

Traditional Indian Knowledge System, It's Significance in NEP with Special Reference to Sikkim Himalaya

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Abstract:

The Indian Knowledge System offers a vast wealth of wisdom on health, agriculture, environment and social well being. This paper will highlight on the rich indigenous knowledge of local community since time immemorial in a very scientific manner. Recently as a process to improve the education system through implementation of NEP 2020. Where the Govt. of India, Department of Education has significantly highlighted the importance of traditional indigenous knowledge to our young generation to preserve and protect the age old wisdom in an articulative manner. The Sikkim Himalayan Region is a land of great socio-cultural and ethnic diversity. Traditional indigenous knowledge based on ancient natural experiments helped local communities in adapting and mitigating many adversity during calamities and disasters. This paper will highlight on the rich indigenous knowledge of natural Communities in a very Scientific manner.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System (IKS). Traditional Indigenous Knowledge (TIK), NEP, Sikkim Himalaya

Introduction:

Sikkim the tiny beautiful state of India located in the Eastern Himalaya with a geographical area of 7096 sq kms and a total population of 6.1 Lakhs. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) regained its significance again in the wake of new research and political recognition of indigenous rights with the adoption of Agenda 21 during the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), for the first time, established international protocols for the protection and sharing of national biological resources, specifically addressing issues of traditional indigenous knowledge. Additionally, Nagoya Protocol (2010) provides a legal framework for the effective implementation of the relevant objectives of the CBD.

In Sikkim Himalaya, the entire landscape being considered as sacred, environment protection and biodiversity conservation is ingrained in the Sikkimese culture. Mountains, rivers, ponds, trees, birds, insects, snakes and animals are culturally sacred to Sikkimese people and they are revered in prayers and hymns by every community residing in Sikkim. The Sikkimese people strongly believes in “Vanaspataya Rakshati Rakshitah” and “Prakruti Rakshati Rakshitah” meaning that the human existence depends on the protection of nature and environment, that we are alive because of nature and it is our responsibility to protect nature and environment.

The Sikkim Himalaya region is a land of great socio cultural and ethnic diversity. TEK based on centuries long natural experiments helped local communities in adapting and mitigating the impact of natural disasters and sustainable management of natural resources. The TEK is rich in indigenous technologies such as socio ecological landscape management; forest ecosystem management and agricultural operations, TEK on protection of sacred landscape (Deorali, Devithan, Cliffs, rivers etc.), sacred species and their habitats, TEK on handicrafts and handlooms, on seed selection, production and storage and management of human-wildlife conflicts are some of the pertinent examples of prevailing TEK in the region.

Paradoxically, over 20-40 years, the merging of a local subsistence economy with a mainstream market economy, globalization, loss of local dialect, food habits, culture and tradition, loss of agrobiodiversity elements, lifestyle change, and out migration of young people along with changes in policies, institutions, technology, etc. are accentuating biophysical and social vulnerabilities in the region.

Integration of IKS in to Higher Education in Sikkim

Traditional knowledge, indigenous knowledge and local knowledge generally comprise long standing traditions and practices of indigenous or local communities. (Gadgil et al., 1993; Berkes et al., 2000). TK also encompasses the skills, wisdom and knowledge of the communities which has been passed orally for generations from person to person. Some forms of TK are expressed through stories, legends, rituals, songs, folklores, legends and even customary laws, rules and regulations (Chaudhary et al 2017).

The inclusion of IKS in the Higher Education is paramount for the holistic development of the state as well as the nation. This approach not only revitalizes the education system but also contribute to the preservation and promotion of Indian languages, art and culture. By doing so India can nurture a new generation of students possessing a deep understanding of their cultural roots. These students can then apply this knowledge to effectively address modern challenges, thereby contributing to the progress and development of the country. Delving in to ancient texts and philosophies within the curriculum offers a unique lens through which students can explore profound values and ethical principles. The integration of IKS in to educational framework holds immense promise for improving human well being. The IKS plays a pivotal role in bridging traditional wisdom with contemporary education by seamlessly integrating ancient practices and insights in to modern pedagogical frameworks. It Connects students with India's cultural heritage while fostering innovative thinking through it's interdisciplinary approach. By blending traditional knowledge, with modern disciplines, IKS thus creates a holistic learning experience that nurtures critical thinking, ethical values and environmental conservation and prepares students to address global challenges by drawing on timeless cultural foundation.

The TKS of Sikkim is rich in indigenous technologies such as socio-ecological landscape management; forest management; water management etc. Following are few sectors where age old traditional indigenous knowledges are practiced till date: 1. Protection of sacred landscape, 2. Sacred species and their habitats, 3. Weather related knowledge, forecasting and preparedness for natural disasters, 4. Seed selection, production, storage for minimizing crop failure, 5. Management of human wildlife conflicts and 6. Water resource management and revival of dry spring etc.

KEY FEATURES OF NEP 2020 PERTAINING TO IKS

- Multidisciplinary approach
- Promotion of Indian Languages

- Emphasis on experimental learning
- Integration of Traditional Arts and Crafts

Challenges in IKS Integration

- Curriculum Development and Implementation
- Teacher Capacity Building
- Addressing Biases and Misconception
- Balancing Modernity and Tradition
- Ensuring Inclusivity and Accessibility
- Maintaining Academic Rigor and quality
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Partnership

Strategies for Successful Integration of IKS in Higher Education

- Comprehensive Curriculum Development
- Capacity Building for Teachers
- Promote Collaborative Research and Dialogues
- Develop Engaging Teaching Learning Materials
- Establish Centre of Excellence for IKS
- Leverage Digital Technologies
- Promote Awareness and Advocacy
- Develop interdisciplinary Partnership
- Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Implementation
- Continuous Evaluation and Replacement

CONCLUSION:

Today's environmental crisis demands a judicious and wise response. Environment can't be saved by scientific debates and discourse but it can be truly saved and revived by infusing sacredness and reverence towards nature in an indigenous way. The revitalization of the Indian Knowledge System holds immense promise for contributing to global sustainability efforts. By integrating ancient wisdom with modern practices, we can address critical issues such as biodiversity conservation, health and well being and social inequalities. The future of sustainable development lies not only in AI and technological advancements but also in embracing holistic, ethical approach rooted in wisdom that has stood the test of time.

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