

# In Search of Root: Indian Knowledge System Through National Education Policy-2020

Haresh Kakde<sup>ID</sup>

Department of English, Government Commerce College, G Road, Sector – 15, Gandhinagar – 382016, Gujarat, India

## Abstract

The University Grant Commission (UGC), through the National Education Policy-2020 (NEP-2020), recommends an ages-old Indian knowledge system (IKS), which should be incorporated into present-day undergraduate and post-graduate courses. Numerous scholars such as Panini, Chanakya, Gautama Buddha, Pingala, and many more contributed massively to grammar, statecraft, spirituality, and mathematics, respectively, and made a huge difference to the world. Therefore, such legacies should be sustained, and attempts should be made to familiarize them with upcoming generations and include them in solving present-day problems. The contribution of such scholars in various domains should be revisited, redefined as per the present-day needs, and, if possible, incorporated with a new knowledge system to foster the knowledge tradition of the world. Under this context, the present paper attempts to extend the boundaries of the IKS. It explores possibilities to revisit, redefine, and integrate it through NEP-2020 to deal with current and upcoming challenges for the development of our nation and the world.

**Keywords:** Indian knowledge system, national education policy-2020, university grant commission

## Introduction

The University Grant Commission (UGC) is a regulatory body of higher education in India. Basically, the development of any nation depends upon its education system, and reframing or transforming it, instead of relying on existing or traditional ways to deal with current socio-economic and political challenges for the upcoming national as well global challenges, is a need of the time due to rapid technological development which has taken place globally. The education policy during the British colonization period continues in the present time, such as education in the English language and dealing with present-day problems. But rich knowledge of our past in mathematics, grammar, ayurveda, and many more domains is neglected or not paid much attention. Through national education policy National Education Policy-2020 (NEP-2020), we can go back again to reclaim our ancient identity by reviving the Indian knowledge system (IKS). In that direction, therefore, first of all, we need to understand historically how Western education, which was introduced in India during the 20th century with Lord Macaulay (Kapoor, 2011).

century it is man or class of men against man or class of men in the class war Marxist doctrine and now in the twentieth century it is woman against man. The Hebraic man-centered view which subordinates everything to man's comfort is the obvious foundation for this conflict model which informs practically all the Western disciplinary codes-sociological, economic, political and is at the heart of the Darwinian evolutionary thought as well. (Kapoor, 2005, pp. 26-27)

In contrast to Western thought, Kapoor (2025) further said, "In the Indian thought system, the function/goal of knowledge is not the exercise of power over others but power over oneself, moksha, the liberation of the self from its own limitation/constraints." The search for the root was one of the ways to reclaim our pre-colonial identity and make the mark of our nation on the globe. In that direction, the implementation of NEP-2020 becomes one of the focal points of the UGC. Under this context, The IKS becomes one of the components of NEP-2020 to bring back our age-old identity. To understand it further, first of all, we need to find out the root of IKS in our Indian knowledge tradition.

## Root of Indian Knowledge System (Tradition)

A number of research scholars have tried to find out and still continue their research for the root of the IKS. Basically, it comprises three words: Indian, knowledge, and system. It refers to Akhand (Undivided) Bharat, unstated knowledge, and well-organized methodology and classification scheme, respectively

...Western education is basically "associated with "power" that leads to the Fall of man. What is common throughout the Western history of ideas is the man-centered worldview. In the Middle Ages, God is the object of study for the sake of man, for his redemption. Renaissance onwards, focus shift to Nature as the object of study for the sake of man... in the nineteenth

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Haresh Kakde, Department of English, Government Commerce College, G Road, Sector – 15, Gandhinagar – 382016, Gujarat, India. **Email:** dr.hareshkakde@gmail.com

(Acharya, 2024). Further, the IKS can be located in Vedic literature, the Upanishads, the Vedas, and the Upnisad. It comprises Jnan, Vignan, and Jeevan Darshan, which has come from experience, observation, and experimentation. These made of a wide range of subjects, such as traditional ecological knowledge, oral histories, spiritual beliefs, language, and sustainable practices, were carried forward from one generation to upcoming generations within indigenous cultures. In this direction, UGC's NEP 2020 proposes IKS for graduate and post-graduate courses. IKS includes tribal knowledge and Indigenous and traditional ways of learning that cover subjects such as Mathematics, Astronomy, Philosophy, Yoga, Architecture, Medicine, Agriculture, Engineering, Linguistics, Literature, Sports, Games, Governance, Polity, and Conservation (Ministry of Education, 2023). To claim our age-old identity and have fruitful outcomes, there is an urgent need to revisit these areas in the present time.

### Revisit Indian Knowledge System (Tradition)

Basically, the British colonial period made a great difference to our lives, which began with English education. Therefore, we need to take into account the British Colonial period when English education in India came into existence with Lord Macaulay's Minutes on Indian Education in 1835. Raviya and Biva (2023) claimed in Exploring English Education In India in the Pre-Macaulayan Period that English education started with the arrival of the British in India. English was considered a trade language in 1600. At the end of the 18th century, the British started educating Indians for two reasons: firstly, to create awe and respect towards the Europeans and, secondly, to spread Christianity in India. It was Charles Grant who introduced modern education in India through the teaching of English to advance Indian society. He proposed using the English language, Western education, and Christianity to effect moral, social, and mental transformation in Indian culture. So, basically, for the purpose of transformation, they had the requirement of the assistant. English education was begun in India. Contradictory to Western education, Indian knowledge proposes that the goal of knowledge is not the promotion of man's material comfort but the enhancement of the mental and physical well-being of all (Kapoor, 2005). Thus, knowledge has never been apart from justice. In fact, it has been imbricated with ethics, with the dominant ethical value of *Dharma*. All disciplines of knowledge, *Vidhya*, have this social-ethical imperative. So, the IKS should be revived for the said purpose.

### Integration (Inclusion) of Indian Knowledge System (Tradition)

The inclusion of Indian knowledge in higher education curricula was issued on 13th June 2023, which emphasizes the promotion of Indian Languages, Arts, and Culture and tries to connect them with pre-colonial knowledge traditions. It gives an opportunity to find the connection of Indian culture globally (Ministry of Education, 2023).

According to Varakhedi (2025), The revival or reinforcement of IKS in education will create new areas of research, which is more harmful than the preservation in present time. Instead, it should be integrated into contemporary knowledge in harmonious ways, but such activity requires more clarity about the subject and hardship. IKS creates a new worldview that is rooted in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah. Further, The IKS is expressed through Indian language terms. The translation of it into English language will create misconceptions. Therefore, the balance between IKS and the Indian language will lead to harmonious growth as well as quality research. This integration of IKS into present domains will lead to holistic education, which is one of the objectives of NEP-2020 (Varakhedi, 2025).

The inclusion of IKS in the curriculum fosters interdisciplinary research, resulting in the harmonious blending of various knowledge systems. Further instilling ethics and values in young Indian students, IKS makes responsible citizens. These ethical teachings in the curriculum assist students in developing a sense

of social accountability, compassion, and ethical decision-making for a balanced life (Mamidala, 2023).

India will nurture a new generation of students with a deep understanding of cultural roots. They can use this knowledge to address modern-day challenges effectively and contribute to the progress and development of the nation (Acharya, 2024).

### Conclusion

As IKS is a new avenue, there will be several challenges faced by the administrative as well as academic fraternity. First and foremost, the challenge will be the lack of awareness about the importance of IKS. Secondly, no clear-cut curriculum for IKS, and thirdly, it creates bias due to the dominance of the colonial education system. These are not an exhaustive list of challenges. The measures to overcome such challenges have been taken by UGC, such as promoting research in IKS, availability in Indian languages, training to the existing teachers, and providing funds for the application and establishment of a Centre or Department. The blend of existing subjects with IKS opens up significant cultural differences and the revival of intellectual knowledge tradition. Further, integration of IKS takes time and intellectual work, so constant monitoring of it by the experts is needed for a fruitful result.

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