

# A Detailed Review Research Paper on Indian Knowledge System: An Expedition from Chanakya to Sundar Pichai

**Dr Reshma Hegde<sup>1</sup>, Jignesh Mehta<sup>2</sup>, Dipika Gaikwad<sup>3</sup>,  
Sujata Sen Bhowmick<sup>4</sup>, Hetal Patel<sup>5</sup>, Ritikaa Sharma<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Principal, Kapol Vidyanidhi College of Hotel Management, Mumbai

<sup>2,3,4,5</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Kapol Vidyanidhi College of Hotel Management, Mumbai

<sup>6</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Arts, Multimedia & Communications, Kapol Vidyanidhi College of Hotel Management, Mumbai

## Abstract

This article will take you on an expedition of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) from the ancient era to modern times. It takes off with the indigenous wisdom of Chanakya and lands with the technological expertise of Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google. Therefore, the article tries to convey how India has evolved from the ancient Indian Knowledge System to the Global arena with its innovations, research & development, etc., that influences various segments of society like education, leadership, and global innovations.

India has always been very dynamic, right from the ancient era to the present day generation. Indians have been very elaborate and have significantly carried forward the legacy of our thought and principles from ancient times. The future generation needs to be awakened with the traditional values and ethical principles of our age old culture, the ancient evolution which directs us about Dharma and Duties, Purity of Soul that leads to purity of Body and Self emancipation leads to Self –Confidence.

With the coming of NEP and encompassing holistic learning in the education system with the help of IKS, Indian youth can be given a new dimension towards knowing about our ancient Indian roots, right from leading an ethical and dutiful living to becoming self-sufficient, resourceful leaders and deal situations with ease, wisdom and patience.

**Keywords:** Indian Knowledge System, Yoga, Dharma, Ancient wisdom, Medieval India Modern innovation,

## 1. Introduction – An expedition through Time & Thought.

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is a vast field encompassing traditional knowledge & practices across various disciplines. Right from the ancient era through the medieval period and the contemporary period, there have been several reformers who have contributed significantly towards the development and upliftment of the society

Right from practicing ethical values to fostering the spirit of equality, service towards mankind, perform-

ing righteous duties, India has always contributed towards a modern, scientific approach towards the society with respect to development of the society, development of education and laid a strong foundation towards a developed India.

## **2. Social Reformers- The path that teaches us where we come from and how we can achieve self-dependence.**

### **Ancient Era –**

Acharya Chanakya was a Brahmin who served as the Chief Adviser & Prime Minister Mauryan Emperor ‘Chandragupta’ & even to successor of Mauryan Emperor ‘Bindusara’.

Chanakya strongly believed that ‘God is not present in idols, our feelings are our God, the Soul is our Temple’.

Chanakya’s Saptanga Theory is considered as a foundational concept in ancient Indian political thought. The elements of Seven Organ Theory of Chanakya:

1. Swami (The Ruler / King)
2. Amatya (Ministers)
3. Janapada (People / Territory)
4. Durga (Fortress)
5. Kosha (Treasury)
6. Danda (Army / Coercive Power)
7. Mitra (Allies)

Chanakya suggested Seven Principles for achieving success in work & life:

1. Knowledge is power
2. Discipline & focus
3. Plan strategically
4. Adaptability
5. Choose associates wisely
6. Learn from failure
7. Hard work & patience

From the Ancient era, Chanakya who is also known as Kautilya or Vishnugupta wrote a political treatise – ‘The Arthashastra’.

Chanakya’s Arthashastra is a key part of IKS which provides insights into Statecraft, Governance & Economics.

Chanakya’s wisdom emphasizes the significance of Mind- set & Attitude.

Social Reformers and Their Role in Shaping Modern India – In Medieval India

### **Medieval Saints and Reformers**

These were spiritual leaders who stood up against caste, blind rituals, and inequality. They connected with common people in local languages.

**Basavanna** – Fought caste and promoted equality through honest work.

**Sant Dnyaneshwar** – Translated sacred texts into Marathi, made knowledge accessible.

**Kabir** – Criticized empty rituals in both Hinduism and Islam; believed God is within.

**Guru Nanak Dev Ji** – Taught equality, service, and devotion without divisions.

**Meerabai** – A woman saint who followed her faith over royal privilege; stood for devotion and courage.

**Chaitanya Mahaprabhu** – Spread love for Krishna through music and dance.

**Sant Tukaram** – Spoke against social injustice; encouraged simple, honest living.



Source: National Digital Library of India (NDLI)

**Therefore**, they made religion more about love, equality, and inner connection—accessible to all, not just the elite.

#### **18th–19th Century Modern Reformers**

These reformers challenged harmful social practices during British rule and pushed for education, women's rights, and rational thinking.

**Raja Ram Mohan Roy** – Fought against sati and for women's education; known as the father of Indian reform.

**Swami Dayanand Saraswati** – Wanted people to go back to the original values of the Vedas; opposed idol worship.

**Savitri Bai Phule** – Opened the first school for girls; fought against caste and gender discrimination.

**Ramakrishna Paramhansa** – Believed all religions lead to the same truth.

**Swami Vivekananda** – Inspired youth; preached strength, service, and self-respect.

**Thereby**, they combined Indian traditions with modern thinking to push for a fairer, more educated society.

#### **Today's Socially Responsible Leaders**

Modern-day change makers who use their success to serve society.

**Ratan Tata** – Known for ethical business and philanthropy in health, education, and innovation.

**Azim Premji** – Donated most of his wealth for rural education and public welfare.

**Sudha Murthy** – Works in villages to build schools, libraries, and toilets; a writer and social worker.

**Sundar Pichai**, being the CEO of Google & Alphabet is a modern day Chanakya, drawing parallels between his strategic acumen & the ancient Indian adviser's renowned wisdom & leadership. He is known for his ability to navigate complex situations & building strong teams.

What makes India a land of timeless wisdom? The answer lies in how knowledge has been passed down, transformed, and kept alive for thousands of years. Indian Knowledge System, or IKS, isn't just about ancient scriptures—it's about a mind-set. This article looks at how those age-old values, ideas, and practices still matter today. We go from Chanakya, the brain behind early political thought, all the way to Sundar Pichai, who leads one of the world's biggest tech companies.

**These leaders have proved** how wealth, knowledge, and compassion can work together for the country's future. All these reformers—from saints to CEOs—have one thing in common: they care about **people**, not just progress. They remind us that India's strength lies in **values**, not just technology or money. Their lives inspire us to build a future that's **inclusive, kind, and rooted in Indian Wisdom**

Thousands of years ago, Indian thinkers were already shaping the world. Chanakya's Arthashastra talked about leadership and governance long before modern economics existed (Sharma, 2005). Aryabhata explained astronomy and introduced the number zero. Sushruta was performing surgeries. Learning centers like Nalanda and Takshashila were not just universities—they were global hubs of learning and discovery (Altekar, 2009).

As time passed, India went through invasions, but with the help of knowledge passed down by gurus and driven by the need for the betterment of society and the community, the spirit of learning endured.

The guidance and wisdom provided by the gurus came in the form of storytelling, spiritual teachings, and efforts by passionate reformers like Swami Vivekananda, who reminded people of their roots. This knowledge continued to thrive through prayer, tradition, and cultural practices—celebrated in festivals and daily life—even as generations changed.

The flame of knowledge remained alive by preserving and practicing the teachings shared by our gurus. Today, we can proudly say that India is a land of knowledge. We continue to revere our gurus for the wisdom they imparted, which has played a crucial role in uniting and strengthening the nation. Kak, S. (2001).

### 3. Changing Times – Igniting a new spark

India went through invasions, colonization, and reform movements—but the spirit of knowledge survived. How? Through storytelling, spiritual teachings, and passionate reformers like Swami Vivekananda who reminded people of their roots.

Knowledge continued to live in everyday life—in prayers, practices, and cultural traditions. Modern education system should include the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, who preached that the real strength lie in inner-self and not in pleasing others. Each textbook should highlight the importance of Indian Teachings and ignite the spirit of positive approach towards life and shed away the negative energies that drive us towards the path of aggression, anger, and all other negative emotions.

Indian knowledge system uplifts the spirit of karma, services and self-confidence that is seldom practised in modern societies and modern form of education.

### 4. New India, New Generation New Dimensions...

After independence, India began to reconnect with its own intellectual traditions. Ayurveda and Yoga gained national and international recognition. The new National Education Policy (NEP 2020) now even



talks about including traditional knowledge in the curriculum (Mishra, 2017). IKS is making a comeback—not just as a subject to study, but as a way of thinking.

The New India nowadays not only focuses on academic performance but also holistic development of the learner.

The Gurukul System (Ancient India) had a focus on spiritual, physical & intellectual growth. The experimental learning through hands-on training made it more inspirational to the education system. Whereas Modern India initiated a step ahead from Gurukul System by inculcating technical skills & job preparations in the academic curriculum.

In the Modern Era of Digital Education the Blended learning has been initiated which involves a combination of online & in person teaching learning process.

### 5. From Gurukuls to Google – The Global Indian Mind

Sundar Pichai may be running Google from Silicon Valley, but his roots are in India. He often credits his upbringing in Chennai for his calmness and problem-solving approach (Pichai, 2020). This section connects the dots—from ancient Indian learning environments like Gurukuls to modern global classrooms and boardrooms. The mindset of learning, adapting, and leading remains the same. Satya Nadella and Sundar Pichai may lead global tech giants, but their values are deeply rooted in Indian ethics. They embody humility and simplicity, staying grounded despite their high positions. Their commitment to continuous learning reflects the Indian belief in the lifelong pursuit of knowledge. Both show a strong sense of responsibility, making decisions that benefit not just their companies but society at large—aligning with the Indian principle of dharma. Their efforts to make technology more inclusive and accessible show their spirit of service, or seva. And their journeys, marked by perseverance and resilience, reflect the Indian values of faith, patience, and determination. In many ways, they are modern examples of how Indian ethical values can thrive on the global stage. Mohanty, M. (2022)

It is truly said that the root makes the tree stand stronger. Yes, as we see Sundar Pichai running Google from Silicon Valley but the roots are Indian and he himself credits his upbringing in Chennai for his calmness and problem-solving approach.

As we see Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella leading the global tech giant but they are from the same environment of India where the journey of Gurukuls to the modern schooling offered the same knowledge but with different technologies and techniques. Even after leading with high positions the values are deeply rooted with Indian ethics. They embody humility and simplicity, and staying grounded with stronger responsibility of decision making which not only benefits the company but also the large part of the society following the Indian principles of dharma.

Thus it can be proudly accepted that they are the modern examples of how Indian ethical values can thrive globally, their accessibility shows the spirit towards technology, their faith and determination which shows that they believe in Indian ethical values by providing services (seva).

### 6. Ancient Wisdom, Modern Relevance

In today's fast-paced, often chaotic world, ancient Indian values feel more important than ever. Ideas like Dharma (duty), Ahimsa (non-violence), and harmony with nature offer guidance on how to live responsibly and mindfully (Rao, 2019). The brilliance of IKS is not just in its age—it's in its ability to stay relevant. What we've seen is that many ideas used in modern management actually have their roots

in ancient Indian teachings. But even though we follow these practices today, they often don't hold up well in the long run.

By learning from India's old scriptures like the **Vedas**, **Upanishads**, and the **Bhagavad Gita**, we can bring more depth, ethics, and responsibility into leadership—both at a personal and organizational level. These spiritual insights can help us build a better world by aligning business and globalization with values like peace and harmony.

A key idea from this wisdom is the **Guna theory**, which explains human behavior through three qualities—**Sattwa** (goodness), **Rajas** (drive), and **Tamas** (laziness or confusion). When these are out of balance, people make poor choices, and that can lead to the downfall of even big companies. Many well-known corporate failures make more sense when seen through this lens.

So, it's time for today's leaders and thinkers to look back at these timeless teachings. They answer some of the biggest gaps in today's leadership and business models. When we combine ancient values with modern tools, we can create a management style that's not only smart—but also sustainable and humane. Rajak, M. P. (2014).

### **Relevance of the Vedic Culture: Why Vedic Culture still exists today?**

Ancient Indian civilization, especially during the Vedic period, was a time of great learning and growth—spiritually, intellectually, and socially. The ideas and practices that began back then helped shape Indian society as we know it, influencing everything from religion and philosophy to science and politics. The Vedas—India's oldest spiritual texts—shared deep thoughts about life, purpose, and how the universe works. Concepts like **dharma** (doing the right thing), **karma** (our actions shaping our future), and **moksha** (freedom from the cycle of life and death) still hold meaning for people today.

This period also saw big developments in fields like **math**, **astronomy**, and **medicine**, which went on to influence knowledge around the world. As people moved, traded, and spread Indian religions like Buddhism and Hinduism, these Vedic ideas reached far-off places—leaving their mark on cultures across Asia, the Middle East, and beyond.

Even now, practices like **yoga**, **meditation**, and **Ayurveda**—which all come from Vedic teachings—are widely respected and used around the globe for promoting wellness and balance.

In today's world, where everything is so fast-paced and connected, the values of Vedic culture feel more important than ever. Its messages about living responsibly, thinking ethically, and growing spiritually can really help us tackle modern-day challenges. It shows us that old wisdom can still light the way forward. Pandey, S. K. (2024).

**Workplace wellness initiatives:** An increasing number of companies are integrating yoga into their employee wellness programs, acknowledging its positive impact on health, focus, and overall productivity. Regular workplace yoga sessions can play a key role in reducing stress, sharpening concentration, and boosting job satisfaction.

**Versatility across Environments:** One of yoga's greatest advantages is its adaptability—it can be practiced in a variety of settings, whether at home, in a park, or at a studio. Even brief sessions, like mindful breathing exercises or light stretches, can be seamlessly woven into daily routines to provide immediate stress relief and enhance mental clarity.

### **The Modern Relevance of Yoga**

Yoga has become an essential practice for those aiming to achieve overall balance, improved health, and emotional well-being. Though it has its origins in ancient Indian philosophy and spiritual traditions, yoga has transformed over time into a comprehensive discipline that supports physical, mental, and emotional

health. Once primarily a spiritual path, it has now gained widespread recognition as a mainstream wellness approach in today's fast-paced world.

### **Exploring Yoga's Impact in Contemporary Life**

This article delves into the wide-ranging benefits of yoga—physical, mental, and social—while also exploring how it fits into the fabric of modern living. Despite its growing global popularity, yoga faces certain challenges. The rise of commercialization and cultural appropriation has, at times, shifted the focus from its authentic roots to a more surface-level practice centered on appearance. There is a pressing need for inclusive and genuine yoga education that honors its cultural heritage while remaining relevant and accessible in today's world.

### **7. Learnings and Reflections – What can we offer to the next Generations?**

So, what can we do with this knowledge today? Schools can teach it, businesses can apply its ethics, and leaders can draw inspiration from it. IKS shouldn't just be studied—it should be used. It's a way to build more balanced, thoughtful, and innovative societies.

In a research conducted, the researcher spent time with 38 students to understand how Sree Narayana Guru's teachings influenced them, and what we found was truly uplifting. The students were inspired by his values: kindness, humility, compassion, treating everyone equally, and his bold stand against the caste system. To them, he wasn't just a historical figure—he was a symbol of hope and fairness.

Almost every student felt that learning about Guru's life made a real difference in how they think. They also strongly believed that lessons like these—on values and life skills—should be a regular part of their education, not just something extra.

What this tells us is simple: when we share stories of great leaders rooted in compassion and justice, young minds respond deeply. With the right planning—like having thoughtful discussions, meaningful activities, and occasional guest talks—these value-based sessions can truly help students not only do well in life but also become better people Singh, N. B. (2017)

Bringing Indian educational philosophies into the NEP 2020 is a meaningful step toward making our education system more rooted, inclusive, and well-rounded. While it's not without its challenges—like updating traditional ideas to fit today's classrooms and making sure all students, no matter their background, feel included—there's a lot to gain. With the right planning, teacher support, and input from local communities, these philosophies can help students grow not just academically, but also as empathetic, responsible individuals with a strong sense of identity. This approach supports the broader goal of quality and sustainable education, showing how India's rich traditions can still guide us in building a better future for all learners. Maheshkumar, S., & Soundarapandian, M. (2024).

### **8. Conclusion – A Living Legacy**

The journey from the ancient wisdom of Chanakya to the modern achievements of leaders like Sundar Pichai demonstrates how the Indian Knowledge System continues to influence and inspire across generations. This legacy is not confined to history but remains a vital source of guidance for today's challenges.

For students, engaging with this system offers more than academic knowledge; it fosters essential values such as discipline, critical thinking, environmental consciousness, and mutual support. Integrating these timeless principles with contemporary technology and open-mindedness equips students to become confident, responsible individuals. This balanced approach helps maintain a strong connection to cultural

roots while embracing innovation and change. Ultimately, such a foundation prepares students to emerge as thoughtful leaders who contribute positively to society and drive meaningful progress.

## References

1. Altekar, A. S. (2009). Education in Ancient India. A classic that explores how education worked in early Indian civilizations.
2. Azim Premji Foundation. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://azimpremjifoundation.org>. This foundation supports rural education and public systems in India.
3. Heehs, P. (2002). Indian Religions: A Historical Reader of Spiritual Expression and Experience. A thoughtful collection on how religion shaped Indian culture.
4. Kak, S. (2001). The Indian Mind: Essentials of Indian Philosophy and Culture. Explains the heart of Indian thinking and traditional values.
5. Mahammad, S. R. (2024). From ancient wisdom to modern wellness: The relevance of yoga today. *Insight Bulletin*, 1(1), 1–4. Discusses how ancient yoga still helps modern well-being.
6. Maheshkumar, S., & Soundarapandian, M. (2024). Harmonizing indigenous knowledge with education in India. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 21(3), 2177–2185.
7. Mishra, R. C. (2017). Indian education and NEP 2020. *Indian Journal of Educational Studies*, 45(2), 115–123.
- Mohanty, M. (2022). Value creation is more important than elite education. *The Management Accountant Journal*, 57(3), 91–93.
8. Murthy, S. (2021). Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life. A collection of heart-touching real-life stories by Sudha Murthy.
9. Nanda, B. R. (2001). Raja Ram Mohan Roy: A Biography. An inspiring look at one of India's greatest reformers.
10. Pandey, S. K. (2024). Vedic culture's influence on civilization. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Humanities and Law*, 2(1), 40–46.
11. Pichai, S. (2020). The Making of a Tech CEO: From Chennai to Google. The journey of Sundar Pichai and what India can learn from it.
12. Rajak, M. P. (2014). Ancient Indian wisdom in modern management. *Aweshkar Research Journal*, 18(2).
13. Rao, S. (2019). Reclaiming Indian knowledge systems. *Journal of Indic Studies*, 6(1), 34–50.
14. Sharma, A. (2011). Indian Saints and Reformers. A simple book that introduces us to India's great change-makers.
15. Sharma, R. S. (2005). India's Ancient Past. A well-known history book that tells India's story from the beginning.
16. Singh, N. B. (2017). Ancient Indian values in modern management. *Vidwat*, 10(1), 3–7.
- Tata Trusts. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.tatatrusts.org>. A major philanthropic arm of the Tata Group working for development across sectors.
17. Thapar, R. (2002). Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300. A detailed yet readable history of early India.