

Reintegrating the Indian Knowledge System in Modern Education: A Curricular Shift under NEP 2020

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Abstract:

India has always been home to deep wisdom and rich traditions, from ancient thinkers like Aryabhata to holistic practices in medicine, environment, and daily life. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 takes a bold step to bring that knowledge back into the classroom. This paper looks at how Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) are being integrated into our modern education-right from school to higher studies. By going through recent studies and articles, we explore how changes in curriculum, teacher training, and classroom practices are helping this shift, while also pointing out challenges like lack of resources, training gaps, and slow policy action. Using a qualitative approach and relying on academic sources, the study highlights that when done thoughtfully, IKS can help create learning that's meaningful, rooted in our culture, and ready for the global stage. It's not just about remembering the past, but about using that wisdom to shape a better future for students.

Keywords: Curriculum , Indian Knowledge Systems, NEP 2020, Teacher Education

1.0. Introduction

India has always been a land of rich traditions, and timeless knowledge. From the ancient universities of Nalanda and Takshashila to the profound contributions of scholars like Aryabhata, Charaka, and Gargi, Indian civilization has long celebrated the pursuit of knowledge as a path to self-realization and societal harmony.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to revive and reintroduce this spirit into the heart of India's modern education system.

“This National Education Policy envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower.” (NEP 2020, pp. 6)

The policy integrates tribal and traditional knowledge systems, ethical and value-based education, environmental stewardship, vocational training, and multidisciplinary learning to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century.

This research explores how NEP 2020 initiates the implementation of Indian Knowledge Systems, embedding them meaningfully into school and higher education curricula, thereby shaping an education model that is rooted in India and relevant to the world.

2.0. Review of literature

The policy through this curricular reimagining rooted in tradition and aligned with modernity India's education system stands to cultivate learners who are intellectually grounded, globally competent, and ethically empowered.

Based on the literature reviews done, the following key themes have been identified and explored.

2.1. Curricular Content

NEP 2020 presents a transformative vision for curriculum development by integrating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in a way that balances tradition with modern educational needs. **Bhardwaj, Ranjan, and Sharma (2024)** align this vision with classical and modern curricular theories, arguing that NEP's pluralistic model supports holistic and inclusive education without sidelining global concerns like sustainability and gender equity.

Venkateshwarlu (2021) highlights the 5+3+3+4 structure as a key enabler, reducing content overload and allowing space for conceptual, critical, and IKS-integrated learning. Similarly, **Tungoe (2024)** sees the policy's interdisciplinary approach—blending arts, sciences, and vocational learning—as naturally suited for embedding IKS, especially through foundational literacy and numeracy schemes like NIPUN Bharat and NMFLN.

The **Rediscovery Advantage (2024)** article critiques rote-based models and advocates a curriculum that reintroduces ancient sciences, ecological insights, and civilizational wisdom to ignite student curiosity.

Dr. Thapliyal (2023) offers a model PG syllabus that embeds IKS across diverse disciplines, while **Nayak and Padhi (2024)** recommend strategic integration through credit allocation, digitization, apprenticeships, and global collaboration to keep IKS both rooted and relevant.

Team CESS proposes a phased curricular reform—beginning with elective courses and evolving into mandatory inclusion—to overcome institutional inertia. **Nilu Rani (2024)** stresses pedagogical innovations like storytelling, ethics education, multilingualism, and experiential learning to enrich IKS-based curriculum, nurturing creativity and cultural pride.

Srivastava et al. (2024) advocate for whole-person education that includes spiritual, ethical, and intellectual growth, emphasizing the involvement of indigenous scholars and community epistemologies.

Shailja Gaur (2024) underscores the need for curricula that prioritize local languages, contextual learning, and equitable representation of IKS, calling it a corrective to colonial imbalances.

2.2. Teacher Education

Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into teacher education is central to NEP 2020's vision of culturally grounded and transformative learning. **Deivam and Joshi (2025)** argue that IKS fosters personal and professional growth by encouraging teachers to become mentors and community builders, rooted in cultural awareness and purpose.

Dyer et al. (2004) emphasize that IKS is not just about tradition, but about cultivating critical thinking, ethical responsibility, and creativity in educators and their students. **Mandavkar and Pavan (2023)** advocate for professional development through hands-on training, workshops, practitioner interaction, and online resource hubs to equip teacher educators with effective IKS pedagogy and assessment strategies.

Tiwari (2022) highlights that embedding IKS in teacher training enhances emotional intelligence, inclusivity, and reflective practice. He underscores the importance of aligning modern pedagogical tools and technologies with India's educational heritage.

Collectively, these scholars affirm that equipping teachers with the skills, mindset, and resources to deliver IKS-based education is essential for meaningful curriculum transformation.

2.3. Challenges In Implementation

Singh (2025), pointed out challenges, such as a shortage of educators knowledgeable about this subject, schools that don't support these concepts, and a lack of funding. However, she believed that we would receive a well-rounded education if we combined modern science with India's intelligence, drawing inspiration from people like Dharampal and others

Gaur's (2024) pointed out the ways the 2020 plan supports having different languages, making more learning resources, and training teachers. She saw problems too, like not enough materials to teach with, set in stone courses, and schools not always being open to change, she added that with a good plan, some money, and working with people who know the old ways, IKS could really make the national curriculum better, building a more inclusive education for everyone.

Ram, Netto, and Mohanan (2024) spotted problems, like old fashioned teacher training, schools that resisted change, and not enough culturally relevant stuff. They suggested designing inclusive courses, using old teaching methods, and changing how teachers are trained to reflect India's knowledge traditions.

Yadav and Patil's (2025) noticed problems like a lack of a clear framework, not enough resources, and worries about how good the courses would be. Their solutions included a standardized course design, partnerships with people who know the old ways, teacher training, and research to help make more resources.

Jacob and Gaur's (2024) was all about how IKS helps students grow, not just in their brains, but also in terms of morals and feelings. The study found some hurdles, like not enough teachers who know this area well, schools that don't want to change, and not enough resources. They cited the 2020 plan and scholars like Mishra and others, calling for courses that are based in the community and teacher support to make sure the education is about values and rooted in culture.

3.0. Research methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach, whose aim is to critically examine how the NEP 2020 facilitates the curricular transformation grounded in India's culture and traditions.

3.1. Data Collection

The study relies on secondary data sources and databases such as Google Scholar, Researchgate, JSTOR, and Scopus were used to retrieve relevant literature. The keywords used for searching included: Indian Knowledge Systems, NEP 2020, curriculum transformation, school and higher education.

3.2. Inclusion Criteria

Only peer-reviewed publications and scholarly works from 2020 to 2025 that directly engage with the themes of NEP 2020 and IKS were considered.

3.3. Scope and Limitations

The study is limited to literature in the English language and primarily reflects developments in the Indian educational context post-NEP 2020. While the review is comprehensive, it may not capture vernacular sources that contribute to the practical implementation of IKS in education.

4.0. Discussion

Bringing Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into education isn't just about adding traditional content, it's about making learning more meaningful and rooted in our culture. NEP 2020 encourages this by promoting storytelling, experiential learning, and ethical thinking, which naturally connect with how people in India have learned for centuries.

Teachers play a key role in this shift, but many still need proper training and resources to teach IKS effectively. Challenges like outdated teaching methods, lack of materials, and resistance to change still exist. However, with community support, better planning, and teacher involvement, IKS can help create an education system that's more balanced, inclusive, and relevant to both Indian and global contexts.

5.0. Suggestions

- The teachers need to understand what IKS is all about. They need to know how to explain it in a way that's simple and makes sense.
- We should also have better learning materials. Schools need good stuff that's easy to understand, like retold stories, short videos, real-life examples, and hands-on activities.
- Teach in the kids' own language, especially the younger ones which helps them connect better. They can relate what they learn in school to what their community does.
- Community involvement is very important. Having people like farmers, craftspeople, and storytellers come in would make learning way more real and interesting. Also, it helps keep those old skills and traditions alive.
- We should also change how we test the students. Instead of just tests, grade them on projects, speaking, art, and group discussions when they're learning about IKS.
- Governments, schools, and education boards need to step up and give IKS the backing and policy it needs in classrooms.
- Also to get rid of teaching subjects in isolation. We can change how we design classes so subjects are more connected.
- Finally, to raise awareness. We should have talks, workshops, and events to show students and teachers why Indian traditional knowledge is valuable. Not just something from the past, but something that's still relevant and smart today.

6.0. Conclusion

NEP 2020 aims to transform the curriculum by integrating IKS into mainstream education, promoting interdisciplinary, value-grounded literacy. This shift provides a holistic worldview, preparing learners for both original and global challenges.

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