



## Indian Knowledge System as A Pathway to Holistic Development

Supriya Kolya\*<sup>1</sup> & Milan Das\*<sup>2</sup>

1. Postgraduate Student, Department of Education, Midnapore College (Autonomous), Midnapore, West Bengal, India, Mail: [iamsupriyakolya@gmail.com](mailto:iamsupriyakolya@gmail.com)
2. Corresponding Author, Assistant Professor (Cont.), Department of Education, Midnapore College (Autonomous), West Bengal, India, Mail: [milandas721424@gmail.com](mailto:milandas721424@gmail.com)

\*These authors contributed equally to the study.

### Abstract:

*The Indian knowledge system, which sees Intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual development as interrelated, promotes holistic development. This issue examines the theoretical and practical challenges of integrating the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into higher education curricula. This issue highlights traditional knowledge, beliefs, cultural and fundamental practices, and social bonds. This issue examines how essential elements such as yoga, Ayurveda, Vedic mathematics, and Indian philosophy can be incorporated into the contemporary education system, from the corporate sector, to promote a holistic approach to learning. The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) offers a multifaceted pedagogical approach. The findings indicate that implementing IKS concepts can lead to more holistic and sustainable educational institutions. Indian knowledge systems emphasise physical wellness through yoga, Ayurveda, martial arts, and other practices that promote strength, balance, and a healthy lifestyle. They see the body as an essential tool for learning and emphasise discipline, a healthy lifestyle, and harmony with nature. Indian knowledge systems place special emphasis on self-realisation, meditation, and introspection as means of spiritual development. They emphasise an ethical lifestyle, peace, and the interdependence of the individual and the social consciousness.*

**Keywords:** Education Reforms, Holistic Development, Indian Knowledge Systems, Sustainable Development.

### 1. Introduction:

The physical, mental, spiritual and cognitive aspects of human development are integrated into a rich and comprehensive intellectual tradition known as the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). Its origins are found in the cultural practices and concepts of ancient India. Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedic mathematics and Indian philosophy are examples of traditional knowledge that have recently seen a resurgence in popularity. However, there are both theoretical benefits and practical challenges associated with integrating IKS into higher education programmes. These include curriculum integration, pedagogical adaptation, value

inculcation and the integration of traditional knowledge with modern academic standards. This article examines how IKS explores its importance as a means to achieve meaningful and holistic development.

This system is not limited to religious or spiritual practices; instead, it has created a holistic philosophy of life that encompasses all areas of science, education, health, philosophy, ethics, social order, environmental consciousness, and the arts. The relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems in modern education and development policy is increasing day by day. The inclusion of IKS in the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) further clarifies the importance of this issue. In today's world, when stress, environmental crises, moral degradation, and social isolation are on the rise, Indian Knowledge Systems can show the way to sustainable, human-centred development. This knowledge system not only makes people skilled or productive, but also helps develop them into conscious, responsible, and value-conscious people. Therefore, it can be said that Indian Knowledge Systems is a powerful pathway to holistic development, which creates a bridge between the inner growth of the individual and the overall well-being of society. By combining IKS with modern knowledge, it is possible to build a balanced, ethical and sustainable future.

## **2. Review of the Research Related Literature:**

**2.1. Baral, S. (2024)** conducted a study on “INCORPORATING INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM FOR HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH NEP 2020”. Discussion of Indian knowledge systems in the NEP 2020 education framework suggests a comprehensive approach. The article highlights traditional knowledge, values, cultural and fundamental practices, and social bonds. The research highlights the value of promoting inclusive, culturally grounded, holistic education and shows how integrating IKS into the curriculum can enhance creativity and critical thinking. Baral advocates for more inclusive educational programs that honour India's rich cultural heritage and prepare the next generation for the challenges facing the world.

**2.2. Ram, T. A., Netto, G. S (2024).** Conducted a study on “INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM: IN THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES”. Indian knowledge systems, including traditional practices, indigenous technologies, and holistic approaches, reflect the interrelated knowledge of diverse Indian communities. This article examines the potential of IKS as a tool for holistic intelligence in education. This study examines the opportunities and challenges of integrating IKS and explores how it can be used across different educational contexts. This study highlights a paradigm shift in education that uses IKS as a catalyst to remove barriers and provide more inclusive, lasting and meaningful educational experiences for all.

**2.3. Lal. K.S. et al. (2024) conducted** a study on “INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS CHALLENGES AND ITS APPLICATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT”. Indian knowledge systems are a storehouse of indigenous and traditional knowledge. IKS offers a multifaceted perspective on education. Ancient Indian philosophy, mathematics, linguistics, medicine, and ecological consciousness served as the foundation for this essay. This research examines the theoretical and practical difficulties of incorporating IKS into higher education curricula. This study highlights possible ways to encourage sustainable growth.

**2.4. Yadav, N. (2024)** Conducted a study on “IMPORTANCE OF SANSKRIT MANTRAS AND ANCIENT INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”. In the era of growth in Indian knowledge systems, people need to keep in mind the significance of prayer, mantras, yoga, meditation, sanskar, and spiritual faith. This topic examines how essential components such as the Veda, Puranas, Upanishads, Yoga, Mantra, Ayurveda, Astrology, and Meditation can be integrated into the contemporary educational system. According to Yadav, our ancient knowledge system has several Sanskrit mantras that follow certain routines, such as walking in the morning or going to bed. This study emphasises the significance of Indian knowledge systems and sanskar mantras for process and sustainable development systems.

**2.5. Geetha, R. K.& Devaki, N. (2022)** Conducted a study on “EMBRACING INDIAN VALUES: UNVEILING THE PATH TO HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT”. Indian principles are very important for promoting holistic development, which includes spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical development. This article explores the transforming power of the complex tapestry of Indian ethos on both individuals and societies. To promote holistic growth, this essay advocates incorporating Indian principles across various aspects of life. To ensure sustainable growth, this paper emphasises the importance of respecting moral commitments and principles.

**2.6. Swain, C. B. (2025)** Conducted a study on “THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM: A HOLISTIC PARADIGM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”. Indian knowledge systems, rooted in ancient intellectual traditions, offer a distinctive, comprehensive framework for understanding the intertwined nature of human and natural systems. This essay examines the applicability of Indian knowledge systems to sustainable development. This work demonstrates our capacity to tackle the intricate problems of the Anthropocene. This article explores the core ideas of the Indian knowledge system, including the necessity of self-realisation, the interdependence of all living things, and living in peace with nature.

### **3. Research Questions:**

**3.1.** What is the role of Indian knowledge systems in promoting holistic development across physical domains?

**3.2.** What is the role of Indian knowledge systems in promoting holistic development across spiritual domains?

### **4. Research Objectives:**

**4.1.** To analyse the role of Indian knowledge systems in promoting holistic development across physical domains.

**4.2.** To analyse the role of Indian knowledge systems in promoting holistic development across spiritual domains.

### **5. Research Methodology:**

The present paper employs a qualitative, descriptive research design to examine the role of Indian knowledge systems in promoting holistic development. Relevant books, research articles, and policy documents were reviewed to understand the core concepts of IKS. Secondary data were collected from reputable academic sources to identify significant difficulties related to the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of growth. This strategy helped me gain a thorough understanding of how IKS might be used in contemporary educational settings.

### **6. Analysis and Interpretation**

**Objective 1. To analyse the role of Indian knowledge systems in promoting holistic development across physical domains.**

Indian knowledge systems emphasise that overall well-being depends on a healthy body. Ancient customs, traditional sciences, and cultural disciplines that view the mind, body, and spirit as interrelated serve as the foundation for physical growth in IKS.

## **A. Ayurveda (Maintaining physical health and balance)**

Preserving balance and physical health, Ayurveda emphasises preventive healthcare, a balanced diet, and lifestyle modification to promote physical well-being. It places a strong emphasis on dosha balance, which supports immunity, strength and healthy bodily functions. Healthy physical habits are guided by methods such as ritucharya (seasonal routine) and dinacharya (daily routine). This study mentioned the eight parts of Ayurveda that are-

### **I. Kaya Chikitsa (Internal Medicine)**

Kaya Chikitsa focuses on maintaining health by balancing *Agni*, the body's digestive and metabolic fire. Since disturbed Agni is considered the root cause of most diseases, this branch treats common internal disorders, including fever, digestive problems, respiratory issues, skin diseases, and joint disorders, through dietary regulation, lifestyle correction, herbal medicines, and detoxification therapies. Its foundation lies mainly in the *Charaka Samhita*.

### **II. Baala Chikitsa (Paediatrics)**

Baala Chikitsa, also known as Kaumarbhritya, deals with the health and diseases of infants and children. It addresses issues such as growth, nutrition, immunity, digestion, and developmental disorders while keeping children's delicate physiology in mind. This branch also covers maternal health, breastfeeding, and childcare practices, drawing heavily from the *Kashyapa Samhita*.

### **III. Graha Chikitsa (Psychology / Psychiatry)**

Graha Chikitsa deals with mental and psychosomatic disorders where the mind plays a central role in illness. It emphasises healing through herbs, diet, mantra therapy, yoga, pranayama, meditation, and behavioural discipline. Rather than only treating symptoms, this branch aims to restore mental balance and emotional well-being.

### **IV. Urdhvaanga (Shalaky) Chikitsa (ENT & Ophthalmology)**

Shalaky Chikitsa focuses on diseases occurring above the clavicle, including disorders of the eyes, ears, nose, throat, mouth, and head. It includes specialised treatments such as eye therapies, nasal cleansing, ear care, and oral health management. This branch is well described in the *Sushruta Samhita* and combines local therapies with herbal formulations.

### **V. Shalya Chikitsa (Surgery)**

Shalya Chikitsa is the surgical branch of Ayurveda, pioneered by Acharya Sushruta. It includes procedures for treating tumours, wounds, fractures, haemorrhoids, urinary stones, and cosmetic defects. This branch also describes surgical instruments, anaesthesia, pre- and post-operative care, and knowledge of vital points (*marma*), showing the advanced surgical understanding of ancient Ayurveda.

### **VI. Damstra (Agada) Chikitsa (Toxicology)**

Damstra Chikitsa deals with poisoning caused by animal bites, plants, metals, contaminated food, water, and air. It emphasises early diagnosis, antidotes, detoxification, and preventive measures. This branch also recognises environmental pollution as a form of toxicity, highlighting Ayurveda's concern for ecological and public health.

## **VII. Rasayana / Jara Chikitsa (Geriatrics & Rejuvenation)**

Rasayana or Jara Chikitsa focuses on ageing, degeneration, longevity, and rejuvenation. It promotes immunity, vitality, memory, and overall quality of life through herbal medicines, diet, and ethical conduct (*Acharya Rasayana*). By balancing doshas and strengthening Agni, this branch supports preventive healthcare and healthy ageing.

## **VIII. Vrsha (Vajikarana) Chikitsa (Aphrodisiac Therapy)**

Vajikarana Chikitsa aims at improving reproductive health, fertility, and sexual vitality in both men and women. It deals with disorders like infertility, sexual dysfunction, and weakness of reproductive tissues through specific diets, lifestyle guidance, and herbal formulations. The goal is not only pleasure but also healthy progeny and physical strength.

### **B. Yoga (Building strength, flexibility and vitality)**

Increasing vitality, strength, and flexibility through asanas that strengthen muscles, increase circulation, improve flexibility, and improve posture, yoga encourages physical fitness. Pranayama energises the body and increases lung capacity. Additionally, it lessens the negative physical consequences of stress, increasing overall endurance and stamina.

#### **a) Traditional Martial Arts**

Agility, balance, coordination and physical discipline are all improved by these approaches. Through organised training, they develop physical resilience, strength, and reflexes.

#### **b) Classical Indian sports and physical culture**

Traditional Indian physical culture and sports, such as Mallakhamba, kabaddi, kushti, and traditional games, are examples of activities that improve body coordination, teamwork, and cardiovascular endurance. They are intended to improve mental attentiveness and physical strength.

#### **c) Diet and lifestyle practice**

Nutrition and way of life, natural, sattvic (pure) nutrition, which promotes a healthy metabolic and physical equilibrium, is the focus of Indian food sciences. Use of herbs and spices (turmeric, Ginger, Tulsi) enhances immunity and physical health.

As per NITI Aayog, it facilitates the integration of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy). The Ministry of Ayush is to develop policy inputs aligned with the National Health Policy 2017 and to strengthen AYUSH integration to support national goals such as Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

### **Interpretation:**

The researchers interpret that Indian knowledge systems promote holistic physical development through a unique combination of Ayurveda, yoga, Traditional sports, a balanced diet, and nature-aligned living.

### **Objectives 2. To analyse the role of Indian knowledge systems in promoting Holistic Development across spiritual domains.**

This study analyses these objectives based on the book 'The Spiritual Heritage of India' by Swami Prabhavananda. The book is divided into 5 major parts/books and about 25 chapters of the Pathway to

Holistic Development. The chapters that discuss aspects of spiritual domains are examined below according to thematic levels-

### **Book 1: Vedas and Upanishads:**

The earliest Indian spiritual concepts are explained in this section. The Vedas introduce the concepts of sacred order (RTA), spiritual discipline, and the pursuit of a deeper reality beneath existence. The Upanishads extend this concept by stating that the essence of a human being (Atman) is identical with the universal reality (Brahman). Self-realisation, inner purity, disciplined thought, and freedom from ignorance are all considered aspects of spiritual development. Here, spirituality is not ritual-based; it is an interior awakening that occurs through knowledge, meditation, and ethical behaviour.

### **Book 2: Auxiliary scriptures-Gita, Puranas, Smriti:**

This section emphasises the usefulness of spirituality. Texts like the Bhagavad Gita show how spiritual life can be experienced in everyday activities through selfless deed (karma yoga), devotion (bhakti yoga) and disciplined meditation (dhyāna yoga). The Puranas and Smritis demonstrate how spiritual values, such as truthfulness, compassion, nonviolence, temperance, and duty, form a person's character and direct society's moral order. Spiritual growth is regarded here as balancing thinking, emotion, and conduct so that persons grow in inner stability and moral clarity.

### **Book-4: The six systems of Indian philosophy:**

This section discusses the philosophical underpinnings of spiritual development. Samkhya distinguishes between the eternal Self and material nature, teaching liberation through discrimination and awareness. Yoga describes spiritual discipline through eight steps: right conduct, posture, breath control, sense withdrawal, focus, meditation, and absorption, showing how the mind becomes peaceful and transparent. Vedanta says that spiritual fulfilment comes from comprehending the unity of the self and the Absolute. All six systems depict spirituality as a logical path: cleaning the mind, acquiring insight, conquering ignorance, and experiencing inner freedom.

### **Book 5: Lives and Teachings of Great Teachers:**

The lives of notable Indian teachers, such as Sankara, Ramanuja, and others, are used in this section to illustrate spirituality. Their experiences demonstrate how spiritual revelation transforms a person's personality, bringing clarity, humility, strength, and compassion. The section clarifies that spirituality is a lived experience as much as an intellectual concept. The conduct of these teachers displays the traits of an enlightened mind: detachment, great joy, fearlessness, and service to humanity. One of the great teachers, Gaudapada, is the first historic philosopher of the system of Vedanta. Then, Samkara is the primary propounder of Advaita Vedanta. The author mentioned 11 great exponents, created to increase knowledge.

Indian knowledge systems view spirituality as an essential dimension of human growth. IKS defines spirituality as self-awareness, inner peace, ethical living and connection to the universe, in contrast to solely religious or ceremonial knowledge. IKS fosters profound spiritual growth through its intellectual, cultural, and practical traditions.

#### **a) Self-realisation and philosophical traditions:**

Understanding the self and the nature of reality is emphasised in Indian philosophies, including Vedanta, Sankhya, Yoga, Buddhism and Jainism. Spiritual development is enhanced by these traditions, which promote critical thinking, introspection, and inner awakening.

**b) Yoga and meditation for inner harmony:**

Inner harmony through yoga, meditation, pranayama, mindful practices, and dhyana helps people achieve emotional equilibrium, mental clarity, and tranquillity.

**c) Ayurveda and mind, body, spirit balance:**

According to Ayurveda, health is a state of harmony between the body, mind and spirit. By coordinating everyday routine with moral and spiritual principles such as moderation, serenity, and purity, it fosters holistic well-being.

**d) Values, Ethics and Dharma:**

Dharma, ethics, and values: IKS advocates moral values such as karuna, satya, ahimsa, and Dharma. These principles direct people towards moral behaviour and spiritual development.

**e) Ritual and cultural practices:**

Cultural customs and rituals, prayers, chanting, festivals, and sacred arts are examples of traditions that foster a sense of community, peace, thankfulness, and connection. They foster a sense of group consciousness and spiritual identity.

**d) Nature-centred wisdom:**

IKS emphasise respect for the natural world and the interconnectedness of all living things. This ecological spirituality promotes environmental peace, humanity and respect.

**Interpretation:**

The researcher interprets that Indian knowledge systems promote spiritual development by encouraging self-awareness, ethical living, meditation, and harmony with nature.

**7. Major Findings:**

7.1. Indian Knowledge System (IKS) provides a multi-dimensional learning approach for the all-round development of students.

7.2. Elements of IKS like Yoga, Ayurveda and Vedic Mathematics significantly enhance physical, cognitive and mental development.

7.3. The incorporation of IKS helps in building social peace, moral values and cultural identity.

7.4. The implementation of IKS in higher education can be possible if training and curriculum issues are addressed.

**8. Conclusion:**

The Indian Knowledge System provides a solid foundation for holistic and long-lasting education. By combining academic pursuits with physical fitness, mental balance, and spiritual awareness, IKS helps build healthy individuals who can contribute effectively to society. The long-term benefits of integrating IKS into higher education include improved mental and physical well-being, connection to cultural roots, ethical awareness, and the development of sustainable lifestyles. Although there are challenges in its implementation, it remains a viable and promising idea for education reform.

In addition, IKS plays an important role in developing students' self-control, a sense of social responsibility, and human values . The proper integration of traditional knowledge systems with modern science and technology can guide future generations towards a more conscious, ethical, and balanced lifestyle. Therefore, the combination of IKS with modern education points to a revolutionary path to the development of conscious, socially responsible human resources.

### **Bibliography:**

- Nida, & Khan, R. (2025). The Indian knowledge systems and their role in physical, Mental, and spiritual well-being. In *Educreator Research journal*: Vol. 12(Issue 11), pp 34-45.
- Kappor, K., & Singh, A. K. (Eds.). (2005). *Indian knowledge systems*. Indian institute of advantage study.
- Baral, S. Incorporating Indian knowledge systems for holistic development through NEP 2020
- Lal, K. S., et al. (2024). Indian knowledge systems challenges and their application in Higher Education for sustainable future Development.
- Ram, T. A., Netto, G. S. (2024). *Indian knowledge systems: In the global perspectives*.
- Yadav, N. (2022). The importance of Sanskrit mantras and ancient Indian knowledge systems for sustainable development.
- Geetha, R. K.& Devaki, N. (2017). *Embracing Indian values: Unveiling the path to Holistic Development*.
- Swain, C. B. (2025). *The Indian knowledge systems: A Holistic paradigm for Sustainable Development*.

**Citation:** Kolya. S. & Das. M., (2026) “Indian Knowledge System as A Pathway to Holistic Development”, *Bharati International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development (BIJMRD)*, Vol-4, Issue-03(2), March-2026.