



Exploring the Foundations and Modern Relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems

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<p>Received 17/05/2025</p> <p>Accepted 21/05/2025</p> <p>Published 09/07/2025</p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p><i>The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is a deep and enduring intellectual tradition rooted in the Vedic period, spanning disciplines such as philosophy, science, medicine, mathematics, and spirituality. Emerging from the Vedas and Upanishads, it integrates concepts like dharma, karma, and moksha, promoting harmony, balance, and interconnectedness in life and the environment. Evolving from oral traditions, IKS has contributed significantly to global knowledge through innovations by scholars like Aryabhata and Brahmagupta in mathematics and astronomy.</i></p> <p><i>Core practices such as Ayurveda and Yoga exemplify IKS's holistic approach to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, gaining global recognition for addressing contemporary challenges in health, education, and environmental sustainability. Philosophical frameworks emphasizing ethical living, self-realization, and social harmony continue to influence modern education and policy, notably India's National Education Policy 2020, which integrates traditional wisdom with modern systems to meet emerging needs.</i></p> <p><i>Principles such as Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam ("the world is one family") reflect IKS's global relevance in fostering sustainability, collective responsibility, and environmental stewardship. Despite historical disruptions, including Islamic invasions and colonial rule, IKS has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, preserving its core essence while contributing to advancements in science, technology, and culture.</i></p> <p><i>In the modern era, the fusion of ancient practices with scientific research is driving innovations in fields like holistic health and environmental protection. This dynamic legacy offers practical solutions to global crises through principles of balance, ethical conduct, and</i></p>
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interconnectedness. The Indian Knowledge System remains a valuable framework for sustainable living, cultural preservation, and global well-being, bridging ancient traditions with contemporary practices to create a harmonious and sustainable future.

Keywords: *Cultural Legacy, Ethical Living, Holistic Health, Indian Knowledge System, Vedic Philosophy*

Introduction

Indian knowledge system is deep and very old encompassing philosophies and spirituality and technically oriented modern sciences and culture apart from occupational sciences. Being disclosed in one of the oldest books in the world – Vedas – this one developed during centuries, incorporating different experience of various theories, which focused on mutual dependence of all the living beings and the world. It would therefore be reasonable to associate the genesis of the Indian knowledge system to the Vedic Period that is believed to have begun around 1500B.C. In terms of sciences, the Vedas contain many information on various sectors of science including medical science, astronomical science, numerical science, political science, spiritual science, and philosophical science etc., which help us to unfold the image of Indian people's life and acknowledge the value of the conception of balance, harmony, unity within a society. This general world view proves that the Indian knowledge system has provided the systemic vision and strategy & technique framing ways in tune with the physical- bodily, psychological- mental, -soul and brotherhood aspects of the life. This point of view is realized in exercising and healing practices like yoga and Ayurveda with the emphasis on balance of a person. Indians gained knowledge in many directions, including and not limited to science and spirituality, art and literature, standards of morality, and etc., and continuously changed the Indian society dramatically. It has impinged upon such areas as sciences, mathematics, medicine, literature and art and is still the dynamic force that governs the social organization and the culture of India. Being aware, by design, to the principles of the everlasting Indian knowledge and philosophy, the NEP-2020 has as its framework. Customize the Indian Knowledge Systems that are Jnan which based on experience, observation and experimentations and epiplectic and analysis also the Vignan and Jeevan Darshan. Such a tradition of validation and putting into practice has shaped our education, arts, administration, law, justice, health, manufacturing and commerce. The primary function of studying history and including the IKSI is to make the historical and uninterrupted tradition of knowledge transmission that represents the Indian perspective or (The Bhāratīya Drishti) ready to address today and the future issues.

Historical Context

Ancient Roots

It is possible to identify ingredients of the Indian knowledge system right from the polluted Vedic period, about 1500 BCE, which is regarded as one of the driving forces of an intellectual and spiritual revolution in India. It is in this time THE VEDAS were composed, and the oldest books of Hindu religion, which are like encyclopedia which embrace every domain of human knowledge of that period, including Ayurveda, Astronomy, Math, ethical, etc. These texts were

orally narrated and presented a vivid picture of oral culture before they were first written in Vedic Sanskrit around between 1500 BC and 500 BC. The Vedas are divided into four major collections: the Rig, Sama, Yaju and Atharva Vedas, holy scriptures that consists of hymns, rituals and philosophical discourses that give a vivid picture about the Indo-Aryan civilization. There are especially powerful hymns to certain gods and goddess – Agni (fire), Indra (the chief god) – this collection reflects the theosophical and cosmological attitude of the Ancient Indians. Likewise, an early Indian ‘wisdom’ tradition that stemmed from Vedic literature features dharma, or the ethical virtue attached to a specific role, and karma, a program of retributive justice. Therefore, for the Veda a new literature, the Upanishads occurred-the philosophical distillate which the word Upanishads mean sitting down near (a teacher) in order to gain knowledge. They are abstract ideas that address ideas such as ‘enlightened’ self-actualization or the specification of the nature of the final truth or the Brahman. Such a shift in philosophies translates to a change from outward exteriors to the interiors, but it is not devoid of all outward signs. Even the Vedic tradition indeed laid a foundation for the sciences; such as mathematics and astronomy; moreover, some editions to the arithmetic and geometry were brought into India long before it was compared to any advancements in such fields anywhere in the world. Knowledge is appreciated so much in this tradition through past mathematicians like Aryabhata and Brahmagupta whose ideas in mathematics are as influential as the modern ones. Thus, readers familiar with the Vedas would realize that they also contain all the current practices in addition to exhibiting an integrated perspective of the modern Indian society and nature that constitutes a foundation for constructing an entire paradigm of civilization in the present-day India. This persistent achievement reveals the Vedic texts do not only act as the record of the history of Indo-Indian civilization but also as the living cultures alive today that shape the Indians’ contemporary existence.

Philosophical Developments

It is a dazzling fabric of Indian philosophies of life that have come into existence in the form of eighteen schools of thought called as Darśanas to enlighten the denizens of the earth about the mystery of life. These philosophical systems originate from Vedas and Upanishads and have matured over thousands of years contributing to the spiritual and moral development of the Indian subcontinent. Dharma is one of the fundamental concepts that dominate the thinking of India which reflects both the cosmic order of the world and the proper role of the man in it. Dharma is a formulation of good conduct and is closely related to such things as truth-telling, nonviolence, and compassion. The Bhagavad Gita, a seminal text of Hindu philosophy, delves into the complexities of dharma, highlighting the importance of performing one's duty without attachment to the fruits of one's actions. Another is the law of karma, the behavior patterns and their results. In Indian philosophy there is a believe that every act a man performs including bodily movements, thoughts, or speech, creates an impact that brings about subsequent occurrence in one’s life. Due to this concept of karma in Feng Shui, people are keen with their actions and try to do good deeds and have good moral bearings. Salvation, or Moksha, which means release from the process of reincarnation, is the chief end in all Indian philosophies. This state of freedom is related to the understanding of the true nature, and it is normally referred to as the atman-brahman experience. The method of attaining moksha is different in most of the darśanas, while some of them advocate devotion, some purely scholarly study, and some yoga and meditation. These are not mere

philosophical concepts of plugging but concepts that are closely associated with realities of day-to-day existence. The Gandian concept of Ahimsa – non-violence in social transformation has been a most vibrant instrument in the hands of social reformers to fight against social injustice. Karma is such beliefs about individual accountability and compassion while Moksha entails several religious practices and standards. Thus, one can conclude that Indian philosophy is a complex pluralism of various viewpoints and systems that contribute to human’s understanding of the world, truth, and the principles of right behavior. Ideas like dharma, karma, moksha and the caste system are the fundamental elements that define both, the values of millions of people in India and experiences that people go through.

Table 1: Key Aspects of Ancient Indian Knowledge and Philosophical Traditions

Aspect	Description
Vedic Period	Origin of Indian knowledge system around 1500 BCE, laying intellectual and spiritual foundations.
The Vedas	Ancient texts including Rig, Sama, Yaju, and Atharva Vedas, containing hymns, rituals, and philosophy.
The Upanishads	Philosophical texts exploring self-actualization, Brahman, and the nature of truth.
Mathematical Contributions	Contributions by Aryabhata and Brahmagupta in fields like arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy.
Philosophical Systems (Darśanas)	Eighteen schools of thought originating from Vedas and Upanishads, shaping Indian philosophy.
Dharma	Ethical virtue tied to cosmic order and personal duty, emphasizing truth, nonviolence, and compassion.
Karma	Law of cause and effect; every action impacts future occurrences, influencing moral conduct.
Moksha	Salvation or release from reincarnation cycle, achieved through devotion, study, yoga, or meditation.
Gandhian Ahimsa	Non-violence used as a tool for social transformation and justice, advocated by Gandhi.

Core Concepts of Indian Knowledge System

Holistic Approach

The openness of the Indian knowledge system is grounded on the reality of Indian’s integrated organic wholeness of material, mind, spirit and society. This perception has its roots from prehistoric philosophy in India of which Ayurveda and Yoga inter alia are its local expressions. Ayurveda is known as Science of life as per this science body and mind of the human should be maintained in balanced condition to avoid disease and other forms of illness. This system does not only involve the medicine or exercise required, but it also takes into account the heart and soul, which assures the culture does not only understand health as a mere property of the physical body. Yoga too is the body, mind and spirit discipline using postures, breathing exercises and spiritual practices that are asanas, pranayamas and meditations respectively. It contributes to good

shape of the body as well as soundness of mind and positive interpersonal state and thus leads one's efforts toward the balanced and harmonious concept. But the approach, which involves a consideration of the whole, is not only narrowly egoistic; it is a vision of a human being as an organism that is an irreplaceable element in the environment. The concept of VasudhaivaKutumbakam, which translates to "the world is one family," encapsulates this ethos by promoting a sense of global interconnectedness and responsibility towards all living beings. Furthermore, the educational philosophies of which the basic assumptions are rooted in the antique tradition imply that a woman is transformed not only within the framework of the soul but also at a deeper level. The NEP 2020 does this by integrating Indian knowledge systems into the present-day education policy and making moral values along with ethical training as compulsory along with the curriculum. This integration aims at creating integrated persons and not informed par excellence informed socially irresponsible scientifically naïve persons. Due to the globalization, principles of wholism are being incorporated in the modern world culturally even such constitutes as "Mindfulness" of Indian origin. In support of this studies have established that engaging in such practices can collectively a long way in enhancing on customer's positive psychological health and other emotional assets together with their total well-being. Thus, the Indian knowledge system's holistic approach serves as a vital framework for addressing contemporary challenges related to health, education, and environmental sustainability, reaffirming its relevance in today's rapidly changing world.

Pramāṇas: Means of Knowledge

First of all, it is important to realize that Indians formulated several kinds of pramāṇas which are the fundamental tools through which people come to know things and gaining knowledge in India is based on them. The three categories of pramāṇas are Pratyakṣa means knowledge obtained through senses that is direct vision, Anumāna means inference and Śabda means word or others' testimony. Purvapeka which is accepted by most as the most important out of the four sources of knowledge is the knowledge which comes through senses and is inferred. Literally the term pratyakṣa according to the Nyaya school of Indian philosophy relate to those kinds of knowledge that arise from the contact of the organs of sense with their respective objects which are without doubt or error. This form of perception is further categorized into two types: Of these two kinds of perception, laukika and alaukika, the first is used more often than alaukika in the indicated countries of the world with a frequency of 63%. Nyaya philosophers clarify this fact that appropriate perception is the relation between the perceiving subject and the perceived object which leads to something that is called contact theory of perception. This is unlike the western philosophy traditions whereby scepticism is observed more especially as the senses are accused of being misleading. Following up the Pratyakṣa is Anumāna which translates to the knowledge by inferential. This method allows people make conclusion on events they may have missed or on events that may have occurred in the past, say when reaching a conclusion that there is fire when seeing smoke. Anumāna is actually the premise of argumentation and aids in dissecting all causation and interconnection of events in reasoning affairs both logical and scientific. Last of all Śabda is knowledge which is generated through śLISTA, the teachings of the Scriptures or the knowledge that comes from enlightened beings, known as Aptavākya. Such a kind of justified knowledge is important where the first order epistemic access to the relevant knowledge is

somehow blocked or constrained and provides a body of truths which are welfare promoting on which ethical and philosophical growth can be built. The allied pramāṇas offer about consciously bouncing the experiences assessing approach while bringing the collective truths legitimacy with possibilities of making ethical-moral, scientific or spiritual harmony. Therefore, through the absorptions of these means of knowledge, Indian philosophy improves the steps of the gaining knowledge and wisdom all in a complex manner by illustrating two indigenous ways of the knowledge, which is observation, and tradition.

Table 2: Holistic Approach and Means of Knowledge in Indian Philosophy

Aspect	Description
Holistic Approach	Integrated view of material, mind, spirit, and society; addressing contemporary challenges.
Ayurveda	Science of life focusing on body-mind balance and holistic health, not limited to physical body.
Yoga	Discipline uniting body, mind, and spirit through asanas, pranayamas, and meditations.
Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam	Philosophy promoting global interconnectedness and responsibility, 'the world is one family'.
NEP 2020	Education policy integrating Indian knowledge systems and emphasizing moral values and ethics.
Global Integration	Global acceptance of holistic principles like mindfulness for psychological health and well-being.
Pramāṇas	Means of gaining knowledge in Indian philosophy, fundamental to acquiring wisdom.
Pratyakṣa	Knowledge obtained through direct sensory perception, categorized into laukika and alaukika.
Anumāna	Knowledge derived from inference, aiding logical and scientific reasoning.
Śabda	Knowledge from scriptures or enlightened beings, providing ethical and philosophical insights.

Evolution of Indian Knowledge System

Historical Milestones

The following can be considered as a history of evolution of the structure of Indian knowledge system, as it is a complex and constantly developing thing, drawing new concepts with time: The era dating from about 1500 BCE is known as the Vedic Period, which set to base for formation of works such as the Vedas & the Upanishads and gave birth to other major branches of knowledge including of course medicine (Ayurveda), astronomy & mathematics among others. It was at this point before they were written in Vedic Sanskrit between 1500 and 500 BCE, the Vedas had been recited orally. The basic institutions such as dharma (proper conduct) and karma (how cause relates to its effect) put forward by the Vedas hold a significant impact on native philosophy and ethics system. In the classical period, there were various philosophical schools known as

darśanas of which the Nyaya and the Vaisheshika gave entirely different views of the metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. During medieval age there was a problem and changes needed to occur due to Islamic invasions and European colonial powers strived to change the traditional knowledge of India. But due to the contemporary schooling system in India, it had almost died by late colonial period, and though attempts were made to restore and augment the indigenous techniques of knowledge systems since the emergence of independent India in 1947, the governmental establishment of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) motivated research and education in various fields. Today Indian knowledge system is comprised of both traditional and scientific inputs with Indian scholars and institutions contributing to science and technology, medicine and health, mathematics and physical sciences, philosophy, literature and arts and several other spheres. Such wealth left behind a continuous history and developed with time, people even now study and understand various texts discovered in the past and sought endlessly to decode this unlimited pool of knowledge that Greek Philosophy holds.

Contemporary Relevance

Global Influence

This continuity of the compatibility of the Indian knowledge system in the modern world is easily seen in the scientific, medical, literary and ecological sciences. Some examples are the practice all over the globe of Mindfulness originating from Yoga and Meditation practices of Indian origin. Both self and others have established that mindfulness practice can have a remarkable sample positive influence on the sphere of mental health by exerting positive influence on stress, anxiety, and or depression making the use of practice therapeutic acceptable globally. For instance, empirical evidence points to the fact that MBIs have utilitarian improves on the quality of psychological wellbeing with WHO giving its blessings to their use. Furthermore, principles such as Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, meaning "the world is one family," resonate deeply in contemporary discussions about global citizenship and environmental stewardship. It facilitates interdependence and teamwork, shared goals and responsibilities, social order that complies with global initiatives in combating climate change and practicing sustainability. Both the concepts of Modern Education and the structure of Indian NEP that was launched recently include features of the Indian Knowledge System. Therefore, this policy encourages cross cutting research which stem from the early knowledge system in solving social problems like health and the environment. Further, most of the Indian scholars and institutions are also coming up in the global SDGs particularly in overall health and protection of environment. For instance, one may pointed out that, although Ayurveda does not address health in terms of the individualistic paradigm and thus does not penalize ecology in ways this is done by principles concerning agriculture and its relation to the ecological environment. Moreover, the revival of indigenicity has also revived new generation research proposal projects that try to align what existing knowledge base system with the new scientific methods incorporating research paradigms. Following efforts are being continually made by the institutions to reach out to the international platform to convey that Indian knowledge systems can be applied to address the present-day issues. This growing consciousness about the talented human resources of India points to the proposition that it has significant contribution to make to these global dialogues about sustainable development, meanings of moral

life and human well-being. Hence, it is not just in the sphere of advancing the modern worldview, the Indian knowledge system holds potential and treasure trove of wisdom and understanding that could be utilized to bring about with a harmonization/optimum of existence.

Integration with Modern Science

One of the most important features of Indian thought of the present is the synthesis of traditional knowledge with the achievements of the latest scientific and technological developments, an orientation that is aimed at the healing of the person as a psychosomatic entity by activating the self-healing processes of the body and harmonizing the psyche and spirit. This synthesis is evidenced by the return to primitive systems such as Ayurveda and Yoga among the systems that have been proved to have holistic health benefits. Ayurveda, often termed the "science of life," emphasizes a balanced lifestyle that harmonizes the body, mind, and spirit. Instead, it focuses on the natural cures and dietary regimen based on the body constitution known as doshas and aims primarily at disease prevention. Some research conducted in the recent past has revealed that Ayurveda can be of immense help for diseases that are chronic in nature like diabetes and hypertension. Yoga that emerged from the Indian subcontinent at the same period as Ayurveda, in turn blends physical postures, breathing exercises, and containing meditation to the Ayurvedic system of treatment. Cross cultural study has shown that practice of Yoga decreases tension, increases focus, and builds vigor, thus being consistent with current notion of health in psychology.

Table 3: Global Influence and Integration of Indian Knowledge Systems

Aspect	Description
Holistic Approach	Integrated view of material, mind, spirit, and society; addressing contemporary challenges.
Ayurveda	Science of life focusing on body-mind balance and holistic health, not limited to physical body.
Yoga	Discipline uniting body, mind, and spirit through asanas, pranayamas, and meditations.
Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam	Philosophy promoting global interconnectedness and responsibility, 'the world is one family'.
NEP 2020	Education policy integrating Indian knowledge systems and emphasizing moral values and ethics.
Global Integration	Global acceptance of holistic principles like mindfulness for psychological health and well-being.
Pramāṇas	Means of gaining knowledge in Indian philosophy, fundamental to acquiring wisdom.
Pratyakṣa	Knowledge obtained through direct sensory perception, categorized into laukika and alaukika.
Anumāna	Knowledge derived from inference, aiding logical and scientific reasoning.
Śabda	Knowledge from scriptures or enlightened beings, providing ethical and philosophical insights.

Moreover, Indian planning authorities have accepted these traditional systems through

policies such as NEP 2020 the National Education Policy which seeks to integrate Indian traditions in knowledge systems into the regular curriculum. This policy also supports inter and trans-disciplinary research, thus includes holistic health models to learning and teaches a new generation a culture of appreciating traditional knowledge as well as scientific discoveries. Hence, it is imperative to note that spiritual writers have continuously pointed that science and spirituality can go hand in hand to enrich the understanding of life and the universe. Vivekananda famously stated that "Science is nothing but the finding of unity," highlighting the shared goal of both domains to seek truth and understanding. In the current context, this synthesis is replicated in several research directions in modern India that combine traditional knowledge with the achievements of the modern world with a specific focus on such sectors as psychology, neuro science, and environmental protection. In this way, adopting such integrative approach, India not only safeguards its cultural identity as a cradle of civilization but also enriches ongoing global discourses over health and well-being, and may provide a number of clues on how to build sustainable living standards for the contemporary world. This integrated approach is important with societies across the globe, recognizing the centrality that mental/spiritual health alongside the physical health, for the well-being, of societies.

Conclusion

Vedas and socratic age of Indian thoughts and Indian philosophy contains absolutely rich and eternal system appropriate to the contemporary world for character building, amelioration of human relation as well as for global peace. This opencast mine of information covers almost everything one can think of whether it is in the field of medicine or astronomy, ethics and spirituality and much more all built on an integral worldview that perceives everything in the universe as connected to each other. Woven through this approach is the skein that constitutes the frame-work of the Indian knowledge system in dharma, karma, moksha – that is the ideality or morality of the world and the law of action and re-action in the world and the urge to freedom in the individual. These concepts in conjunction with their usage in the practical ways of everyday living” yoga and Ayurveda to name but a few, elicit a positive way of life that emphasizes the acquisition of the physical and mental strength, as well as the soul. The principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, or "the world is one family," encapsulates the ethos of global interconnectedness and responsibility towards all living beings, a perspective that resonates strongly with contemporary discussions on sustainability and environmental stewardship. In the last decade specifically the Indian knowledge system has started to receive increasing attention and as well-made increasing influence on the international front. This tradition also encompasses some of the practices that have been borrowed from different western religious practices such as mindfulness and meditation that has been of so much value in mental health and great personality. Likewise, the concept of synergistically integrating the best of the indigenous knowledge system with the best of the global knowledge system that has been adopted here has led to innovations in such fields like medicine; though originally rooted in Ayurveda principles, are increasingly being more and more grounded with modern scientific medical research to formulate the modern system of preventive and curative health care which is more or less individualistic in nature. Basing on the integration of the Indian knowledge system into education systems, is a clear example by NEP 2020 in India the Indian knowledge system has a modern applicability. Regarding this policy since

it acknowledges age old treasure trove of India knowledge and traditions as its paradigm, which wants to integrate the ancient Indian knowledge system to the modern-day education to meet the existing and emerging needs. The NEP also encourages educating Tribal and Indigenous people knowledge and Traditional types of Education in order to support the Cultural diversity which India has. When the world today is surrounded with different kinds of crises whether it is climate crisis or social inequalities the Indian knowledge system has everything which is required to formulate solution paradigms for future. For people in the unhealthy societies, they are greedy societies which are associated with evils that prevail in the society like corruption 'this is and can only be' as a result of deviation from the four fundamental principles of life which include; balanced living, ethical right living, courtesy and ...interconnectedness. But yet India's knowledge system is relevant today because the kind of knowledge that can be imparted is a knowledge that is helps an individual in his process of becoming and evolution apart from supporting him in his search for spirituality.

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