



## Ancient Wisdom to Modern Era: Integrating Indian Knowledge for Atmanirbhar Bharat

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### Abstract:

*India's civilizational knowledge has continuously shaped its intellectual, cultural, and socio-economic progress. This study investigates how the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) can be effectively integrated into the modern era to strengthen the national vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India). Using a document review method within a descriptive and qualitative research approach, the study deeply analysed classical scriptures, scholarly literature, policy documents, and government initiatives to analyse the contemporary relevance of ancient wisdom. The findings reveal that diverse IKS disciplines such as Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedic Mathematics, traditional agriculture, indigenous sciences, architecture, metallurgy, astronomy, and ethical governance offer sustainable and innovative solutions for present-day challenges. When harmonised with modern scientific approaches, these systems contribute significantly to advancements in healthcare, environmental management, education, food security, entrepreneurship, and local industries. Successful models such as India's global leadership in yoga, Ayurveda-based wellness sectors, organic farming initiatives, and the revival of artisanal crafts reflect the economic and developmental potential of blending ancient and modern knowledge. Furthermore, national programs like Make in India, Digital India, and the PLI Scheme resonate with principles derived from the Arthashastra, Swaraj, and community-centric development philosophies. Overall, the study concludes that integrating ancient wisdom with modern frameworks provides a holistic, culturally rooted, and sustainable pathway for achieving self-reliance and inclusive national development.*

**Keywords:** *Indian Knowledge System, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Traditional Knowledge, Innovation, Sustainable Development, National Self-Reliance.*

### Introduction:

In response to the severe social and economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of India introduced the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2020. This initiative represents a comprehensive development framework that extends beyond mere economic self-sufficiency to include social, cultural, and technological

dimensions. The central objective of Atmanirbhar Bharat is to strengthen indigenous industries, promote innovation and entrepreneurship, and reduce India's reliance on imported goods and technologies.

A crucial foundation for achieving this vision lies in the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), which embodies a rich repository of traditional wisdom developed and refined over thousands of years. IKS encompasses diverse domains such as Ayurveda, Yoga, agriculture, architecture, mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, and other indigenous sciences. These knowledge traditions offer sustainable, context-specific, and culturally rooted solutions that remain highly relevant in addressing contemporary developmental challenges.

This paper argues that the effective integration of Indian Knowledge Systems into modern development strategies is essential for realizing the goals of Atmanirbhar Bharat. By aligning ancient wisdom with present-day needs, India can foster holistic growth that is economically viable, socially inclusive, culturally grounded, and technologically innovative. Such an approach not only supports self-reliance but also ensures sustainable and indigenous pathways for national development in the modern era.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

- i. To identify key elements of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) that support Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- ii. To find out IKS based initiatives for achieving Atmanirbhar Bharat.

### **Methodology:**

The research has carried out based on the method of document review in the direction of qualitative approach of research. Data for this paper has collect from various primary and secondary sources such as, various books, research articles, and electronic journals. Methods has used to collect information- document review, archival investigation, representative themes, that were found across collected documents, and analysed. In this study, Indian Knowledge System has been analysed deeply. The content of each document has reviewed in detail by the researchers.

### **The historical context of the Indian Knowledge System:**

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) evolved over millennia within a rich historical and cultural context. Rooted in the Vedic period (c. 1500 BCE), it developed through oral traditions such as the Vedas, Upanishads, and later texts like the Smritis, Puranas, and philosophical darśanas. Ancient universities like Takshashila and Nalanda institutionalized knowledge across disciplines including philosophy, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, linguistics, and ethics. During the medieval period, IKS interacted with Islamic scholarship, enriching science, art, and administration. Colonial rule disrupted indigenous systems by privileging Western epistemology, yet post-independence India has sought to revive and integrate IKS. Today, IKS is viewed as a holistic, value-based framework linking knowledge, practice, and societal well-being.

### **Atmanirbhar Bharat:**

Atmanirbhar Bharat launched in 2020 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it is a national campaign to promote self-reliance in india, emphasizing a vision of a new india that is resilient, competitive and better integrated into the global economy. The mission is supported by a large economic stimulus package and is built on five key pillars: Economy, Infrastructure, Systems (technology-driven arrangements), Vibrant Demography, and Demand.

In the Atmanirbhar approach, the focus is on making India self-reliant and self-sufficient in all aspects, thereby reducing our dependence on imports from other nations by increasing our capacity to produce locally, most of the items. However, to achieve this result, one must focus on improving the ‘Ease of Doing Business in India’; that is essential to realize this vision of Atmanirbhar.

### **Practicing Ancient Wisdom in Modern Era:**

It involves integrating timeless principles of the Indian Knowledge System—such as holistic living, ethical conduct (dharma), sustainability, and experiential learning—into contemporary life. Practices like yoga, Ayurveda, mindfulness, and value-based education promote physical health, mental well-being, and social harmony. Ancient insights into ecology, community living, and self-discipline address modern challenges such as stress, environmental degradation, and moral decline. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes blending traditional knowledge with modern science to create responsible, innovative citizens. Thus, ancient wisdom remains relevant by guiding balanced development and inclusive progress in a globalized world.

### **Ancient Wisdom in Constructing Atmanirbhar Bharat:**

Ancient Wisdom in Constructing *Atmanirbhar Bharat* lies in revitalizing India’s indigenous knowledge systems to foster self-reliance rooted in sustainability, ethics, and innovation. Traditional concepts such as *Swadeshi*, *Dharma*, *Lokasangraha*, and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* emphasize self-sufficiency, social responsibility, and collective welfare. Ancient practices in agriculture, Ayurveda, metallurgy, mathematics, and local craftsmanship support sustainable livelihoods and decentralized economies. Integrating these with modern science, technology, and education—as envisioned in NEP 2020—strengthens human capital, cultural confidence, and economic resilience. Thus, ancient wisdom provides a civilizational foundation for an inclusive, innovative, and self-reliant India aligned with global progress.

### **Core Elements of the IKS towards Atmanirbhar Bharat:**

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) represents a comprehensive and holistic epistemological framework developed over thousands of years, encompassing philosophy, science, technology, ethics, and social organization. One of the central objectives of Atmanirbhar Bharat—self-reliant and sustainable national development—finds strong philosophical and practical support within the core elements of IKS.

A fundamental element of IKS is its holistic worldview, which perceives knowledge as an integrated whole rather than fragmented disciplines. The Indian philosophical traditions, particularly the Upanishadic and Vedantic schools, emphasize the unity of knowledge (*jnana*), action (*karma*), and values (*dharma*). This integrated perspective supports self-reliance by promoting balanced human development—intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual—which is essential for building responsible and capable citizens (Radhakrishnan, 1951).

Another key element is indigenous scientific and technological knowledge. Traditional Indian contributions in mathematics, metallurgy, architecture, astronomy, agriculture, and medicine (Ayurveda) demonstrate a long-standing tradition of innovation rooted in local needs and resources. These knowledge traditions promote *Swadeshi* (local production) and sustainability, which align directly with the economic and technological self-sufficiency envisioned under *Atmanirbhar Bharat* (Dharampal, 2000).

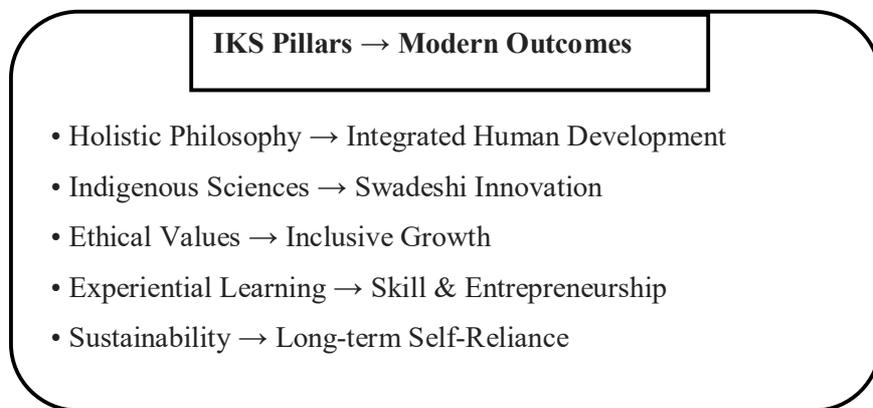
Ethical and value-based foundations form a crucial pillar of IKS. Concepts such as *dharma* (righteous duty), *lokasangraha* (social welfare), and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world as one family) encourage social responsibility, inclusive growth, and collective well-being. Such ethical orientations are vital for ensuring

that self-reliance does not become isolationist but remains socially and environmentally responsible (Sen, 2005).

The experiential and practice-oriented nature of learning in IKS is another significant element. Knowledge transmission traditionally emphasized observation, apprenticeship (*guru–shishya parampara*), and application, fostering skills, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. This approach directly supports skill development, entrepreneurship, and vocational competence—key requirements for a self-reliant economy (Government of India, 2020).

Finally, the sustainability-oriented worldview of IKS underscores harmony between humans and nature. Traditional ecological knowledge, sustainable agriculture, and resource management practices emphasize conservation and regeneration. This ecological wisdom supports sustainable development models essential for long-term national self-reliance (Sharma, 2015).

Thus, the core elements of the Indian Knowledge System—holistic knowledge, indigenous science, ethical values, experiential learning, and sustainability—collectively provide a strong intellectual and cultural foundation for realizing the vision of *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.



### Indian Knowledge System (IKS)- Based Initiatives for Achieving Atmanirbhar Bharat

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) has increasingly informed policy and practical initiatives to realize the vision of *Atmanirbhar Bharat*. These initiatives span multiple dimensions, integrating traditional knowledge with contemporary frameworks to promote self-reliance across education, health, agriculture, industry, research, and innovation.

**Education:** The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes incorporating Indian knowledge traditions, including philosophy, mathematics, arts, and environmental studies, into school and higher education curricula. Establishment of IKS cells in universities promotes research, interdisciplinary learning, and skill development, fostering intellectual self-reliance and nurturing future innovators (Government of India, 2020; UGC, 2023).

**Health and Medicine:** Traditional systems of medicine under the AYUSH framework—Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy—have been institutionalized to enhance healthcare self-reliance. Standardization, research, and global dissemination of these systems reduce dependency on external medical frameworks and support employment and wellness initiatives (Patwardhan, 2014).

**Agriculture and Sustainability:** Indigenous agricultural practices such as organic farming, mixed cropping, rainwater harvesting, and soil conservation are being promoted for ecological balance and food security. These practices, rooted in traditional ecological knowledge, encourage sustainable livelihoods and long-term self-reliance in resource management (Sharma, 2015).

**Industry and Local Economy:** Initiatives like *Vocal for Local* and *One District One Product (ODOP)* aim to revitalize traditional crafts, local manufacturing, and agricultural products. These programs encourage decentralized production, enhance rural livelihoods, and reinforce the Swadeshi philosophy, contributing to a self-reliant national economy (NITI Aayog, 2021).

**Research and Innovation:** Indian Knowledge System-oriented research centers and initiatives, including the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), facilitate documentation, protection, and application of indigenous knowledge. These initiatives enhance intellectual property rights, prevent bio-piracy, and foster indigenous innovation, thereby strengthening India's global knowledge presence (WIPO, 2018; UGC, 2023).

**Technology and Modern Applications:** Integration of IKS with modern science and technology—such as Ayurvedic biotech, yoga-based wellness apps, and herbal formulations—promotes indigenous innovation while ensuring that traditional wisdom remains relevant in contemporary technological and entrepreneurial contexts (Patwardhan, 2014; NITI Aayog, 2021).

Collectively, these multi-dimensional initiatives demonstrate that IKS is a dynamic framework contributing to *Atmanirbhar Bharat* not only as a philosophical or cultural resource but also as a practical tool for self-reliance. By linking ancient wisdom to modern applications, these initiatives enable sustainable, inclusive, and knowledge-driven development across sectors.

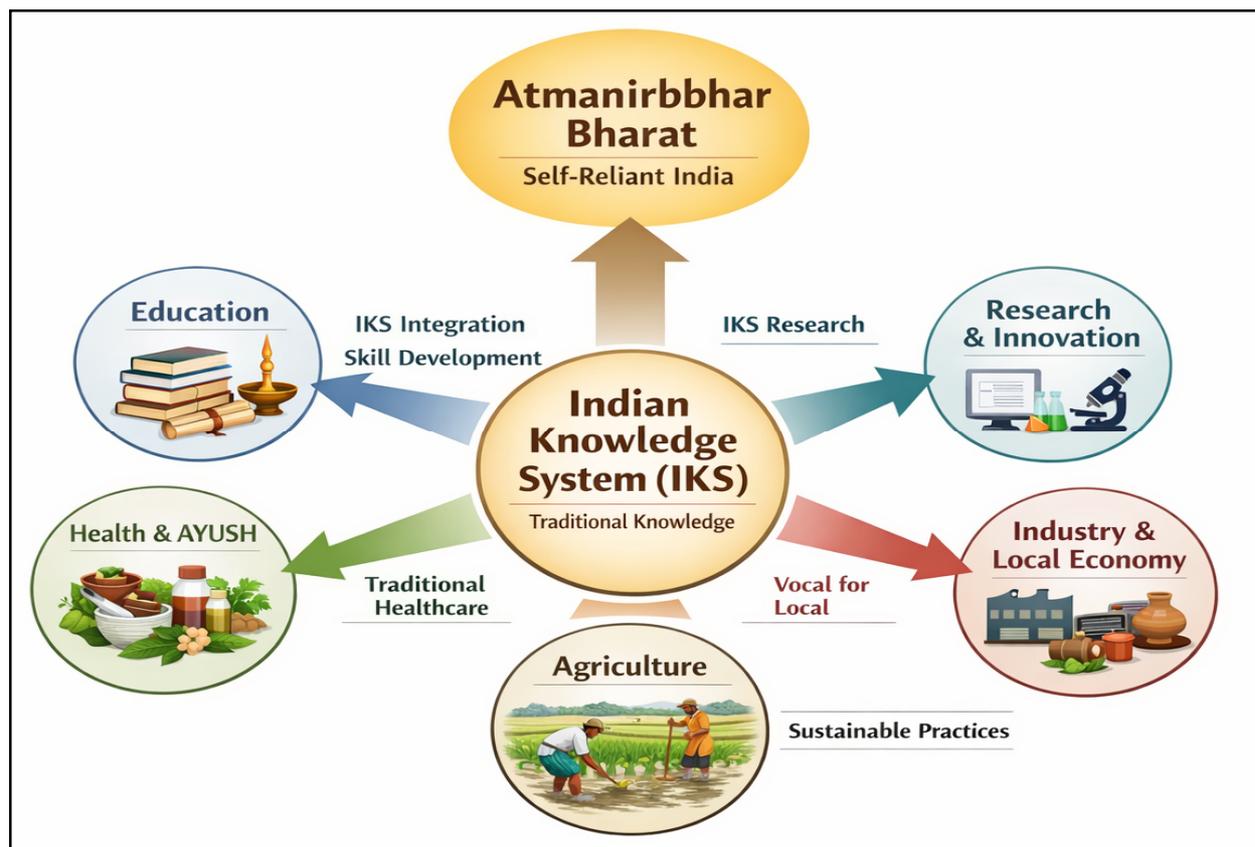
## Findings:

### Objective 1:

The study reveals that the core elements of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) strongly support *Atmanirbhar Bharat*. Holistic knowledge integrates intellectual, moral, and spiritual development, fostering responsible citizens (Radhakrishnan, 1951). Indigenous science and technology, including mathematics, medicine, and metallurgy, promote innovation and self-sufficiency (Dharampal, 2000). Ethical values such as *dharma* and *lokasangraha* guide social responsibility and inclusive growth (Sen, 2005). Experiential, practice-based learning develops skills and creativity, while sustainability-oriented principles ensure ecological balance (Sharma, 2015). Collectively, these elements provide a comprehensive framework for self-reliant, innovative, and socially responsible nation-building.

### Objective 2:

The study finds that multiple IKS-based initiatives contribute to *Atmanirbhar Bharat* across diverse sectors. In education, IKS integration and university cells enhance research and skills (Government of India, 2020; UGC, 2023). Health initiatives like AYUSH strengthen indigenous healthcare (Patwardhan, 2014). In agriculture, traditional ecological practices promote sustainability (Sharma, 2015). Programs such as *Vocal for Local* and *ODOP* support industry and local economies (NITI Aayog, 2021). Research and innovation are reinforced through TKDL and IKS centers (WIPO, 2018). Integration with modern technology fosters indigenous innovations, entrepreneurship, and self-reliance.



### Conclusion:

The integration of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into modern frameworks demonstrates its enduring relevance. By leveraging traditional wisdom in education, health, agriculture, industry, and innovation, India can achieve sustainable self-reliance. IKS not only fosters economic and technological independence but also nurtures ethical, social, and ecological responsibility, establishing a holistic pathway toward a resilient and Atmanirbhar Bharat.

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