



Role of Indigenous Pedagogical Practices to Preserve the Indian Knowledge System (IKS)

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Abstract:

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS), rooted in the country's ancient philosophy, science, and culture, is still recognised in contemporary discourse. IKS is slowly fading away because of modernization and non-inclusion in the formal educational curriculum. Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems within educational programs is highlighted in the newly developed National Education Policy (NEP) of India, introduced in 2020. The present study aims to explore the role of indigenous pedagogical practices in preserving IKS. The study makes use of a qualitative research design, which involves literature reviews and analysis of conventional practices. The findings show that these pedagogical practices not only facilitate the transmission of knowledge but also promote value based education, cultural identity, and practical life skills. The study concludes that integrating indigenous pedagogies into the formal education system is essential for the preservation and promotion of IKS, ensuring cultural continuity and sustainable development.

Keywords: Indigenous Pedagogical Practices, IKS, Sustainability, Life skills, Panchpadi.

Introduction:

सहनाववतु।सहनौभुनक्तु।सहवीर्यकरवावहै।तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तुमाविद्विषावहै॥ॐसहनाववतु।सहनौभुनक्तु।सहवीर्यकरवावहै।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तुमाविद्विषावहै॥ॐशान्तिःशान्तिःशान्तिः॥ (तैत्तिरीयोपनिषदि)The Bhartiya approach is sustainable and aims to promote the well-being of everyone. Regaining our heritage's extensive knowledge system and showcasing the "Indian way" of doing things to the world are crucial. This calls for educating future generations of experts who will demonstrate to the world the distinctiveness and uniqueness of our ancient civilisation's way of life.The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is an ancient yet highly relevant framework for intellectual activities that has evolved over thousands of years.IKS emphasises the connection between education and the moral, intellectual, ecological, and spiritual aspects of life."The rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian Knowledge and thought has been a guiding light for this Policy. The pursuit of knowledge (Jana), Wisdom (Pragyaa) and truth (Satya) was always considered in Indian thought and philosophy as the highest human goal" (NEP 2020).As globalisation and Western epistemologies dominate academic discourse, there is growing recognition of the importance of reviving indigenous knowledge systems, especially in education and pedagogy.The IKS will be scientifically included in school and higher education curricula. This would encompass tribal knowledge, indigenous and traditional modes of learning, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, yoga, architecture, medicine, agriculture, engineering, languages,

literature, sports, games, government, politics, and conservation. Specific courses on tribal ethno-medicinal techniques, forest management, traditional (organic) agricultural cultivation, natural farming, and other topics will also be offered. This rich legacy of timeless Indian knowledge and philosophy is acknowledged as a guiding element in the NEP, 2020. Jnana, Vignana, and Jeevan Darshan make up the Indian Knowledge Systems, which have developed from experimentation, observation, experience, and thorough analysis.

Reviews of the Research Related Literature

Kumari & Niyogi (2025) conducted a qualitative study on “The Indian Knowledge System and Indigenous Pedagogies: A Historical and Contemporary Review”. This study examines how classical pedagogies, such as guru-sisya paramparā and dialogic learning methods (sanvāda), can be adapted to modern education systems, especially in light of changes. The paper argues for an interdisciplinary, inclusive, and morally oriented approach to IKS, positioning it as a dynamic framework with significant educational implications for Sustainability and knowledge systems around the world. **Singh & Reyhner (2013)** conducted a qualitative study on “Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogy for Indigenous Children”. Indigenous students worldwide face a lack of respect for their human rights and academic success due to educational system failures. Academic achievement and desire for traditional colonial education have been lacking among students. In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which highlighted this failure. This study reviews the literature on how using Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in schools can improve Indigenous children’s education. It also includes examples of how the United States and India have supported Indigenous educational rights, which are now recognised by the UN. **Mehta & Singh (2024)** conducted a qualitative study on “An Exploration of the Indian Knowledge System: Roots, Significance, and Contemporary Relevance”. This study dives into the substance of IKS, highlighting its historical development, distinguishing characteristics, and relevance in modern societal and educational situations. Using a combination of historical research and contemporary evaluation, the study demonstrates the robustness and usefulness of IKS in modern frameworks such as the National Education Policy 2020. This study illustrates how IKS can address global concerns such as sustainability and holistic education by combining traditional wisdom with modern advancements. **Meitei & Meitei (2024)** conducted a qualitative study on “Integrating IKS and Pedagogical Approaches Inspired by IKS into Modern Curriculum”. This study suggests that integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems into modern curricula is vital to creating inclusive and relevant education for all students. By embracing IKS and adopting pedagogical approaches inspired by these systems, educators can enhance students’ learning experiences and foster respect for diverse perspectives. Overcoming challenges through targeted strategies will facilitate a more holistic educational framework, honour Indigenous knowledge and promote sustainability and cultural understanding. **Dey (2025)** conducted a qualitative study on “Indian Knowledge Systems and Its Pedagogical Intervention in Higher Education”. This research examines how the Indian Knowledge System might be integrated into higher education using instructional strategies that promote critical thinking and deep insights. This research focuses on integrating Indian knowledge systems into higher education through pedagogical interventions. Educators should be encouraged to teach these courses engagingly to ensure retention beyond the classroom. Higher education institutions play a crucial role in developing culturally aware and reliable individuals who drive India’s progress as a knowledge society. **Baral (2024)** conducted a qualitative study on “Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems for Holistic Development through NEP 2020”. This study aims to integrate IKS perspectives across disciplines, encouraging research and innovation, offering experiential learning, partnering with knowledge holders, and increasing faculty capacity. Key challenges include curricula. Efforts include teacher training, addressing prejudices, balancing tradition and modernity, promoting diversity, maintaining academic rigour, and collaborating across disciplines. To successfully integrate IKS, strategies include comprehensive curriculum design, teacher training, collaborative research, engaging teaching materials, establishing centres of excellence, leveraging technology, raising awareness, fostering interdisciplinary partnerships, ensuring inclusive implementation,

and continuous evaluation and refinement. A collaborative method can help learners gain holistic knowledge, cultural identity, and essential skills for the 21st century. **Vageeshan & Kamalakar (2025)** conducted a qualitative study on “Integrating Indian Knowledge System in Education: A Study of Government Reforms”. This study evaluates the ability of IKS to promote intellectual, emotional, and cultural growth. The essay highlights the hurdles of implementing effective reforms, including the need for new teaching methods, teacher training, and infrastructure assistance. This study assesses the role of IKS, which promotes critical thinking, creativity, and meaningful learning, preparing students to become global citizens. Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) promotes research to address societal challenges. IKS, rooted in Vedic literature such as the Vedas and Upanishads, is ready for integration into educational systems. A teacher training and mentoring development strategy is being implemented to enhance the quality of teaching in IKS classrooms. Teachers will receive specialised training on certain Indian knowledge themes. **Gupta & Dhingra (2025)** conducted a qualitative study on “Ancient Wisdom, Modern Learning: Harmonising Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) Into Contemporary Education”. Indian Knowledge Systems embrace ancient wisdom in subjects like Ayurveda, Vedic mathematics, yoga, and sustainable agriculture. These systems, developed over centuries, provide vital insights into health, mathematics, ecology, and philosophy. This study reviews secondary data from policy documents, academic publications, and empirical investigations to provide a comprehensive roadmap for integrating IKS, and it offers concrete methods for integrating IKS into existing education by analysing future research, teacher training, and global collaboration tactics.

Research Gap

The researcher had found that there is a lesser number of studies on the potential of indigenous pedagogical practices to preserve the IKS in modern classrooms, as the National Education Policy 2020 has given more importance to the integration of the Indian Knowledge System in mainstream education. In fact, less research has been conducted on indigenous knowledge traditions as pedagogical practices, rather more emphasis has been placed on the theoretical and historical constructs of these traditions. Little comparative research has been conducted to assess the effectiveness of indigenous pedagogical practices compared to modern pedagogical practices, and less research has been conducted on indigenous pedagogical practices in various parts of India; rather, more importance has been given to indigenous people as a whole. Overall, the significant gap in previous research lies in the lack of studies that specifically investigate ‘**Role of Indigenous Pedagogical Practices to Preserve the Indian Knowledge System (IKS)**’, taking into account their unique context, challenges, and potential intervention strategies.

Research Question

1. What are the roles of Indigenous Pedagogical Practices to Preserve the Indian Knowledge System (IKS)?

Objective of the Study

1. To explore the roles of Indigenous Pedagogical Practices to Preserve the Indian Knowledge System (IKS).

Methodology

The current study is descriptive and analytic in nature. Primary as well as secondary data sources are collected from the documents in the library and online repositories. The resources used for this research paper have been gathered by analyzing some journals on the Indian Knowledge System, reliable sources of information on IKS from seminars, webinars, and workshops, and a few important articles on Indigenous pedagogies, IKS, and the impact of the same on the contemporary educational system. NEP 2020 and NCFSE 2023 have been analyzed using web sources.

Analysis and Discussion

Objective 1: To explore the roles of Indigenous Pedagogical Practices to preserve the Indian Knowledge System (IKS).

The focus of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is on the understanding of the role of traditional modes of teaching and learning in the preservation of the rich intellectual and cultural heritage of the country. The indigenous modes of teaching-learning are deeply rooted in the traditions, customs, and life of the people in the region. The traditional modes of learning include the mode of learning through the oral transmission of knowledge in the form of stories, chanting, learning through experience, and the GuruShishya mode of learning, wherein the knowledge is transmitted from the teacher's heart directly to the learner's heart in a very personal setting. The Indian Knowledge System refers to a broad spectrum of knowledge areas such as philosophy, medicine, agriculture, arts, architecture, and spirituality. Indigenous pedagogies play an important role in the preservation of knowledge by integrating it with the lived experiences and practices of the people. Indigenous pedagogies are quite different from the formal system of teaching and learning because they do not depend on textbooks and formal curricula. Learning is linked with the environment and the larger society.

Value based Education

माताभूमिःपुत्रोऽहंपृथिव्याः II (Atharva Veda.12.1.12, BhūmiSūkta). It expresses a profound philosophical and ethical relationship between humans and nature, which is central to the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). It emphasises deep emotional and ethical bonding with nature. Valuebased education is a term that refers to a form of education that focuses on developing individuals by incorporating moral values, ethical behaviour, emotional intelligence, and social responsibility into the learning process. The core principles of value-based education encompass moral and ethical development, emotional and social well-being, responsible citizenship, and harmony between the individual and society (Kumari, 2026). Valuebased education plays a vital role in the learner's overall development, as it offers the opportunity to grow in a moral, spiritual, and intellectual manner. On the other hand, the importance of nature lies in its significance for the sustenance of the Indian Knowledge System through the reconnection of the learner with nature, something that has always been integral to the philosophy of India. The Indian way of knowledge recognizes the profound relationship between man and nature. From the values that revolve around nature, students will be able to appreciate life and its creatures, save natural resources, and live in harmony with their environment. Such values are not only preached but also put into practice through the simple acts of nurturing vegetation, minimizing wastage, and recognizing the cycles of the seasons. The inclusion of these principles of nature in education ensures that the Indian Knowledge System is maintained in its dynamic form—living, experiencing, and perpetuating itself through daily practice. Through the link between traditional wisdom and current learning methodologies, value-based education guarantees that the Indian Knowledge System continues to be pertinent and useful. This not only helps in conserving cultural heritage but also enables students to incorporate these values into their lives and lead an ethical life.

Development of Practical Life Skills

Skills related to practical activities like agriculture, farming, craftsmanship, indigenous medicine, and saving water have an important part to play in the sustenance of the Indian Knowledge Tradition since they help knowledge remain connected with day-to-day practical experience. The Indian tradition of knowledge has always had a practical approach, wherein knowledge is acquired by doing and living harmoniously with nature. The focus of IKS was on learning through experience. Whether it was farming, medicine and art. Students learned by doing, not just reading (Puri, 2025).

Agriculture and farming are more than just activities related to economics; they hold ecological wisdom that is embedded within their practices, which include crop rotations and organic farming. The relevance of such

knowledge cannot be underestimated and is important even today when students are taught these aspects of sustainability that promote human-nature interactions. On the other hand, craft skills, including weaving, pottery, and handicrafts, help in developing creativity, patience, and proficiency while sustaining traditional methods and culture. These craft skills also encourage independence and appreciation of physical labour, which form the essential elements of Indian culture. The system of traditional medicine is highly linked to the concept of Ayurveda and promotes the application of herbs, good habits, and precautionary measures. This is because traditional medicine considers health from an integrated perspective encompassing both body and mind. Finally, the practice of water conservation through rainwater harvesting, pond, well, and stepwell utilization demonstrates the scientific and ecological perspective of traditional societies. The development of such practical skills ensures that education becomes purposeful, sustainable, and realistic. It guarantees that not only does the learner acquire knowledge but also becomes an heir to sustainable living. In this regard, the Indian Knowledge System remains alive and vibrant as it is practiced in daily life.

Cultural Aspect

The cultural dimension of education will further promote the Indian Knowledge System by making it more embedded in people's experiences and traditions. It will also help to include regional languages and history in the curriculum so that learners can easily associate their immediate social and cultural environment with their education. The cultural side of education that involves rituals, folklore, and art forms such as 'Patachitra' serves an important role in maintaining the Indian Knowledge System by making sure that the knowledge remains alive. Through folklore, students innately comprehend the importance of values such as honesty, bravery, teamwork, and reverence for nature. Such lore often encompasses a message or knowledge of life, society, and the surroundings, adding relevance to learning. Additionally, folklore sustains cultural heritage, local dialects, and language. It helps learners connect with their history and gain appreciation for the wide variety of Indian culture. Rituals, on the other hand, go beyond religion and hold significant significance in relation to nature, seasons, wellbeing, and social coexistence. Students are able to grasp the significance of tradition when they appreciate rituals. The process of folklore, which entails stories, music, and mythologies, is an effective means of passing down information from one generation to another. Cultural forms like 'Patachitra' include both storytelling and artistic representation to preserve the tales, belief systems, and traditional knowledge of society. Through the practice of such creative activities, learners get more than theoretical information; they get practical experiences too. 'Patachitra' is not just a painting art form but also a tradition of telling stories by using mythological tales, historical incidents, and societal messages in a visualized form. This enables effective transfer of knowledge between different generations through interesting means. Likewise, traditional arts like pottery making, hand-weaving, and other types of craft-making demonstrate knowledge, skills, creativity, and connection with nature. Such types of cultural forms instill the importance of patience, skills, and sustainability in society. In addition, such forms carry traditional knowledge which has been acquired by generations together. Overall, these aspects make learning warm, interesting, and realistic for the learner.

Sustainability

The role of sustainability in education is significant in the development of the Indian Knowledge System by relating the ecological wisdom of the past with the modern education system. Indian knowledge systems have always focused on the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. IKS lays great emphasis on holistic health care that includes physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. One of the oldest forms of medical practices, Ayurveda, focuses on preventive care and natural treatments. The Indian Knowledge System is not only preserved but also actively used to build a more balanced, ethical, and environmentally conscious society.

- **Teachers' Sustainability**

Teachers are role models who demonstrate values such as respect for nature, simplicity, ethical living, and social responsibility, which are embedded in Indian knowledge systems. Teachers, through their teaching styles, help students make links between theory and practice through local knowledge, culture, and experience. They also help in the sustainability of IKS through the promotion of critical thinking, reflection, and application of traditional knowledge in modern times. This is achieved through the promotion of lifelong learning, being flexible, and being committed to the preservation of culture. This, therefore, implies that the sustainability of the Indian Knowledge System, as promoted by the teacher, not only ensures its sustainability but also preserves it for the development of future generations.

- **Students' Sustainability**

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” – Eleanor Roosevelt. The sustainability of students is vital for promoting the Indian Knowledge System, as it will ensure that students take responsibility for preserving and practising indigenous knowledge. If students adopt sustainable attitudes, they will take responsibility for preserving their cultural heritage and practising traditional knowledge. IKS places significant emphasis on holistic health by integrating the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of students. Education helps students learn to respect nature, practice eco-friendly habits, and live a healthy lifestyle, all of which are part of the Indian knowledge system. By assimilating these values and practising them in real-life situations, the students will help to perpetuate the relevance of the Indian Knowledge System and build a sustainable, ethical, and culturally grounded society.

- **Environmental Sustainability**

The Ancient Indian practices focused on living in harmony with nature. The traditional water management practices, agriculture, and architectural designs were made according to the ecosystem. With environmental sustainability in education, students become aware of various practices such as water management, biodiversity, medicinal plants, and sustainable agriculture. These are some of the practices that have been deeply rooted in indigenous knowledge and have helped tackle some of the issues in the environment today. In the modern-day setting, IKS's focus on experiential learning can be adapted for educational reforms. For example, the incorporation of environmental ethics and indigenous practices can be used as a means of promoting a better understanding of sustainability among future generations.

Holistic Development

Indian knowledge traditions have always underscored the fact that “true education is not merely an intellectual exercise, but an inner transformation and self-realisation.” Holistic development is important for maintaining the Indian Knowledge System by developing an individual's complete personality—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. According to Indian philosophy, a human being is made up of his or her body, mind, intellect, and spirit, and education should foster all of these simultaneously. The psychological basis of the Indian traditions can be understood in the following terms: Panchakosha - Annamaya (physical), Pranamaya (energy), Manomaya (mind), Vijnanamaya (intellect), and Anandamaya (inner bliss). When all these levels are cultivated in balance, the person becomes stable, conscious. This idea can be related to the three domains of education. The physical and intellectual layers (Annamaya and Vijnanamaya) can be related to the cognitive domain, where the students will be given knowledge. The emotional and mental layers (Pranamaya and Manomaya) can be related to the affective domain, where the values will be imparted. The acquisition of skills and actions, along with disciplined living, can be related to the psychomotor domain. Finally, the inner peace and self-realization (Anandamaya) can bring harmony between the three domains. In a very human sense, it means educating the ‘whole person.’ It enables children to not only think better but also feel deeply, do better than just act responsibly, and live more meaningfully. These are

traditional ideas in our education system. We are merely updating these ideas to make them relevant to our lives today.

Pedagogical Approaches

The role of pedagogies is very important to preserve the Indian Knowledge System because it is through pedagogies that the student experiences and relates to knowledge. If the pedagogy is relevant and related to life, then traditional knowledge is something that the student lives with. Learning methods like experiential learning enable the students to learn by doing things such as observing nature, learning traditional crafts, or participating in day-to-day activities in the community. It is the Indian way of learning by experiencing things instead of memorizing them. The role of the different pedagogical approaches recommended in the 'National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023' is also significant in the maintenance and sustenance of the Indian Knowledge System by making the learning process more "real-life" and "culturally" relevant. The concept of 'Panchpadi' (Aditi, Bodh, Abhyas, Prayog, and Prasara) (NCFSE 2023) is all about promoting the idea of natural ways of learning, from experience to reflection, understanding, application, and finally internalization. This is how knowledge has traditionally been imparted in our country, not just through text, but through living, doing, and thinking. This helps students develop an inner connection with what is being learned, as opposed to just rote-learning. The concept of learning outside the classroom is facilitated by community engagement. Through community engagement, students learn outside the classroom and in real life. When students engage with the community, such as with the artisans, farmers, elderly persons, and cultural practitioners, they learn in real life. On the other hand, collective learning embodies the Indian tradition of learning collectively or together, as characterized by discussion, cooperation, and collective responsibility. Collective learning creates a sense of belonging and harmony while promoting knowledge development. In a simple sense, these pedagogical methods make education more alive, connected, and meaningful. These methods enable students to acquire knowledge, respect, practice, and propagate the richness of Indian traditions, thereby making the Indian knowledge system thrive.

Policy Perspectives

The Indian Knowledge System can be preserved effectively through the formulation of policies that provide direction, status, and position to it within the educational framework. With the explicit inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems in policies, it is regarded as an important element of education. NPE 1986 policy, among others, placed importance on education for national integration and diversity in India because there is no doubt that culture and traditions are important ingredients in society building. Policy frameworks such as NEP 2020 focus on embedding Indian values, language, art, and local knowledge into the curriculum. Through this, it becomes possible for students to relate their cultures to what is taught in school. It is an effort to encourage students to learn regional languages that embody great traditional knowledge. Furthermore, these policies facilitate the training of teachers, the development of curricula, and the conducting of research based on the traditional knowledge systems of India. These policies ensure that indigenous knowledge is not forgotten but continues to evolve. Overall, policies function as a solid base. It provides an atmosphere that allows for valuing and practicing one's own culture with confidence on the part of students, teachers, and community members. As a result, the Indian Knowledge System will not be confined to books only but will be alive.

Conclusion

The survival of Indian Knowledge Systems can be ensured through the incorporation of its values, beliefs, traditions, and teachings in all areas of education. This can be done through methods like value based learning, integration of culture, sustainability, and practical life skills development. These practices help knowledge go beyond mere books and make it a part of one's experience. Things like folklore, craft work, farming, indigenous medicine, and community involvement give the process of learning more meaning and significance. The holistic development, through the help of indigenous values and a learner-oriented

approach, promotes not just mental growth, but also moral, emotional and spiritual development. At the same time, appropriate policies and active involvement of teachers and students ensure respect for and continuation of traditional knowledge. The survival of Indian Knowledge System is about maintaining connections with one's culture, nature and values. With education helping people think, act, and feel in tune with all this, IKS is ensured survival for current and future generations.

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