

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABILITY IN TEACHER EDUCATION: TAKING CUES FROM INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

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Abstract

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) refers to the traditional knowledge systems and practices that originated in India, encompassing various fields such as Ayurveda, yoga, astrology, and traditional medicine. It includes various disciplines such as: Traditional Sciences (Ayurveda, Yoga, Jyotish and Vastu sastra); Philosophical and Spiritual Traditions (Vedanta, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism); Artistic and Cultural Expressions (Indian Classical Music, Indian Classical Dances, Natya Shastra and Visual arts); Mathematics and Astronomy (Vedic mathematics and Ancient Indian astronomy); Language and Literature (Sanskrit language and literature and regional languages and literature). Teacher education field trying to revamp its courses according to the needs of NEP 2020 has much to integrate from traditional Indian system. In order to fulfil the goals of wholistic development of the child, traditional fields of yoga, philosophy, Ayurveda and jyotish hold much significance. The present paper is focussing on these areas and their contribution in child development so that proper integration aspects can be thought of.

Keywords: IKS, Teacher Education, IKS Aspects and Integration Strategies

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) refers to the traditional knowledge systems, philosophies and practices that originated in India, encompassing various fields such as Ayurveda, yoga, astrology, and traditional medicine. It includes various disciplines such as, Ayurveda, Jyotisha, Yoga, Vastu along with Veda, Upanishad and related literature. The system includes Vedic philosophy, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism as dominant philosophies which originated in Indian continent and gradually spread to other parts of world. Sanskrit and its allied languages being dominant communication tools during that time, majority of the literature is available in Sanskrit, Pali and other languages. But IKS also includes the regional language and its literature to understand the knowledge, skills developed and preserved during ancient times. So along with Sanskrit, one can consider their own mother tongue based literature and knowledge in IKS. Various arts like dance forms, theatre arts, music, sculpture and many are specific to a particular geographical context. Folk lores, dance forms, art forms are famous worldwide. All these contribute to developing different aspects of education systems in a wholistic manner.

Indian Knowledge Systems in a glance

Indian knowledge systems are well known for their close integration with nature in achieving the goals of life. Peace and harmony with in leading life is the main path to lead life. All living beings on this earth are considered equal and respected in the same way. One can witness many festivals dedicated to the worship of specific plants and animal species and also festivals, rituals associated with seasons

and starting of professional work. All these aspects point towards a holistic approach in the pursuit of life goals and development of individual. One has to identify self as part of this universe and unite with it to lead life happily by following cultural practices religiously.

Union with community and nature brings well-being and comprehension of roles and responsibilities related to self, family and community. Every individual is groomed to understand the philosophy of life according to their living context and lead life properly towards death. Philosophy of life is to attain moksha following the rituals/purusharthas specific to varna, ashrama. This forms the spiritual aspect of life. This type of disciplined life leads to self-realization through experiencing life to the fullest with health and wealth. The systems are well developed to enhance well-being of the individual through developing body, mind and spirit in harmony.

Well-developed literature of these systems like, Vedas, Upanishads, Yoga, Jyotisha, Agama Shastra, Shat Darshana, Prasthana Traya and many more explains the aspects of leading life from birth to death without confusion.

Considering the importance of traditional systems to find answers to present complex problems like, environmental degradation, disharmony with nature and overpopulation Indian government kept this concept as an important tool to achieve the wholistic development goals of NEP 2020. These systems are identified to be helpful in achieving the goals of - Preservation of cultural heritage; Contribution to global knowledge; achieving health and wellness goals (through Ayurveda and yoga) and find proper ways for multidisciplinary education and interdisciplinary research

Teacher Education in a glance

Teacher education in India is in a state of transformation since Varma commissions report about improving the professional rigour in the discipline. From the beginning the professional status of the field is in discussion and the discipline lacks the clear cut guidelines on the professional guidelines to define who can teach? And who is suitable to become a teacher? At this time also we find teachers in schools teaching without professional training and teaching subjects in which they do not have any mastery. These situations put a question mark on the quality of the teaching as a profession. Even the teacher training institutes are also under scan for various kinds malpractices and mismanagement in providing training and certification to candidates. Even after stringent actions against these institutions and bringing out many reforms in the manner of conducting training programmes the situation is not improving according to the expectations. New education policy in India NEP 2020 also threw light on these aspects to implement the policy as per vision to achieve goals.

Implementation of NEP 2020 is mainly rested with the development and training of teachers to work to achieve the goals of wholistic development of children. Therefore, it is imperative to include sustainability aspects in teacher training programmes according to the level and need of the programme. Various aspects

explained about these systems already prove that these aspects help to develop - proper teachers to find solutions to the existing problems of curriculum, teaching-learning and assessment. How to integrate these traditional system aspects into the modern outlook of democracy, inclusive nature of societies is the main obstacle in the path.

Sustainability concepts in Indian Knowledge Systems

Modern day sustainability rests on three words, education, employment and empowerment. Providing a change to every human being on the earth to get access to resources with equal opportunity to get education, to seek employment and to empower themselves. Most of the concepts of IKS are close to this vision. Some points of reference are -

Various practices of IKS like being close to nature, achieving purusharth, following ashrama dharma, using indigenous resources and ways of living emphasizes on Wholistic development of individual in the process of survival.

IKS believes in the right to equal existence for all. It advocates for giving equal respect to all living beings irrespective of their level of evolution. In the nature each individual living being has a right exist and demands equal access to resources for their own survival.

Harmony with nature is the important concept of IKS. In order to sustain in the world human beings has to maintain a peaceful and harmonious relation with nature respecting all its rules and regulations. This helps us to develop a proper network with all living beings of the nature.

The concept of chaturashram dharm and chaturvidh purusharth indirectly gives the empowerment and access of resources to people according to age, so that everyone enjoy life with maturity. It has set rules and regulations for all to behave with morals and ethics so that resources are peacefully shared and enjoyed by all in the society.

For each and every necessity and problem of life one has to be dependent on own resources. This self-dependency develops creativity in problem solving and make persons more confident in dealing with situations. Within own resources available people are surviving to fulfil the life goals. Emphasis on indigenous knowledge is a key to sustainable development.

Integration is the core of Indian knowledge system principles. Integration of one system with other is early recognized and practiced through setting principles of balance with nature, dharma and purushartha etc. one cannot survive alone in the society. We have to form a bond with each other person in the society to survive and sustain.

Valuing what we have to survive is more important than looking for shortcomings. Value emphasis on living a moral and ethical life without harming the prosperity and sustainability of other is main aspect here. Social values are more emphasized in the survival of Indian society.

Community engagement in a healthy way bring self-growth also. It helps us to thing about the problems of others in order to solve ours. One can take a proper

decision to come out of a problem without causing much harm to others. One has to celebrate good things and even bad times for help in the life to live peacefully.

Need to Integrate IKS in Teacher Education

The traditional aspects of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) concepts like being in harmony with nature, believing in wholism etc. are close to the concepts of sustainable development. Teacher education which is suffering with the sustaining its identity in the context of professional existence at par with other professional courses, need to integrate these concepts into its curriculum and teaching. This will help in maintaining close relation with other fields and in turn help teacher education to exist with ease in the contemporary tough competitive scenario. Other advantage is integrating the concepts into teacher education can enrich teaching practices, promote holistic learning, and foster cultural relevance. The following points are important expected outcomes of this integration.

Teaching and learning process is closer to living context as IKS believes in harmony with nature, working close with the nature and adjusting with the nature. So, teaching learning also focus more on these aspects relating content to living context of children.

Relating content to contextual reality also promote cultural sensitivity in children as they are close to the nature. They understand the reason to perform rituals related to life with interest and enthusiasm as the reasons are clearer to them. They understand the do's and don'ts of their daily life along with education.

Being close to context in learning also develops wholistic concept to teaching and learning. It also fosters wholistic development in students.

Students are interacting with environment to learn. In this process they have to analyse, criticize, synthesize their learning to come to conclusion on the concept. This process also encourages critical thinking, logical organization of content.

The process of integration, close to nature and using indigenous knowledge in teaching learning develops the value of empathy in teachers and students. Now they are clearer about the need of existence for all living beings with equal opportunities, access and empowerment.

Because of this closeness to teaching learning the concepts of IKS can be utilized to develop sustainability in teacher education.

Specific concepts of IKS that can be utilized in Teacher Education

Teacher Education is developing teachers to teach in schools. So whatever aspects are important to be develop in school students are the inputs to be given to student teachers in pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. First teachers need to understand the students from their developmental aspects, then from intellectual aspects. So, the domains are identified as cognitive, affective and psychomotor levels. Some of the IKS Concepts that can be useful for Teacher Education area in connection with wholistic developmental aspect of student could be Incorporating Ayurvedic principles of health for wellness and self-care; Following Yogic practices for mental well-being and focus; Contents

like Vedic mathematics for logical reasoning; Understanding Jyotish concepts for predicting and comprehending human nature; Broad Indian philosophical perspectives on ethics, values, and purpose to develop character, personality and citizenship characters.

These aspects are not only for schools but for teacher education field also. Then only teachers can be trained as per goals of NEP 2020.

Integration Strategies for IKS Concepts

Better way to introduce these concepts to student teachers is integration, which itself is an aspect of IKS. Integrating the concepts with theoretical and pedagogical subjects will help developing awareness in students to use them for future employment context. Some of the ideas are as Incorporate IKS modules in teacher training programs; Use storytelling and case studies to illustrate IKS principles; Encourage reflective practices and journaling; Integrate IKS into existing subjects (e.g., math, science, language); Collaborate with IKS experts and practitioners; Develop IKS-based teaching resources and materials; Organize workshops, seminars, and conferences; Courses can also be developed in teacher training programmes based on IKS concepts like, Introduction to Indian Knowledge System, Ayurveda and Wellness in Education, Yoga and Mindfulness for Teachers, Vedic Mathematics for Teachers, and Indian Philosophy and Ethics in Education; Assessment and Evaluation practices can focus on the aspects like Reflective journals and portfolios, Lesson plans incorporating IKS concepts, Case studies and group discussions, Quizzes and assignments, and Teaching practice and observation

One can expect to develop teachers and students with better conception of their cultural context, health and hygiene, mental well-being, preparation for better personality and citizenship and creative in facing life challenges.

Challenges and Considerations:

All is not going to be that easy as thought due to various opinions held about these systems in sections of society. There is also a fear that incorporation of these aspects may turn some ideas which are not well going with present day society. The documentation and preservation of the texts of these systems, validity and authenticity of its preaching also is under scrutiny. Whether the ideas, knowledge expressed in these texts is appropriate for present day modern education is also one question. There is going to be an initial resistance to change which has to be dealt with care. In addition to these, unpreparedness of the field, limited resources and curriculum updating also pose some implementation problems. Wide diversity in culture, tradition, religion, language is the wide area problem to deal with.

Conclusion

The path is difficult but not impossible. Developing training programmes with IKS concepts carefully chosen, conducting research on integration, providing funding for research and training through specific centers established and

encouraging collaboration at national and international level gradually develop the situations towards positive attitude.

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