Research Paper

NEP 2020: Integrating Indian Knowledge Systemin Teacher Education Programme

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Abstract:-
National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 foregrounds the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) as a vital resource for contemporary education and advocates its meaningful integration into curricula and teacher education. This joint paper highlights, how the incorporation of IKS can reshape teacher education programmes in India by contributing to a culturally grounded, inclusive, and development-oriented educational framework. This article tries to justify the relevance of IKS in teacher preparation while also examining the challenges and constraints that may arise during its implementation.It further explains the rationale for incorporating IKS in teacher education and discusses its relevance to the development of 21st-century competencies. It analyses the implications for curriculum design, assessment practices, and practicum experiences. At the same time, it identifies key concerns and barriers, such as epistemological tensions, risks of tokenism and essentialism, limitations in faculty expertise, scarcity of resources, language and translation related issues, alignment with accreditation and assessment system, and questions related to academic rigour and inclusivity.The paper also discusses the potential of IKS to strengthen key components of teacher education, including curriculum, teaching–learning processes, evaluation methods, and professional development, with a strong emphasis on indigenous foundations. It posits that the thoughtful integration of IKS can help prepare teachers capable of nurturing critical thinking, creativity, environmental awareness, and social justice among learners. While acknowledging both the advantages and limitations of such integration, the study asserts that meaningful change requires curriculum reform, faculty development, community partnerships, and supportive policy measures. Ultimately, the paper contends that, by focusing on the holistic development of the learner, IKS holds significant transformative potential in shaping compassionate, reflective, and competent teachers equipped to address the needs of contemporary Indian education.

Keywords:*Indian Knowledge System, Teacher Education, Holistic Education; Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Curriculum Reform, Pedagogical Advancement, Multilingualism, Indigenous Ecological Knowledge.*

I.   Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a significant shift in India's educational vision by formally recognizing the importance of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) across all levels of education, including teacher education. Indian Knowledge System encompass India's rich intellectual heritage, comprising scientific, philosophical, cultural, indigenous, and tribal traditions. These include classical knowledge traditions such as Nyaya, Samkhya, and Ayurveda, as well as locally evolved practices rooted in community life and ecological wisdom. The integration of IKS into teacher education is not merely symbolic; rather, it reflects a purposeful effort to promote epistemic justice, cultural relevance, and the decolonization of educational knowledge. This joint paper examines the justification for incorporating explains IKS into teacher education, highlights its potential benefits, identifies key challenges, and proposes strategies for meaningful and sustainable implementation with reference to NEP: 2020.

Rationale for Integrating IKS in Teacher Education

Epistemic Justice and Decolonization of Knowledge:-For decades, colonial legacies in education have marginalized indigenous knowledge while privileging Western epistemologies as the dominant standard of academic legitimacy. Integrating Indian Knowledge System(IKS) into teacher education seeks to correct this imbalance by acknowledging the validity of diverse knowledge traditions. Teacher education institutions can serve as spaces where multiple ways of knowing coexist, enabling future teachers to connect India's intellectual heritage with contemporary pedagogical practices.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:-Indian Knowledge System offer pedagogical approaches deeply embedded in local cultures and lived experiences. Teachers who are familiar with regional languages, folk traditions, indigenous crafts, and environmental practices are better positioned to design meaningful and context-sensitive learning experiences. Such culturally responsive teaching strengthens student engagement, affirms learners' identities, and fosters inclusivity and a sense of belonging within the classroom.

Development of 21st-Century Skills in Teachers: - Indian Knowledge System

(IKS) should not be perceived as outdated or irrelevant; rather, it actively supports the development of critical thinking, creativity, ethical reasoning, problem-solving, and sustainability awareness. For instance, Ayurvedic principles emphasize holistic well-being, offering valuable insights for contemporary health education. Similarly, Nyaya philosophy cultivates logical reasoning and analytical skills, while indigenous ecological knowledge provides practical solutions for environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

Strengthening Teacher Identity and Community Engagement:-Teachers trained in Indian Knowledge System(IKS) can function as cultural intermediaries between schools and local communities. This role enhances teachers' professional identity and strengthens trust between educational institutions and society. Such engagement also enables reciprocal knowledge exchange, where community wisdom contributes to formal education and schools become more socially responsive as well as effective.

Challenges in Implementing IKS in Teacher Education

Epistemological Tensions and Risk of Tokenism: - The integration of IKS raises important epistemological concerns, particularly when traditional knowledge system interacts with dominant Western scientific frameworks that prioritize quantification and empirical validation. Many forms of Indian knowledge are experiential, oral, and qualitative in nature. Harmonizing these differing epistemologies requires mutual respect and dialogue without undermining the integrity of either knowledge system.Superficial inclusion of IKS—such as limiting it to isolated cultural references or folklore—may reduce it to token representation. Additionally, portraying IKS as homogeneous or static risks ignoring its internal diversity, adaptability, and evolving nature. NEP: 2020 says meaningful integration must therefore avoid stereotyping and oversimplification.

Faculty Capacity, Resource Limitations and Language and Translation Challenges: - A major obstacle to effective implementation is the shortage of teacher educators with adequate expertise in Indian Knowledge System. Furthermore, there is a lack of teaching-learning materials, scholarly literature, and open educational resources in regional languages. Without sustained capacity-building initiatives, the integration of IKS may remain aspirational rather than operational.

Much of India's traditional knowledge exists in classical languages such as Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit, as well as in diverse indigenous dialects. Translating these sources into modern academic formats often leads to loss of nuance and contextual meaning, posing challenges for accurate representation and pedagogy.

Assessment and Accreditation Constraints

Existing Teacher Education Curricula are aligned with standardized assessment frameworks and accreditation requirements. Incorporating IKS within these rigid structures raises concerns related to evaluation methods, certification processes, and institutional accountability, necessitating curricular and assessment reforms.

Concerns Regarding Academic Rigor and Inclusivity

Critics argue that the inclusion of Indian Knowledge System may compromise academic rigor if not subjected to critical analysis. There is also a risk that dominant or well-documented traditions may overshadow marginalized or lesser-known knowledge system, thereby undermining inclusivity. These concerns highlight the need for balanced and critical engagement.

Proposed Framework for Implementation

Faculty training programs andCommunity Engagement of pupil Teachers: - Institutions should prioritize systematic capacity development through faculty training programs, research fellowships, and collaborations with traditional knowledge practitioners. Alongside content mastery, teacher educators and pupil teachers must also be equipped with appropriate pedagogical strategies for teaching of Indian Knowledge System local artisans, farmers, healers, and other knowledge holders should be actively involved in teacher education as co-creators of knowledge rather than passive contributors. Such participatory approaches ensure authenticity and strengthen the connection between theory and practice.

Development of Open Educational Resources, Curriculum Integration, Research and Evaluation Mechanisms:-Creating accessible IKS-based resources in regional languages and user-friendly formats can democratize knowledge access. Digital platforms can play a crucial role in disseminating these resources widely and equitably.Indian Knowledge System should be embedded across foundational courses, pedagogical studies, and practicum components of teacher education programs. Field-based experiences may include community immersion, ecological studies, or engagement with indigenous arts and crafts.Robust research methodologies should be employed to assess the impact of IKS integration on teacher identity, student learning outcomes, and community participation. Continuous evaluation will help address concerns related to quality and rigor.

Partnerships and Collaborations: There is the need to foster relationships between teacher education institutions, IKS experts and the communities since it facilitates sharing of knowledge and resource. It is beneficial for the educators work with organizations of Yoga, Ayurveda, traditional arts and other IKS to gain expertise and practical-training opportunity. Blending of IKS involves meaningful participation of all stakeholders in order to afford cultural sound methodology which is in relevance to the target community

Policy Implications for Teacher Education and Ensuring Pluralism and Equity: -The integration of Indian Knowledge System into teacher education requires coherent and supportive policy frameworks. While NEP 2020 provides a guiding vision, effective implementation depends on coordination among accreditation agencies, state-level authorities, and funding bodies. Policies must encourage multilingual education, interdisciplinary approaches, and incentives for research in IKS.Implementation strategies must consciously promote equity by representing diverse and marginalized knowledge traditions. Social justice principles should guide decision-making processes to ensure inclusive representation and participation.

II.   Conclusion:

The integration of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into teacher education represents both a moral obligation and a meaningful pedagogical advancement. Rather than being a symbolic or superficial inclusion, IKS has the potential to fundamentally reshape educational practices and perspectives. Its incorporation helps correct long-standing marginalization of indigenous knowledge, strengthens teachers' professional identities, and situates education within the cultural and social contexts of learners. By engaging with IKS, educators develop a holistic worldview grounded in local relevance, ethical values, and interconnected ways of knowing—capacities that are essential for navigating the complexities of the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, the effective adoption of IKS requires addressing epistemological concerns, institutional limitations, and gaps in professional capacity. With sustained support through structured training, collaboration with communities, accessible learning resources, and inclusive policy frameworks, IKS can reorient teacher education toward a model that is culturally rooted, socially equitable, and forward-looking. In doing so, teacher education can emerge as a powerful catalyst for positive and transformative change in society.

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