

# Need for Incorporation of Indigenous Values in Modern Education System

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## Abstract:

The vision of education is to inculcate life skills and employability skills among students. In the holistic approach to education, the emphasis is given to making future cosmopolitan citizens. Global citizenship is nothing but a collective approach to addressing all the problems that our Earth is now facing. Preserving natural heritage is now a prime concern to make human civilization sustainable in this world. Indigenous knowledge system flourishes based on a particular territory comprising all elements of that particular place through age-old practices, whereas the Western Education system establishes ignoring the local fragrance, Worldview of original habitats. Indigenous value system gives emphasis on the mutual-co existence of every species. The present education system based on Western culture and values fails to provide sustainable consistency to civilization. Greediness, the self-centred approach, materialistic behaviour, material culture, and ego-centric approach is the gift of Euro-centric pedagogy. Reckless and break-less development using natural resources indiscriminately is nothing but a mere projection of colonial industrial philosophy. Where the ideology of Education talks about turning humans into resources, their Euro-centric pedagogy makes them mere copy-paste of Frankenstein who destroys the very genre of life within the blink of an eye. Sustainable Development Goals ask for Quality Education, with which other goals of sustainable development are interlinked. Either alone the employability skills nor life skills cannot serve the purpose of the enrichment of humanity. The intermingling of both is a basic requirement of the Modern Education system. In this very context where the Euro-centric pedagogy fails to address the values of humanity in the Education system, the indigenous values of tribes are the preserver, protector, and builder of humanity. Indigenous values give due emphasis to communitarian resource management, the wise use of resources and their conservation. Where in our civilized society, we fight with our counterparts to snatch their rights, those indigenous counterparts fight unitedly with each other for their survival. In an advanced society, where we rush behind self-identity, there tribes settle with belongingness with every stakeholder of nature, be it living or non-living, be it with animals or plants. The goal of present education lies in achieving the aims of Sustainable Development Goals where indigenous value systems are necessary to incorporate to achieve desired success. Employability skills also should not be confined to those skills about how to use them, rather, it is now necessary to incorporate indigenous values in the mere concept of using by extending them to use and sustain them for the future. When employability skills of progressed World induce the concept of Superiority among us, the indigenous value system respects the omnipotence of Nature for our survival. The present paper will analyse the importance of indigenous values and how they should be incorporated into the modern education system to make it a holistic one in a real sense and to inculcate a sense of cosmopolitanism.

**Keywords:** Tribes, Indigenous Value System, Life Skills, Employability Skills, Education.

### **Introduction:**

Education inputs values among its recipients to subsist in a life that satiates individuals as per the agreed values of society. We can't ignore the essence of values in the modern education system in the era of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when the motto of education lies in the four pillars of Education to ensure peace and employability in every phase of society. The incorporation of Indigenous values in the modern education system might be one of the solutions to those problems that society faces now. Indigenous value system constructs the route map for young aspirants to spend their lives on ethical principles and make them competent to find employability.

Euro-centric education system uniformly ties the education system of the whole World into a single thread that lacks indigenous flavour, ignoring the difference of world views remaining between them and the indigenous knowledge system. As a result, a large section of people in the World are unemployed and face violence in different shapes daily, When the controlling power rests in the hands of the Western to dominate the knowledge system, they relegate another source of knowledge as 'savage, superstitious and primitive' (Akena, 2012). Like other colonised countries, the Indian education system is dominated by the philosophy and pedagogy of European philosophy. The main thought process of introducing of euro-centric approach and overshadowing indigenous knowledge is to reform the cognitive thought process of colonised people alike to them.

After Independence, Inclusive Educational Model is adopted following European ideologies and indigenous knowledge is unheard of. The voice-less sound of indigenous people and their age-old indigenous knowledge get muted in a touch of mainstreaming inclusive education. But when the coinage of development puts a question about the sustainability of the Earth and its belongings, the emergence of the concept of sustainable development evolves begins to give priority to the indigenous knowledge system. The Global Scientific Committee recognised the importance and relevance of the indigenous knowledge system and advertised it at the global platform of the World Conference on Science held in Hungary, in 1999 (UNESCO, 1999). The conference put stresses the amalgamation and synthesis of the western knowledge system with the indigenous knowledge system for environment and development in the true sense. Indigenous knowledge system develops through age-old practical practices and accumulated knowledge of communities, such as, in Thailand, there is a sea-gypsy tribal community that is able to escape from tsunamis using their indigenous knowledge system.

The Value education system mainly focuses on life skill education and employability skill education. Life skills enable every adolescent to confront all kinds of challenges and pressures that society imposes on them. Indigenous values might be helpful to resolve classroom conflicts, upgrading academic performance and including the socially excluded sections. The new NPE of 2020 asks for introducing Quality Education with the bird's eye "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education (Pal & Sarkar, 2022) and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (Subhasree Pal et al., 2022). The modern education system wants to impose those values on individuals which makes them productive citizens (UNESCO, 2015) with a healthy sound mind frame. They can use their learnings and makes productive usage of them and society achieves a true sense of progress including every individual. When the Ethiopian education system got reshaped with a Euro-centric approach in which the scope of assimilation of indigenous pedagogy was totally excluded, produced such an education system throughout the world that all individuals don't get fit into that shape. The Euro-centric education system produces such aspirants among whom there is a steady

degradation of humanity and a lack of life skill approaches. What Golding has portrayed in his Nobel prize-winning novel “Lord of the Flies”, the young generation is a mere replica of that very novel. Only employability skills make the human head and brain filled with straw rather than emotions. Though the voice begins to raise to calculate tribal values in the modern education system to bring holistic paradigms for all stakeholders of the society, the priority is given to the indigenous knowledge system not up to the mark. The present paper brings focus on how tribal values can be congregated into the present education system to introduce the fragrance of ‘vasudhaiva kutumbakam’.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The present study intends to explore the World Views of tribal community which serves as the basis of tribal values. It also explores why it is of the hour to incorporate tribal values into the modern education system to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

### **Methodology of the Study:**

The present study is completely qualitative research based on secondary data gathered from different resources such as government reports, magazines, journals, research articles etc. to bridge up conclusions.

### **Tribal World View as Projection of their Values:**

Tribal World View unlocks that very window based on which a community runs through ages, perhaps thousands and thousands of years. It builds the superstructure of their indigenous knowledge system. Their worldview surfaces from their inseparable correlation with nature and their very existence. Nature, indigenous people, Values and their World Views are synonymous with each other. Their indigenous knowledge system developed due to close association and intermingling with each other. As the forest is abundant, and rich resources are there, the tribal never think of piling up things for the future nor making blueprints of development policies for 5 years or 10 years. They use the forest for their existence but they don't indiscriminately use it, when they use a portion, they give that very portion the desired quality time so that the forest regenerate itself. They only concentrate on the present, and their plans are so flexible, that alter with the changes of the seasons, and the alteration of a day, and not fixed for the whole lifetime. Their plans for existence are associated and intertwined with the community where they live, with nature that gives them natural resources and the environment where they thrive. This interpersonal relationship makes them distinguished from civilised society. Tribal communities are not static or full of stagnant ideas, rather their worldviews are “Constantly in the process: a fluctuating assemblage of more or less connected ideas that change as to focus, affective colouring perhaps the content and choice of connection and emphasis” (Redfield, 1962). The critical as well as creative thinking capability of tribes is concerned with the changing perspective of their life situation which makes them survive even in utmost harsh conditions. They exclude the concept of the exclusive or privatised property but consider all have belonged to the community in which they belong. What they cultivate, that they reap and use are part of the community. The sense of absence of privatised property ties the whole tribal community into a single garland. From the beginning, the concept of joint family is absent but the concept of togetherness is always there. They consider women as a counterpart in their drudgery and day-to-day life (Pal & Sarkar, 2023). When non-tribal communities are an example of complicated interdependent economic exchange based on ‘production-consumption-distribution’, the self-dependent economy of tribes is simply based on ‘production and consumption’ (Bhattacharya et al., 2021). The core value of happiness and self-

dependency emerge from the world view of the economy. When they cultivate even, they leave some grains on the field by themselves to nourish those animals which depend on the field. This sense of empathy and effective communication skills with nature and natural habitats are those desired values that can lead the World towards Sustainable Development. Respectfulness to authority and tradition are key features to moving ahead. The concept 'generation gap' generates from not recognising our elders as the horizon of knowledge, proficiencies, skills and wisdom. The tribal cultural paradigm is based on oral culture which deeply connects tribal worldview with subjective, relational and existential extents. It establishes close bonding among kinship systems by uniting members and giving importance to the elders' knowledge system. No rat race or competition to defeat others is among them. The joy of learning without competing with others, mutual respect for each other, and prioritised knowledge that they learn through heredity form the base of integrity, compassion and kindness for each other which are lacking among non-indigenous communities to a large extent.

### **Indigenous Knowledge Adds Values in Existing Modern Knowledge System:**

Knowledge is a didactic part of Values that provides a supportive perspective in the decision-making process and ensures a healthy connection between ecosystems and their inhabitants. The man-making process is an interplay among knowledge, values, perspective and visions. Knowledge makes the foundation of particular values which directly support a particular policy which must have a definite role in human attitude and behaviour. The Tribal Indigenous Knowledge system is not an exception in this case.

Knowledge---Values---Perspectives---Visions----Attitudes

(Source: Author)

The history of the development of science clearly acknowledges their owing towards the indigenous knowledge system, such as Galileo's contribution to Physics was inspired by 'knowledge of ballistics developed by craftsmen at Arsenal in Venice' (Balick & Cox, 2020). During colonial periods, Euro-centric Knowledge System had been introduced with the influx of knowledge about different plants and animals. To create knowledge blocks to identify species, European Knowledge System heavily relies on the Indigenous Knowledge system to enrich Western Taxonomies and the Herbarium study (Ellen & Harris, 1999). Therefore, the basis of European Science is deeply rooted in borrowed knowledge from the Indigenous Knowledge System but very little or no acknowledgement is acknowledged of the Indigenous Knowledge System from the European Knowledge System to establish its sole supremacy. Euro-centric Knowledge though borrowed information but its essence of the value of education was missing, without realising the value system of indigenous people, none can imitate it.

In 1962, Rachel Carson in his book 'Silent Spring' depicted the innumerable harms that we cause to the Earth's environment. From this time onward, researchers throughout the World began to lay emphasis on the Indigenous Knowledge system to attain sustainable development goals, stop environmental degradation and increase agricultural productivity ensuring soil fertility and texture. CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) starts collaborating with the Indigenous Knowledge System of a local population with the European Knowledge System as the beginning of a new era. CIKARD (The Centre for Indigenous Knowledge for Agriculture and Rural Development) gives priority to the indigenous knowledge system as an important superstructure for developing a 'sustainable agriculture system'. The Indigenous Soil Characterization system glorifies the importance of this system at the local level. Indigenous knowledge also gets worldwide recognition to have the potential to preserve flora-fauna by

maintaining bio-diversity (Bhattacharya & Pal, 2022). When the European approach towards medication is established on the Greek traditions, the Indigenous medical practices are based on plants that are still used by 80% of the World's population (*Guidelines on the Conservation of Medicinal Plants*, 1993). The Indigenous Knowledge system provides empirical thoughts on crop domestication, breeding, agro-cultivation, agroforestry, crop rotation and even pest control which adds value in the present turmoil period to find the desired answer to the question of the purpose of Modern Education.

### **Incorporating Tribal Employability Skills into Modern Education System:**

Education has been segmented into multiple chunks to make a specialised workforce in employability markets. The main purpose of education is to provide a 'better livelihood'. India possesses the second highest concentration of tribal population. Even with the changing scenario of the economy, every tertiary profession claims its position in the present economic system for a better economic scenario in the World. Not only that but to ensure sustainable development, Quality education (Pal & Sarkar, 2022) has the liability to furnish those desired skills to the desired level that already they possess to a certain extent to bridge the gap between employer and employee (Pal et al., 2023). Tribal has expertise in animal husbandry, different types of agriculture, ethno-botany, ethno-zoology, ethno-science, dancing and singing, various types of crafts and portraits, sericulture, disaster management, and indigenous knowledge of sea-gipsies, collection of MFPs etc. When Santhals (*The Indigenous Colour of India-The Indian Tribes*, 2020) get acknowledgement for their singing and dancing, Jarawa has the proficiency to gather honey from very tall trees (*The Jarawa*, 2019) there the fame of Basta and Jarawa tribes develops from their terracotta work (Saxena, 2018). We never forget the grandeur of the Madhubani Art of Bihar (Halder et al., 2018). There is a large scope to amalgamate those wonderful employability skills into the modern education system for a better output for society. Being a 'Demographic Dividend', to cope with the size of young India, it is the hour needed to incorporate tribal employability values for establishing economic supremacy in World's scenario.

### **Probable Outcomes of Incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge with Modern Education:**

Eurocentric knowledge system does not possess any additional knowledge which can give the answer to the present crisis of sustainability. Even modern peace education is not able to put a full stop to terrorism, and warmongers. To satisfy economic needs and justify the self, they can anytime raise war. UNESCO has rightly said, "...the same species that invented war is capable of inventing peace (UNESCO, 1991). Education encompasses two prime focuses: life skill education and employability skills. The Indigenous knowledge system has an untapped wealth of knowledge, and values that can able to bind different cultures and customs into a single thread. Education aspires to evoke among its aspirants the skills that might build the receivers as sensible, compassionate human resources who emerge as an active participants in the development of society. With the interaction between the indigenous knowledge system and Eurocentric knowledge, such a path is created that ensures equality and equity throughout the whole society. The neglected and indigenous knowledge system gets the desired recognition. The practice of piracy specifically using indigenous knowledge systems that have been practised long might be stopped. The voiceless again regain their voice. It also increases the scope for indigenous people to sustain themselves in the educational field more fruitfully and productively than previously as well as stimulates the rate of upper mobility. Students always learn life skill values in a better way other than peer groups. In the

classroom, indigenous students are most neglected and face social discrimination from students of non-tribal communities and teachers.

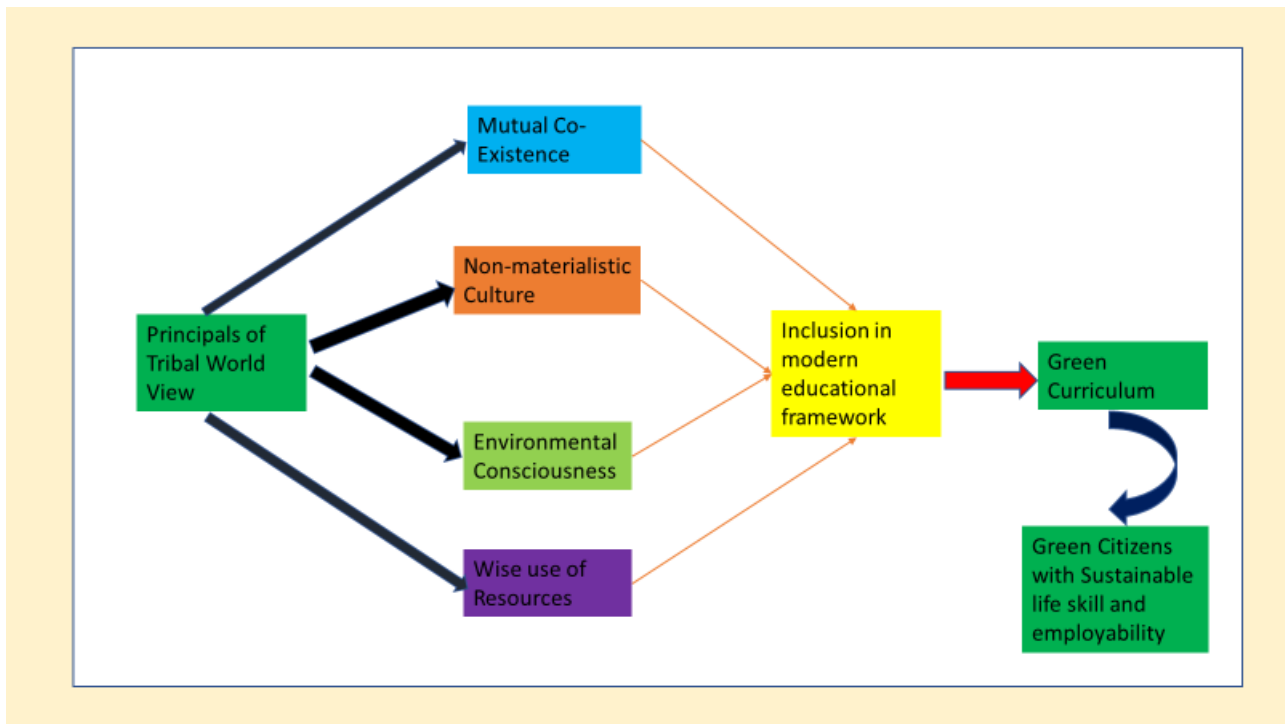


Figure 1: Inclusion of tribal values in education systems

Source: Author

When the indigenous knowledge system gets important, it brings a huge chance in the social domain of indigenous students, and non-tribal communities begin to learn life skill values also from them. The mutual respect and adoration towards each other certainly make a paradise on Earth. No child sleeps with hunger nor does any house struggle with one-day income. Not only that inclusion of tribal values will make the future responsible green citizens equipped with sustainable life skill and employability skills.

### The Way to Incorporate:

In order to incorporate indigenous and euro-centric knowledge systems together, it is necessary to have mutual respect, open dialogue and transparency with each other. So-called civilised society imposes a bedrock of mind that is reflected in social and economic dimensions that have to be integrated. The process of integration must be done from top to down levels including all stakeholders of the society. To do the work of incorporation most effectively, the following points should be focussed on:

1. Gaining a thorough understanding of historic tribal lifestyles: Modern education systems can include courses on tribal history and culture, including their beliefs and customs, in their curriculum. Schools can engage members of tribal communities and bring them in to speak to students, offering firsthand accounts of the group's unique experiences and the challenges they confront.
2. Inclusion of traditional knowledge: Tribal communities have significant expertise and knowledge of local ecology, medicinal plants, and animal behaviour. Incorporating this essential knowledge in educational programs will expose students to alternative ways of understanding the natural world.
3. Learning through storytelling: Tribal members often pass knowledge and expertise to future generations through storytelling. This tradition could be incorporated into teaching methods, enabling students to learn about history, social values, and cultural knowledge through stories.

4. Community Service and Cultural Participation: Encourage students to engage in community service events, giving them the opportunity to learn and interact with members of local tribal communities. This will provide an excellent opportunity to enrich their cultural awareness through participation in tribal customs, practices, and activities.
5. Involving tribal elders: Education systems might collaborate with tribal elders to offer mentorship and cultural guidance to students. This collaboration will introduce students to diverse perspectives and inform them of Indigenous perspectives.
6. Incorporating local sciences and technology practices: Tribal communities have vast knowledge of indigenous sciences and ecological connection as well as incorporating these practices in educational systems will broaden students' understanding of Indigenous technology, ecological, and farming knowledge.
7. Establish provisions for the training of indigenous people prioritising their World views to make them proficient in employability skills and to carry on research The ratio of indigenous teachers should be enlarged for a better teaching-learning process.

### Conclusion:

Indigenous Value education is the desired raindrop in the scorching heat of summer that the whole society is facing global issues and challenges. It provides a holistic approach that builds individuals as human resources with the combination of brain and heart. The incorporation of Indigenous values in the modern education system certainly will be the beginning point of society for the integrated development of students' accompanying humane quotients and employability skills. Conflicts, Social Deprivation, and Inhuman Attitudes would diminish and communication with hearts to hearts are fostered. The incorporation process might not be limited to the periphery of education only, there is a greater scope to extend it into the fields of environmental management, government policies, entrepreneurship, corporate business and development mediations. Incorporating tribal worldviews into the curriculum will provide students with a broader understanding of Indigenous knowledge and will provide a framework that goes beyond just Western education. It will also aid in developing mutual respect and enhance cross-cultural understanding between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

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