

Revitalizing Higher Education through Indian Knowledge System (IKS): A Vision for NEP-2020

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Abstract:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative blueprint aimed at reshaping India's educational framework, with a particular emphasis on the integration of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into the mainstream curriculum. The NEP-2020 envisions a holistic educational system that not only promotes academic excellence but also preserves, nurtures and balances India's rich cultural and intellectual heritage. The paper discusses how IKS, deeply embedded in India's diverse socio-cultural context, can contribute to the curriculum, research, and pedagogical practices, while also fostering global collaborations. Furthermore, it critically examines the challenges and opportunities that arise in embedding such knowledge into formal higher education landscape. The importance of decolonizing education, integrating local languages, and creating interdisciplinary learning environments is also highlighted. By reviewing various educational policies, scholarly works, and the potential impacts of IKS, the paper aims to present a road map for its effective implementation. The study concludes that the integration of Indian Knowledge System within NEP-2020 could lead to a more inclusive, sustainable, and culturally rooted education system, ultimately fostering national identity and social development. This paper provides insights into how India's knowledge can empower its higher education institutions and contribute to a more diverse global knowledge exchange.

Keywords: Decolonization, Higher Education, India, Indian Knowledge, NEP-2020.

1. Introduction:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, a sweeping educational reform introduced by the Government of India, seeks to transform the educational structure of India, aiming for holistic and inclusive growth by embracing a multidisciplinary approach. The policy reflects the aspiration of a progressive, globalized India while simultaneously emphasizing the preservation and integration of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) within the educational framework. The integration of IKS into formal education has emerged as a significant focus of the NEP-2020, reflecting a desire to reconnect with India's cultural and intellectual heritage. By emphasizing the need to preserve traditional knowledge while fostering academic excellence, the policy aims to create a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable educational system.

Historically, knowledge in India has been systematically marginalized under colonial educational structures, which prioritized western models of education. The NEP-2020 aims to reverse this trend, promoting the inclusion of IKS not only as an academic subject but as a core component of a holistic education system. IKS in the Indian context encompasses a range of traditional knowledge, practices, and values, many of which are embedded in India's ancient scriptures, local languages, and communities. These systems have the potential to contribute valuable insights into sustainability, health, ecology, and social organization.

In recent decades, the push for decolonizing education has gained momentum worldwide, with several nations reflecting on their colonial pasts and striving for systems that honor local knowledge systems. In India, the NEP-2020 offers a unique opportunity to integrate IKS into mainstream education, presenting a challenge to the prevailing dominance of Western-centric paradigms in academia.

The Concept and Importance of Indian Knowledge System (IKS):

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) refers to the vast body of traditional knowledge and practices that has been developed and passed down over generations by Indian communities. This knowledge encompasses not only practical knowledge but also cultural and philosophical worldviews that inform the relationship between humans, nature, and the cosmos. They include various domains, including environmental stewardship, agriculture, medicine, art, governance, and social structures. In India, IKS is deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of the country, with traditions and practices rooted in an understanding of local ecosystems, traditional healing methods, philosophical schools of thought, and complex social and community structures. IKS include practices like Ayurveda, Vastu Shastra, classical Indian music, dance forms, philosophy, and ecological knowledge, which are often deeply rooted in local customs, languages, and traditions. According to the Ministry of Human Resource Development (1992), "Indian Indigenous Knowledge System refers to the knowledge systems indigenous to India which have developed over centuries based on the local cultures, customs, practices, and traditions of different communities. It includes knowledge about traditional medicine, sustainable agricultural practices, ecology, natural resources management, and other socio-cultural domains."

IKS are not merely historical relics but are living systems of knowledge that continue to offer valuable insights for contemporary challenges. For example, traditional agricultural practices, such as rainwater harvesting and organic farming, hold immense potential in addressing contemporary environmental crises like climate change and water scarcity. Moreover, IKS are inherently interdisciplinary, blending aspects of philosophy, ethics, ecology, social organization, and technology, making them a rich source of knowledge for education. Indian knowledge systems are often based on deep, locally-situated knowledge about environmental conditions, biodiversity, and sustainable resource management, passed down through generations. In this sense, they are integral to India's heritage and contribute significantly to sustainable practices (Sharma, 2011).

The roots of IKS in India can be traced back to ancient texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, and other classical scriptures, which not only encompass spiritual teachings but also scientific knowledge in fields like medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and agriculture (Mishra, 2019). Indian Knowledge Systems are not merely fragmented pieces of information but represent holistic, systems-based knowledge that integrates the physical, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of life. It is

transmitted across generations through oral traditions, practices, rituals, and customs (Yadava, 2014). Despite their significance in shaping societal structures, these systems were largely relegated to the periphery with the advent of British colonialism, which introduces Western models of education that prioritized science and technology while disregarding local knowledge systems.

IKS have played a crucial role in shaping India's cultural identity and addressing societal needs. For example, Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine, has influenced health care practices not only in India but across the world, promoting holistic health and preventive care (Jain, 2018). Similarly, traditional agricultural practices rooted in IKS have long contributed to sustainable farming and ecological balance (Sharma, 2021). IKS are not only functional but also offer a framework for understanding the world in an integrated and non-reductionist way, which contrasts with the often compartmentalized western approach.

In the context of higher education, the integration of IKS offers a means of enhancing the relevance and applicability of academic research and education. It provides an opportunity to bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and modern science, creating a holistic approach to knowledge. By incorporating IKS into the curriculum, research, and pedagogy, the NEP-2020 aims to nurture a more inclusive and culturally relevant educational system.

The Role of NEP-2020 in Integrating IKS into Higher Education:

The NEP-2020 outlines a vision for a holistic, inclusive, and multi-disciplinary approach to education. It highlights the need for the integration of India's rich cultural heritage into the formal education system, placing special emphasis on Indian Knowledge Systems. The policy advocates for a "flexible and diverse education system" that encourages both students and educators to explore and integrate knowledge from multiple sources, including IKS.

One of the key features of NEP-2020 is the emphasis on the decolonization of education. This concept is particularly significant in the Indian context, where colonial legacies have shaped the educational system for centuries. The policy underscores the importance of restoring and valuing Indian knowledge and perspectives, which have often been sidelined in academic circles dominated by Western paradigms. By acknowledging the importance of IKS, NEP-2020 aims to rectify this historical imbalance and promote a more inclusive educational framework.

Furthermore, NEP-2020 envisions a "curriculum that is more flexible and based on choice," where students are encouraged to engage with a broad range of subjects, including those that draw from Indian traditions. The policy advocates for the promotion of local languages, cultures, and traditions, recognizing the importance of contextualized knowledge. This approach not only fosters a sense of national identity but also strengthens the connection between students and their local communities.

Additionally, the policy's focus on interdisciplinary learning is crucial in integrating IKS. The NEP-2020 envisions the creation of multi-disciplinary institutions where students and faculty from different academic disciplines collaborate and learn from each other. This environment offers fertile ground for the incorporation of IKS, as traditional knowledge often spans multiple domains, including ecology, agriculture, spirituality, and governance.

IKS in the Curriculum: A Pedagogical Approach

Integrating IKS into the curriculum is not merely about adding a few chapters on our Indian culture but about reshaping the way knowledge is approached and delivered. This integration presents a unique opportunity to develop a more holistic and multidisciplinary educational approach. The NEP-2020 envisions a system where students can pursue academic interests in a variety of subjects, including those based on our ancient knowledge, without being confined to rigid boundaries. The pedagogical model advocated by NEP-2020 stresses the importance of experiential learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving. These are qualities that are deeply embedded in the IKS, which are rooted in real-world experiences and community-based practices.

One of the ways in which IKS can be integrated into the curriculum is through the inclusion of our languages, arts, and practices. This can be achieved by incorporating Indian epistemologies in courses across disciplines, including philosophy, history, sociology, environmental studies, and anthropology. Additionally, universities can establish research centers focused on our Indian knowledge, where scholars from various fields can collaborate to study, document, and apply traditional knowledge systems. IKS can be integrated into disciplines like environmental science, health studies, anthropology, and even engineering, by drawing upon ancient Indian concepts such as sustainable agricultural practices, natural building techniques, and alternative medicine (Prasad, 2021). For instance, Ayurveda can be taught alongside modern medical sciences, not as a replacement but as a complementary system, offering students a broad perspective on health and wellness.

The NEP-2020 strongly advocates for interdisciplinary learning, which can be particularly beneficial when integrating IKS. Research that bridges traditional knowledge with contemporary science can lead to innovative solutions for addressing modern-day challenges. For example, traditional ecological knowledge from indigenous farming practices can be paired with modern environmental science to develop more sustainable agricultural techniques (Bhatnagar, 2020). Interdisciplinary Research Centers focused on IKS could be established, offering students and scholars opportunities to explore and contribute to the growing body of knowledge in areas like sustainable development, health and cultural preservation.

The NEP-2020 also encourages the development of “local curricula” that reflect the unique knowledge and traditions of different regions in India. This approach ensures that the curriculum is relevant to students and that it fosters a sense of pride in their cultural heritage. Moreover, integrating IKS into the curriculum aligns with the policy's emphasis on promoting sustainable development, as many indigenous practices are deeply rooted in ecological sustainability.

Challenges in Integrating IKS into Higher Education:

Dominance of West: While the integration of IKS into higher education offers significant opportunities, there are several challenges that must be addressed. One of the primary obstacles is the entrenched dominance of Western-centric knowledge systems in Indian universities. The academic framework in many institutions is still largely shaped by colonial educational structures, with little room for Indian perspectives. This Western-centric approach often marginalized indigenous knowledge, leading to its under-representation in academic curricula. The perception that traditional knowledge is outdated or

unscientific further exacerbates this issue, hindering the acceptance and integration of IKS in educational institutions (Visvanathan, 1997).

Institutional challenges: Another challenge, particularly within the established academic institutions, is the lack of trained educators who are well-versed in the IKS. Traditional universities and colleges often prioritize western knowledge systems that have limited capacity or expertise in teaching IKS. Educators may lack the necessary training or resources to effectively teach about our Indian knowledge, while students may be unfamiliar with or skeptical of non-western forms of knowledge (Sharma, 2020). Moreover, there is often a lack of interdisciplinary collaboration, with many departments functioning in isolation from one another. This soiled approach makes it difficult to integrate IKS into the curriculum in a meaningful way.

The lack of resources and infrastructure for research in Indian knowledge is another major hurdle. Unlike Western knowledge systems, which have been well-documented and institutionalized, IKS are often transmitted orally or through informal channels. This makes it difficult to formalize or ancient knowledge in research and academic publications. Additionally, there is often a gap in the preservation and documentation of Indian languages and practices, which are crucial for the transmission of knowledge.

Socio-cultural and Linguistic Barriers: IKS are often conveyed through local languages and oral traditions, which pose barriers to their integration into a system dominated by English and Hindi as mediums of instruction. There is a need to develop educational materials that translate Indian knowledge into formats accessible to a wider audience while preserving the cultural integrity of these systems Dey, 2021).

Opportunities for Global Collaborations: The global recognition of Indian knowledge as a valuable resource opens up new opportunities for international collaboration. By creating partnerships with academic institutions in other countries, India can contribute to global conversations on sustainability, biodiversity, and community development, showcasing the relevance of IKS in solving contemporary problems (Lal, 2019).

Opportunities for Collaboration and Global Impact

One of the most promising aspects of integrating IKS into the NEP-2020 framework is the potential for global collaboration. In recent years, there has been growing interest in Indian knowledge from international academic communities, particularly in the fields of sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and climate change. India's rich repository of IKS presents a valuable resource for global research, and Indian institutions can play a leading role in these international discussions. Indian Knowledge System is seen as a comprehensive body of knowledge that intersects with modern development in areas like agriculture, medicine, architecture, and environmental sustainability. It not only offers solutions to local problems but also has the potential to address global challenges such as climate change (Sharma & Dutta, 2018).

Collaborating with Indian knowledge systems can also provide Indian universities with opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and global partnerships. By embracing the richness of IKS, Indian higher

education institutions can position themselves as leaders in the emerging field of decolonized education and knowledge systems.

Case Studies and Examples from Educational Institutions: Several Indian universities and institutions have already begun integrating IKS into their curricula. Jawahar Lal Nehru (JNU) and Banaras Hindu University (BHU) offer programs that incorporate traditional knowledge systems, particularly in fields like Ayurveda, Sanskrit Studies, and Ecological Studies. These examples serve as models for how IKS can be effectively integrated into higher education institutions.

Future Directions and Road map for Implementation:

The integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into higher education requires a holistic approach, with curriculum reforms playing a pivotal role, and in this scenario the following steps are recommended:

- **Curriculum Reforms:** A curriculum that reflects the rich traditions of IKS while simultaneously incorporating modern educational frameworks can facilitate the preservation, application and advancement of Indian knowledge. To achieve this, certain steps and strategies should be considered:
- **Inclusion of Indian Knowledge Across Disciplines:** IKS should not be confined to a specific department or area but should be woven across the disciplines such as agriculture, ecology, medicine, philosophy, and social sciences. This approach allows students to understand how or ancient knowledge can contribute to contemporary challenges, such as sustainability, environmental conversation, and health care. For example, research on integrating IKS in agricultural curricula highlights the relevance of traditional agricultural practices in modern sustainable farming techniques (Kumar et al., 2019). Incorporating IKS across multiple disciplines will help students appreciate the inter-connectedness of knowledge systems, bridging the gap between traditional wisdom and modern science.
- **Development of Interdisciplinary Courses:** The curriculum should include interdisciplinary courses that merge IKS with contemporary scientific knowledge. These courses should encourage critical thinking and respect for our Indian knowledge systems while exploring their relevance to modern challenges. For instance, a course on “Sustainable Agriculture: Traditional Practices and Modern Science” can combine traditional ecological knowledge with modern agricultural practices. Research on integrating interdisciplinary approaches in education shows that it fosters holistic learning and encourages students to think outside the box (Narayan, 2017). Interdisciplinary approaches to IKS can also promote innovation by blending traditional knowledge with technological advances, creating solutions that are both culturally grounded and scientifically advanced.
- **Curriculum Development with Community Participation:** Involving different communities in the curriculum development process ensures that IKS is represented authentically and accurately. Community elders, practitioners, and knowledge holders can offer valuable insights into the specific knowledge systems that have evolved in different regions. This participatory approach helps create curriculum content that respects cultural contexts and practices. Research has shown that

community participation in curriculum development enhances the quality and relevance of education (Mishra & Patel, 2018). The voices of different Indian communities should be central to curriculum development, making the education process more inclusive.

- **Creation of Specialized Indian Knowledge Centers:** Higher education institutions can establish centers or departments dedicated to the study and research of IKS. These centers would not only focus on research and documentation but also offer specialized courses, workshops, and seminars. These centers should focus on the preservation, revival and adaptation of IKS in the context of modern issues. These initiatives would also help develop a curriculum that is dynamic and adaptable to the evolving needs of society and the environment.
- **Strengthening Teacher Training and Professional Development:** It is a very crucial aspect of integrating IKS into higher education. For this, teachers must be trained in integrating advanced technologies, such as AI and IKS tools, into their teaching practices (Bates, 2019). Teacher-training should also emphasize student-centered learning approaches and the use of IKS for adaptive learning paths (Anderson & Dron, 2011). Collaboration with technology experts in teacher training can foster a deeper understanding of IKS and its applications in education (Garrison & Anderson, 2011).
- **Incorporating Indian Pedagogies and Practices:** The curriculum should also incorporate ancient Indian pedagogical approaches, which often emphasize experiential learning, oral traditions, and community-based learning. These pedagogies, when integrated into the modern educational system, can offer students an enriched, culturally relevant learning experience. The focus should be on learning through practice, story telling, rituals, and community engagement. Studies have highlighted the importance of Indian pedagogies in promoting holistic education, which blends cognitive, emotional, and spiritual learning (Kumar & Mishra, 2020). These pedagogies are aligned with the needs of a diverse, globalized world that requires new ways of thinking and learning.
- **Addressing Language Barriers:** In many instances, IKS is embedded in local languages and dialects, making it difficult for students from different language backgrounds to access and understand these systems. One way to address this challenge is by providing bilingual or multilingual materials in different Indian languages alongside translations into English or other widely spoken languages. This strategy ensures that Indian knowledge is accessible to a wider audience while preserving the linguistic diversity of India. For example, integrating multilingual teaching practices has been shown to improve students' ability to connect with indigenous knowledge systems (Chaudhary & Pathak, 2015).
- **Faculty Development:** Faculty members are central to the transformation of the educational landscape, and their role in both teaching and research is pivotal in the successful incorporation of IKS into mainstream academia. The NEP-2020 also emphasizes the need for faculty development to align with the new pedagogical and curricular reforms aimed at ensuring quality education. According to the policy, faculty training should be seen as a continuous process that builds their capacities in innovative teaching methods, interdisciplinary approaches, and research methodologies (Government of India, 2020). For effective faculty development, the following steps can be taken:

➤ **Curriculum Design and Faculty Development:** As part of faculty development, universities can create multidisciplinary curricula that promote the study of IKS, combining traditional knowledge with modern scientific approaches. Faculty should be actively involved in the process of curriculum design and in ensuring that IKS are not just supplementary, but form an integral part of academic programs.

➤ **Specialized Faculty Training Programs:** Establishing specialized training centers for faculty members focused on Indian knowledge systems, as recommended by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) (2020), would ensure that teachers are equipped with the tools and resources to teach IKS. This would also promote cross-cultural exchange with different Indian communities.

➤ **Mentorship Programs:** According to Sharma and Yadav (2021), there is a significant gap in the availability of Indians knowledge resources and qualified faculty members who are proficient in these areas. Therefore, faculty development should also include mentorship programs, where senior academics with expertise in IKS guide younger educators and scholars in integrating our Indian knowledge into their teaching and research.

➤ **Recognition and Incentives for IKS Research:** Institutions should offer incentives and recognition for faculty members engaged in research that incorporates IKS, as a way to motivate and promote further exploration in this field. This can include research grants, fellowships, and awards that acknowledge faculty contributions to the preservation and promotion of Indian knowledge (Government of India, 2020).

➤ **Collaboration with Traditional Knowledge Holders:** To further enrich faculty development, collaborations between academic institutions and traditional knowledge holders can provide insights and hands-on training in these knowledge practices. Such collaborations also promote intercultural understanding and foster a learning environment rooted in both traditional and academic knowledge (University Grants Commission, 2020).

● **Language Support:** The integration of IKS into India's higher education framework, as envisioned in the NEP-2020 requires a significant attention to the role of languages. The NEP-2020 recognizes the importance of using local languages in teaching and learning, as a means to both preserve and promote India's diverse linguistic heritage.

➤ **Multilingual Approach in Education:** One of the central features of the NEP-2020 is its advocacy for mother-tongue-based education. The policy emphasizes that students should be taught in their native language until at least grade 5, preferably upto grade 8, and ideally through grade 12. This move is in alignment with the need to incorporate IKS, which is deeply rooted in local and indigenous languages (NEP 2020). By teaching our ancient knowledge in native languages, the policy aims to preserve cultural expressions, knowledge systems, and traditions that are often inaccessible in formal academic discourse.

➤ **Language as a Tool for Decolonization:** Language holds significant power in the decolonization of education, as it is often through colonial languages (e.g., English) that indigenous knowledge has been marginalized or misrepresented (Dube, 2018). The NEP-2020 stresses the importance of promoting Indian languages such as Hindi, regional languages, and classical languages,

while also fostering bilingualism or multilingualism. This policy shift reflects a broader commitment to reclaim Indian cultural and intellectual frameworks that were historically sidelined by the colonial educational system (Mishra & Kumar, 2019).

➤ **Curriculum Development and Language Support:** To integrate IKS into the curriculum, it is essential to develop textbooks and learning materials in regional and indigenous languages. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 and the subsequent guidelines from the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) also emphasize incorporating local knowledge through regional languages (NCERT, 2005). Moreover, the establishment of a language-appropriate curriculum for IKS can ensure that students connect with knowledge systems in a manner that is culturally relevant and linguistically accessible.

➤ **Global Collaboration and Language Support:** As India seeks to promote IKS globally, collaborations with international academic institutions and research organizations will require creating bridges between Indian languages and global languages, including English. The policy supports the creation of global partnerships that can allow Indian indigenous knowledge to be shared globally while respecting linguistic diversity. This exchange, however, must ensure that local languages are not undermined in the process, and IKS is represented authentically in various linguistic contexts (UNESCO, 2020).

● **Research Partnerships:** The integration of IKS into higher education requires collaboration and partnerships between a variety of stakeholders, including academic institutions, indigenous communities, government agencies, and international research networks. These partnerships are crucial for facilitating knowledge exchange, capacity building, and the creation of an interdisciplinary academic environment that honors both traditional and modern academic perspectives.

➤ **Collaborations between Academic Institutions and Indigenous Communities:** One of the most significant components of research partnerships in the context of IKS integration is fostering collaborations between universities and indigenous communities. The NEP-2020 encourages the establishment of stronger ties with local communities to promote community-based learning and research (NEP, 2020). Universities can set up research centers that focus on indigenous languages, cultural practices, and ecological knowledge, while indigenous communities can provide direct insights into their traditional systems of knowledge. Such partnerships will ensure the authenticity of IKS, as it will be researched, documented, and taught from the perspective of those who have preserved and practiced it for generations (Agarwal & Bhatt, 2018).

➤ **Interdisciplinary Research Networks:** The NEP-2020 advocates for interdisciplinary learning and research, encouraging higher education institutions to break down traditional subject silos (NEP, 2020). To successfully integrate IKS, interdisciplinary research networks must be established, where scholars from fields such as anthropology, history, environmental science, sociology, and education come together to study and contextualize Indian knowledge systems. Research partnerships in this regard can be bolstered through collaborative projects funded by government bodies like the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and the University Grants Commission (UGC). For instance, the UGC's

initiative to promote interdisciplinary research can help fund and support research that incorporates IKS into mainstream academic frameworks (UGC, 2019).

➤ **International Research Collaborations:** As India seeks to position itself as a global player in academic research, international partnerships will be pivotal in sharing IKS with the wider world. Research partnerships with international universities, especially those in regions with indigenous populations like Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands, can help facilitate cross-cultural dialogue and the exchange of knowledge (Smith, 2019). These global partnerships can lead to the co-creation of research publications, joint workshops, and academic exchanges, all of which will contribute to a more diverse global discourse on indigenous knowledge and its relevance in contemporary times.

➤ **Government and Policy Support:** The Indian government's commitment to promoting IKS through the NEP-2020 is a critical factor in fostering research partnerships. Through initiatives such as the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) and the Ministry of Education's Research and Innovation Division, the government can provide the necessary infrastructure, financial support, and policy frameworks to ensure that research partnerships focused on IKS flourish (MoE, 2020). Moreover, government-supported commissions like the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) can play a key role in ensuring that the Indian perspectives are accurately represented in academic research and teaching (NCST, 2017).

➤ **Promoting Indian Knowledge Researchers and Scholars:** To further the cause of IKS integration, there is a pressing need to promote scholars researching on IKS within the academic research community. As the NEP-2020 outlines, creating equal opportunities for marginalized groups, including indigenous populations, is essential for ensuring that diverse voices contribute to the academic discourse (NEP, 2020). Research partnerships should prioritize the inclusion of indigenous scholars in leadership positions, offering them a platform to conduct research and publish their findings in both national and international journals.

➤ **Challenges and Opportunities in Research Partnerships:** Although the potential for impactful research partnerships is considerable, challenges such as limited access to research funding, lack of infrastructure in rural and tribal areas, and the marginalization of indigenous knowledge in academic settings remain. Nevertheless, these challenges also provide opportunities for creating more inclusive research spaces that promote the sharing of knowledge on equal terms. Strategic partnerships with national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), think tanks, and advocacy groups can help overcome these challenges by providing additional resources and platforms for disseminating research findings (UNESCO, 2020).

2. Conclusion

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 presents a bold and transformative vision for the future of India's educational system. A central aspect of this vision is the integration of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into the higher education framework. This integration is not merely a curricular addition but a step toward decolonizing education and enriching it with diverse, locally relevant knowledge that has shaped India's intellectual and cultural heritage for centuries. By embedding IKS in the mainstream educational system, NEP-2020 offers a holistic approach that moves beyond academic excellence to foster a deeper connection with the nation's roots, values, and cultural diversity. This paper underscores

the importance of rethinking pedagogical practices, research methodologies, and curriculum designs to reflect indigenous knowledge, which can provide unique perspectives on global issues and offer innovative solutions in fields such as sustainability, agriculture, medicine, and philosophy. This, in turn, can enhance global collaboration and strengthen India's role in the international knowledge economy.

However, the path toward realizing this vision is not without its challenges. The formal incorporation of IKS into higher education requires overcoming deep-rooted biases, institutional inertia, and a lack of awareness about the value and richness of our ancient knowledge. The paper discusses the significant barriers that must be addressed, such as resistance to change within academic institutions, inadequate infrastructure, and the absence of qualified educators who can effectively teach IKS within contemporary academic frameworks. To counter these challenges, the policy must prioritize capacity-building efforts and teacher training, alongside the creation of supportive infrastructures that allow for the effective integration of IKS into the curriculum.

In addition, the paper also highlights the need for a broader commitment to decolonizing education. This involves moving away from a Euro-centric model of learning that often sidelines indigenous knowledge and instead fostering an environment where diverse forms of knowledge are acknowledged, respected, and incorporated into educational discourse. One key aspect of this process is the integration of local languages into higher education, ensuring that IKS is transmitted not only through academic texts but also in a culturally authentic manner that respects indigenous linguistic traditions.

Moreover, the creation of interdisciplinary learning environments is critical in enabling the cross-pollination of IKS with modern scientific and technological knowledge. Such interdisciplinary exchanges would allow students to appreciate the richness of both traditional wisdom and contemporary scientific knowledge, thereby fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the world. These environments also open the door to innovative, context-specific solutions to global problems, demonstrating that IKS has a critical role to play in addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change, sustainable development, and social equity.

Ultimately, the NEP-2020 offers a visionary road map for the future of higher education in India, with the integration of IKS serving as a cornerstone of this transformation. If implemented effectively, this policy has the potential to create a more inclusive, culturally rich, and globally relevant educational system. It can bridge the gap between India's ancient knowledge traditions and modern educational paradigms, enriching the learning experience and equipping students with the tools needed to navigate an increasingly interconnected world. As the paper emphasizes, the success of this initiative depends on the collective efforts of policy makers, educators, and communities to overcome challenges and make IKS a central and respected part of India's educational future. In conclusion, the successful integration of IKS within the context of NEP-2020 will not only revive India's intellectual heritage but will also contribute to the creation of a more diverse and inclusive global knowledge economy, offering a unique and invaluable perspective that can inspire future generations.

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