

## **Relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems in Higher Education: Getting Future Ready**

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### **Abstract**

With the aim to help the learners develop and grow holistically towards a better tomorrow and stay connected with cultural roots the NEP 2020 has suggested to include Indian Knowledge System as a course in the Higher Education Curriculum. Placing emphasis on integrating IKS into the higher education curricula will help students to develop holistically, face challenges improving their competitiveness in a global perspective, multi-disciplinary learning, improving skills with practical application and developing an innovative entrepreneurial mindset. Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) must use the available technology and infrastructure for developing content worthy teaching material and training the instructors for ensuring better engagement of learners and intrinsic growth.

**Keywords:** Learners, IKS, HEI, Competitiveness, Holistically, Challenges, Multi-Disciplinary, Entrepreneurial

### **Introduction**

The information, beliefs, and customs that have been formed over thousands of years on the Indian subcontinent make up the complex and varied Indian Knowledge System (IKS). It has evolved and culminated as a result of the contributions of numerous civilizations and cultures and has its roots in the ancient Vedas, Upanishads, and age-old writings. Philosophy, religion, physics, mathematics, medicine, astrology, literature etc. are few of the many topics that fall under the umbrella of the knowledge system. The foundation of IKS is a holistic approach that incorporates the mind, body, and spirit, among other facets of human existence. Self-realization and inner development are a significant part of Indian Knowledge Systems. This is accomplished by engaging in activities like yoga, meditation, and the search for wisdom and knowledge. The Indian Knowledge System is still an essential component of Indian civilization

and a source of inspiration and direction for both individuals and communities, even in the face of modernization (Timane & Wandhe, 2024). The local and tacit indigenous knowledge needs to be protected and sustained as its application will move from generation to generation (Rao, 2006).

India, with its rich tapestry of cultural heritage, history and diversity, has always placed importance on education as it plays the key role in shaping the country's future thus incorporating Indian Knowledge (IKS) in Higher Education Curricula. This system adopts a holistic approach to learning aiming to develop well-rounded individuals capable of contributing traditional values and a forward-looking mindset to society. IKS aims to incorporate the country's ancient wisdom with contemporary knowledge in global perspectives in the age of rapid growth, technological advancement and globalisation. It is also essential to foster IKS in educational arena so that we can make the society more inclusive and equitable one. For this, it is essential to bridge the existing gap between the urban and rural education system and societal thought processes. On June 13, 2023, the document "Incorporating Indian Knowledge in Higher Education Curricula" was released which focuses on promoting Indian languages, arts, and culture and attempts to eliminate any gaps in the flow of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) by incorporating IKS into curricula at all educational levels. The government aims to establish IKS Centres with HEIs in-order to disseminate and popularize IKS. This will further motivate people to participate in various IKS initiatives through Jan Bhagidari programs (Mandavkar, 2023).

## **Review Of Literature**

Engagement with both traditional and contemporary concepts can enhance students' comprehension of their cultural identity, expand their intellectual perspectives, and increase their confidence. Blending indigenous knowledge into existing educational system can help learners to face challenges by fostering adaptability, resilience and sustainability-oriented view akin to global development goals (Lal et al. 2024). Applying IKS into higher education curricula will help students to analyse the gained contemporary knowledge and synthesise into new one (B. Madhavan et al., 2022). Curriculum creation, teacher preparation, addressing biases, striking a balance between tradition and modernity, guaranteeing inclusivity, upholding academic rigor, and multidisciplinary collaboration are some of the major challenges faced by the higher education system. Comprehensive curriculum design, strong teacher preparation, cooperative research, creating interesting teaching-learning resources, creating IKS centres of

excellence, utilizing technology, raising awareness, cultivating interdisciplinary collaborations, guaranteeing inclusive implementation etc. can ensure successful IKS integration (**Baral, 2024**). Modules for teacher orientation and training needs be created to enhance the quality of classroom instruction on IKS courses; specialized teacher training centres will be established to train teachers on particular subjects related to Indian Knowledge Systems (**Mandavkar, 2023**).

### **Relevance of Indian knowledge systems in higher education**

#### **➤ PERSONAL GROWTH AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT:**

Application of ancient texts, philosophies, practices, and skills within the curriculum provides a distinctive perspective that allows students to probe deep morals and ethical principles by exposing them to rich cultural heritage. IKS emphasis on holistic understanding of the self, nature, and the universe (**Timane & Wandhe, 2024**) by merging with academic learnings, Thus, cultural enrichment becomes a foundation for personal growth of students.

#### **➤ HELPS IN PROMOTING GLOBAL COMPETENCE:**

Blending IKS with global views and ideas ensures a good exposure to the learns thereby broadening the horizons, improves cross-cultural discernment, resilience and collaboration skills. The globalization of higher education has spurred an increasing interest in comprehending global competence (**Jiaxin et.al, 2024**). By fostering a global outlook, learners can navigate without hassles in diverse professional environments, cultivate values, attitudes, ethical principles and contribute meaningfully. This will further promote sustainability through understanding diversity, applying empathy, social justice and responsibility towards future generations It encourages individuals to adopt more sustainable lifestyles and behaviours (**Agbedahin, 2019**).

#### **➤ MULTI-DISCIPLINARY LEARNING**

The multi, inter, trans- disciplinary nature of IKS enhance the analytical and logical learning ability of students along with the existing courses. Incorporating traditional Indian knowledge and practices into education can make learning more engaging and valuable one especially in rural areas where education takes a setback. Though in urban areas the Gross Enrolment Ratio is comparatively better laxity is found as courses may

lack appeal to the learners. Indigenous knowledge offers a treasure trove in various areas like in;

- i) Agriculture- Applying indigenous knowledge in ancient agricultural practices in classification of land on the basis of quality and productivity, farm input selection, farming practices, harvesting techniques and storage practices suiting to the local environment conditions and availability of resources. Such practices can be taught to students who opt Bachelors in Science specializing in Agriculture and allied courses. This will help the learners to blending the gained knowledge with modern techniques and practices.
- ii) Ayurveda- Ayurveda of India is one of the oldest surviving alternative medical system and practices which is parallel modern medical sciences. Often known as knowledge of longevity which facilitates self-transformation and awakening of the consciousness (**P. Ram Manohar, 2005**). It offers more holistic way of living. Thus, course of ayurveda can be taken as a generic elective subject for different streams in HEIs helping individuals apply knowledge of ayurveda into the daily needs like food to take care of their body, mind and soul.
- iii) Mathematics- Contributions of Aryabhatta, Brahmagupta to the indigenous mathematical knowledge has been widely recognised. Integrating indigenous mathematical knowledge in education, business, management will contribute to the improve the mental prowess of learners, enhance decision making ability and problem-solving skills that are required for performing daily activities in personal and professional areas.
- iv) Economics- Arthashastra by Kautilya is one of the major contributions of India to the world. This book emphasised on the concept of politics, economics, tax, trade, public welfare etc. Taking cues from this knowledge and integrating it with behavioural economics (modern economics focussing human behaviour) can help business leaders and learners to take informed and right decisions associated with their respective areas.

#### ➤ **SKILL BASED LEARNING APPROACH AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS**

Amalgamating IKS into regular ensures that the learners are well equipped with ancient skills and practical applications in various areas like arts, handicrafts, weaving, pottery, carpentry etc. This helps to promote and preserve our existing indigenous knowledge and would help rural areas to become more sustainable, socially equitable and enhance

lively-hood in this globalized era. Whereas in urban areas integrating technology with indigenous knowledge and practices helps in proper land use planning, town construction planning, building designs, sewage and waste disposal, business and economic management etc. Thus, IKs offers various promising strategies to skill based learning and practical approach.

#### ➤ **DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET**

The philosophical concepts of IKS can be applied in management of day-to-day activities of business organizations and for personal avenues. From rich indigenous intellectual heritage, various concepts of management like innovation, context-specific solutions to contemporary challenges, management and governance of business, offering indigenous knowledge contributions to the global discourse on ethical business practices and sustainable development etc can be done. It fosters a culture of self-reliance, creativity, problem-solving, risk-taking ability among the entrepreneurs especially when the world is evolving.

#### ➤ **ACCESSIBILITY, TECHNOLOGY AND LEARNING**

In the fast-moving world, education must be accessible to all without hassles. This can happen when there is an easy influx of technology into educational areas making digital learning possible for learners spread across large area. Courses on IKS offered with required content on digital libraries and on platforms like SWAYAM, e-PG Pathshala, Course Era etc. will enhance inclusivity and accessibility to both rural and urban teachers and learners to upgrade themselves with the valuable insights on country's rich knowledge without biasness offering the same content all over the country. For this to work creating awareness plays a key role. Teachers and learners must be trained to equip with technology of using the e-learning platforms especially in rural areas. Experienced faculties must develop time bound right content without biasness.

#### **Getting Future Ready**

- Every student enrolled in a UG or PG programme should be encouraged to take credit courses in IKS amounting in all to at least 2 or 4 credit of the total mandated credits at least in their first years. This can be offered as General Elective Course or Additional Course.

- IKS can be provided as a Course under SWAYAM thereby creating accessibility and inclusivity.
- Blending indigenous sustainable practices with modern practices will improve the relevance in global front.
- Learnings must happen in Local or Regional languages apart from English in order to ensure the disappearing dialects are protected.
- Higher Education must ensure that teachers are trained regularly for developing of IKS content for teaching and learning, leverage technology with IKS, effective implementation and continuous evaluation.
- Acceptability and adaptability of learners, academicians, researchers, industries play a key role in fostering the relevance of IKS. Community engagement can ensure faster acceptability and adaptability.

## **Conclusion**

One of the major challenges faced by the Indian Knowledge System is the impact of globalization (Viader, 2022) has led to decline in the popularity and relevance of traditional knowledge and practices. In order to preserve the dilution of this incredible knowledge system and promoting it the Government of India has established various institutions like the Indian Council of Historical Research, Indian Council of Cultural Relations etc. for safeguarding the prolific knowledge. Therefore, to keep our cultural heritage alive among the new generation it is quintessential to impart this indigenous knowledge to young minds so that they can adapt to the dynamic competitive world and face challenges. Contributions and support from government, teaching-learning community and various agencies is necessary for strengthening the cultural roots and knowledge.

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