. The research paper examines the role and relevance of the Indian knowledge system in the contemporary education system, as well as the process of integration and the difficulties or challenges encountered during this process.

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM IN EDUCATION

IKS will be introduced scientifically in school and higher education curricula. IKS will include tribal knowledge as well as indigenous and traditional teaching methods including mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, yoga, architecture, education, agriculture, engineering, linguistics, literature, sports, games, It will also include governance, politics and conservation. Specific courses on tribal ethno-medicinal practices, forest management, traditional (organic) crop farming, natural farming etc. will also be made available. An attractive course on Indian knowledge systems will be available as an elective for secondary school students. The policy recognises that knowledge of India's rich diversity should be directly acquired by learners. This will include simple activities like student tours to different regions of the country. This will not only promote tourism but will also help in developing awareness and appreciation of India's diversity, culture and traditions as well as knowledge of different parts of the nation. Under ' Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat ', in this direction, 100 tourist destinations in the country will be identified where educational institutions will send students to study these places and their history, scientific contributions, traditions, indigenous literature and knowledge etc., so as to enhance the heritage knowledge about these areas. Currently, 32 IKS Centres have been established to catalyse core research, teaching and dissemination of IKS. 75 high-level interdisciplinary research facilities like Ancient Metallurgy, Ancient Town Planning and Water Resource Management, Ancient Chemistry etc. are operational. Around 5200 internships have been offered at IKS. 50 faculty development programmes, workshops and national/international conferences have been organised. More than 8000 HEIs have started adopting IKS in their curriculum and have worked on digitisation of 1.5 lakh books. The IKS department has brought together leading thinkers and practitioners from various knowledge areas to develop Vision 2047 and prepare a roadmap for establishing a rich Indian micro-culture. By benefiting from our vast knowledge, it will be easier to encourage and enable more research to meet the challenges of our present times. Incorporating these courses into mainstream education will provide inspiration while preserving the heritage of our education system. Through exposure to both traditional and contemporary concepts, students can gain a better understanding of their culture, broaden their intellectual development, and increase their self-confidence.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the relevance of the Indian knowledge system in contemporary education.
2. To study the integration of Indian knowledge systems into contemporary education.
3. To study the challenges facing the integration of the Indian knowledge system into contemporary education.

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Research Methodology and Data Collection:

This research is descriptive and analytical in nature. In which qualitative research methodology has been adopted. Which relies only on secondary sources. Information was collected through a thorough review of existing literature from NEP -2020 policy documents, IKS curriculum framework, review journals, reputable online resources, previous research on IKS. The issues were analyzed based on the available information.

CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL RELEVANCE OF THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

Contemporary means current, in today's modern education, the Indian knowledge system is not only relevant, but it is also the solution to many problems of today's era. While modern science provides material comforts to humans, IKS provides inner peace of life. The shortcomings in today's education can be removed with the help of IKS. In the present time, as opposed to education based only on marks, the Indian knowledge system emphasizes on understanding, thinking, and skill development. In today's competitive era, not knowledge with marks but skill-based knowledge is required. The relevance of the Indian knowledge system in contemporary education is as follows.

1. **Mental Health:** The biggest problem of the present time is mental health. People of every age live their lives under mental stress or pressure. Student life has become competitive, as a result, the incidences of depression, loneliness, suicide are increasing day by day. Freedom from the pain of this stress is found through the Nishkam Karma of the Gita and the Ashtanga Path of Yoga. Yoga and meditation increase the concentration and mental stability of students in today's stressful life. Bhagavad Gita has a deeper understanding of human nature, nature or its personality than modern psychology. It teaches a person to remain steadfast even in the face of failure.
2. **Environmental Values:** Respect for nature should be the basis of a sustainable lifestyle. The Indian knowledge system considers nature not as an object of consumption but as a mother/father. And that is why in our Indian culture, the elements of nature are worshipped. Banyan, Tulsi, Peepal, Sun, Moon, Cow, Kagwas are all part of our tradition. It is said in the "Ishavasya Upanishad" that use only what is necessary. This principle is the basis for today's sustainable development.
3. **Logical and Mathematical Ability:** Logic and mathematical ability are very important in the era of modern coding and data science. Vedic mathematical methods not only make calculations faster, but also activate the brain. Philosophies like Nyaya and Mimamsa help in developing logical thinking. Which is useful for today's engineering and AI (artificial intelligence). Emphasis is placed on understanding instead of memorization, emphasis is placed on how much the student understands rather than how many marks he gets. Logical thinking emphasizes on developing the ability to ask questions and analyze.
4. **Holistic Health:** A person's daily routine affects his physical and mental health. The lifestyle of modern man is the root of his various diseases. Instead of just curing diseases with medicines, it is necessary to adopt a lifestyle that prevents diseases. The rules of daily routine and seasonality of Ayurveda are highly relevant to prevent the negative effects of modern life.

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5. **Value-based Leadership:** In modern times, we talk about EQ (Emotional Quotient). The stories of Chanakya Niti and Panchatantra teach leadership qualities, strategy and social responsibility. This is like a case study for today's students.
6. **Social Connection and Family System:** In the era of social media, a person may have thousands of millions of followers, countless friends on various social media platforms, but today a person is feeling lonely. On social media, he does not show himself as he is, but appears happier, more courageous, helpful, honest. As a result, such people have to face disappointment and frustration. The basis of a person's happiness and sorrow becomes other people, due to which he constantly feels lonely. The Indian knowledge system teaches us to move from self to community. The spirit of Vasuvaidhya Kutumbakam is necessary to make a global citizen.

Integration of Indian knowledge systems into contemporary education

1. **Interdisciplinary studies:** Teaching Ayurvedic principles with modern medical sciences and Vastu Shastra with architecture, exploring ancient water management techniques to deepen the society of environmental sustainability. Some real examples are: IITE Gandhinagar runs a course called IKS program, in which engineering students study metallurgy and architecture of ancient India. Through which they learn to use ancient sustainable technologies in modern construction. Blending Ayurveda and Modern Medicine, for example, many hospitals in India now use Ayurvedic treatment methods along with allopathy. (Lifestyle management for diabetic patients) Many states, including Gujarat, have started Vedic mathematics classes in primary schools. As a result, students can calculate faster and their fear of mathematics is removed.
2. **Multilingual Education:** By incorporating texts from Sanskrit, Prakrit and regional languages in subjects like literature, philosophy and history, India's linguistic richness is celebrated and linguistic sensitivity is also promoted.
3. **Teaching method and technique:** Experiential Education - In the ancient Gurukul tradition, every disciple in the Gurukul used to do daily work. Whether the disciple was a child of a king or a common citizen, the same rules of daily routine were followed for everyone. Along with the experience of daily work, they got experience in agriculture, crafts, cooking, etc. in today's modern education, experimental learning provides practical experience. IKS shows the best solutions against the increasing mental stress and mental illnesses due to modern lifestyle. Modern education emphasizes only on intellectual development. While IKS combines physical, mental and spiritual development through Panchakosha. Incorporate yoga and pranayama in daily activities. The world has accepted the importance of yoga, it is not just exercise but a means of increasing mental peace and immunity.
4. **Morality and Value Education:** When it comes to value education in contemporary education, Indian religion and the principles of Purushartha help in making students socially responsible citizens.
5. **Vocational Education:** Integrating local arts and crafts into education by making them part of the curriculum will increase pride in labor among students, give impetus to the Vocal for Local campaign, and increase employment opportunities.

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Challenges regarding the implementation of the Indian knowledge system in contemporary education

The Indian knowledge system holds immense potential for the comprehensive development of society, but its implementation will face challenges. These obstacles arise due to the historical, cultural and philosophical disparities between indigenous knowledge and Western educational models. Some of the challenges are discussed below.

- **IKS Lack of awareness and understanding of IKS:** Most people are unaware of IKS and its importance. Due to this ignorance, integrating IKS into contemporary education can be challenging. A section of society considers this integration as just going back to the past. Changing this mindset is also challenging.
- **Resistance to change:** Resistance to change in the education system hinders the integration of IKS. (Pandey 2024) The reluctance to integrate IKS into the formal educational framework continues due to the continued dominance of Western-centric curricula.
- **Documented Knowledge:** Proving ancient knowledge to modern scientific standards and establishing that it is not superstition is a major challenge. IKS There is a lack of documented knowledge about which poses an obstacle to promoting IKS in modern education.
- **Language barrier:** Indian knowledge is in Sanskrit, Pali and regional languages. Preparing standardized textbooks and reference books that can be embedded in the framework of modern education is a major challenge. Translating old manuscripts and explaining them in today's scientific context is a difficult task.
- **Lack of resources:** Indian knowledge system is based on oral transmission of knowledge. There are no written records. This makes it challenging to design and implement IKS- based programs and courses. Furthermore, funding for IKS research and education is low.
- **Lack of trained teachers:** The current teachers are educated in the Western education system. They do not have a deep knowledge of the Vedas, Vedic mathematics, Ayurveda or the principles of ancient economics. Without proper education training, there is a danger that this system will remain in name only.
- **Balance in the curriculum:** It is necessary to ensure a balanced curriculum that harmonizes ancient and contemporary knowledge. A survey conducted by NITI Aayog found that 45% of educational institutions face difficulties in balancing IKS with the existing curriculum due to curricular overload.
- **Job Creation:** There is very little demand in the global economy for businesses that directly incorporate Indian knowledge. As a result, how and where will jobs be found in the market? It is not yet clear how the corporate world and global markets will accept this knowledge.

CONCLUSION

The integration of Indian knowledge system and modern education is not about going back to the past, but about building the future on the foundation of the past. For the successful implementation of NEP 2020, it is essential that IKS is accepted not just as a subject, but as a 'way of life'. The present research paper analyses proposals for integrating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into mainstream education. This study shows how ancient Indian science, mathematics, linguistics and environmental values can be combined with modern teaching

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methods to instill in students a sense of pride in being ' global citizens ' as well as ' rooted in India '.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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