

Indian Knowledge System and The Global South

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Abstract

How school curricula and classrooms are designed to impart knowledge in India? Is the traditional pattern to integrate spiritual and scientific knowledge led to its reach towards global south? How can Indian knowledge system be improved to built future by integrating global south as well? Is Indian knowledge system really preparing students for unknown? All these questions inspires to delve deeper into the traditions and modernity of Indian knowledge system. Indian tradition and concept of knowledge is pertained in its age old tradition covering philosophy, spirituality, mathematics, yoga, arts, ethics etc. which has impacted the world especially south reclaiming its physical and metaphysical realm of knowledge. This implies that it is an holistic interdisciplinary area imbining material, metal and spiritual dimension rather than devoid of science, philosophy and culture into separate compartments.

Indian knowledge system focusses on value based (Ashoka's dharmchakraparivartan, loksangraha, non – violence, truth, social responsibility), pragmatic, experience oriented growth which will lead to sustainable, harmonious relation promoting it to global south nations such as South Africa, Sudan, Cuba, Chile etc. the southern epistemologies integrates African indigenous knowledge, Latin American Buen Vivir and Maori traditions in knowledge. The intercultural approach in knowledge system will lead to sustainable and innovative global collaborations.

***Keywords :** Indian Knowledge System, Global South, Holistic education, Interdisciplinary learning, Spiritual–scientific integration,*

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Traditional knowledge, Modern education, Indian school curriculum, Classroom design, Value based education, Experiential learning, Pragmatic learning, Sustainable development, Southern epistemologies

Introduction

Indian Knowledge System has its roots imbibe in ancient traditions where study focuses on spirituality and scientific realm. This implies that it offers an structured and systematic exploration including Vedic corpus which is the backbone of Indian knowledge as it covers philosophical systems such as Vedanta and nyaya layering it with Samhitas, Brahamans, Aranyakas, and Upnishads highlighting the scientific concepts and its contributions in the field of metaphysics, ethics, and cosmology (Mahadevan, B., Bhat, V. R., & NAGENDRA, P. R. 2022). This traditional knowledge has helped not only indigenously but also gave new insights to global world specifically to global south teaching the concept of “sarvam khalvidam brahma” (all is divine) leading to harmonious relations and collaborations countering Global North’s exploitative nature. Indian aspires to promote the concept of Vasudev kutumbkam which will lead to cosmopolitan world order aggregating the knowledge which is common to both India and South. (Kumar, R. 2024).

In the era of multipolar world, Global South has been provided with alternative to colonial knowledge paradigms in the form of Indian Knowledge System. It led to decolonizing of curriculum by formulating National Education Policy (EP 2020), aggregating indigenous epistemologies with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) for innovation in health (AYUSH), agriculture (Vrikshayurveda) and governance (Arthashastra principle). This community centric model led to progress and also help in establishing a unique system of knowledge which will become strength and India will fulfil its role where it becomes voice of global south and catering students towards innovation and alignment. But this also led to shift our focus on challenges coming along with globalisation where erosion of local wisdom, due to cross-cultural dialogue for hybrid solutions is a concern.

The Global South As An Epistemic Category

There has been a shift in the understanding of Global South away from seeing it from the point of view of geography, economy(s

an underdeveloped nation) towards a scenario producing knowledge that will move in the direction of challenging western hegemony. In this regard the knowledge of global south must be analysed since from ancient time to contemporary period, the global South has struggled to emancipate itself from the influence of Eurocentric dominance and to frame their own base for developing knowledge system to safeguard their traditional knowledge and culture. The global south at present give preference to innovation over solidarity, creating knowledge's that reconfigure African studies and counter hegemonic narratives.

Colonial Knowledge And The Global South

Due to colonial impact, the knowledge pertained by West was imposed on the East by making it as a universal framework. This has led to marginalisation if local traditional knowledge and its methods which if implemented can give new avenues which can be proved as path breaking. There are Global north standards which decides scholarships create academic dependency as a continuation of colonial legacy. The contemporary inequalities in learning and application process makes it harder for student's to compete globally. These issues has its own historical and structural background where European knowledge was forced as scientific. This attempt eroded the indigenous systems as it was termed as barbaric and outdated leading to economic disparities, racial hierarchies, giving privilege to Whites. Because of global academic stratification, stratified research degree, core periphery collaborations, English hegemony and resource imbalance, issues such as "brain drain", imitation of Western ways leading to the loss of student's inner self. This resulted into distorted knowledge as Northern work neglects South (Schöpf, C. M. 2020).

Epistemic Marginalization

The excursion of knowledge produced in south in a systematic manner as Global academic knowledge mirrors the inequalities in the learning pertaining in the world system. This implies that the Global North dominating circuits in the field of publications while letting Global South to remain at the periphery. This can be proved by the fact that 90% of top cited journals are based on North as authors from South are underrepresented. There are also citation disparities as

Southern scholarships are outward oriented and even ranking and funding also favours North. This has led to the emergence of alternatives such as Latin American SciELO, African platforms to provide opportunity and recognition (Collyer, F. M. 2018).

These disparities are not only evident in academics, but also in global health. Research practices which constitute epidemic injustice as suppressing the potential of south due to structural prejudices and colonial legacy. Credibility deficit and interpretive marginalization are two central forms of epistemic wrongs, which hinders the growth in southern global health practices. These kind of situation create urge to establish indigenous system to provide base to individuals. And group to perform, are there true capability (Bhakuni, H., & Abimbola, S. 2021).

Rise Of Southern Epistemologies And Future

The development of Southern Epistemologies to criticise western modernity's, deep hierarchies to work as a project for global cognitive justice. The concept of abusive thinking describes about the invisible but powerful line that divides the knowledge of west into two realms. These are “ this side of the line” where knowledge is treated as visible, rational, universal and even legitimate whereas another realm is “other side” where knowledge is treated as invisible, inferior and even non-existent (De Sousa Santos, B. 2016).

This divide is not only symbolic but it projects the mind-set and systematic destruction and suppression. To counter abyssal thinking, there is an epistemologies of south which provides validity verification, diversity and creativity to counter dominant hegemonic knowledge system. As the world is dealing with crisis such as climate change, inequality mental health, there is a need of diversification of knowledge. Thus, the epistemologies of south provides insights for the future, as they underpin subaltern cosmopolitanism, a bottom up, transnational solidarity. There is a need of cognitive justice to provide global justice by rewriting history to include south and legitimise contributions of south (learn from the south).

Foundation Of Indian Knowledge System

Indian knowledge system can be seen as vast multi-layered tradition evolved and continue to get evolved by integrating new

patterns, which can hold significant contemporary relevance. The integration of philosophical scientific linguistic medical ecological and cultural knowledge gave Indian knowledge system an edge to perform better to frame futuristic approaches. The Indian knowledge system has been founded on the bedrock of Vedic and post Vedic knowledge, highlighting diverse fields of Nyaya, Ayurveda, Vedanta and other sophisticated knowledge, catering to logic and reasoning. (Singh, D. 2026).

The respect and recognition given to Indian knowledge system in 1893s Chicago conference where swami Vivekananda famously declared “I’m proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance”. Being a cosmopolitan patriot, empowering Indians against colonialism and providing Vedanta philosophy and viewing them as universal truth, focusing on spiritual aspect (Sharma¹, T. K., & Isarani, L. 2025, November). Since from the ancient time period the Indian knowledge system provides a strong base and has a global respect. Due to its high spiritual values, culture and traditions, which provide impetus and draw attention from far regions towards India bringing people to people connect.

Ontological Foundations

To understand the ontological foundations of Indian knowledge system one needs to understand the concept of ontology. The concept of ontology deals with the branch of metaphysics, which deals with the nature of being showing properties and relations between them. The ontological foundation of Indian knowledge system is “sarva-bhuta-hite-ratah”, a Sanskrit phrase from the Bhagwat Gita, which explains the inter-connectedness of life as it gives the way of life to engage in the welfare of all beings.

The Indian knowledge system has established a complicated, multi element ontological system consisting of components that gave structured way to gain knowledge of reality time and human experience by providing both quantitative and qualitative insights. The Indian knowledge system cannot be treated as irrelevant, meta-physical or obsolete, as in the present scenario, along with scientific technological development, spiritual and ethical teaching gain equal importance to shape responsible generations (Denisov, D. V. 2023).

Epistemology : The Multi - Pramana Framework

The Indian knowledge system has a unique way to deal with the problems and provide solution in the form of multi-pramana framework showcasing a comprehensive multi-dimensional approach to acquire knowledge, which is legitimate (prama). This is different from the western system which often favour's empirical studies, whereas Indian knowledge system combines sensory logical, analogical and testimonial evidence to develop reality. Therefore, the four primary pramans provide valid meanings as accepted by Nyaya school, which are discussed below in detail :

i. Pratyaksha Pramana (Perception) - This implies that perceiving knowledge through direct observation or sensory perception (ryes, ears, tongue, nose, skin) and the mind. This is the first step to gain superficial knowledge which will help in the further analysis, which give deeper insights as it develops base for the understanding. Thus, it can be considered as the most basic direct and primary source of gaining knowledge and can be seen practically applied in Ayurveda to diagnose patients along with the use of empirical observations provided by science involving both external sensory input and internal mental processing (manasa pratyaksha).

ii. Anumana Pramana (Inference) – This type if knowledge is gained through the logical process to derive conclusions or formulating an opinion based on evidence, reasoning, and prior knowledge. In simple sense it is the knowledge established by “reading between the lines”, to understand those information which is not directly stated. Logical reasoning or deduction provides the bases concluding a truth based on observations and prior knowledge.

The method used is typical inference requires an invariable concomitant (Vyapti) between a sign and object. This can be explained by example such as inferring fire on a hill (unseen) because smoke (seen) is present. Anumana pramana has three types which are *purvavat* (interpreting effect from cause), *sheshvat* (interpreting cause from effect), and *samanyatodrishta* (based on general observation).

iii. Upamana Pramana (Comparison/Analogy) – This deals with the phenomenon where knowledge of an object is derived from its similarity of a previously known object. This will help in the

establishment of relationship between an identity and the object it refers to. This can be explained from the analogy that suppose there is a knowledge that a gavaya (wild cow) looks like a cow and if one sees an unfamiliar animal in the forest due to previous reference, that animal will be taken as gavaya, which is knowledge gained through upamana.

iv. Sabda Pramana (Testimony/Word) - this is very crucial type of knowledge gained by a means of speech or written word of an authentic source or expert (aptavakya). This type of knowledge involves empirical scientific and expert literature as significantly refers to the Vedas and authorised scriptures in the traditional Indian philosophy.

Evolution of Indian Knowledge System

The Indian knowledge system has a significant place in the development of scientific and spiritual knowledge. The Indian Knowledge System has evolved from traditional Indian education values to modern educational values in the form of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. To understand the modern system of imparting knowledge, traditional system needs to be analysed as there is a deep relation between traditional and modern values.

In the traditional education system, there was a concept of Gurukul system. The Gurukul system impart knowledge in a unique way where students used to live with their teacher. This enables the learning through close mentorship, using an holistic approach to integrate moral physical, intellectual and spiritual development of knowledge. This implies that education was not limited to mere academic development rather, it aggregates other essential aspects of overall character building such as teaching ethics, discipline, social responsibility, arts and harmonious living (Patil, V. K., & Patil, K. D. 2023).

For this kind of learning, Takshila and Nalanda are famous institutions imparting knowledge to students by attracting students across Asia. Traditional Indian knowledge system was majorly concerned with the value based learning where knowledge is perceived as a medium of welfare to society. Sushurth, Aryabhata, Panini, Chanakya demonstrated the depth of Indian knowledge system by contributing in the field of science, astronomy, linguistics and political science. There has been an evolution in the Indian knowledge system and a transformative shift happened in 2020 with the passing of

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. National Education Policy (NEP) provides holistic framework to redefine learning systems. One of the most inspiring changes introduced is to shift from 10 + 2 model to 5+ 3+ 3+ 4 framework, aligning school curriculums with the developmental stage of childhood. The reason behind this particular change is to make education more flexible experience base so that it can be aligned with cognitive growth. The comparison between Indian Knowledge System and National Education Policy 2020 are discussed as (Mandavkar, P. 2025) :-

Comparison between IKS and NEP 2020

Dimension	Indian Knowledge System (IKS)	National Education Policy (NEP 2020)
Philosophical Foundation	Rooted in ancient Indian knowledge derived from holism, interconnectedness, ethics, experimental learning, and spiritual development.	Rooted in constitutional framework, global competitiveness, and 21 st – century skills while integrating Indian traditions.
Purpose Of Education	Framing of balanced human being (<i>purusharthas</i>), moral character, societal harmony, and self-realization.	Creation of creative, critical, ethical, and employable citizens for a knowledge-based economy.
Knowledge Orientation	Multidisciplinary by nature which integrates science, arts, philosophy, ecology, health, and ethics.	Promoting multidisciplinary universities, flexible curricula, and integration of vocational, scientific, and cultural knowledge.
Pedagogical Approach	Gurukul System based approach through the means of oral learning, community-based knowledge, and value-centric teaching.	Experience based, relevant for competition through flexible pathways (5+3+3+4 model).
Teacher's Point Of View	Guru as a moral guide, mentor as he/she becomes the central character.	Teacher guide as facilitator, mentor, and professional requiring continuous training (NISHTHA, teacher educational reforms).
Curriculum Structure	Integrate and fluid focussing on harmony between discipline and life skills.	Flexible, modular, multidisciplinary including empirical as well as qualitative learning.
Language Policy	Based on mother tongue, mostly Sanskrit or regional languages.	Strong emphasis over mother tongue till Grade 5, promoting Indian languages to impart classical knowledge.
Assessment Philosophy	Continuous, qualitative, holistic.	Competency based evaluation.
Ethical & Value Education	Dharma, empathy, self-discipline, environmental ethics, and social responsibility.	Value based education, skill development.
Sources Of Knowledge	Indigenous (ancient wisdom),	Integrating IKS to main curriculum aligning with global standards.
Vision Of Institutions	Community rooted learning.	Multidisciplinary universities, digital learning and research based.
Global Orientation	Civilizational, cultural, and spiritual.	Aiming for global competitiveness, internationalization.
Contemporary Relevance	Provide sustainable, ethical, and holistic framework.	Using selective IKS to enrich modern education, innovation.

Integrating Indian Knowledge System With Global South

The foundational values of Indian education system and perspective of global south gives a unique and pragmatic approach to move towards modern technology oriented knowledge. Integration and assimilation of both global south knowledge system with Indian knowledge system led to holistic decolonized and sustainable development of educational framework. This will shift the focus away from Eurocentric models formulating indigenous framework for imparting knowledge.

By incorporating traditional knowledge of Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedic mathematics, sustainable methods of agriculture with modern scientific technologies will foster interdisciplinary approach. There is a need to integrate the positive aspects of both the system to enhance cognitive skills and provide futuristic solutions to deal with the global challenges such as climate change and health. The key areas of integration involves decolonization education by modifying curriculum as encouraged by NEP 2020 which needs to be promoted in global south as well.

Sustainable approach towards ecology and providing solutions by integrating ancient wisdom of both the knowledge systems will give future oriented perspective. Also, combining traditional indigenous knowledge systems of both India and global south. To provide solutions to promote health and wellness by incorporating interdisciplinary approach bridging STEM with traditional wisdom. to implement this scientific and value based knowledge teachers need to be trained along with the reforms in the curriculum. T20 South Africa 2025 proposal and NEP 2020 to give legitimacy and funding to promote indigenous knowledge system. This will further enhance the chances of recognition in global knowledge exchange through collective efforts.

Conclusion

Although there is great potential to formulate a futuristic model of knowledge system by taking clues from our traditional knowledge system and collaborating with Global South. This research and collaboration is the need of the hour as the kids who are going to kindergarten will end up working for technologies that are still not yet

invented. This implies that curriculum needs to be designed in such a way that students to be trained to deal in unknown situations. This is because unknown situations will increase due to the increment in the rate of change as previously change was constant but not anymore. Hence emotional stability is required along with technological impetus as there is difference between correlation and causation.

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