



RESEARCH ARTICLE



EMBEDDING INDIAN KNOWLEDGE TRADITIONS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT



The educational landscape in India is poised for a significant transformation through the adoption of the National Education Policy 2020, which aims to instil a sense of pride and rootedness in Indian culture and knowledge systems among students. This paper delves into the need for a paradigm shift in education, emphasizing the incorporation of Indian Knowledge Traditions (IKT) into the curriculum. The aim is to facilitate the holistic development of students by imbibing values, ethics, and wisdom from ancient Indian texts and philosophies.

The paper underscores the historical contributions of India to various fields, such as mathematics, science, medicine, and philosophy, often overlooked due to the influence of Western education. The urgency to integrate IKT arises from the gaps in the modern education system, which predominantly emphasizes specialized skills rather than holistic personality development.

The benefits of integrating IKT are manifold, including nurturing cultural awareness, fostering a positive sense of identity, and promoting ethical decision-making. The paper underscores the role of educational boards like NCERT, ICSE, and NIOS in developing dedicated IKT courses, which can also be offered through online platforms. To realize these goals, collaboration with traditional scholars and experts, training of teachers in IKT, and interdisciplinary research are proposed.

By embracing Indian Knowledge Traditions, India's education system can reinvigorate its commitment to holistic development, cultural preservation, and sustainable societal progress. The paper envisions an educational landscape where students graduate with not only academic proficiency but also a deep sense of identity, values, and pride in their heritage.

Keywords: *Childhood, Indian Knowledge Tradition, National Educational Policy, Values, Identity, Pride, Heritage, Childhood*

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Education in India must undergo a paradigm shift and students should learn about Indian Knowledge Traditions. The National Educational Policy 2020 seeks to instill in students a rootedness and pride in India, and its "rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions"

"The vision of this policy is to inculcate among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen."

Need for imparting ancient values into today's education system has been recognized, mainly because there are many lacunae that are not addressed by the modern education system. Holistic development of personality is what is being desired for and not mere development of certain specialized skills. Today the content of school education in India in all domains of knowledge is largely based on the modern western cultural and intellectual traditions. In schools one must emphasise upon the necessity for value based teaching that instils in the learner moral values, ethical values, human values and spiritual values. Ancient Indian knowledge penned down by the Rishis that has come down to us through the scriptures is a repository of Spiritual knowledge. The Indian Knowledge Traditions writings on the education always emphasise the power of right understanding and have always given courage and

inspiration to both the teacher and the student. If such literature is introduced in schools along with the skills and knowledge then the students will be imbued with values and full flowering of the individual holistically will be possible.

Newton is widely regarded as the first to discover gravitational concepts. However, an Indian mathematician named Bhaskaracharya developed the theory of gravitation 500 years before Newton. India was once thought to be a traditional country, but the rest of the world is unaware of our contributions to the modern world. Our theories have served as the foundation for many concepts, including weather forecasting, astronomy, astrology, and aviation. India has developed some of the best mathematicians the world has ever seen. Many of these geniuses were not given credit for their work. World's first dentists were from India 9,000 years ago, and that historical evidence suggests that plastic surgery originated in India more than two millennia ago, with nasal reconstruction being the most likely operation. Sushruta, an ancient Indian surgeon who lived in 600 BC, is thought to have been the first to describe Rhinoplasty. Arabic numerals were invented in India by the Hindus. In India the binary number system came around 3rd or 2nd century, Acharya Pingala an ancient Indian mathematician invented binary system, it is assumed that he was 1st inventor of binary system in the world. Aryabhatta was among the mathematicians who brought new deductions and theories in mathematics and astronomy. His contribution to mathematics is unmatched and cannot be ignored. "Very few of us know that the speed of light was known to Indians in Vedic period."



Due to the constant influence from the western world the students of our country are oblivious to these facts. Hence the introduction to IKT should include the "Knowledge of India" from both ancient and modern India, as well as a clear sense of India's future aspirations in areas such as education, health, and the environment. These elements should be incorporated in an accurate and scientific manner throughout the school curriculum wherever relevant. Indian Knowledge Systems, including indigenous and traditional ways of learning, should be covered and included in subjects like mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, yoga, architecture, medicine, agriculture, engineering, linguistics, literature, sports, games, as well as in governance, polity, conservation.

The preservation and promotion of India's cultural wealth must be considered a high priority for the country, as it is truly important for the nation's identity as well as for its economy. Cultural awareness and expression are two of the most important skills to enshrine in children in order to give them a sense of identity, belonging, and appreciation for other cultures and identities. It is through the development of a strong sense and knowledge of their own cultural history, arts, languages, and traditions that children can build a positive cultural identity and self-esteem. In IKT the emphasis on different regional languages should be there as languages influence the way people of a given culture speak with others, including with family members, authority figures, peers, and strangers, and influence the tone of conversation. Language is inextricably linked to art and culture, in particular, efforts should be made to preserve and promote all Indian languages including classical, tribal and

endangered languages should be taken on with new vigour.

Currently our education system is reeling under the ills of Westernization, excessive privatization and an exclusion from its cultural underpinnings. As a result, we must incorporate Indian knowledge and tradition into education in such a way that it becomes our "way of life." Thus, it is the moral responsibility of all stakeholders in the Indian educational system to strive for quality and equitable education for all by extending stimulating courses on the Indian Knowledge Traditions to students at a young age so that they understand the importance of "doing what's right" and have a logical framework for making ethical decisions. The ancient education system focused on the holistic development of the individual and emphasised on values such as humility, truthfulness, discipline, self-reliance and respect for all creations. The National Education Policy 2020 envisions an educational system fashioned on the lines of India's profuse linguistic, cultural and artistic heritage. The promotion of Indian arts and culture is seen as very important and it could be effectively imparted through integrating Indian arts into the main curriculum which would not only develop a strong sense of identity and aesthetic outlook but also enhance creative and cognitive skills among the children.

The importance of incorporating IKT (Indian Knowledge Traditions) and languages into the mainstream curriculum should be ingrained in the personalities of students at all levels, from kindergarten to Ph.D. IKT can be integrated and incorporated into traditional curricula. When



considering IKT, we should consider streams and the appropriate type of cultural conglomeration. A common programme should be implemented so that IKT can be integrated into the domain of school education.

IKT should not be separated from the syllabi in classes 1-3, but should be integrated into the curriculum and programme. Short stories about chivalry, bravery, manifesting the theme of Indian culture and traditions should be narrated in these classes. There should be cross-referencing of research material. IKT should permeate the student's mind and heart.

For classes 4 –7, one course or portion of EVS that is embedded or rooted in our Indianness should be included in the school curriculum. IKT and vernacular language should be introduced in classes 9-10 and one chapter should be devoted to vernacular language and the history of languages. Visits to historical sites, source libraries, and Indian museums should be used to incorporate Indian Knowledge Traditions into the curriculum. Indian Knowledge Traditions should be introduced as a course for classes 11 and 12 where the focus should be on Sanskrit-based upanishads and Indian ethos. These classes should follow a structured curriculum on IKT that imparts knowledge. Innovative approaches to introducing and infusing IKT through pictorial representation, vernacular language, and culture are required. Cultural awareness and expression are among the major competencies considered important to develop in children, in order to provide them with a sense of identity, belonging, as well as an appreciation of other cultures and identities. It is through the development of a strong

sense and knowledge of their own cultural history, arts, languages, and traditions that children can build a positive cultural identity and self-esteem.

Embedding Indian Knowledge Traditions into the curriculum is very essential and stories are the most powerful way of infusing IKT into the curriculum at the foundational level. The aim of IKT division will be to promote interdisciplinary research on all aspects of "Indian Knowledge Traditions" and preserve and disseminate "IKT" for further research and societal applications.

Educational boards like NCERT, ICSE and NIOS can develop a separate course on the Indian Knowledge Traditions and these courses can be taken up by experts and scholars in academic institutions and these courses can also be made available on online educational platforms like MOOCs and SWAYAM.

One must include elements of Indian Knowledge Traditions in school curriculum so that the students:

- Get familiar with major Indian thinkers in different disciplines and understand the contribution of Indian mind in various fields.
- Get familiar with the primary texts of Indian thought through an organized study of short extracts in translation of those texts..
- Enhance self-awareness and develop pride towards their country.
- Develop positive attitude towards Indian ethos and thoughts.



In order to promote Indian Knowledge Systems in educational curriculums one can initiate the following procedures:

- Develop specific courses focusing on IKT.
- Infuse IKT into existing courses using relevant examples and concepts.
- Preserve original traditions, texts through appropriate means.
- Research by studying original texts and understanding their relevance for sustainable societal development.
- Collaborate with traditional scholars, artists and experts.
- Train the teachers in the field of IKT.

Education was given the highest priority in ancient India, with the primary goal of developing the individual's personality. The importance of education has always been recognised for physical and spiritual upliftment, as well as the proper discharge of various responsibilities. There is need in the school curriculums to create a course on Ayurveda and enlighten children about its systematic approach. Ayurvedic treatments are more effective in most of the chronic diseases. Ayurveda is a holistic approach ground in reality, Indians developed highly sophisticated mathematics like highly sophisticated mathematics for navigation and ability to predict weather patterns. Currently the focus is on making the already existing IKT knowledge corpus into mainstream academia. When we refer to subjects in particular, the social science curriculum must be able to demonstrate how the nation and national unity

play a role in local people's perceptions. The Social Science textbooks should fulfill the National objectives and manifest the national ethos of the country. The textbook concept should be expanded from merely instructive to more suggestive and utilitarian. The science curriculum is an instrument of social change to reduce the divide related to economic class, gender, caste, religion and region.

We must realise that the aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge but a complete realisation and liberation of the self. We should also focus on traditional knowledge and cultural practices to manage and conserve natural resources for generations.

Formal education has become more classroom-focused, and the gap between community-based knowledge and school-based knowledge is on the rise, we must seek to connect classrooms with actual environmental problems, identifying links between issues that reflect real-world situations and relating environmental education to the local community. The IKT curriculum can developed in a unique partnership with local villages and focusing on traditional knowledge. The proposed IKT curriculum can focus on the idea of the village as an ecosystem highlighting upon educational sustainability and negotiating different worldviews and value systems about development and livelihood.

Ancient Indian knowledge penned down by the Rishis that has come down to us through the scriptures is a repository of Spiritual knowledge. To quote the Bhagavad Gita "Adyatma Vidya Vidyaanam"- which meant it is the spiritual knowledge that is the highest form of all knowledge.



Their writings on the education that always emphasized the power of right understanding have always given courage and inspiration to both the teacher and the taught. If such literature is introduced in the teaching curriculum along with the skills and knowledge that is presently being delivered, the students will be imbued with values and full flowering of the individual as a whole will be possible. Hence the curriculum of IKT should be introduced from schools drawing from the rich scope in Ancient Indian literature, imparting the aforementioned values and highlighting the importance of time, the very purpose of life, role of discipline and definition of success in education and the key aspects of education such as Listening, Reflection and Application.

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