



Incorporating Indian Indigenous Wisdom into Modern Education

Pritom Doley

Department of Political Science, Jagiroad College.

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous wisdom connects a learner with the cultural heritage, values and traditions. It encourages deeper understanding of concepts, ethical values and connection to the environment. In today's complex world, it can stimulate creativity and critical thinking by offering alternative perspective and problem solving approaches. It supports an interdisciplinary learning by integrating ancient Indian scientific principles into modern science curriculum. Integrating indigenous wisdom and modern education creates a more holistic and culturally relevant learning environment by combining traditional wisdom with contemporary wisdom. It could be a game changer by helping us to preserve cultural heritage, promote diversity and provide a better way understanding of the world. Learning could be made more interesting and engaging by methods of using indigenous story telling. But while integrating the both, we must keep in mind that the indigenous wisdom is respected and shared in a way that is mutually beneficial. Outmost care should be taken that the indigenous perspectives are represented accurately. India's New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises on interdisciplinary education, practical learning, innovation, spiritual and moral values. An overlap of the emphasis of education between indigenous knowledge system and modern education is clearly visible. Therefore the paper would like to look into the historical context of

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Indian education and examine the similarities between the ancient Indian education system and the objectives of modern education. It would also try to focus on the benefits, challenges and the probable outcome of the integration.

Introduction

Education is a process of cultivating knowledge, values, skills, and wisdom necessary for individual and societal development and not merely the transmission of information. Indian indigenous wisdom encompasses a diverse body of knowledge derived from Vedic literature, Buddhist and Jain traditions, tribal knowledge systems, local ecological practices, folk traditions, and community-based learning methods. Characterised by its holistic approach, Indian Knowledge System emphasise on interconnectedness between humans, environment and society. It covers discipline ranging from Ayurveda, Yoga, Mathematics, Astronomy and Arts. It embodies the indigenous intellectual traditions that have shaped India's cultural and scientific landscape for thousands of years. Indian culture and philosophy have had a deep effect globally. India is a land that carries a legacy of vibrant culture, beauty of nature and has given numerous philosophers and saints to the world, like Brahmagupta, Aryabhatta, Charak, Nagarjuna, Bhaskaracharya, Kautilya etc , to name a few, who have contributed immensely in fields like mathematics, astronomy, political science, medicine, ayurveda, religion and yoga. To further emphasise on this, Indians discovered the value of 'Pi', much before the west could think of it and 'Zero' is yet another major contribution to the field of mathematics.

The world has moved on ever since and has developed an understanding of various things including the functioning of the universe and integration of technology into various fields. The 21st century has brought in a lot of advantages to humans and technological advancements in various fields. However, it has its own disadvantages. The world is dealing with range of problems like economic crisis, changing weather pattern, mental illness, violence, etc. The world is increasingly finding it difficult to tackle these problems and challenges due to limitations of their knowledge and experience that come from the way they perceive the world. Though there has been huge technological revolution, yet there are few untouched fields of technology. Some aspects of human life still needs in person intervention and human touch or a social connection, which seems missing in the era of technology. At this saturating point the world is turning towards India, towards its deep traditional knowledge system to look for ways to overturn the situation and find some remedy. The Indian knowledge system has the potential and aims to support and facilitate further research to solve contemporary social issues in several fields ranging from holistic health, psychology,



nature, environment and sustainable development. These indigenous dimensions have been historically sidelined by the modern education system, which is oriented towards global scientific knowledge and technological advancement.

The colonial period introduced a Western model of education that largely marginalized indigenous systems of knowledge; it has often neglected local knowledge traditions, ethical values, cultural diversity, and holistic approaches to learning. In recent years, scholars and policymakers have recognized the need to reconnect education with India's indigenous intellectual heritage. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 explicitly emphasizes the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into mainstream education as a means of fostering holistic development, cultural awareness, and national identity (Government of India, 2020).

Incorporating Indian indigenous wisdom into modern education is not an attempt to replace scientific knowledge with traditional beliefs. Rather, it seeks to create a balanced educational framework that values multiple ways of knowing and learning. Such integration can enrich educational experiences, promote cultural sustainability, strengthen ethical consciousness, and contribute to sustainable development.

Objective:

The objective of the paper is to;

1. Look into the historical context of Indian education and examine the similarities between the ancient Indian education system and the objectives of modern education.
2. It would also try to focus on the benefits, challenges and the probable outcome of the integration.
3. Analyse the relevance and application of Indian knowledge system into modern curriculum.

Methodology:

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. It is primarily based on secondary data collected from various sources, including books, academic journals, research articles and relevant websites. These sources were carefully reviewed and analysed to understand the nexus between Indian knowledge system and modern education.

The Indian Education System:

The colonial education system's influence led to drastic changes in the colonized nation's education and teaching methodologies (Sharma). The role of educational administrators in India, before 1947, was to simply carry out the restricted educational program developed by the British. English became the medium of instruction which eventually wiped out the need to explore knowledge in local languages. Doing research and publishing in an international journal was not easy for the Indians as most of such journals were in



English and native language researchers could not express the essence of the local art and knowledge to match its requirements.

The Colonial rule completely revamped the educational system by bringing in a new one. It was a mixture of home country as well as imported from other domain, as part of the uneven process of empire building (Alleder,2009). In response to this, the nationalist struggle, did not construct its own system and adapted the one already shaped by experimentation and imposed by the Empire. This new education system completely sidelined the indigenous and traditional knowledge forms and focussed on science and technology as priority.

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020:

The third education policy after the independence, NEP 2020, promises a revamp of the Indian education structure by formalizing pre-primary schooling, promoting multi-disciplinary learning, academic freedom, and creating a more comprehensive liberal, choice friendly and job-oriented education system that aligns with the Global standards (Singh and Narayanan, 2023). The NEP claims its inspiration from the philosophies of ancient wisdom which is a departure from the existing secular consensus of scientific temper in education (Gopalkrishnan,2023).

The Indian knowledge system:

Indian knowledge system has evolved over a long period of time with a wide range of subjects such as astronomy, ayurveda, yoga, health and wellbeing, maths etc. Based on Vedic literature, the Vedas and the Upanishad, it has the potential to support and facilitate research to solve contemporary issues referenced along with existing ones. According to Kautilya, education aims at three outcomes;

a) Vidya,ie, creation of new knowledge, b) Vivek,ie, wisdom to use the right knowledge at the right time and place for the right purpose, and c) Vichangnata,ie, the skill set to get proper results of knowledge in real life. All these can be achieved only with an efficient education system that integrates existing knowledge with required skill set.

The major focus of Indian knowledge system was giving attention to ‘how’ in place of ‘what’. In this era of technological dominance, to deal with concern of human existence, the learners needs to be trained to develop a new skill set, unlearn and relearn. Integration of Indian knowledge system could bring such a balance in Indian education. The Indian knowledge system primarily delas with various ways to gain knowledge of ourselves, our surroundings, our universe and eternity. It helped people to fulfil their daily needs, without disturbing the law of nature, rather they preserved nature and nurtured humanity. We need to



imbibe these aspects of Indian wisdom into our learners, so that the GenZ and Gen Alpha, who are not closely related to the social values and ethos, can learn to protect while progressing. It helps us to connect with our inner self, surroundings and the Divine. A nation needs to have a strong foundation if it aspires to be a superpower. Indian indigeneos wisdom or knowledge system comes to the rescue as it can only provide us education system that is grounded in our own deep traditional roots.

During the British era , the education system was focussed on creating a workforce of various kinds, especially to create a labor force. Today the institutions want their learners to be 'job ready'. There isn't much difference between the two of them. The proposed NEP 2020 and the inclusion of Indian knowledge system, this gap needs to be bridged. As the great Epic Mahabharata says, " A student learns one-fourth from his teacher, one-fourth from his own intelligence, one-fourth with the passage of time, and one-fourth from his peers". We need to create an education system based on this (Bharadwaj, 2021). A positive approach towards life could be developed through an Indianized education in learners. It would also help them to improve upon their spiritual skills and help them analyse the situation and go ahead using various feasible solutions and a confident mindset.

India, with its tradition of rich culture, history, and diversity, has always placed a deep value on education. The 'Tantra Yukti', which is now popular across all institutions under the name of research Methodology has a dedicated segment in Indian education system, and it cannot be mere coincidence. Our ancient education system was not just based on tradition of oral knowledge transfer, but was well structured and ensured understanding, learning, and implementation of knowledge through research and understanding. Focus should also be on multilingualism and multicultural approach to promote the inclusivity of diversity. The University Grants Commission also seeks to train 15 lakh teachers in Indian knowledge system in the coming years, which would then assist the learners with an overview of Indian tradition and culture. This gives us an idea about the seriousness of integrating the Indian knowledge system in the degree level education.

Conclusion:

Bridging Indian knowledge system with the modern education system represents a pivotal step towards an inclusive, holistic educational system that balances tradition with innovation. This synthesis respects India's cultural heritage while preparing learners for contemporary global challenges. Strategic curriculum reform, investment in teacher education and policy commitment as envisioned in NEP 2020 will be critical for this transformation. The integration would over all enrich India's education landscape by fostering grounded ethical and sustainable knowledge paradigms.



India has been the centre of learning since ancient times. With the vision of NEP 2020 we would be able to go back and present the indigenous knowledge to the newer generation, which will eventually make them understand the world in a better way. It has the potential to complement and enrich contemporary higher education by providing a more comprehensive understanding of human knowledge, civilization and cultural heritage bringing benefits to students, academia and society at large.

Social accountability, compassion and ethical decision-making could be installed into the learners by integrating ethical teachings available in Indian knowledge system. The actual success of the foundation of Indian knowledge system in the Modern education system would be in the overcoming of the challenge to integrate the wisdom from multiple streams and help learners to understand, interpret and implement the same. It would be a challenge to modernize education through Indian knowledge system. Apart from this there are various other challenges like lack of awareness among learners and scholars about what Indian knowledge system is all about, the romanticization of Indian knowledge system at the expense of overall achievement, the lack of clear cut policy on it, the generally poor and incomprehensive documentation of Indian knowledge system.

The inclusion of Indian wisdom into the modern education system is wished to exhibit the benefits of Indian thought model when applied to our modern day problems. To the benefit of the world, there should be Indianization of modern education system through Indian wisdom. Community participation would be the key to formulate and implement the education policies effectively. An 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat' would be possible only if we integrate our Indian wisdom successfully and seamlessly into our education system. Every discipline of our Indian knowledge system should find a place in the regular disciplines instead of placing it as a separate discipline. The integration would definitely need few years but it has to be pursued gradually, continuously and rigorously. If this is done, then we would be again on the path of becoming the 'Vishwa Guru', to whom the world would turn to solve its problems.

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