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Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems: A Path to Revitalizing Higher Education

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Abstract

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) has a rich and diverse heritage that encompasses a vast range of knowledge traditions, from Vedic studies to various regional and linguistic literatures. The integration of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into higher education has gained momentum in recent years, aiming to bridge traditional wisdom with contemporary education. This article explores the significance of IKS, discusses the potential benefits of integrating it into higher education, and addresses the various challenges involved as well as the paper aim to focus on Why do we study IKS, Why it is in our syllabus, What is the basic concept of IKS to Higher Education. This paper explores the implications of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 on the Indian knowledge system.

The Indian Knowledge System encompasses the vast traditional knowledge base that has evolved in India over millennia. It includes various disciplines like Ayurveda, yoga, Vedic mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, architecture (VastuShastra), and spiritual practices. With the advent of globalization, there is a renewed interest in harnessing the insights from IKS to address contemporary societal needs. Integrating IKS into higher education provides an opportunity to connect students with India's rich cultural heritage while enriching modern scientific inquiry and holistic learning.

KEY WORDS: *Indian Knowledge Systems, Holistic Education, Experiential Learning, Ethical Dimensions and Cultural Heritage*

Introducing Indigenous Knowledge Systems to young minds fosters a deep sense of pride and connection to their cultural roots, cultivating a lifelong appreciation for their heritage. India claims the diversity of traditions, philosophies, and practices that have been endured for centuries, reflecting the country's rich cultural diversity. **The University Grant Commission has actively endorsed measures to facilitate the unified integration of IKS with modern-day subjects, aiming to maintain the rich heritage of IKS in Multi-disciplines. Efforts have been initiated by UGC to assimilate and promote IKS within contemporary higher education systems, recognizing the valuable knowledge passed down through generations.** The National Education Policy (NEP), as enacted in 2020, emphasizes the inclusion of IKS into curriculums at all levels of education, in line with this, the National Credit Framework has made it possible for students to earn credit in courses relating to Ancient Indian Sciences and Arts. IKS is also being included under the Vision 2047 for BharatiyaRasayanasastra initiative. Under University Grants Commission guidelines, it is advised that 5 per cent of a student's total credits should be in IKS courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The Vedic literature serves as a guiding light, providing insights into the reflective understanding and wisdom of ancient Indian sages. It offers thoughtful philosophical teachings, decent principles, and

practical knowledge that have shaped the Indian way of life for millennia. This timeless treasure trove offers philosophical teachings, moral principles, and practical knowledge that have profoundly shaped Indian culture and way of life for thousands of years.

Indian knowledge systems provide a rich repository of holistic and sustainable practices that can complement and enhance contemporary scientific approaches. Integration of Indian Knowledge Systems into the mainstream education system can have numerous benefits, including fostering a better understanding of India's rich cultural heritage and providing innovative solutions to contemporary challenges faced by the country. The main objective of integrating IKS into the education system is to ensure that India's ancient knowledge systems, such as Ayurveda, Yoga, and traditional arts, are preserved and promoted for future generations. By revitalizing the Indian education system through the inclusion of IKS, students can develop a deeper appreciation for their nation's unique history and cultural identity.

Enhancing multidisciplinary learning through IKS promotes a holistic approach to education, encouraging students to explore connections between various fields and fostering a more profound understanding of complex concepts. Promote Cultural Heritage and Identity by Integrating IKS helps to preserve and celebrate India's rich cultural heritage, fostering a sense of identity and continuity among students. By encouraging ethical and sustainable practices, traditional knowledge systems emphasize ethical reasoning and sustainable practices, aligning with global goals for sustainable development, which is one of the basic requirements in the present day. To foster innovation by bridging the gap between ancient wisdom and modern science, IKS can inspire innovative solutions to contemporary challenges.

NEP 2020 advocates Interdisciplinary Studies for an education system that allows students to study across disciplines. This includes integrating traditional knowledge systems such as classical arts with modern science, technology, and humanities courses. Universities and colleges are encouraged to design curricula that include courses on traditional knowledge, philosophy, ethics, and cultural studies alongside contemporary themes. This includes the study of regional history, folklore, traditional medicine, and environmental practices. Higher education institutions are encouraged to engage in research and documentation to document and preserve traditional knowledge systems, making them accessible and relevant in contemporary context which can be widely used.

Promotion of language and literature is one of the aspects to promote indigenous languages. Encouraging the translation of traditional texts into modern languages and vice versa to make them accessible to a broader audience.

To foster a sense of morality and ethics among students by studying the Vedas, Upanishads, and other ancient texts in the curriculum, as well as the rich heritage of India. Cultural Studies and Artistic Heritage by Promoting traditional Indian arts, crafts, dance, music, and theater within higher education institutions. This preserves cultural heritage and provides students with a well-rounded education. Establishing departments and research centers focused on Indian cultural studies, including art, history, musicology, and performing arts, gives everlasting value.

Teaching traditional Indian practices related to diet, lifestyle, and wellness as part of the curriculum. Health and well-being will be characterized through the study of yoga and Ayurveda which reflects a daily lifestyle that is healthy and happy life. Sustainability and Environmental Integrating traditional ecological knowledge and sustainable practices into environmental studies and sustainability programs and their application in modern environmental conservation efforts will help to win over future aspirations.

One of the primary challenges is the lack of adequate resources and infrastructure to support the integration of IKS into the curriculum. There are certain challenges when it comes to integrating IKS with NEP. There is a lack of awareness among the community and stakeholders about the importance of

IKS. IKS is generally present in non-literary form and it has been passed verbally from one generation to another. It makes difficult to develop and realize IKS-based courses and programs in educational institutions. Additionally, resistance from educators and policymakers who may be doubtful about the significance and value of traditional knowledge in the modern world can pose a significant barrier to the successful implementation of IKS in the education system.

As IKS is available in different languages it may create barriers to those who are not well-versed with these languages. Moreover, the colonial system of education has created a bias against the IKS in the Indian Education system. There may be concerns about the potential loss of the unique cultural context and practices associated with traditional knowledge systems if they are integrated into the mainstream curriculum. There is no clear-cut curriculum about IKS. Many stakeholders may see it as irrelevant or outdated to present scenario. The Indian education system is largely focused on the Western knowledge system and it can create difficulty in accepting this system. There is also a deficiency of well-qualified teachers to teach the IKS because it is not widely adopted yet.

Effective integration of Indian knowledge systems into education can be achieved through a range of strategies, promoting a rich and inclusive learning environment:

1. Infusing traditional Indian values and teaching into the curriculum.
2. Establishing specialized universities and institutions focused on the study, research, and dissemination of ancient Indian wisdom.
3. Promoting interdisciplinary learning that harmonizes modern and traditional knowledge systems.
4. Encouraging interdisciplinary research that blends traditional knowledge with modern scientific approaches.
5. Founding interdisciplinary research centers that investigate and apply ancient Indian knowledge systems, fostering innovation and cultural revival.
6. Conducting faculty development workshops to explore innovative approaches for incorporating Indigenous Knowledge Systems into existing curricula.

In conclusion, the Indian knowledge system still holds true in the modern world and offers helpful advice for handling problems like stress relief, sustainability. It provides a wealth of information that can be applied to better individuals, better society and better communities. It is a genuine step that enhances student's educational experiences, fosters cross cultural understanding, and closes the knowledge gap between conventional wisdom and contemporary knowledge. To incorporate the IKS into higher education courses may provide a more comprehensive, diverse, and inclusive learning environment that equips students to face the challenges of the modern world with morality, wisdom, and a profound understanding of their cultural heritage. Faculty members should be encouraged to create and instruct these courses in interesting way to expect the impact of these initiatives beyond the classroom, as HEIs play a pivotal role in making the younger generations to be culturally aware and ethically reliable individuals driving India's advancement as a knowledge driven society.

The implementation of Indian Knowledge System will not only transform education but also regenerate the Indian psyche and way of life. By infusing fundamental Indian thought, knowledge, tradition, art, skills, craftsmanship, and management into various sectors, India will undergo a philosophical revolution.

Revitalizing the Indian education system through the integration of traditional Indian knowledge systems is aimed at augmenting the personal and professional development of students that is holistic development. This approach is centred on cultivating a comprehensive learning environment that nurtures intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth. As well as melding ancient Indian wisdom with contemporary education, students can cultivate critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and a profound comprehension of life's interconnectedness.

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