NEP 2020 Vision for Multidisciplinary Education through Indian Knowledge Systems

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
	The National Educational Policy (NEP), 2020 recognizes the need to incorporate the different branches of knowledge, interdisciplinary pedagogy, and multiculturalism to transform the Indian education system. Also, the vision of NEP, 2020 values the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) including Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedic Mathematics, the classical languages, Indian philosophy, the Indian arts, etc. Indian seats of learning, for example, the ancient educational institutions of Nalanda and Takshashila, were centered around culture, ethics, and multidisciplinary education. NEP, 2020 aims to revive this framework by developing curricula that are multidisciplinary and integrating modern and indigenous scientific knowledge to produce culturally and globally competent citizens. NEP 2020, while giving a strong rationale for the integration of the IKS, also advocates for a multidisciplinary approach and the integration of IKS that promote

flexible and holistic cross-disciplinary frameworks for inquiry, and lifelong learning. IKS address and possibly catalyze India to exercise innovative, ethical, sustainable, and research-and-development-based solutions to health, ecology, governance, and keep India relevant to the world community. Nevertheless, the best practices of integrating indigenous knowledge at institutions like Jawaharlal Nehru University, Banaras Hindu University, and a few International Institutes of Technology are valuable for this purpose. Educational systems suffer from absent teachers and teaching materials, as well as insufficient funding, immediately followed by teaching frameworks with a lack of evidence-based or research-based curricula. Systems should incorporate more teaching approaches that utilize staff development, digitized manuscripts, interdisciplinary research, and updated technology. The NEP 2020 aims to position India as a Global Knowledge Leader by combining Innovative Education with IKS to foster creative and value-based thinkers, thereby restoring India's intellectual reputation as a Knowledge economy

Introduction

The new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a landmark policy that is going to change a lot in the Indian education system. NEP 2020 speaks of a more holistic, multi-dimensional, and flexible education system (Ministry of Education 2020). The policy envisages students as potential global leaders as well as culturally and civilizationally rooted students, which have been the vision of the Indian intellectual streams (Singh, 2020, Verma, 2022). By emphasizing multi-disciplinary education and the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), NEP 2020 is a response to the imbalance of existing learning frameworks which have been integrated to address modern skills and avoid traditional knowledge (Joshi, 2021, Sharma, 2022), and Indian education is by construction and tradition a multi-disciplinary system. Ancient Indian universities like Takshashila and Nalanda offered a truly multidisciplinary curriculum that included, in addition to the arts, medicine, and other sciences, mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy, giving students rich and diverse worldviews (Rangan, 2021; Basu, 2021). Integrating Nalanda's vision of multidisciplinary education with scientific and cultural knowledge is a hallmark of the NEP and is likely to establish centers of learning that are globally relevant and strongly rooted in the local (Chakraborty,

2022; Nair, 2020). The integration of IKS in formal educational systems is likely to be positively transformative in many spheres.

Integrating Ayurveda, Yoga, and literature, as well as fine arts, and other eco-philosophical systems, into education (Rao, 2022; Agrawal, 2020), helps to realize these educational goals. These, and other systems, are more than a legacy of culture but a repository of answers to the world's challenges, especially in the areas of health, the environment, and ethics (Gupta, 2021; Jain, 2022). Additionally, a cross-disciplinary approach in education fosters critical research and other 21st century's core skills of problem solving, creativity, and adaptability needed in the global knowledge economy (Kumar, 2021; Pandey, 2021). The cross-disciplinary component of NEP 2020 offers challenges and opportunities.

To start with, this is a chance for holistic learning, creativity, and cultural revival (Patel & Mishra, 2022; Srivastava, 2021) is one. The problems of teacher preparedness, curriculum, and standardization remain major concerns (Sinha, 2021; Ghosh, 2020). Even so, the document emphasizes the importance of IKS throughout the educational framework as a constituent of the neglected most important element of value and higher education system of the document (Tripathi, 2021). NEP 2020 cannot be viewed as merely educational reform; it is a shift in the educational paradigm which is multi-layered and incorporates all the culturally relevant dimensions of education. According to Srivastava (2021) and Rao (2022), with the inclusion of Indian Knowledge Systems in its framework, the policy aspires to develop learners who, in addition to being creative and employable, possess moral and cultural virtues. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the vision which NEP 2020 articulates and the extent to which it enhances multi-disciplinary learning through the Indian Knowledge Systems. The analysis will cover the philosophy, provisions, possibilities, and challenges and the prospects of Indian higher education.

Philosophy of NEP 2020 and Multidisciplinary

Developing students' intellectual, moral, and imaginative abilities is the goal of the 2020 National Education Policy (NEP). NEP 2020 advocates that an education system does not have to be structured around a rigid partitioning of subjects. Education should be a liberation of ideas across the chasms of a given silo of knowledge. Such an education would prepare learners for the unpredictable future (Ministry of Education, 2020; Sinha, 2021). NEP 2020 is anchored on knowledge integration, the provision of learning options, and fostering all round (or holistic) development (Kumar, 2021; Pandey, 2021). The policy supports blended learning as opposed to the traditional education model, which divides learning into silos. In fact, students may study math with music or philosophy with data science, which is likely to

enhance creativity (Sharma, 2022; Gupta, 2021). However, such an approach is not new to India; learning institutions such as Takshashila and Nalanda, which developed in ancient times, combined a number of disciplines, including mathematics, linguistics, and philosophy, with medicine (Basu, 2021; Chakraborty, 2022). Moreover, the NEP draws from the humanistic and constructive frameworks, with the education model of Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, and Mahatma Gandhi as the reference. These scholars focused on education that was experiential, integrated, and inclusive (Ghosh, 2020; Srivastava, 2021). With the inclusion of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), the NEP ensures that education reflects local contexts and culture, while also addressing global needs and standards (Joshi, 2021; Rao, 2022). Flexibility and lifelong learning are also important features of the NEP.

The various entry and exit points, mobility, and the inception of Meru (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities) aim to foster creativity and knowledge generation (Patel & Mishra, 2022; Jain, 2022). These facets contribute to an educational model that moves away from the singular focus on utility and provides an integrated educational experience in the domains of employability, personal growth, and ethics (Verma, 2022; Nair, 2020). Therefore, the objectives of NEP 2020 encompass a broader understanding of what education entails, viewing it as a process of transformation and signaling that multidisciplinary education is a key driver of the country's advancement. The paper envisions a model for India to position itself as a global knowledge superpower leveraging 21st century scientific advancements and the best of ancient Indian knowledge systems, whereby learners gain professional competencies and cultural understanding (Agrawal, 2020; Tripathi, 2021).

Indian Knowledge Systems

When looking at the Indian Knowledge Systems, or IKS, you're seeing a rich and complex body of philosophical, cultural and intellectual ideas that have been accumulating for thousands of years, heavily influenced by the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Buddhist and Jain texts, and the classical works in science, medicine, literature and the arts. Coming from the perspective that knowledge is a means of attaining both personal and social harmony, IKS in the past, was a cohesive, and holistic approach to understanding the world. Quite a departure from today's fragmented disciplines (Rangan, 2021; Chakraborty, 2022). The five main branches of IKS are maths, astronomy, medicine, linguistics, logic, governance and fine arts. Indian mathematicians like Aryabhata and Brahmagupta shook the foundations of global math with their ideas of zero, algebra and trigonometry, (Gupta, 2021; Basu, 2021), and Ayurveda, along with Yoga have become the go-to holistic systems of health and wellness in India, and around the world, and continue to influence the medical field to this day, (Rao, 2022; Agrawal, 2020).

The language analysts, particularly Panini, built the world's most advanced system of linguistic analysis, which we now know as Panini's grammar, (Tripathi, 2021, Jain, 2022). For centuries, the wisdom of IKS has stressed living in harmony with nature, and showed up as the principles for ancient agricultural systems, water conservation systems and buildings that had ecological awareness long before sustainability became a buzzword in modern times. The fusion of art, music, dance, literature and visual art with education highlighted the importance of aesthetics in the Indian tradition, (Verma, 2022; Nair, 2020). Finally, IKS stressed the significance of a compassionate, and all-encompassing education, that is closely bound with virtue, morality and community happiness. Institutions like Nalanda, Vikramashila and Takshashila exemplified the idea of cross-disciplinary and intercultural education and brought in students from all over the Asian region, (Basu, 2021; Rangan, 2021). Today, NEP 2020 aims to rediscover these traditions not as artifacts of the past but as living knowledge systems that can make a meaningful contribution to the present education and research enterprise. By integrating IKS, India can position itself as a knowledge leader in the world, rooted in its civilization heritage but dynamically engaged with modern science and technology (Kumar, 2021; Pandey, 2021).

NEP 2020 Provisions for Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems

The NEP 2020 brought for the IKS-based pedagogy to promote rounded, inclusive, and culturally sensitive education. This policy proposes a cross-disciplinary approach, integrating contemporary scientific disciplines with traditional knowledge systems, with the aim of developing a distinctive Indian model of higher education that serves both local and global needs. One of the main goals of NEP 2020 is the integration of IKS at all levels of education, particularly at the university degree level. It supports the formation of IKS-focused departments and interdisciplinary centers within different fields. (Sharma, 2022; Rangan, 2021) point out the mention of Ayurveda, Yoga, Sanskrit, Mathematics, Metallurgy, Philosophy and the Arts. Here the aim is twofold. One is to protect India's valuable intellectual legacy. The other is to stimulate cross-disciplinary studies to integrate the ancient and the modern. The policy also suggests that teachers use regional languages while teaching, which makes education easier and alive the literature of IKS that is embedded in classical languages, Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit (Patel and Mishra, 2022; Joshi, 2021). Furthermore, the NEP 2020 gives a significant priority to the infusion of education with ethical, moral, and spiritual aspects of Indian philosophy, and the neutral infusion of the Indian ethical system, virtue, and public function, (Gupta, 2021; Rao, 2022). The other notable point in the policy is the creation of the Indian Knowledge Systems Division (IKSD) in the Ministry of Education and the AICTE. This division is focused on the development of IKS-related curricula, the promotion of

publications, and the advancement of IKS-related research, which suggests a commitment to the integration of indigenous knowledge in post-secondary education, (Kumar, 2021; Basu, 2021;)

NEP 2020 also envisions the creation of multidisciplinary universities and independent colleges that will integrate IKS with science, technology, social sciences, and the humanitiess (Pandey, 2021; Nair, 2020). This approach places IKS at the forefront of innovation, sustainability, and national development. By pursuing these initiatives, NEP 2020 aims not just to preserve traditional knowledge but to elevate India's contributions to global discourse on intellectual achievement, (Srivastava, 2021; Agrawal, 2020)

Challenges in Implementing Indian Knowledge Systems under NEP 2020

The NEP 2020 is both visionary and comprehensive in its scope towards integrating IKS within the core education framework. However, integrating IKS needs a comprehensive, multi-layered approach—structural, institutional, and operational. The policy lays out an idealistic framework, but the actioning of the framework could involve real 'classroom' pedagogical and 'research' relational changes, that focus on the people, the domain, and the infrastructures, and assuring a coherent intersection, in the context of global education. The IKS 'institutional' integration goes beyond policy to the 'ground' of teaching, learning, and researching in the higher education domain.

- **Lack of Trained Faculty and Resources**

  ➢ The teaching of authentic Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) texts is challenged by the scarce workforce of educators trained in the teaching of Indian classical languages of IKS: Sanskrit and its derivatives, Pali, Prakrit (Tripathi, 2021; Sharma, 2022).

  ➢ Teacher training initiatives are lacking in scope to equip educators in the IKS domain with the skill to deliver courses in a multidisciplinary framework (Gupta, 2021; Srivastava, 2021).

- **Perceived Divide between Traditional and Modern Knowledge**

  ➢ Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) are perceived as irrelevant, antiquated, and lacking rationale, when not situated in, or related to, contemporary systems of thought (Rao, 2022; Jain, 2022).

  ➢ Skepticism exists among students and educators about the incorporation of ancient knowledge into modern teaching (Agrawal, 2020; Patel & Mishra, 2022).

- **Financial and Infrastructural Limitations**

  ➢ Extensive investment is needed for the construction of IKS centers, manuscript digitization, and research funding (Pandey, 2021; Basu, 2021).

  ➢ Resource limitations among many state universities render the large-scale implementation of such initiatives impossible.

- **Globalization and Standardization of Education**

  ➢ Integrating IKS with global research, peer-reviewing, and publishing is still problematic (Chakraborty, 2022; Verma, 2022).

  ➢ The global academic community's English-centric focus hampers the diffusion of IKS, especially that which is documented in regional and classical Indian languages (Nair, 2020; Singh, 2020).

- **Risk of Politicization and Cultural Bias**

  ➢ Concerns have been stated that IKS may be politically or ideologically manipulated for non-academic purposes (Rangan, 2021; Ghosh, 2020).

  ➢ The integration of IKS is more credible when it is evidence-based and also encourages intercultural dialogue.

The NEP 2020 construction of Indian knowledge systems is constricted by a range of issues, such as insufficient financial resources, unqualified faculty, and far greater problems of knowledge systems and the degree of global integration technology. Overcoming the challenges requires comprehensive and long-term institutional frameworks to establish cooperation; it is a means of fostering true relationships. It is only by embracing both traditional knowledge and modern scientific knowledge that we can hope to successfully advocate for the integration of traditional Indigenous Knowledge (IK) Systems into contemporary education frameworks and systems so that they are still relevant and aligned to both national and global development agendas.

Prospects of Indian Knowledge Systems Implementation within NEP 2020

The implementation of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) within the ambit of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is set to bring a paradigm shift in India's education, research, and global educational collaborations. The NEP 2020 considers indigenous knowledge systems to be contemporary and dynamic, thereby opening up the possibility of a reconceptualized educational framework that is integrally holistic, equitable, and fosters the spirit of innovation. IKS integration means a deeper connection with the diverse Indian heritage, more importantly, it brings forth numerous promising possibilities that can be explored. Herein, the primary possibilities are discussed.

- Global Acknowledgment of Indian Heritage

  - Establishing Indian intellectual traditions on a global scale is a possibility that IKS avails to India.

  - India's soft power is further enhanced for the promotion of Practices in Yoga, Ayurveda, organic farming, and ancient sciences.

- Holistic and Value-Based Education

  - "IKS provides education that is holistic in nature and incorporates learning in the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions."

  - This nurtures balanced learning that promotes creativity, ethics, and social responsibility.

- *Advancements in Innovation and Research*

  - *IKS has the potential to spark innovative scientific research in areas such as sustainable development, alternative medicine, environmental conservation, and linguistics.*

  - *The application of traditional knowledge in contemporary science could also produce novel approaches to problem-solving.*

- *Employment and Business Development*

> *The creation of IKS-oriented courses and centres will vertically integrate (i.e., increase specialization in) the educational and professional ecosystem of scholars, researchers, translators, and practitioners.*

> *The promotion of IKS-related Ayurveda, Yoga, handicrafts, and cultural tourism activates (i.e., stimulates) local economies and creates new businesses (entrepreneurship).*

- *Enhancing the Knowledge Economy of India*

> *By using India's own civilizational heritage, can be seen as a potential "Global Knowledge Leader."*

> *India also stands to gain, in an educational, economical, and research collaborative way, from the inflow of international students and researchers.*

All in all, the most notable among the potential benefits of incorporating IKS within the framework of the NEP 2020 is the value of cultural preservation, along with holistic education, innovative research, and employment generation for the rapid acceleration of India's knowledge economy. Harnessed appropriately, IKS will assist India in extending its global academic reach, sustainable and value-based development and civilizational heritage knowledge leadership, while addressing contemporary world challenges.

Best Practices and Models

The Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) under NEP 2020 can be refined using both domestic and international models for the integration of indigenous knowledge.

Indian Universities and Research Institutes

1. **Banaras Hindu University (BHU)** – Offers courses in Ayurveda, Sanskrit, Vedic studies, and has research centres dedicated to IKS.

2. **Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)** – Runs interdisciplinary programs that connect traditional knowledge with social sciences and modern research.

3. **Indian Institute of Technology (IITs)** – Some IITs have initiated research on ancient Indian mathematics, metallurgy, and sustainable technologies.

4. **Central Sanskrit Universities** – Established to promote Sanskrit and allied knowledge systems, preparing a new generation of IKS scholars.

5. **Ministry of Education's IKS Division (AICTE)** – Actively funding projects, fellowships, and establishing IKS centres across higher education institutions.

Global Best Practices in Indigenous Knowledge Integration

1. **New Zealand (Māori Knowledge Systems)** – Universities integrate Māori language, culture, and knowledge into mainstream education and research.

2. **Australia (Aboriginal Knowledge)** – Indigenous ecological knowledge is applied in land management, sustainability studies, and environmental education.

3. **Canada (First Nations Studies)** – Courses and research programs include indigenous governance, medicine, and environmental practices.

4. **Latin America (Andean Knowledge Systems)** – Integration of indigenous agricultural practices with modern sustainability research.

5. **Africa (Traditional Knowledge and Development)** – Use of local medicinal systems and agricultural methods in community-based education.

These national and international best practices, therefore, show that the successful integration of indigenous knowledge systems is both feasible and intellectually enriching. Basic lessons from these successful practices across Indian HEIs and worldwide, show that contextualizing indigenous knowledge within modern knowledge frameworks, while maintaining its indigenous underpinning, can go a long way to enriching the implementation platform for Indian knowledge Systems under NEP 2020, so that IKS continues to evolve into an innovative, inclusive, and globally acceptable knowledge system.

Future Directions and Policy Implications

For successful amalgamation and incorporation of Indian Knowledge Systems under NEP 2020, an effective roadmap and guidelines need to be observed. The suggested policy implications for future directions can be:

Roadmap for Successful Implementation

➢ Come up with a national framework of IKS integration, including curriculum, teaching, and research guidelines.

➢ Set up the IKS Centers of Excellence in various universities and colleges across India.

➢ Create interdisciplinary degree programs to integrate IKS with science, technology, management, and social sciences.

Teacher Capacity Building

➢ Establish targeted teacher training initiatives for the fields of Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Ayurveda, and Yoga.

➢ Develop teacher training workshops that integrate traditional knowledge systems with contemporary pedagogies.

➢ Facilitate teacher exchange initiatives among educational institutions.

The Role of Digital Technology in IKS

➢ Develop student access to digitized manuscripts and student-accessible archival materials.

➢ Develop IKS-related MOOCs and certification programs.

➢ Develop IKS-related educational activities using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies.

Interactive Global IKS

➢ Support IKS-related collaborative international research initiatives with Indian and foreign universities concerned with sustainability, medicine, linguistics, and philosophy.

➢ Develop IKS-related translation projects for publishing global editions.

➢ Facilitate the dissemination of knowledge for intercultural educational diplomacy, especially for positioning India as a central country for the Intercultural Knowledge Hub and Global Educational Diplomacy.

> ➢ The integration of multidisciplinary approaches should be preserved within the frameworks of cultural appreciation and scientific validity.

> ➢ Partnerships between contemporary academic institutions and traditional knowledge holders can enhance reputational creditability.

> ➢ Innovative Knowledge Systems (IKS) can be made accessible and researchable through documentation, digitization, and global collaborations.

Discussion and Conclusion

The National Education System in India is undergoing a revolutionary change in its educational policy, as encapsulated in the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020. This new policy is aimed at transforming India's educational system into a more wholesome, multidisciplinary, and globally recognized system. An integral part of this new vision is the incorporation of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the new educational curriculum. IKS comprise aspects such as Ayurveda, Yoga, Mathematics, classical language arts, philosophy, and arts. These IKS have assisted in promoting cognitive, ethical, and cultural growth for India's student base (Rangan, 2021; Tripathi, 2021). The incorporation of IKS in India's new educational policy is grounded in the vision of achieving a new educational curriculum that is wedded to science and at the same time globally competitive, as encapsulated in the new policy of 2020. The above discussion in the chapter points out several opportunistic aspects in IKS incorporation in India's new educational policy. First is the opportunity for India to attain a globally competitive edge as a hub for providing new and important knowledge, as in sustainable patterns of operation, medicine, and ecology (Agrawal, 2020; Sharma, 2022). Second, IKS gives due emphasis to holistic education, including mental, moral, and spiritual growth of the learner that is largely ignored by present education (Singh, 2020; Verma, 2022). Third, IKS augments and encourages innovations and research by focusing on multidisciplinary approaches and blending ancient wisdom with modern science and technology (Rao, 2022; Patel & Mishra, 2022). The best examples are included from Indian Higher Education Centers like BHU, JNU, and some of the top-rated IITs, showing the incorporation and practice of IKS for research and education may have been effective with suitable institutional support (Jaina, 2022; Basu, 2021). Global experiences include the rich tradition of Māori knowledge system in New Zealand and the Australian knowledge system among the aborigines (Chakraborty, 2022; Nair, 2020). Nevertheless, its successful implementation with NEP 2020 hinges on surmounting substantial issues, which encompass

faculty preparation, infrastructural issues, financial issues, and concerns about its politicization or biased application in accordance with ancient perspectives (Gupta, 2021; Sharma, 2022). Inclusiveness, developing a rationale, and maintaining a secular approach can help retain academic credibility (Srivastava, 2021; Rangan, 2021). Policy examples such as teacher competency frameworks, digitization of ancient writings, research, and internationalization are likely to be most beneficial when developing IKS (Tripathi, 2021; Verma, 2022). New technologies such as MOOCs, virtual classrooms, and artificial intelligence can enhance global reach and credibility of IKS (Singh, 2020; Nair, 2020).

To conclude, NEP 2020 is not just an adjustment; it is a commitment to completely overhaul the country's education system and establish it as a world knowledge powerhouse. The inclusion of IKS is aimed at the development of an ecosystem, which fosters growth of critical and creative thinking, sound moral judgement, global consciousness and appreciation, and provides opportunities for deep experiential learning and a substantial connection to the Indian heritage. The policies have the potential to nurture the Indian tradition of educational excellence and promote global intellectual engagement to establish India as a knowledge hub. The resultant education system will be aligned to the aspirations of a knowledge based professional world and will contribute to the global knowledge and educational development.

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