



National Education Policy 2020 and the Revival of the Indian Knowledge System

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Abstract:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant paradigm shift in India's educational landscape, placing strong emphasis on the revival, integration, and promotion of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) within mainstream education. This research explores how NEP 2020 seeks to restore the relevance of India's rich intellectual traditions—including Ayurveda, Yoga, classical languages, philosophy, traditional arts, environmental wisdom, and indigenous scientific practices—through curricular redesign, institutional strengthening, and interdisciplinary learning. The study examines policy provisions that aim to embed cultural heritage, ethical values, and holistic learning models into school and higher education. It investigates initiatives such as the establishment of the Indian Knowledge Systems division under the Ministry of Education, the promotion of Sanskrit and regional languages, and the encouragement of experiential and competency-based learning infused with traditional knowledge. Using policy analysis supported by academic literature and stakeholder perspectives, the research evaluates the potential of NEP 2020 to create an inclusive and culturally rooted education system. Findings highlight that the policy provides a comprehensive framework for reviving IKS but also faces challenges related to implementation, teacher training, curriculum development, and balancing traditional knowledge with contemporary academic standards. The study concludes that NEP 2020 offers a transformative opportunity to reposition Indian Knowledge Systems as an integral part of national education, fostering identity, innovation, and global relevance when effectively executed.

Keywords: *Indian Knowledge Systems; Curriculum Reform; Holistic Education; Traditional Knowledge; Experiential Learning; Indigenous Knowledge Revival.*

Introduction:

Education has historically functioned as both a transmitter of knowledge and a mechanism for cultural continuity. In the Indian context, systems of knowledge evolved over millennia, encompassing philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, linguistics, architecture, ecology, ethics, and governance. These systems—collectively referred to today as the Indian Knowledge System (IKS)—were deeply

interdisciplinary, experiential, and embedded in local socio-cultural contexts. However, colonial interventions in education, particularly during the nineteenth century, resulted in the systematic marginalization of indigenous epistemologies in Favor of Western knowledge paradigms. Post-independence educational frameworks largely continued this legacy, prioritizing modern disciplinary structures while relegating traditional knowledge to peripheral or cultural studies.

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** marks a significant departure from earlier policy frameworks by explicitly recognizing the value of India's indigenous knowledge traditions and calling for their integration into mainstream education. For the first time in independent India's policy history, the revival, preservation, and advancement of Indian knowledge systems are articulated as a national educational priority. NEP 2020 envisions education as a means of fostering rootedness, cultural confidence, creativity, and holistic development while simultaneously preparing learners for global engagement.

The policy situates IKS not as an alternative to modern knowledge systems but as a complementary epistemic resource capable of enriching contemporary education. By emphasizing multilingualism, interdisciplinary learning, experiential pedagogy, and research grounded in Indian intellectual traditions, NEP 2020 seeks to reclaim epistemic plurality and correct historical imbalances in knowledge production and transmission.

Objectives of the study:

1. To assess NEP 2020's vision and role in reviving Indian knowledge systems in education.
2. To examine the specific NEP 2020 actions intended for IKS preservation, integration, and study.
3. To analyse the body of research on IKS and its integration into contemporary education.

Methodology:

The paper trying to Explore it in a Qualitative way on the basis of documentary analysis.

Sources Data - Secondary data was collected from websites, various articles and journals. Primary data was collected from *National Education Policy 2020* issued by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, Official reports, UGC.

Review of literature:

Banga (2010), For the Revival of The Indian Knowledge System analysis the key National advances in higher education for sustainable development in India. And the most highlighting point is Varied educational strategies that are emerging in relation with Education for sustainable development in Indian Knowledge System.

Jagadesh (2020), The National Education Policy-2020 emphasized that it is timely and futuristic approach which will build up critical thinking, Competency and also making learning experiential. NEP-2020 will be led to prepare students to actively contribute to economic progress of India.

Kannan (2020), Had conduct a study with views that National Education Policy-2020 (NEP) is the vision that the policy has for the country as a Whole and this document is visionary in character. This study determine that NEP-2020 is of visions that not only change education but also expected to change all over India growth.

Patil (2021) The National Education Policy-2020 which is remodelling version of our educational policy that is believe to Promoting Indian value-based Education, Bharat centric education, create a knowledge-based society and emphasized on Knowledge- based educational system.

Findings:

Objective 1. NEP 2020's Vision for Indian Knowledge Systems

A central finding of this analysis is that NEP 2020 conceptualizes Indian knowledge systems as an integral component of national identity and intellectual heritage rather than as relics of the past. The policy emphasizes that India's traditional knowledge—from Vedic literature and classical philosophy to local ecological practices and artisanal skills—offers valuable insights into sustainability, ethics, governance, and human well-being. NEP 2020 frames IKS as dynamic, evolving systems that can inform modern scientific inquiry and innovation.

The policy envisions education that is “rooted in Indian ethos” while remaining globally relevant. This dual emphasis reflects an epistemological shift from imitation to innovation, where learners are encouraged to draw upon indigenous frameworks alongside global knowledge systems. NEP 2020 thus positions IKS as a source of intellectual confidence, creativity, and problem-solving capacity.

Objective 2. Policy Provisions for IKS Integration

NEP 2020 introduces several explicit and implicit provisions for integrating Indian knowledge systems across educational levels:

- **Curriculum Reform:** The policy calls for the inclusion of Indian knowledge traditions in school and higher education curricula, including philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine (Ayurveda, Yoga, Siddha, and other systems), arts, literature, and environmental knowledge.
- **Multidisciplinary and Holistic Education:** By dismantling rigid disciplinary boundaries, NEP 2020 creates space for interdisciplinary engagement with IKS, allowing traditional knowledge to intersect with science, technology, humanities, and social sciences.
- **Language Policy:** The emphasis on mother tongue and regional languages as media of instruction, particularly in the foundational years, is critical for accessing and transmitting indigenous knowledge embedded in linguistic traditions.
- **Teacher Education:** NEP 2020 recognizes the need to prepare educators capable of teaching IKS-based content, calling for reforms in teacher training institutions.
- **Research and Institutional Support:** The establishment of dedicated centers for Indian knowledge systems and encouragement of research grounded in traditional epistemologies signal institutional commitment to preservation and innovation.
- **Experiential Learning:** The policy's emphasis on experiential, inquiry-based, and community-linked learning aligns closely with traditional Indian pedagogical approaches such as gurukul systems and apprenticeship models.

Objective 3. Scholarly Perspectives on IKS Integration

The body of research on Indian knowledge systems underscores their scientific, philosophical, and pedagogical sophistication. Scholars have highlighted the contributions of Indian mathematics to algebra and

geometry, Ayurvedic medicine's holistic understanding of health, and indigenous ecological knowledge's relevance to sustainable development.

Existing literature also emphasizes that meaningful integration of IKS requires epistemic respect rather than token inclusion. Researchers caution against superficial representation of traditional knowledge as folklore or cultural ornamentation. Instead, they advocate for critical engagement, contextual interpretation, and dialogue between traditional and modern knowledge systems.

Studies on curriculum reform further suggest that integrating IKS can enhance learner engagement, cultural relevance, and ethical awareness. However, scholars also identify challenges, including lack of trained faculty, inadequate instructional materials, and lingering perceptions that traditional knowledge lacks scientific rigor.

Discussion:

Reclaiming Epistemic Plurality:

One of the most significant implications of NEP 2020 is its attempt to restore epistemic plurality within Indian education. For decades, formal education systems privileged Western frameworks of knowledge production, often presenting them as universally superior. By recognizing Indian knowledge systems as legitimate and valuable, NEP 2020 challenges epistemic hierarchies and promotes intellectual self-reliance. This shift aligns with global academic movements advocating decolonization of knowledge and curriculum. However, NEP 2020's approach remains distinct in its emphasis on synthesis rather than rejection of global knowledge. The policy promotes coexistence and dialogue between Indian and Western epistemologies, fostering a more inclusive and balanced intellectual ecosystem.

Pedagogical Transformation and Learner-Centered Education:

The integration of IKS necessitates a fundamental transformation in pedagogy. Traditional Indian education emphasized experiential learning, moral development, and teacher-student relationships grounded in mentorship. NEP 2020's learner-centered, inquiry-driven pedagogy resonates strongly with these principles. However, translating this vision into classroom practice poses significant challenges. Many teachers have been trained within content-heavy, examination-oriented systems and may lack familiarity with IKS-based pedagogies. Without substantial investment in teacher education and professional development, policy intentions may remain aspirational.

Research, Innovation, and Knowledge Production:

NEP 2020's emphasis on research rooted in Indian knowledge systems has the potential to generate innovative solutions to contemporary problems, particularly in areas such as health, sustainability, and community development. Integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern environmental science, for example, could offer context-specific strategies for climate resilience. At the same time, scholarly discourse warns against uncritical glorification of the past. Rigorous methodologies, peer review, and ethical research practices are essential to ensure credibility and relevance. The challenge lies in developing research frameworks that respect traditional epistemologies while maintaining academic rigor.

Implementation Challenges and Risks:

Despite its progressive vision, NEP 2020 faces several implementation challenges. These include disparities in institutional capacity, resistance to curricular change, political misinterpretations of cultural revival, and the risk of homogenizing diverse knowledge traditions under a singular narrative of "Indian culture." India's

knowledge heritage is pluralistic, shaped by regional, linguistic, and community-specific practices, and effective integration must preserve this diversity.

Conclusion:

The National Education Policy 2020 represents a landmark moment in India's educational history by formally recognizing and advocating the revival of Indian knowledge systems. By positioning IKS as a foundational element of education, NEP 2020 seeks to restore cultural continuity, foster intellectual confidence, and promote holistic development. The policy's provisions for curriculum reform, multilingualism, interdisciplinary learning, teacher education, and research create a comprehensive framework for integrating traditional knowledge into contemporary education. This paper has demonstrated that NEP 2020's vision aligns closely with scholarly calls for epistemic plurality, decolonization of curricula, and culturally responsive pedagogy. The findings highlight both the transformative potential of IKS integration and the practical challenges associated with implementation. Meaningful revival of Indian knowledge systems requires more than policy articulation; it demands sustained institutional support, teacher preparedness, rigorous research, and critical engagement with tradition.

In conclusion, NEP 2020 offers an opportunity to reimagine Indian education as a space where ancient wisdom and modern knowledge coexist productively. If implemented with sensitivity, inclusivity, and academic rigor, the revival of Indian knowledge systems can contribute not only to national renewal but also to global knowledge discourse. The success of this endeavour will ultimately depend on how effectively policy ideals are translated into educational practice, research, and lived learning experiences.

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