

Indian Knowledge System in Higher Education- Benefits and Relevance in Modern ERA

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ABSTRACT

Indian knowledge systems (IKS) is a comprehension of knowledge, practices, and innovations accumulated since ages in India, covering various disciplines, including mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and ecology. These knowledge systems have regularly been ignored in our Indian education system, however, their contribution to advancing technology has been remarkable. Since ancient eras, people in India obtained knowledge and information from close observation of nature and the environment, for example, visions of sustainable agricultural practices, herbal medicine, ecosystem management, etc. The integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into Indian education underscores the core principle of a rootedness and pride in India. It explains its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions of National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). It envisions an educational system based on Indian values and principles. In an increasingly changing and uncertain world, the significance of preserving and imparting traditional knowledge systems, particularly those rooted in the rich cultural heritage of India, cannot be overstated. To be a global citizen, one needs to be rooted in one's culture and tradition. The importance of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in higher education, along with Indian languages, arts, and culture, has been emphasized by the NEP 2020. It has recommended integrating IKS into curriculums at all education levels. The University Grant Commission (UGC) has actively endorsed measures to facilitate the unified integration of IKS with modern-day subjects, aiming to maintain the rich heritage of IKS in diverse 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. Here is an overview of the relevance of IKS in higher education through National Education Policy, 2020

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, Relevance, Education, Culture

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) involves the systematic transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next, based on Vedic literature, the Upanishads, the Vedas, and the Upvedas. The National Education Policy (NEP) acknowledges this rich heritage of ancient Indian knowledge and thought as a guiding principle, highlighting its structured approach to knowledge transmission.

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) encompasses Jnan, Vignan, and Jeevan Darshan, which have developed through experience, observation, experimentation, and thorough analysis. This time-honored practice has had a profound impact on various facets of society including education, arts, administration, law, justice, health, manufacturing, and commerce. Additionally, it has left a significant imprint on classical and other languages of India, communicated through texts, oral traditions, and artistic expressions. IKS encapsulates knowledge from ancient India, along with its triumphs and obstacles, providing a vision for India's future aspirations, particularly in the fields of education, health, environment, and all aspects of life.

Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into higher education curricula is an important step that can enhance students' learning experiences, stimulate cultural understanding, and bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and modern knowledge.

By implementing IKS, higher education institutions can cultivate a more holistic, comprehensive, and diverse learning environment that prepares students to navigate the complexities of the modern world with wisdom, ethics, and a deep appreciation for their cultural heritage.

Indian Knowledge System in Education:

The introduction of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into school and higher education curricula is being approached in a systematic manner. IKS encompasses tribal knowledge alongside Indigenous and traditional educational methodologies, which span various disciplines including mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, yoga, architecture, medicine, agriculture, engineering, linguistics, literature, sports, games, and governance. The curriculum will feature specialized courses on tribal ethno-medicinal practices, forest management, and traditional organic farming techniques. Additionally, an engaging elective course on Indian Knowledge Systems will be offered to secondary school students. The policy emphasizes the importance of firsthand experience with India's rich diversity for learners. Plans are in place to incorporate simple activities, such as student excursions to different regions of the country, which will not only enhance tourism but also foster an understanding and appreciation of India's cultural diversity, traditions, and the knowledge inherent in various regions of the nation.

The following factors can be counted certainly for introducing this subject in higher education.

Pride in traditions:

The introduction of IKS to young people installs a sense of pride and appreciation for their cultural heritage. India claims the diversity of traditions, philosophies, and practices that have been endured for centuries, reflecting the country's rich cultural diversity. By learning about ancient Indian texts such as the Vedas, and Upanishads, and epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana, young learners gain insight into the profound wisdom and intellectual achievements of their ancestors.

Solving contemporary Problems:

IKS offers valuable insights and is capable of addressing contemporary challenges in various domains. From sustainable agriculture practices mentioned in ancient texts like the Arthashastra to the holistic healthcare system of Ayurveda, these traditions offer time-tested and environmentally sustainable solutions. The integration of traditional knowledge with modern science and technology, The younger generations hold great potential to contribute towards innovative solutions for pressing problems such as climate change, healthcare, and sustainable development.

Holistic Pedagogy:

The pedagogy of Indian knowledge systems is fundamentally interesting and holistic, engaging learners on numerous levels. Not only rote memorization like Sanskrit shloka, these systems emphasize experiential learning, critical thinking, and the cultivation of practical skills. The Storytelling, debates, and interactive discussions among students are encouraged to explore complex ideas, and improve a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. Children are feeling stressed out, this trend in students can be brought about when traditional pedagogy is used.

Human Values in Education:

Indian knowledge systems are deeply engrained in human values such as compassion, respect for nature, and the quest for truth and righteousness. By imparting these values through education to young learners, Indian knowledge systems cultivate ethical leadership, empathy, and social responsibility. The human values in education nurtures personality development and also contributes to the development of a more compassionate and sustainable society.

Involvement in local culture:

Indian knowledge systems connect learners to their local culture and knowledge, a strength of traditional knowledge. Understanding regional norms, folklore, and indigenous practices, students develop a deeper appreciation for their cultural individuality and inheritance. This connection to local traditions develops a sense of being appropriate and empowering young people to become stewards of their cultural legacy.

Neuroscientific benefits:

Recent neuroscience research has underscored the intellectual benefits of engaging with Indian knowledge systems. Practices such as yoga, meditation, and chanting have been shown to enhance cognitive function, reduce stress, and improve emotional well-being. By incorporating these practices into education, young learners can develop greater focus, resilience, and emotional intelligence, enhancing their overall learning experience and academic performance.

The Relevance of IKS Today

We owe a lot to the ancient Indians, teaching us how to count. Without which most modern scientific discoveries would have been impossible”

Albert Einstein

The Indian Knowledge System is not just a historical interest but has practical applications today. Here are a few reasons why exploring IKS by young generations can be enriching:

1. **Interdisciplinary Understandings:** IKS covers numerous domains such as philosophy, science, politics, and arts, offering interdisciplinary insights that can enhance one's professional and personal life.
2. **Holistic Approach:** Unlike the often fragmented modern educational systems, IKS promotes a holistic understanding of life and the universe, fostering a more integrated and balanced perspective.
3. **Sustainable Practices:** Many principles in IKS emphasize sustainability and harmony with nature, which are crucial in addressing contemporary environmental challenges.
4. **Ethical Foundation:** The ethical and moral teachings in texts like the Arthashastra and Yogashastra provide a strong foundation for ethical decision-making and leadership.
5. **Well-being:** The comprehensive approach to well-being is emphasized in the traditional Indian medical system known as Ayurveda. In today's world where life-related conditions are on the rise, it advocates for natural mending ways, personalized curatives, and a focus on conservation of health.
6. **Stress management:** The roots of yoga in India, it is a comprehensive approach to internal, physical, and spiritual well-being. It includes ancient ways like asanas (postures), pranayama (breath control), and observation. It has been experimentally proved to lower stress, promote internal health, and increase health in general. These ways are especially material in today's stressful ultramodern society.
7. **Sustainable living:** Indian knowledge system propagates the idea of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family). It emphasizes the interdependence of all living beings to attain sustainable living practices considering environmental issues and the demand for natural resource conservation and preservation, these principles are getting more and more important.
8. **Spiritual Growth:** Spiritual growth perceptivity into the nature of reality, mindfulness, and tone are handed by Indian knowledge systems like Vedanta, a philosophical frame grounded on the ancient books known as the Vedas, similar training advice on tone enhancement, tone mindfulness, and the pursuit of meaning and purpose, all of which are material in the ultramodern world where so numerous people are looking for lesser fulfillment.
9. **Innovation:** Science has historically been advanced by Indian knowledge systems in disciplines like astronomy, mathematics and metallurgy. The zero, the decimal system and trigonometry which are ancient knowledge are still extensively used in current education and technology, demonstrating the significance of Indian knowledge systems in fostering invention and advancement.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people." The Indian Knowledge System, preserved and celebrated through initiatives like Bharat Vidya, continues to illuminate the path for generations to come, reminding us of the profound and enduring legacy of ancient wisdom.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Indian knowledge system still holds true in the modern world and offers helpful advice for handling problems like stress relief, sustainability, etc. 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.

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