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**IMPLEMENTATION OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS IN UNIVERSITIES: A CASE STUDY APPROACH UNDER NEP2020**

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The introduction of the National Education Policy 2020 marks a transformative phase in India's educational landscape. The policy envisions an education system that nurtures intellectual competence alongside ethical awareness, creativity, and social responsibility. Central to this reform is the revitalization of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), which encompasses India's classical philosophies, scientific traditions, arts, languages, and community-based practices.

**INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM:**

The Indian Knowledge system refer to the indigenous knowledge, philosophies, sciences, arts and practices over centuries. It represents a holistic and integrated approach to understanding life, nature and society.

**NEP 2020:**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a transformative framework designed to overhaul India's education system, focusing on 21st-century skills, holistic development, and flexibility from school to higher education.

Integrating IKS within mainstream curriculum seeks to bridge historical wisdom with contemporary educational objectives. Rather than viewing tradition and modernity as oppositional, NEP 2020 promotes a synthesis that fosters multidisciplinary learning, experiential pedagogy, and value-oriented education. This integration aims to cultivate well-rounded individuals capable of critical inquiry, cultural rootedness, and global engagement. Thus, holistic education under NEP 2020 is conceptualized as the balanced development of cognitive, emotional, ethical, and practical dimensions of learners.

**LITERATURE REVIEW:**

Scholarly discourse increasingly recognizes Indian Knowledge System (IKS) as a comprehensive intellectual tradition that historically integrated philosophy, science, governance, health, arts, and environmental understanding. Studies highlight that ancient centres of learning such as Nalanda University and Takshashila University functioned as multidisciplinary institutions, fostering debate, inquiry, and character development alongside specialized knowledge.

Classical texts including the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita articulate educational ideals grounded in self-realization, ethical responsibility, and reflective thinking. Contemporary researchers interpret these philosophical foundations as compatible with modern constructivist and experiential learning models.

The National Education Policy 2020 reinforces similar principles by advocating multidisciplinary education, flexibility in subject choice, mother-tongue instruction, and value-based learning. Literature suggests that integrating yoga, indigenous environmental knowledge, and traditional sciences into formal curricula contributes to socio-emotional development and sustainability awareness.

**METHODOLOGY:**

This study employs a qualitative and exploratory research design to analyze the alignment between Indian Knowledge System principles and the National Education Policy 2020. Secondary data sources, including policy documents, peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and government reports, were systematically reviewed.

A thematic content analysis approach was adopted to identify recurring constructs such as interdisciplinarity, experiential learning, ethical education, multilingualism, and research integration. The collected data were categorized and synthesized to develop an analytical framework linking IKS components with holistic educational outcomes. The methodology emphasizes conceptual interpretation rather than empirical measurement, enabling a structured examination of policy intentions and scholarly perspectives

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:****I. Epistemological Integration:**

The analysis indicates strong conceptual convergence between IKS philosophy and NEP 2020's educational vision. Traditional Indian epistemology emphasizes interconnectedness among diverse domains of knowledge,

contrasting with compartmentalized disciplinary structures prevalent in contemporary systems. Historical institutions such as Nalanda University exemplified integrated learning environments where philosophy, medicine, astronomy, and linguistics coexisted within a unified intellectual framework.

NEP 2020’s push for multidisciplinary universities, flexible curricula, and holistic development reflects this integrative orientation. Such epistemological restructuring supports systems thinking and contextual problem-solving.

**Example 1.a:** The following sloka is a classical illustration of integrated learning environment in the Indian Knowledge tradition from Taittiriya Upanishad, particularly in the Śikṣāvallī section.

सत्यं वद धर्मं चर स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः ।

आचारस्य प्रियं धनमाहत्य प्रजातन्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः ॥

Satyam vada, Dharmam chara, Swadhyayan-ma pramadah

Acharyaya priyam dhanamahritya, Prajatantum ma vyavachhetsih:

(Source: Taittiriya Upanishad Shikhavalli 11.1)

**Meaning (Conceptual Translation):**

Speak the truth. Practice righteousness. Do not neglect self-study. Offer gratitude to the teacher and uphold social responsibility.

**This instruction embodies integration across multiple domains.**

**Table 1: Integrated elements**

Dimension	Integrated Element
Cognitive	Self-study (Swadhyayan) – lifelong learning
Ethical	Truthfulness (satyam), righteous conduct (dharma)
Social	Respect for teacher (Acharya) and society
Behavioral	Application of knowledge in life practice

Thus, learning is not fragmented into academic subjects alone. It integrates Knowledge, Values, Conduct, Community engagement. This aligns strongly with holistic education principles advocated in contemporary frameworks like NEP 2020.

The structured illustrations of Integrated Learning Environments drawn from classical Indian sources and linked with contemporary educational practice are explained below.

**Example 1.b: Practical Contemporary Example:**

For Environmental Studies Course in a university adopting integrated learning, the teaching and learning is as follows.

- Students study climate science (cognitive)
- Practice sustainable campus initiatives (behavioral)
- Reflect on ethical responsibility toward nature (value-based)
- Work in community outreach programs (social integration)

Here, knowledge, values, and action merge — mirroring the Upanishadic vision.

**Example 2.a: Integrated Learning in the Bhagavad Gita:**

योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्

Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam

( Source: Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Verse 50)

**Meaning:** Yoga is excellence in action

**Table 2: Integrated Dimensions**

Dimension	Integrated Element
Intellectual	Discernment (Jnana)

Emotional	Devotion (Bhakti)
Practical	Action (Karma)
Ethical	Duty (Dharma)
Psychological	Self-regulation (Yoga)

**Example 2.b: Modern Educational Application**

A Management classroom applying this principle:

- Teaching strategic theory (knowledge)
- Encouraging ethical decision-making (values)
- Conducting simulations (action competence)
- Reflective journaling (self-awareness)
- Learning integrates cognition, emotion, action, and ethics.

**Example 3.a: Integrated Learning in the Gurukul System:**

सा विद्या या विमुक्तये

Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye

(Source: Vishnu Purana (1.19.41))

**Meaning:** True knowledge is that which liberates

**Table 3: Core features of Gurukul Model**

Element	Description
Residential learning	Education integrated with daily life
Character formation	Moral discipline emphasized
Experiential tasks	Service, nature engagement
Teacher–student bond	Personal mentorship

This sloka is often used as a motto for educational institutions, including the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Dharwad, emphasizing the transformative power of learning.

**Example 3.b: Contemporary Equivalent:**

A residential university that integrates Academic curriculum, Community service, Yoga and meditation, Skill-based internships to enhance whole-person education.

Some of the residential educational institutions like IITs (Indian Institutes of Information Technology), Ashoka University, Visva-Bharati University, Azim Premji University & Sri Sathya Sai Institute etc., in India aligned explicitly with key objectives of NEP 2020, particularly multidisciplinary education, holistic development, experiential learning, value-based education, and community engagement etc.,

**II. Value-Oriented and Ethical Formation:**

IKS places considerable emphasis on ethical conduct, self-discipline, and social harmony. Philosophical teachings embedded in the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads advocate reflective decision-making and moral responsibility. NEP 2020 similarly underscores constitutional values, empathy, and civic responsibility.

The results suggest that embedding ethical reflection within professional and technical education can address contemporary concerns about value erosion in academic institutions.

**Example 4:** The following sloka is a foundational textual illustration of Value-Oriented and Ethical Formation from Bhagavad Gita.

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः

śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt

sva-dharme nidhanam śreyaḥ para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ

(Source: Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Verse 35)

**Meaning:**

It is better to perform one’s own duty (dharma) imperfectly than to perform another’s duty perfectly; abandoning one’s moral responsibility leads to fear and disorder.

**Ethical Significance:** This verse establishes:

- Moral responsibility (Dharma)
- Integrity in action
- Authenticity and self-awareness
- Courage in ethical decision-making

Value formation here is not theoretical morality but context-based ethical action aligned with one’s role and responsibility.

**Table 4: Integrated Outcomes**

Dimension	Formation outcome
Ethical	Commitment to truth
Emotional	Moral Courage
Social	Institutional trust
Professional	Accountability

Value-oriented education requires Ethical reflection modules, Role-based responsibility exercises, Community engagement programs, Mentorship and character development etc., This aligns strongly with character-building objectives emphasized in holistic and NEP 2020 frameworks.

**Example 5:** The following statement is a clear conceptual linkage between Indian Knowledge System and the value-based education goals of National Education Policy 2020.

**मातृदेवो भव। पितृदेवो भव। आचार्यदेवो भव। अतिथिदेवो भव॥**

Matru devo bhava, Pitru devo bhava, Acharya devo bhava, Atithi devo bhava

(Source: Taittiriya Upanishad (Shikshavalli I.11.2), part of the Yajur Veda)

**Meaning:**

Regard your mother as divine.

Regard your father as divine.

Regard your teacher as divine.

Regard your guest as divine.

This sloka emphasizes reverence, gratitude, duty, and relational ethics.

**Alignment with NEP 2020 Value-Based Education Goals:** NEP 2020 explicitly calls for education that promotes Ethical reasoning, Constitutional values, Respect for elders and teachers, Empathy and social responsibility. Indian cultural ethos and heritage etc.,

The Upanishadic principle aligns structurally with these objectives

**Table 5: Conceptual Mapping**

NEP 2020 objective	Description
Character Formation	Cultivates humility, gratitude, moral discipline
Respect for Teachers	“आचार्य देवो भव” reinforces guru–shishya ethos
Social Responsibility	“अतिथि देवो भव” encourages hospitality and civic ethics
Holistic Development	Integrates emotional, moral, and social intelligence

The phrase operationalizes NEP 2020’s vision of education that moves beyond cognitive acquisition toward Moral responsibility, social harmony, Cultural rootedness, Emotional maturity etc., Thus, it serves as a classical ethical foundation supporting NEP 2020’s goal of value-based, holistic, and culturally grounded education.

**III. Experiential and Competency-Based Learning:**

Traditional pedagogical approaches in India emphasized dialogue, apprenticeship, and experiential immersion. Texts such as the Charaka Samhita illustrate systematic clinical observation and preventive healthcare models, indicating early scientific reasoning within indigenous frameworks.

NEP 2020's competency-based education, internship models, and vocational integration resonate with such experiential traditions. The findings demonstrate that practical learning rooted in local knowledge systems enhances skill development and contextual awareness.

**Example 6:** The following sloka is a classical illustration of Experiential and Competency-Based Learning from Bhagavad Gita, where learning occurs through lived action rather than submissive instruction.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

Karmany-evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana;

Mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmani.

(Source: Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2, Verse 47)

**Meaning:** You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, nor be attached to inaction.

This verse reflects experiential and competency-based learning, which emphasizes,

- Learning through action (Karma)
- Skill development in real contexts
- Focus on process over mere results
- Active engagement rather than passive withdrawal
- Education here is not theoretical abstraction but practice-driven formation

**Conceptual Insight:**

The Gita's pedagogical context itself is experiential:

- Arjuna does not learn ethics in isolation.
- He learns amid a real-life moral crisis.
- Knowledge is integrated with action, reflection, and responsibility.

Thus, “कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते” becomes a classical philosophical foundation for modern experiential and competency-based pedagogy

**IV. Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion:**

The policy's advocacy of mother-tongue instruction aligns with IKS traditions where knowledge transmission occurred through Sanskrit, Pali, Tamil, and regional languages. Research supports the cognitive benefits of multilingual education, including improved comprehension and critical reasoning.

However, effective implementation requires high-quality translation, curriculum development, and faculty training to maintain academic standards.

**Example 7:** The following verse is a powerful classical foundation for Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion from the Rigveda.

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतोऽदब्धासो अपरीतास उद्भिदः

A no bhadraḥ kratavo yantu visvato adabdhaso aparitasa udbhidah

(Source: Rigveda (1.89.1))

**Meaning:** Let noble and auspicious thoughts come to us from all directions / sides of the universe.

This mantra reflects intellectual openness, cultural receptivity, and epistemic pluralism—core principles underlying linguistic inclusion

**Table 6: Conceptual Mapping**

Rigvedic Principle	NEP 2020 objective
Openness to ideas from all directions	Encouragement of multilingual competence
Acceptance of diversity	Inclusion of regional and tribal languages
Knowledge beyond boundaries	Flexible language choices in higher education
Cultural receptivity	Preservation of Indian linguistic heritage

The mantra symbolically supports a non-hegemonic knowledge structure, where no single language monopolizes learning

**V. Institutional and Structural Constraints:**

Despite strong conceptual alignment, operational challenges persist. Institutions may face limitations in faculty expertise, interdisciplinary collaboration, and research validation mechanisms. There is also a need to ensure that integration remains inclusive and evidence-based rather than symbolic.

Therefore, sustained institutional reform and scholarly oversight are essential for meaningful implementation.

**Example 8. Kautilya’s Saptanga Theory :** Kautilya (Chanakya) conceptualized governance as a system of interdependent institutional organs, not merely personal rule.

**स्वामी अमात्य जनपद दुर्ग कोश दण्ड मित्राणि प्रकृतयः।**

(Source: Arthashastra)

**Meaning:** The state consists of seven constituent elements, Swami (Ruler), Amatya (Ministers /Officials), Janapada (Territory & Population), Durga (Fortification/Infrastructure), Kosha (Treasury), Danda (Military/Administrative Power), Mitra (Allies)

**Table 7: Conceptual Mapping**

Arthashastra Structural Element	NEP 2020 Reform Equivalent
Swami (Leader)	Governing Board / Institutional Head
Amatya (Trained Officials)	Professional academic & administrative cadres
Kosha (Treasury)	Transparent funding & financial autonomy
Danda (Regulation & Discipline)	HECI regulatory framework
Durga (Infrastructure)	Digital universities & campus development
Mitra (Alliances)	Internationalization & industry partnerships
Janapada (People)	Student-centered learning ecosystem

**Structural Parallel in Higher Education:**

Kautilya emphasized that institutional failure occurs when:

- Officials lack competence
- Financial systems are weak
- Oversight mechanisms collapse
- Structural roles are unclear

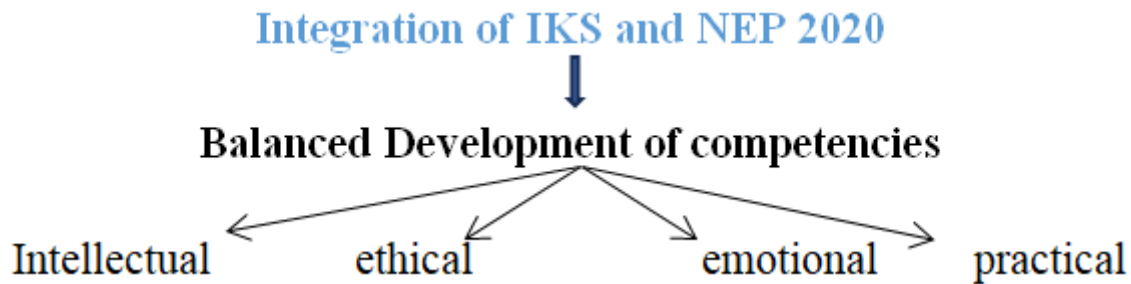
Similarly, NEP 2020 identifies systemic issues in Indian higher education such as:

- Over-regulation
- Rigid affiliation models
- Fragmented governance
- Limited institutional autonomy

**Conclusion and Implications:**

The integration of Indian Knowledge System within the framework of the National Education Policy 2020 represents a strategic educational reform grounded in both heritage and modernity.

Diagram 1: Integration of IKS and NEP 2020



Source: Author compilation

The study concludes that IKS offers a robust philosophical and pedagogical foundation capable of advancing holistic education—defined as the balanced development of intellectual, ethical, emotional, and practical competencies.

#### **Policy Implications:**

Structured implementation guidelines, funding allocation, and accreditation mechanisms are necessary to ensure systematic integration. Establishing interdisciplinary research centres and evaluation frameworks can enhance academic credibility.

#### **Institutional Implications:**

Universities must invest in faculty capacity building, curriculum redesign, and collaborative research initiatives. Leadership commitment is critical for sustaining reform momentum.

#### **Pedagogical Implications:**

Teaching methodologies should emphasize dialogue, experiential learning, ethical reflection, and community engagement. Integrating wellness practices and sustainability education can enrich holistic development.

#### **Research Implications:**

Future studies should empirically assess the impact of IKS integration on student outcomes. Comparative and interdisciplinary research will strengthen theoretical and practical contributions.

#### **Societal and Global Implications:**

Holistic education rooted in indigenous knowledge can promote cultural confidence, social responsibility, and sustainable development. International academic collaborations may position India as a contributor to global educational innovation while maintaining universal scholarly standards.

In summary, the implementation of Indian Knowledge System with NEP 2020 provides a transformative framework for re-envisioning education in India. When implemented with academic rigor and inclusivity, it has the potential to cultivate ethically grounded, intellectually competent, and socially responsible citizens prepared for both national development and global engagement.

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