

Reimagining Language Pedagogy through Indian Knowledge System: Shaping India's Educational Future

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Abstract:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places a strong emphasis on the integration of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) across disciplines in order to bring about a radical change in India's educational system. This paper aims to examine the change in language teaching which is necessary for pedagogical rethinking that harmonizes contemporary linguistic practices with India's rich philosophical, cultural and intellectual heritage. The goal of integrating IKS into language instruction is to develop a well-rounded approach that links traditional knowledge with modern international standards. IKS-based language instruction promotes the use of oral traditions, regional literature, classical texts, and Indian aesthetic theories like rasa. It encourages multilingualism, supports basic learning in the mother tongue, and helps pupils become more culturally conscious. IKS-based language education transcends rote grammar teaching and advances holistic development by including ethical ideals, critical thinking, and contextual learning. It aims to develop students who are socially conscious, culturally aware, and linguistically proficient. IKS adoption in language instruction does, however, come with some difficulties. These include the requirement to preserve academic rigor while integrating traditional knowledge, the absence of current curriculum frameworks, the paucity of research materials, and inadequate teacher preparation. Systematic curriculum change, professional development courses, and multidisciplinary research projects are necessary to meet these difficulties. India's educational future might be shaped by rethinking language instruction through IKS, which will improve global competency while fortifying cultural identity. A dynamic, inclusive, and values-based language education system that is in line with India's goals for the twenty-first century can be produced by fusing tradition and innovation.

Keywords:

Indian Knowledge System (IKS), Language Pedagogy, Multilingualism, Holistic Development and Curriculum Reform etc.

Introduction

Because it explicitly calls on schools and universities to incorporate the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into teaching and learning, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a watershed in Indian education. It views Indian customs as living sources of knowledge that can coexist with contemporary concepts rather than as antiquated or out-of-date. Since language is the primary means of transmitting, sharing, and safeguarding knowledge, language education is at the heart of this shift. This essay describes how IKS might be used to reinvent language instruction in India. It demonstrates how regional languages, oral traditions, classical texts, and Indian philosophies may all contribute to a deeper, more fulfilling approach to language learning. Additionally, it examines how NEP 2020 promotes mother tongue education, multilingualism, and value-based learning and how these concepts relate to useful teaching strategies. The study addresses the difficulties in curriculum design, teacher preparation, and academic quality while offering straightforward and doable solutions.

Understanding the Indian Knowledge System:

The numerous systems of knowing that have developed in India over thousands of years are together referred to as the Indian Knowledge System. Philosophical, linguistic, literary, grammatical, artistic, medical, mathematical, scientific, ethical, and spiritual ideas are all included. This knowledge has been transmitted orally, through scriptures, comments, stories, songs, and numerous regional languages, including Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, and others. IKS encompasses not only ancient writings but also indigenous ways of life and learning, folk traditions, local histories, and community practices. It frequently links knowledge with moral principles and social duty and emphasizes discussion, debate, recollection, and introspection. For instance, traditions such as Bhakti poetry demonstrate emotional and spiritual expression in regional languages, whereas Indian philosophical schools such as Nyaya and Mimamsa demonstrate extensive effort in logic and interpretation.

In education, IKS highlights:

- Learning through experience and observation.
- Respect for teachers and elders.
- Integration of values like truth, non-violence, compassion, and self-discipline.
- Close link between language, culture, and community.

Language learning transcends grammar and vocabulary when these concepts are incorporated into language pedagogy. While still satisfying contemporary scholarly and international demands, it turns into a means of establishing connections with identity, culture, and ethics.

NEP 2020 and Language Education:

A comprehensive policy foundation for integrating IKS into language instruction is provided by NEP 2020. It encourages the use of Indian languages—classical, regional, and tribal as cultural and intellectual conduits. Additionally, it suggests that instruction be given in the mother tongue or home language until at least Grade 5, and ideally until Grade 8, as students acquire concepts more effectively in the language they are most familiar with. Among the main language-related points of NEP 2020 are:

- Multilingualism in schools is strongly supported.
- The creation of multilingual and bilingual textbooks and resources.
- Encouragement of translation, including the use of technological tools to make information accessible in multiple languages.
- Preservation and advancement of endangered and classical languages.
- Establishing a division inside the educational system dedicated to Indian Knowledge Systems to facilitate IKS research and instruction.

These regulations demonstrate that language serves as a link between IKS and modern knowledge rather than merely being a subject. To help kids feel rooted in their own culture while remaining open to the world, they encourage teachers to incorporate global topics with local stories, music, and literature.

Reimagining Language Pedagogy through IKS:

Rethinking language pedagogy through IKS entails altering both the content and methods of instruction. It urges a shift away from a limited emphasis on exam-based learning, memorized responses, and rote grammar. Rather, language instruction ought to foster students' critical thinking, cultural awareness, communication abilities, and values.

An IKS-based approach can:

- • Consider Indian languages as rich intellectual resources rather than merely "vernaculars."
- To educate reading, writing, speaking, and listening, use Indian myths, proverbs, storytelling, and poetry.
- Incorporate ideas such as sabda (word/sound), dharma (duty/ethics), and rasa (aesthetic emotion) to enhance comprehension of the role of language in Indian thought.
- Connect language exercises to everyday situations such as family, celebration, village or city life, and local concerns.

For instance, teachers can employ straightforward translations of Indian epics, folktales, or biographies of Indian philosophers in addition to international materials, rather than just assigning English sections from foreign contexts. Students can develop their language skills while witnessing the respect of their own culture in the classroom thanks to this combined content.

Oral Traditions, Storytelling and Regional Literature:

A solid foundation for language acquisition is provided by oral traditions, which are essential to IKS. India has a rich history of multilingual drama, epics, ballads, folk melodies, and storytelling. Children and young people find these formats engaging, memorable, and simple to relate to.

Using oral traditions in language pedagogy can:

- Develop listening and speaking skills through recitation, narration, and group reading.
- Build memory and concentration through repeated telling and chanting.
- Encourage creativity when students retell, adapt, or dramatize stories.
- Strengthen bonds with local culture and elders, who are often the keepers of stories.

Strong illustrations of human experiences, societal problems, and philosophical queries may be found in regional literature written in languages like Gujarati, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, Hindi, and many more. These traditions' essays, poetry, and short stories can be taught in both first- and second-language schools. Translations of local literature into English can demonstrate to pupils the value of Indian experiences in global languages. A language class might, for example, read a brief folktale from the students' home region in their mother tongue before looking at a basic English translation. In both languages, students contrast words, expressions, and feelings. Regional literature thus promotes both cultural pride and bilingual proficiency.

Classical Texts and Indian Aesthetic Theories:

IKS is largely derived from classical works in Sanskrit and other languages, particularly in the fields of rhetoric, grammar, and aesthetics. Highly developed concepts on language structure, sound, meaning, and emotional impact can be found in works such as Panini's grammar, the *Natyashastra*, and classical poetry. Despite the complexity of these writings, some of their principles can be simplified and applied in contemporary schools. Students can better grasp how language can affect the heart and mind by using the notion of *rasa*, which relates to aesthetic feelings like love, courage, compassion, and astonishment. Teachers may inquire after pupils have read a poem or a story: Here, which *rasa* do you feel? Is it *veera* (heroism), *hasya* (humor), or *karuna* (pathos)? Word choice, tone, and imagery are then discussed.

Other traditional concepts that link Indian tradition with contemporary literary studies include *vakrokti* (crooked or indirect speech), *alankara* (figures of speech), and *dhvani* (recommendation). Teachers can demonstrate similar elements in classical and *bhakti* poetry rather than relying solely on Western examples to teach simile, metaphor, and irony. This promotes a more inclusive literary education and strikes a balance between local and global viewpoints.

Multilingualism, Mother Tongue and Cognitive Growth:

NEP 2020 views multilingualism as an asset rather than an issue. Given that many youngsters in India grow up hearing and using multiple languages, this is in line with the country's reality. Early learning in the mother tongue enhances comprehension, self-assurance, and cognitive development, according to educational research.

IKS-based language pedagogy supports:

- Strong foundations in the home language or mother tongue for basic literacy and numeracy.
- Gradual addition of regional, national, and international languages in a structured way.
- Use of translanguaging, where students are allowed to move between languages in discussion and note-making to support understanding.

In actuality, a teacher can urge students to write a brief synopsis in the target language, such Hindi or English, after they have discussed a topic in their native tongue. This approach views all of the student's languages as learning tools rather than obstacles, and it respects their entire linguistic arsenal. Additionally, this strategy aids in maintaining linguistic diversity. Children feel seen and appreciated when they discover that their native tongue—regardless of whether it is a tribal or minority language—is significant enough to be used in the classroom. The idea that only English or one dominating language is "intelligent" or "modern" is diminished, and self-respect is increased.

Holistic Development and Value-Based Language Education:

Knowledge has always been associated with values and character development in traditional Indian schooling. By including social awareness, emotional intelligence, and ethical concepts in addition to language proficiency, IKS language instruction can promote holistic development. Indian texts and

folktales frequently convey ethical and philosophical lessons on integrity, decency, empathy, nonviolence, and environmental preservation. Reading and discussing these kinds of literature helps students think about duty, responsibility, and right and wrong in addition to improving their vocabulary and comprehension. Students can make connections between the values in stories and their own lives through classroom activities like role plays, group discussions, and reflective writing. A few examples of holistic language instruction are:

- Dialogues on social issues found in literature, such as inequality, gender, environment, or caste.
- Activities that connect language with art, music, and drama (for example, enacting scenes from a play or singing traditional songs).
- Reflection exercises, where students write about how a story or poem made them feel or what lesson they got from it.

Such practices support the NEP 2020 goal of value-based education and help produce students who are not only linguistically skilled but also socially and morally aware.

Challenges in Integrating IKS into Language Pedagogy

Even though the vision is powerful, there are real difficulties in bringing IKS into language education. Many of these challenges are structural, practical, and attitudinal. Some key challenges are:

- Lack of clear curriculum frameworks that show how to include IKS in a systematic way in language syllabi.
- Limited availability of updated, student-friendly materials that present IKS content in simple language.
- Inadequate teacher preparation; many teachers have not been trained in IKS concepts or in how to use them in everyday teaching.
- Fear of reducing academic rigor if too much focus is placed on tradition and culture instead of standard grammar and formal skills.
- Social and parental preference for English-only or English-dominant teaching, which can sometimes make schools ignore IKS and Indian languages.

Another difficulty is striking a balance between specificity and inclusion. India is home to numerous communities, languages, and customs. IKS cannot be viewed as solely majoritarian or Sanskritic. To ensure that no group feels excluded, materials and techniques must respect diversity, including tribal, Dalit, and regional knowledge traditions. These difficulties demonstrate that good intentions are insufficient. IKS-based language instruction requires careful preparation, investigation, and funding.

Curriculum Reform and Material Development:

Curriculum reform is a key step to bring IKS into language teaching in a structured and sustainable way. Syllabi at school and university levels should clearly state how IKS elements are to be included, what learning outcomes are expected, and which kinds of texts and activities will support those outcomes.

Some possible curriculum strategies are:

- Including a balanced selection of texts from Indian classical, medieval, modern, and folk traditions, along with international works.
- Designing themes such as “nature and environment,” “family and community,” “ethics and duty,” or “identity and language,” and drawing texts from both IKS and global sources under each theme.
- Encouraging project-based learning, where students collect local proverbs, folk songs, or oral histories and present them in the target language.

Textbook development must follow these aims. New books can include:

- Simple explanations of IKS concepts like *rasa*, *dharma*, and *sabda* as they appear in stories and poems.
- Activities that ask students to compare expressions in different languages they know.
- Glossaries that include Indian literary and rhetorical terms alongside English terms.

Digital resources, including audio and video recordings of oral traditions and interactive language exercises based on Indian content, can support flexible and engaging learning. Translating quality IKS-related texts into various Indian languages and English will also help teachers access material that is both authentic and usable in class.

Teacher Education and Professional Development:

Teachers are the main agents of change in any pedagogy. For IKS-based language teaching to succeed, teacher education programs must be reformed. Pre-service (B.Ed., M.Ed.) and in-service training should include both conceptual and practical components related to IKS. Teacher education can focus on:

- Basic understanding of IKS: its scope, historical background, and relevance today.
- Knowledge of Indian language traditions, including major classical and regional literatures.
- Classroom strategies for using stories, oral traditions, and culturally rooted tasks in language teaching.
- Skills in multilingual pedagogy, including managing classrooms where students have different home languages.
- Reflective practice, where teachers examine their own attitudes toward Indian languages and English and work to reduce internal biases.

Teachers can exchange ideas and best practices through workshops, online courses, and group projects. For instance, educators from various areas can collaborate to develop lesson plans utilizing regional resources and assess them with their pupils. Such methods can be documented to create a model repository that others might use. The NEP 2020 call for IKS will stay on paper if teachers are not given significant support. Thus, it is crucial to provide teachers with information, tools, and self-assurance.

Multidisciplinary Research and Policy Support:

Integration of IKS in language pedagogy also needs strong research support. Universities, research institutes, and teacher education colleges can play a major role by studying how IKS-based approaches work in real classrooms. Areas of research may include:

- Effects of mother tongue-based and multilingual language teaching on learning outcomes.
- Student attitudes toward Indian languages and IKS content in language classes.
- Effective methods of teaching classical and regional texts in simple and engaging ways.
- Role of digital tools in preserving and using oral and folk traditions in language education.

Research results can be used by policymakers to create reward programs, provide cash, and improve recommendations for schools that successfully implement IKS. To keep rules and teaching methods consistent, they can also encourage collaborations across organizations like school boards, language universities, and the Indian Knowledge Systems division. This kind of interdisciplinary effort will assist guarantee that IKS integration is not merely symbolic but actually influences curriculum, teaching strategies, and evaluation in significant ways.

Shaping India's Educational Future:

Using the Indian Knowledge System to reimagine language instruction involves more than just revisiting the past. The goal is to create a future in which Indian students can comfortably engage with the outside world while still feeling deeply entrenched in their culture. This vision is amply supported by NEP 2020, which combines IKS, multilingualism, and contemporary educational objectives. Language instruction based on IKS can:

- Strengthen cultural identity by giving students access to their own literary and philosophical heritage.
- Promote social harmony by respecting all languages and cultures present in the classroom.
- Improve global competence by combining strong foundations in Indian languages with effective learning of international languages like English.
- Develop critical and ethical thinkers who can question, analyze, and create, not just repeat information.

Careful curriculum change, excellent teacher preparation, the development of rich learning resources, and ongoing research are all necessary for the future. Language schools in India can become places where tradition and innovation coexist if these actions are taken seriously. Students will develop into socially conscious, culturally aware, and linguistically proficient citizens prepared for the twenty-first century in these classrooms through the use of stories, poems, and discussions derived from IKS.

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