

Indian Knowledge System and NEP 2020: Building a Bright and Self-Reliant Society

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a historic milestone in India's educational trajectory by systematically embedding the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into mainstream curricula, moving away from a purely Eurocentric academic model. This paper explores the strategic role of IKS under the NEP 2020 framework as a cornerstone for building a progressive, self-reliant (Atmanirbhar) society. By reintegrating classical Indian contributions to mathematics, metallurgy, environmental ethics, sustainable agriculture, and holistic medicine into modern pedagogy, the policy aims to restore civilizational pride while answering contemporary global crises. Far from being a nostalgic retreat into antiquity, the integration of IKS serves as an epistemological tool to cultivate critical thinking, multilingualism, and sustainable living practices among students. This study analyzes the transformative potential of this framework in fostering grassroots innovation, ethical leadership, and local entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the paper addresses key institutional mandates required for implementation, such as producing high-quality bilingual textbooks, training school and university faculties, and standardizing interdisciplinary research methodologies. Ultimately, the paper argues that synthesizing time-tested indigenous wisdom with modern technological advancement is essential to nurturing globally competitive citizens who are deeply anchored in their cultural heritage and capable of driving self-reliant national progress.

Keywords: *Indian Knowledge System (IKS), National Education Policy (NEP 2020), Self-Reliant India (Atmanirbhar Bharat), Indigenous Pedagogy, Sustainable Living & Eco-Ethics, Civilizational Reclaiming, Societal Transformation*

The history of India is not just a saga of the triumphs of kings and emperors, but it is an inexhaustible storehouse of knowledge and science. In ancient times, India was known as the 'World Guru', the main reason for which was the rich Indian Knowledge Tradition (IKS). Scholars from all over the world used to come to universities like Nalanda, Taxila and Vallabhi. But unfortunately, during the medieval and slave rule, we started drifting away from our original knowledge tradition. But, through the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the Government of India has once again tried to bring 'Indianness' to the center of education. The main purpose of this policy is not just to award degrees, but to enable students to face modern challenges by connecting them with India's glorious past. India is a country whose foundation rests on 'knowledge'. In ancient times, India the 'Vishvaguru' was called, the main reason for which was our rich knowledge tradition. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is not just

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Received: March 01, 2026; Revision Received: March 20, 2026; Accepted: March 22, 2026

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an administrative document, but it is an attempt to restore India's self-confidence. In this policy, the 'Indian Knowledge Tradition' (IKS) has been placed at the centre of education, so that the coming generation remains connected to its culture and can face modern challenges. The progress of any nation depends on its education. Education is not just about getting a degree, but understanding one's own culture and using knowledge for the welfare of the world. India has been a land where the mantra of 'Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye' (Education is that which liberates) has been followed. After years of colonial education, the Government of India has tried to bring about a revolutionary change in the Indian education system through the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). The main pillar of this policy is the Indian Knowledge System (IKS).

What is Indian Knowledge Tradition (IKS)?

IKS stands for Knowledge It is a compilation that has evolved through generations of experience, observation and scientific analysis. It includes the following areas:

- Science and Mathematics: Discovery of Zero, Astronomy of Aryabhata and Bhaskaracharya.
- Health and Wellness: Ayurveda, Siddha and Yoga which emphasize on 'Holistic Health'.
- Language and Literature: Deep knowledge in Sanskrit, Prakrit and regional languages.
- Sociology and Economics: Kautilya's Economics and Indian Values of Life.

PLACE OF IKS IN NEP 2020

NEP 2020 is not just a change in curriculum, but a change in mindset. Some important steps have been taken under this policy to mainstream IKS:

1 Education in Mother Tongue

Research shows that a child learns fastest in his/her mother tongue. NEP 2020 gives priority to mother tongue in basic education, so that the child can It remains connected to culture and traditional knowledge.

2 Holistic and interdisciplinary approach

In ancient Indian education, there was no separation between art, science and morality. NEP 2020 also allows students to learn music along with mathematics or yoga along with physics. This makes holistic development of the student possible.

3 Inclusion of Ayurveda and Yoga

The aim of education is to improve the physical and mental health of students through Ayurvedic principles and yoga practices.

ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

The revival of the Indian knowledge tradition in education will bring about far-reaching changes in society:

- Resurgence of cultural pride: When students learn about India's ancient contributions, the feeling of inferiority complex will be removed and a sense of pride for the nation will be instilled.
- Sustainability: Indian tradition always inspires to live in harmony with nature. In the modern era of global warming, the mantra of 'Prakrithi Rakshit Rakshitah' will make the society environmentally oriented.

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- Inculcation of moral values: Through the teachings of the Panchatantra stories or Upanishads, qualities like truth, non-violence and altruism will be instilled in children, which will create a healthy society.
- Employment and skills: Providing education in areas like handicrafts, traditional agriculture and Ayurveda will increase employment opportunities at the local level.

4. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

No major change comes without challenges:

- Teacher training: Teachers need to be given special training to integrate modern science and ancient knowledge.
- Lack of research: Many facts of IKS are still trapped in manuscripts. It is imperative to research them using modern scientific methods.

Why was IKS included in NEP 2020?

The aim of NEP 2020 is to make India a 'global knowledge superpower'. The main reasons for this are as follows:

(1) Restoration of Self-Pride:

To instill confidence in Indian students towards their heritage. They should feel proud of their heritage.

(2) Solving Global Problems:

The Indian knowledge system has accurate solutions for problems like environment and mental health. So that global problems can be solved.

(3) Cultural Pride and Connection with Roots:

The purpose of including IKS in NEP 2020 is to keep the new generation connected to its roots. So that cultural continuity is maintained. The main purpose of NEP 2020 is to familiarize students with the rich heritage and traditions of India. India's thousands of years old history is full of knowledge, art and science. Including IKS in education increases national pride and self-respect towards one's own culture in students.

(4) Holistic Development

The Indian knowledge system emphasizes not only on bookish knowledge, but also on 'Panchakosha' (physical, physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual) development. It helps in building the mental health, moral values and character of the students.

(5) Traditional solutions to modern problems:

The solutions to the problems that the world is facing today, such as climate change, mental stress, unstable lifestyles, etc., lie in Indian traditions:

- Environment: Indian way of achieving harmony with nature.
- Health: Physical-mental well-being through Ayurveda and Yoga.
- Mathematics and Science: Vedic mathematics and principles of ancient astronomy.

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(6) "Decolonization" of education

For a long time, our education system has been based on the Western model. IKS has tried to give an 'Indian perspective' to education again, so that students understand Indian logic and ideology and implement it in their lives instead of blindly imitating foreign ideas.

(7) Integration with 21st century skills:

IKS is not old-fashioned, but is being integrated with modern science. For example,

- Panini's Grammar: Which is used in modern computer language and AI (Artificial Intelligence).
- Architecture and Agriculture: Ancient Indian engineering and models of natural farming etc.

Ayurveda and Vedic Mathematics are two such pillars of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) which are equally relevant across the world even today. In the context of NEP 2020, in-depth details of both these subjects are presented here.

AYURVEDA: SCIENCE OF LIFE

Ayurveda is not just a treatment for diseases, but an 'art of living'. It works on the principle of 'Svastasya Swasthya Abhaya, Aturo Vikaar Prashamanam Cha' (Protecting the health of a healthy person and curing the disease of a sick person).

Key Principles:

- Panchamahabhuta: The entire universe and the human body are made up of five elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Sky.
- Tridosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha): Disease occurs when the balance of air, bile and kapha in the body is disturbed. Ayurveda restores this balance.

Social and Educational Relevance:

- Daily Routine and Ritucharya: According to NEP 2020, students will be taught about dietary habits and seasonal changes from an early age, so that the immune system is strengthened.
- Mental Health: Ayurveda emphasizes on 'Satvavajaya Chikitsa' (mental health), which is very necessary in today's stressful era.
- Natural Remedies: Ayurvedic knowledge becomes a boon for the society to avoid the side effects of chemical medicines.

VEDIC MATHEMATICS: THE AMAZING ART OF CALCULATION

This is a mathematical system based on 16 Sutras and 13 Upasutras revived by Jagatguru Swami Bharati Krishna Tirthaji Maharaj. It makes mathematics a game, not a burden.

Key Features:

- Speed and Accuracy: Calculations can be done 10 to 15 times faster with this method than the normal method.
- Mental Calculations: It empowers students to do complex calculations in their minds without pen and paper.

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- Creative Solutions: There are multiple ways to calculate the same example, which develops the child's creativity.

Impact of NEP 2020 and Vedic Mathematics:

- Removing the fear of mathematics: Many students find mathematics difficult. Vedic Mathematics makes mathematics interesting, which will help reduce the drop-out ratio.
- Competitive exams: This method is a very effective remedy to save time in JEE, NEET or banking exams.
- Increasing concentration: The use of formulas significantly increases the student's memory and concentration (Focus).

Impact of IKS and NEP 2020 on society

(1) Change in the field of education

Provision has been made to provide education in the mother tongue in school and higher education. Several studies have found that a child can learn fastest in his mother tongue. This will encourage children from rural and disadvantaged sections of the society to join the mainstream of education.

(2) Economic and skill development

Integrating Vedic Mathematics and local arts in the curriculum will increase the logical ability and skills of students. According to NEP 2020, vocational education will be started from the sixth standard itself, which will be useful in realizing the dream of 'Self-reliant India'.

(3) Health and Lifestyle:

Inclusion of Ayurveda and Yoga in the curriculum will create awareness in the society about 'Preventive Health'. Yoga is accepted globally today, but its basic principles will be re-established in Indian society through IKS.

(4) Social Values and Ethics

The Indian knowledge system teaches the spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the whole world is one family). Through NEP 2020, human values, empathy and service have been integrated into education, which will help in building a responsible society.

Thus, the confluence of NEP 2020 and the Indian knowledge system is another step towards India's educational freedom. This is not just a matter of the past, but it is a matter of building a magnificent edifice of the future on the foundation of the past. Only when Indian society takes pride in its knowledge and uses it for the welfare of the people, will India truly become a 'World Guru'.

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Acknowledgments

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Nagori, R.A. (2026) Indian Knowledge System and NEP 2020: Building a Bright and Self- Reliant Society. *International Journal of Social Impact*, 11(1), 193-198. DIP: 18.02.1031/20261101, DOI: 10.25215/2455/11011031