

Editorial

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It is even more pertinent now when India is making rapid strides towards leading global economies in every field, be it galloping GDP or economic growth, be it digital revolutions or self-reliance, that we focus on the fundamentals of our own culture and traditional knowledge systems which propelled us towards our current prowess. The Indian Knowledge systems (IKS) focused on an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and holistic approach encompassing all segments of society leading to a welfare state in both letter and spirit. These “comprise of Jnan, Vignan, and Jeevan Darshan that have evolved out of experience, observation, experimentation, and rigorous analysis”¹. Rooted in ancient practices, traditions and texts, embedded in interconnectedness and sustainability, these systems were all encompassing. Not only were they based on scientific principles but also factored in the relationship between man and nature, progress and environment, neither exclusive of each other but interdependent and symbiotic. It promoted a cultural identity which was neither cohesive nor unitary, it celebrated heterogeneity and the local in the global. Science and spirituality sat well with each other and radical enquiry was at peace with the mystic.

Arthaśāstra gave insights into political systems and statecraft and Natyaśāstra was a treatise in performing arts and architecture. The Vedas and Upanishads were the pillars on which IKS stood, guiding with practical wisdom that emerged out of dialogue and logic. Be it metaphysics or epistemology, reason or ethics, the six key Darśanas or schools of philosophy (Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, Vedanta) established the tenets of Indian philosophy. These were not just intellectual pursuits but ways of life, they governed the material, the spiritual and lived reality.

In the colonial and post-colonial times, the study and practice of these and more were pushed to the margins as a Eurocentric education system was firmly established in Macaulay's Minutes and English eroded regional dialects and the IKS became a fading memory. The National Education Policy 2020 sought to redress this, as it saw the immense potential in systemic integration of ancient wisdom and knowledge with the contemporary ecosystem. Digitisation paved the way towards preservation and dissemination. What was lost and forgotten was excavated and restored in a meaningful way making it potent and pertinent. Every language that became extinct also meant loss of an entire knowledge system, its practices and traditions. It was imperative to leverage this deep reservoir and to reinforce modern education and scientific enquiry to make India, the Vishwaguru. NEP 2020 set out to integrate IKS at the very outset, at a young age in schools itself.

Knowledge of India will include knowledge from ancient India and its contributions to modern India and its successes and challenges, and a clear sense of India's future aspirations with regard to education, health, environment, etc. These elements will be incorporated in an accurate and scientific manner throughout the school curriculum wherever relevant; in particular, Indian Knowledge Systems, including tribal knowledge and indigenous and traditional ways of learning, will be covered and included in mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, yoga, architecture, medicine, agriculture, engineering, linguistics, literature, sports, games, as well as in governance, polity, conservation. Specific courses in tribal ethno-medicinal practices, forest management, traditional (organic) crop cultivation, natural farming, etc. will also be made available. An engaging course on Indian Knowledge Systems will also be available to students in secondary school as an elective. (NEP, p. 16, 4.27)²

Both curriculum and pedagogy was reformulated to include the regional and the local, the indigenous and traditional be it in sciences or humanities. To make education more "relatable, relevant, interesting and effective" (NEP, p. 16, 4.29) and at the same time entrench a strong cultural identity and instil national pride. A roadmap was laid out, phased progression from schools to colleges to universities, as the way forward was to include what was left behind. Multilingualism replaced teaching of one dominant language replacing the erstwhile belief that English was the language of empowerment. The monolith

was discarded for the continuum as the community, the artisanal and the tribal undergirded research in every field be it linguistics or medicine, architecture or engineering, performing arts or astronomy and more. What was to be integrated was not just the knowledge of various fields but the ability to solve problems, critical thinking, logic and reasoning embedded in IKS.

The focus now shifted to inquiry based learning and experiential learning; classroom engagements enriched with internships leading to entrepreneurship, vocational skills with development, theory with practice, lectures with field trips and projects, all leading to holistic development, the underlying tenet of NEP 2020. This of course is not without challenges in the Indian classroom where the student teacher ratio is at best dismal, infrastructural support limited to the urban, teacher training not yet tailored, and budgetary support a distant dream. However, this is a step in the right direction and it is high time we took cognisance for what is ours before it is completely appropriated by others.

The focus of the research papers included in this issue are varied and diverse, each pertinent and insightful. Prof. Sidharth Mishra and Dr. Sumedha Dhasmana seek to examine the extent to which fake political-news becomes viral online during the election time-period and also assess the strategy adopted by the fact-checking platforms in exposing misleading content. The authors find the privately-owned platforms performing better on various parameters. Against the backdrop of persistent challenges faced by rural India, there is a dire need to change the urban-centric approach towards rural development. In an attempt to evaluate the impact of rural development programmes initiated by the Indian Government, Dr. Vijeta Pundir, Dr. Pratibha Rai, and Prof. Anup Mishra seek to unfold various issues, implementation challenges, and policy-gaps and have proposed the way forward for sustainable progress in this direction.

Even small interventions can enable a significant change in behavior and decision making. The decision to opt for ESG investments, is an act of socially responsible behavior, as put forth by Prof. Gayatri and Dr. Surendra Kumar in their paper. Apart from tracing the development of ESG framework, they provide a comparative assessment of the past, present, and future behavior of ESG mutual funds.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education brings with itself a radical change in the way how students consume and retain content. Dr. Shruti Goel and Dr.

Ekanshi Gupta seek to critically examine the role of AI in media education in terms of redesigning pedagogy, influencing literacy and critical thinking levels. They discuss the consequential challenges and opportunities as also the implications involved therein. Dr. Latesh Kanoujia, in her research paper on AI and Education, seeks to explore the scope and to assess the potency of AI and its applications in enabling change in the Indian educational system. A number of policy implications have been identified.

The issue of identity for South African Indians is not the same as other segments of Indian-diaspora globally. Dr. Sushmita Rajwar and Prof. Ritu Kohli seek to evaluate the role of print media, social media, and Bollywood in shaping the identity of South African Indians, in particular.

We hope that the readers find the articles useful and gives them food for thought. Several experts spared their precious time and made available their expertise in reviewing the manuscripts received for publication and provided critical comments and suggestions for improving the quality of these papers. Our sincere thanks to each one of them.

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1. <https://www.education.gov.in/en/nep/indian-knowledge-systems>
 2. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf