INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM AND NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020: A BRIEF ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, has been launched to transform the Indian education system using holistic development of the learners. This framework provides a comprehensive and integrated strategy for the growth of the education system. The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is one of the significant aspects of the NEP curriculum. IKS encompasses diverse and rich heritage knowledge of India that covers various domains such as science and technology, literature, philosophy, culture, medicine (ayurveda), and yoga. NEP has focused on interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge, and it can integrate the contemporary knowledge vested with IKS to address current and future challenges. The IKS covers the knowledge assets from the pre-historic to the current period. NEP fosters the creation of language resources and technology to facilitate the IKS as it recognizes its importance for disseminating indigenous knowledge. The integration of IKS with NEP will help to understand the underlying contemporary societal issues and to carry out further research on these issues. It will foster the growth and understanding of rich and diverse indigenous knowledge among various stakeholders and rejuvenate traditional knowledge with the help of modern technology.

Key Words - Indian Knowledge System, New Education Policy, Contemporary Knowledge, Interdisciplinary Knowledge and Holistic Development

Introduction

India is a country with an ancient civilizational history and practices that are known to mankind. It is expected to accumulate some knowledge throughout its existence. This ancient knowledge was preserved on palm trees and transferred from generation to generation orally. But over time there were abrupt changes in the knowledge transformation process and this indigenous knowledge was lost. The newly introduced education system has attempted to provide this knowledge to society as demanded. Indian Knowledge System (IKS) comprises three words namely: Indian, Knowledge, and System.

Figure1. Components of the Indian Knowledge System

Indian: It refers to Akhanda Bharata i.e. undivided Indian subcontinent. It covers the area that spans from Burma on the east, modern-day Afghanistan on the west, the Himalayas on the north, and the Indian Ocean on the south. Chanakya was instrumental in the establishment of the Mauran Empire and Panini who wrote Sanskrit grammar got their education at Takshashila University of ancient India now in Punjab, Pakistan. Ancient Indian education included the teaching of eighteen Vidya Sthanas, or schools of learning, which were imparted in renowned centers such as Nalanda and Takshashila. India's global reputation has been derived from its contributions in the fields of Art, Architecture, Science, Technology, Craft, Engineering, Philosophy, and Practices. Most of the foreigners who visited India for knowledge and disseminated this knowledge to the West and other parts of the world. This is a part of IKS.

Knowledge: Knowledge refers to the tacit knowledge and it lies in the wisdom of knowledge seekers. It is gained by insights into personal experiences, through observations, facing real-life problems, and solving them. Knowledge may exist in literary and non- literary forms. This tacit knowledge is transferred systematically by way

of proposing new theories, and frameworks, and in the form of literary work i.e. in the form of explicit knowledge.

1.3. System: System means a well-organized methodology and classification scheme used to access a body of knowledge. The codification and classification are based on the need, interest, and capacity of the knowledge seeker so that he may access the inherent knowledge. This will help them gain insights from overall knowledge and know-how that different knowledge components logically complement each other

The IKS is the systematic transfer of ancient and contemporary knowledge from one generation to another. It covers ancient knowledge from various domains to address current and future challenges. This knowledge exists in both literary and non-literary works. Literary resources cover Vedic and allied literature (Sanatana Dharma mainly in the Sanskrit Language), resources on other dharmic traditions (Buddhism and Jainism), and, knowledge that exists in Indian languages and dialects. Non-literary resources are present in oral traditions available across the country

1. IKS Division: In October 2020, the AICTE headquarters became the site of the newly formed IKS division, which is part of the Ministry of Education (MoE). In the knowledge repository, the IKS has 29 IKS research

2. centers, 17 IKS Teacher Training Centers, and 7 IKS Bhasha Kendra. These research centers are interdisciplinary and they will preserve and disseminate the knowledge for further research and societal applications. The IKS Teacher Training Centers will provide necessary training to teachers to understand indigenous and traditional knowledge and IKS Bhasha Kendras will act as centers to promote linguistics and literary knowledge. These centers will rejuvenate the languages which are on the verge of extinction and contain the knowledge to transform the nation. **("Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)", n.d.).**

3. Activities under the IKS Division:

To provide funding support of Rs. 30-40 lakh over two years by considering the need to establish IKS centers in traditional schools and STEM educational institutions that will promote IKS and related activities.

To pair up students with IKS experts under the IKS Internship Program to carry out short-term research projects/ workshops/activities with a stipend (about of Rs. 25000) for two months.

To establish a more structured approach to IKS teaching, the regulatory body for technical education has authorized the creation of a textbook entitled 'Introduction to Indian Knowledge System, Concepts and Applications' authored by B Mahadevan.

Some IITs have shown a keen interest in IKS. IIT Guwahati has been offering Ph.D. in spoken Sanskrit and Assamese since its inception in November 2021. IIT Gandhinagar introduced the IKS optional course in 2016, well in advance of the NEP's rise in prominence.

Challenges of the Indian Knowledge System: With the advent of globalization there is a race to change the traditional education system and to make it of global standard by modernization. There is a dramatic change in pedagogy, curriculum, and medium of instruction. This has changed social dynamics a lot **(Sharma and Joshi, 2018).** This has led to social imperialism and cultural imperialism. In cultural imperialism, countries with high social status dominate the societies and cultures of countries having low social status **(Coleman, 2010).** The Indian education system is of Macaulay Origin and still, we are following it. In the age of vast information systems and following this education system we have lost our culturally based knowledge and heritage. We have lost our agricultural biodiversity and it has put pressure on food security, nutrition, and overall agricultural development. There is a massive loss of intellectual capital. Our IKS has more than 7000 medicinal plant species and over 15,000 herbal formulations. It has not only made it popular but it is drawing its attention to biopiracy and patenting them within or outside of the country. This amplifies the wrong ownership **(Ghosh, 2015).** There is a dichotomy in people whether to go with the indigenous way of living or to join the mainstream.

3. NEP and IKS Inclusion: The NEP 2020 has emphasized that IKS will be part of the curriculum and will be incorporated scientifically. IKS along with tribal knowledge will be included in mathematics, engineering, philosophy, yoga, medicine, sports, games literature, languages, and various other domains. NEP has focused on specific courses in tribal ethnomedicinal practices, forest management, and organic and natural farming. Under NEP, IKS will be taught as an elective course for secondary school students. These inputs will be delivered through modern technologies, fun games, and cultural exchange programs among different states. NEP focuses on multilingualism and the IKS repository has many languages. Under NEP students will be delivered curriculum in their native languages and Sanskrit the most ancient language will be taught to all. By learning different languages, they will know the rich and diverse culture of the nation. The multilanguage formula will cover the aspects of Constitutional provisions and it will create unity and integrity across the nation **("National Education Policy 2020", n.d.).** It would be easy to include the history of Indian mathematics in normal math classes. The same could be done for architecture, philosophy, and Ayurveda. This is the goal of the NEP, but it will have to be done slowly.

1. Challenges of Implementation: There are certain challenges when it comes to integrating IKS with NEP. There is a lack of awareness among the community and stakeholders about the importance of IKS. IKS is generally present in non-literary form and it has been passed orally from one generation to another **("Indian Knowledge**

Systems (IKS): Challenges of implementing it in", n.d.). It makes it difficult to develop and implement IKS-based courses and programs in educational institutions. There is no clear-cut curriculum about IKS and it is leaving educationists perplexed **("Autonomous colleges in state face challenges in implementing", n.d.).** Many stakeholders may see it as irrelevant or outdated. As IKS is available in different languages it may create barriers to those who are not well-versed with these languages. Moreover, the colonial system of education has created a bias against the IKS in the Indian Education system. The Indian education system is largely focused on the Western knowledge system and it can create difficulty in accommodating this system. There is also a shortage of well-qualified teachers to teach the IKS because it is not widely adopted yet.

2. Conclusion: The inclusion of IKS in India may help the stakeholders to know their cultural heritage and they may develop a deep understanding of the environment. As IKS is based on tacit knowledge it can help students to face and tackle the challenges they are going to face in their real life such as challenges of climate change and food security. But this inclusion of IKS has certain challenges and these challenges need to be addressed before inclusion. The Indian government has taken a step under NEP to integrate IKS into the curriculum. There is an emergent need for proper training of the teachers so that they have proper knowledge of IKS and can deliver it in a meaningful way. The data available about IKS needs to be streamlined with the help of information technology and making it available as per the needs and capacity of the stakeholders. This cannot be done overnight as the Indigenous Knowledge Systems have evolved in India over thousands of years. It will be replaced gradually over time.

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