

Exploring the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the Indian Knowledge System (IKS): Highlighting the significance of Higher Education.

Dr Pinki Rani Dei

Assistant Professor of Commerce, Government Science Degree College, Chhatrapur, Ganjam, Odisha

ABSTRACT

Education promotes the overall development of individuals, who form groups that eventually build society. A well-rounded individual is vital for a thriving community. There is a strong link between education and business, with the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) enhancing educational quality and holding strategic importance for commerce. IKS offers a comprehensive approach rooted in India's ancient wisdom, blending traditional values with modern knowledge. It significantly influences higher education and structural growth among youth. The Indian higher education model encourages holistic learning, emphasizing ethics from Indian traditions, fostering inclusivity, and supporting vibrant social communities. Partnering with IKS experts and institutions can help close knowledge gaps and leverage IKS to improve human well-being. The current NEP 2020 supports IKS. This piece examines the core of IKS and its link to higher education, especially regarding NEP 2020. It offers theoretical insights into IKS that can guide future research. IKS has significant potential both educationally and socially.

Keywords: Education, educational environment, IKS, Higher Education, NEP 2020

INTRODUCTION

IKS forms the foundation of India's education system, reflecting its deep-rooted ancient knowledge. The NEP 2020 illustrates how Indian Knowledge Systems encompass Jnan, Vijnana, and Jeevan Darshan, all developed through experience, observation, and experimentation. IKS has shaped Indian languages and influenced various textual, oral, and artistic traditions. It includes knowledge from ancient India and its ongoing development. As one of the world's oldest civilizations, India has texts like the Vedas, Arthashastra, and philosophical works that provide profound insights into life, commerce, and society. Relying only on Western ideas isn't enough; the Indian Knowledge System offers valuable views on health, agriculture, and social well-being. Education is crucial for progress and now plays an essential role in helping individuals manage life's challenges. Despite disruptions in education, properly integrating IKS can bring significant benefits. It fosters a strong sense of identity and pride, connecting students to their heritage. Incorporating ancient texts and philosophies into education allows students to explore deep values and ethical principles.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY: The Author has outlined the following objectives for the study:

1. To understand the essence of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS).
2. To understand the essence of NEP-2020.
3. To analyse the relationship between IKS and higher education, with specific reference to NEP 2020.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & PROCESS

The article discussing IKS and its connection to Higher Education, particularly regarding NEP 2020, is a descriptive analysis based on secondary data. The author aims to understand the essence of IKS and explore how it relates to higher education, especially within the context of NEP 2020. This work contributes to the existing literature on IKS by establishing its link to higher education.

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM (IKS): PERSPECTIVES AND AGENDA

The IKS perspective emphasizes its benefits. India's strong knowledge system enables learners to pursue meaningful pathways. The country's efforts to revitalize education through the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) are fueled by its rich cultural heritage and intellectual traditions. Historically, British colonial policies negatively affected India's education system, impeding national progress. Today, the government effectively manages the Indian Knowledge System, supporting comprehensive education. This system combines traditional values with modern knowledge, promoting holistic development through various educational initiatives. IKS includes a vast collection of wisdom gathered across fields such as science, health, agriculture, social welfare, commerce, and education. Major challenges include low awareness among educators and administrators, difficulties in documenting IKS knowledge, resistance to change within educational institutions, and a preference for Western knowledge systems. Globalization has introduced new perspectives into curriculum development and teaching methods. Teacher training is crucial for institutions to adapt to educational advancements and integrate Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Higher education requires increased responsibilities from teachers and students, making understanding the complex education system essential. Ultimately, education supports the holistic development of individuals, laying the foundation for a prosperous society.

IKS & NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP)

The New National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the importance of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). It aims to meet the growing educational needs of the country by proposing a comprehensive overhaul of the entire education system. The policy advocates for active pedagogy, the development of core competencies, life skills, including 21st-century skills, and experiential learning at every level. It recommends low-stakes board exams, holistic progress reports, and reforms in assessment methods to promote critical and higher-order thinking. Additionally, it seeks to mainstream vocational education and reform teacher training. Overall, the NEP provides a refined framework to structure the education system, fostering talent development across the nation. It values not only underperforming students but also the creative potential of the new generation. The NEP 2020 offers an excellent opportunity to transform the education system and promote accessible, high-quality education for everyone. Since independence, India's education policies have developed considerably, each tailored to address the evolving needs of society and students. Here's a brief overview of the key milestones and highlights of the education policy over the years.

Kothari Commission (1964–66)

- Recommended the **10+2+3 structure** of education.

- Emphasized **equal access**, **vocational training**, and **teacher remuneration**.
- Introduced the **three-language formula** and stressed **preschool education**.

National Education Policy 1968

- First official education policy post-independence.
- Focused on **compulsory education for children up to 14 years**.
- Promoted **regional languages** and **science education**.
- Aimed to increase **public spending on education**.

National Education Policy 1986

- Introduced **Operation Blackboard** to improve primary school infrastructure.
- Focused on **education for women and marginalized groups**.
- Encouraged **open universities** and **distance learning**.
- Revised in 1992 with a **Programme of Action (POA)** to strengthen implementation.

Right to Education Act (2009)

- Made **free and compulsory education** a **fundamental right** for children aged 6–14.
- Mandated **minimum infrastructure standards** and **teacher qualifications**.

National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005.

- Shifted focus to **child-centric learning** and **constructivist pedagogy**.
- Encouraged **critical thinking**, **flexibility**, and **inclusive education**.

National Education Policy 2020

- Replaced the 10+2 system with a **5+3+3+4 structure**: foundational, preparatory, middle, and secondary stages.
- Introduced **multidisciplinary higher education**, the **Academic Bank of Credits**, and **multiple entry-exit options**.
- Emphasized **early childhood care**, **foundational literacy**, and **digital learning**.
- Promoted **vocational training**, **mother tongue instruction**, and **global alignment**.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND IKS

Higher education plays a crucial role in shaping the careers of citizens. Young people face the tough choice between pursuing higher studies or entering the workforce. Various factors influence this decision, such as economic concerns, personal motives, family background, and financial issues. The higher education sector in the country is expanding, supported by efforts from the government, local authorities, NGOs, and others. In India, there are about 920 universities, including 404 state universities, 126 deemed universities, 50 central universities, and 340 private universities (www.ugc.ac.in). Additionally, approximately 40,000 colleges and around 10,000 standalone institutions highlight the vast scope of higher education.

Today, youth have more options to pursue education than in the past. Post-secondary studies, including university, are crucial for citizens. While whether education guarantees success is still debated, its significance remains constant, as it drives societal progress. Higher education broadens societal perspectives on advancement and growth. Its main goal is to enhance Learning and Innovation Skills in young people, encouraging proactive development of creativity and innovation. Additionally, it aims to provide opportunities in Media, Information Management, and Technology Skills. Higher education fosters momentum for Life and Career Skills. Over the years, the pathways to higher education have

expanded, with more courses and institutions now available. The key priority should be to fulfill the educational goals and cultivate a development ecosystem through education.

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is rooted in Vedic literature and seeks to address modern societal challenges through a structured framework. It integrates traditional wisdom from the Vedas and Upanishads, promoting interdisciplinary research and education. Initiatives include aligning IKS courses with digital platforms, training educators, and encouraging innovation via competitions and partnerships. IKS Centres in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) will act as centers for research and community outreach. The aims are to spread genuine knowledge, generate employment opportunities, and highlight Indian heritage worldwide, thereby fostering national pride and cultural awareness.

IMPLEMENTATION OF IKS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) has excellent potential to contribute to societal development, but its adoption faces numerous hurdles. Challenges such as limited awareness, undocumented knowledge, and resistance within educational institutions slow down its integration. To implement IKS effectively in Higher Education, key strategies include:
- Conducting targeted campaigns to raise awareness among stakeholders—educators, administrators, policymakers, and the public—about the importance of IKS.
- Introducing introductory courses on IKS for educators and administrative staff.
- Encouraging collaboration between college faculty and IKS experts or knowledge holders in curriculum design.
- Develop digital repositories to store documented IKS knowledge, including audio recordings, transcripts, videos, and multimedia resources. Organize workshops for faculty to explore strategies for integrating IKS into existing courses. Create interactive learning experiences that engage students directly with IKS, such as field trips to observe traditional practices (like herbal medicine gardens and organic farms), workshops with IKS practitioners, and project-based learning where students apply IKS knowledge to real-world problems. Advocate for curriculum frameworks that provide flexibility within IKS integration. Document and share success stories of colleges that have effectively implemented IKS education initiatives to inspire other institutions and demonstrate the positive impact of IKS on student learning and well-being.

CONCLUSION

India's educational journey emphasizes increasing accessibility, quality, and adaptability. IKS has a solid foundation within the education system, and NEP 2020 supports this. In today's world, education is vital for human growth, which also promotes societal progress. Although education is essential for national development, India encounters difficulties in ensuring high-quality education for all. IKS faces challenges in implementation, including limited awareness and understanding among educators, resistance to change in educational institutions, and a preference for Western knowledge systems. IKS promotes the idea that education and learning are continuous, lifelong processes.

A person gains the fullest experiences in life, including personal, professional, environmental, socio-cultural, civic, and political aspects. These experiences collectively contribute to a well-rounded education. We need to revive our rich heritage's knowledge system and showcase our unique way of doing things. This approach encourages broader training and development of citizens, enabling them to demonstrate a lifestyle that transcends materialism and strives for lasting success. Integrating the Indian

Knowledge System (IKS) into educational frameworks offers excellent potential for enhancing human well-being.

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