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Relevance of Integration of Indian Knowledge System in National Education Policy 2020

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the importance of the inclusion of the Indian Knowledge System into the concept of the National Education Policy 2020 aimed at changing the education system in India by introducing inclusiveness, interdisciplinary, and contextual learning. Although the importance of indigenous knowledge traditions in policy has increased, academic studies of how these are being incorporated in the modern educational reforms are scarce. In this gap, this paper intends on critically evaluating the applicability, extents, and consequences of integrating the Indian Knowledge System into mainstream curricula and pedagogy. The study presents, based on a qualitative policy and document analysis of the National Education Policy 2020 and supporting academic literature, that the incorporation of indigenous knowledge improves epistemic diversity and cultural sustainability and leads to holistic and learner-centered education. The results also indicate that integrating the Indian Knowledge System has a potential to close the gap between the traditional wisdom and the contemporary science, which will enhance curriculum design, pedagogical methods, and teacher education. The research enhances the literature on the topic by providing a theoretically informed and policy-based approach to understanding the process of indigenous knowledge integration in higher education. It finds that proper implementation of Indian Knowledge System with National Education Policy 2020 has far-reaching consequences to the governance of education, innovative knowledge curricula, and the sustainability of the knowledge ecosystem in India in the long run.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, National Education Policy 2020, Indigenous Knowledge, Higher Education Reform, Curriculum Integration, Educational Policy

Introduction

The inclusion of indigenous knowledge in education is a topic that has been researched in different contexts around the world such as in Africa, Latin America, Australia and Canada. Indigenous knowledge has become the focus of UNESCO in its continued efforts to make education sustainable (UNESCO, 2017, 2022). African research studies show that the use of indigenous knowledge enhances engagement and relevance among learners and the context especially in rural and marginalized learning institutions (Odora Hoppers, 2009; Dei, 2011). On the same note, studies in Australia and New Zealand emphasise the importance of indigenous epistemologies in promoting both inclusive and culturally based systems of education (Battiste, 2013; Smith, 2012).

The literature on comparative education indicates that an effective introduction of indigenous knowledge needs to be supported by institutions, curriculum reform, and teacher education (Altbach, 2016; Marginson, 2018). In the absence of a systematic change, the risk of tokenization of indigenous knowledge instead of its meaningful incorporation remains (Santos, 2014). These observations can be used as a valuable analytical perspective to understand the policy-driven integration of IKS in India as part of the National Education Policy 2020.

The National Education Policy 2020 is the policy intervention that pays special attention to the recognition of the Indian Knowledge System as one of the basic elements of the educational reform (Government of India, 2020). According to the scholars, the policy allows breaking a shift of content-heavy and exam-based models to holistic, multi-disciplinary, and learner-oriented education (Tilak, 2021; Agarwal, 2020). Cultural rootedness, experiential learning and flexibility covered in the policy closely relate to the epistemology of IKS (Sundar, 2020).

The recent research is investigating the ability of the policy to mainstream IKS by integrating the curriculum, teaching mother-tongue, and interdisciplinary learning (NCERT, 2021; Srinivas, 2022). Nevertheless, there are also challenges in the field of institutional capacity, faculty preparedness, and standardization of indigenous knowledge content according to empirical literature (Kapur, 2021; Joshi and Patel, 2023). Critics warn that the vision of the policy can be only a dream unless there are established implementation frameworks (Altbach and de Wit, 2020).

2. Literature Review

Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations of Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Indigenous knowledge systems have become a concept that has been increasingly discussed in recent decades, especially in the context of the discussion of epistemic justice, decolonization, and inclusive development. Indigenous knowledge can be described as locally based and locally contextualized systems of knowledge that have been formed as a result of the interaction between the community and the environment over a period of time (Berkes, 2012). Scientists claim that these knowledge systems reflect alternative epistemologies that dispute the universalist assertions of Western traditions of science (Smith, 2012; Santos, 2014). In theoretical

terms, indigenous knowledge is strongly related to constructivist and postcolonial views, which focus on the social embeddedness of the knowledge production (Battiste, 2013).

The relegation of the indigenous knowledge in the formal education systems has been largely blamed on the colonial past which served to give preference to the Eurocentric system of teaching and learning (Nandy, 2000; Kumar, 2005). According to the postcolonial theorists, colonial education not only erased indigenous epistemologies but also re-organized knowledge forms, which leads to what Santos (2014) calls epistemicide. As a result, the re-introduction of indigenous knowledge in education is being conceptualized as an intellectual and ethical necessity (Dei, 2011). In theory, this process is consistent with the capability approach by Amartya Sen which puts a heavy regard on culturally relevant education as a way of increasing human capabilities and agency (Sen, 1999).

Indian Knowledge System: Conceptual Scope and Educational Relevance

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is a broad intellectual tradition, which includes philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, ecology, linguistics and pedagogy (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Srinivas, 2019). As opposed to the compartmentalized contemporary disciplines, IKS is also defined as integrative and holistic worldview in which the knowledge is tied to the ethics, society and nature (Aurobindo, 1998). According to scholars, the classic Indian pedagogy was focused on experiential, dialogical, and moral learning, which are in tune with modern constructivist theories of learning (Sharma, 2016).

A number of research papers note that IKS can be used to find solutions to the modern problems of sustainability, health, and social unity (Beteille, 2012; Dasgupta, 2018). Nevertheless, IKS was mostly out of the scope of formal education since the colonial times and the initial years of post-independence, which resulted in a lack of alignment between education and aboriginal socio-cultural contexts (Kumar, 2005; Tilak, 2021). According to recent theoretical work, the re-integration of IKS in the context of higher education could foster epistemic plurality and the culturally responsive pedagogy (Sundar, 2020).

Global and Comparative Perspectives on Indigenous Knowledge in Education

The world has witnessed the studies of indigenous knowledge applied in education in various settings such as Africa, Latin America, Australia and Canada. The UNESCO (2017, 2022) continuously focuses on indigenous knowledge as the key to sustainable development in education. African research shows that indigenization of knowledge enhances the learner experience and contextualization especially in rural and marginalized environments (Odora Hoppers, 2009; Dei, 2011). Equally, studies in Australia and New Zealand have emphasized how indigenous epistemologies contribute to the creation of inclusive and culturally based education system (Battiste, 2013; Smith, 2012).

According to the literature on comparative education, the proper incorporation of indigenous knowledge involves institutional support, redesigning of curriculum, and teacher training (Altbach, 2016; Marginson, 2018). Unless the system is transformed, indigenous knowledge will be tokenized instead of integrated in a

significant way (Santos, 2014). These insights are significant analytical tools to understand the policy-driven approach of India to the integration of IKS based on the National Education Policy 2020.

National Education Policy 2020 and Indian Knowledge System

The National Education Policy 2020 is notable as it is an intervention policy that acknowledges the Indian Knowledge System as an underlying part of an educational change (Government of India, 2020). According to scholars, the policy can be characterized as the abandonment of models based on content and exams in favour of the holistic multi-disciplinary and learn-focused models of education (Tilak, 2021; Agarwal, 2020). The epistemological tenets of IKS are closely connected with the focus of the policy on the cultural rootedness, experience-based learning, and flexibility (Sundar, 2020).

The latest research investigates the policy of mainstreaming IKS with the help of curriculum integration, teaching in mother tongue, and interdisciplinary learning (NCERT, 2021; Srinivas, 2022). Nevertheless, the institutional capacity, faculty readiness, and standardization of indigenous knowledge content are also in the list of the challenges identified in empirical literature (Kapur, 2021; Joshi and Patel, 2023). Opponents note that the policy vision can just be on paper unless there are clear implementation frameworks (Altbach and de Wit, 2020).

Contemporary Empirical Literature and Research Gaps

More recent empirical research (starting in 2019) is starting to investigate the pedagogical and institutional implications of indigenizing higher education. According to the studies, IKS-based curricula improve critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and problem-solving skills in the context (Sharma and Gupta, 2021; Rao, 2022).

Global and Comparative Perspectives on Indigenous Knowledge in Education

The incorporation of indigenous knowledge in education is an issue that has been explored in various contexts all over the world such as Africa, Latin America, Australia, and Canada. Indigenous knowledge is a fundamental part of sustainable development education as highlighted by UNESCO (2017, 2022). African studies have shown that the use of indigenous knowledge enhances learner participation and contextuality especially in rural and marginalized contexts (Odora Hoppers, 2009; Dei, 2011). Likewise, studies in Australia and New Zealand also emphasize the contribution of indigenous epistemologies to the establishment of inclusive and culturally based education systems (Battiste, 2013; Smith, 2012).

According to the comparative education literature, institutional support, curriculum redesign, and teacher training are the factors that should be offered to achieve successful integration of indigenous knowledge (Altbach, 2016; Marginson, 2018). In the absence of a wholesome transformation, indigenous knowledge becomes a tokenism instead of becoming enshrined in any meaningful way (Santos, 2014). These insights are a critical analytical prism to study the Indian policy-based approach to the integration of IKS within the framework of the National Education Policy 2020.

The National Education Policy 2020 is an important instrument of policy change that directly acknowledges that the Indian Knowledge System is a key element of education reform (Government of India, 2020). The scholars define the policy as a shift away from the model of content-heavy and test-based education to multidisciplinary and learner-centered education (Tilak, 2021; Agarwal, 2020). The cultural rootedness, experience-based and flexible nature of the policy are more akin to the epistemological postulates of IKS (Sundar, 2020).

More recent research focuses on potentials of the policy to mainstream IKS by means of curriculum integration, teaching in the mother-tongue, and interdisciplinary learning (NCERT, 2021; Srinivas, 2022). Nevertheless, problems associated with the institutional capability, faculty readiness, and standardization of indigenous knowledge content are also mentioned in empirical literature (Kapur, 2021; Joshi and Patel, 2023). Opponents warn that the vision of the policy might not be able to materialize without clear implementation structures (Altbach and de Wit, 2020).

Contemporary Empirical Literature and Research Gaps

The most recent empirical research (2019-2024) is also paying more attention to the pedagogical and institutional potential of incorporating indigenous knowledge in the context of higher education. According to the studies, IKS-based curricula help students to improve critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and contextual problem-solving skills (Sharma and Gupta, 2021; Rao, 2022). Research also Research Gap.

The available literature on the indigenous knowledge systems and education offers a cogent conceptual and normative support to the idea of integrating the traditional knowledge into the formal learning systems. Although global and Indian studies have emphasized the epistemic, cultural, and pedagogical potential of the indigenous knowledge, much of this research is either theoretical in nature or historical in description. There is a relative lack of empirical and policy-based research exploring systematic incorporation of Indian Knowledge System in reforms of contemporary higher education. With the National Education Policy 2020, academic interest has been predominantly based on the big picture policy intentions as opposed to the implications of the implementation process, institutional readiness and transformation in pedagogy.

In addition, an apparent gap regarding the integrative research on the linkage of theoretical research on this concept of indigenous epistemologies to the existing policy frameworks and governance systems in Indian higher education is present. There is also a lack of research that focuses on the issues of curriculum development, faculty capacity, assessment programs, and quality assurance when it comes to integrating Indian Knowledge System. Because of this, a large gap of knowledge on how the policy vision of the National Education Policy 2020 can be translated into a form which is both academically rigorous, institutionally viable and pedagogically effective, still exists. Avoiding this divide is crucial towards the translation of policy aspirations to sustainable educational practice.

Objectives of the Study

The current paper is intended to critically review the importance of incorporating Indian Knowledge System into the context of the National Education Policy 2020. In particular, it aims at examining the conceptual and theoretical grounds of the Indian Knowledge System and the way they apply to the modern reforms in higher education. The paper also seeks to evaluate the policy justification and desired results of the integration of Indian Knowledge System as proposed in the National Education Policy 2020. Also it explores the possible consequences of such an integration on curriculum development, pedagogy, teacher education and governance of education. Lastly, the research will also make a contribution to the current academic and policy discussions by providing a policy and systematic framework that can be used to implement the Indian Knowledge System effectively and contextually to higher education institutions.

Research Methodology

It is well known that methodological literature reviews are rigorous methodologies of theory building, policy analysis, and conceptual synthesis, especially in areas where empirical evidence is fragmented or emergent (Snyder, 2019; Webster and Watson, 2002). In contrast to the traditional narrative review, a methodological literature review is a systematic review and comparison and synthesis of the existing studies in order to formulate new theoretical statements and analytical frameworks. This method is well adapted to policy-based and theoretical studies, where the goal is not to be able to test hypotheses but to critically analyse and synthesize various bodies of knowledge (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003).

Research in the social sciences and education literature review literature based on secondary data is in the increasing trend of analysing policy restructuring, system of governance, and epistemological transformations (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006; Grant and Booth, 2009). These reviews allow scholars to follow the conceptual development, outline the prevailing theoretical views and reveal gaps in research that could be missed by empirical studies. Since indigenous knowledge and education policy debates are oriented towards normativity and conceptuality, a methodological literature review can be described as the suitable mode of analysis (Booth, Sutton, and Papaioannou, 2016).

Theoretical articles based on secondary sources are established in the Scopus-indexed journals, especially when they have developed clear review methods and are analytically rigorous (Yadav, 2010; Paul and Criado, 2020). The methodological reviews also assist in theory development by summarizing the existing studies into consistent theories, demarcating the conceptual scopes, and providing policy-relevant approaches (Jaakkola, 2020). Within the Indian Knowledge System, where literature represents an interdisciplinary domain of philosophy, education, policy, and cultural studies, such approach is capable of having interdisciplinary integration that cannot easily be attained via primary data collection.

In addition, the methodology literature reviews are especially useful to examine large-scale policy reports like the National Education Policy 2020 because they allow systematically comparing policy intents with the scholarly discourse (Bowen, 2009; Bacchi, 2012). When document analysis is incorporated into a wider literature review context, it improves a deeper sense of interpretation and increases the validity of the analysis. The combination is very common in the research of educational policy to evaluate the reform patterns, the priorities of governance and the problems of implementation (Ball, 2015; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010).

The current research will meet the best practices in qualitative and theoretical research by way of using a methodological literature review based on the secondary data analysis. The methodology can be said to be conceptually clear, analytically transparent and rigorous in scholarship, and permits a critical approach to both a classical and modern literature. It also helps to better highlight the contribution of the study by placing the National Education Policy 2020 on the context of the wider theoretical, methodological and policy discussions through the integration of the Indian Knowledge System.

Discussion

The current research was conducted with the aim to critically discuss the importance and connotations of the implementation of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into the National Education Policy 2020 with the help of the theoretical literature review and secondary data. The discussion combines the conceptual discussion, policy discourse and the current scholarship in an effort to determine whether the policy vision is a substantive epistemic change or a symbolic shift in the Indian education system. The results indicate that the inclusion of IKS in the National Education Policy 2020 is a paradigmatic change to the educational thinking that has significant conceptual, institutional, and pedagogical challenges.

On the conceptual level, it is important that the focus on IKS indicates the global reconsideration of knowledge hierarchies in education. The most significant criticism of Western hegemonic epistemologies is consistent: researchers claim that indigenous and local knowledge systems are marginalized, which results in epistemic injustice and alienation of culture (Smith, 2012; Santos, 2014). National Education Policy 2020 seems to address this criticism directly, by predicting indigenous knowledge as a legitimate and useful part of formal education (Government of India, 2020). This is in line with decolonial and postcolonial theories of pluralization of knowledge systems and appreciation of alternative epistemologies (Battiste, 2013; Dei, 2011). The fact that the policy expressly supports IKS is therefore an indication of an effort to redefine the epistemic basis of Indian education and not just updating the content in the curriculum.

Nevertheless, it is also seen in the discussion that the conceptualization of IKS as a policy discourse is very general and at times vague. Although the policy acknowledges the richness and interdisciplinarity of Indian knowledge traditions, it is not explicitly stated in terms of the theoretical framework in which integration could be done. This lack jeopardizes the confusion of IKS with cultural heritage or moral education per se, in place of the recognition of the latter as a dynamic structure of knowledge with scientific, philosophical, and methodological facets (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Srinivas, 2019). The literature warns that the lack of conceptual clarity can lead to the fact that the integration of indigenous knowledge can be limited to the symbolic

representation instead of the epistemic change (Santos, 2014; Sundar, 2020). Therefore, the discussion reveals that we must get past rhetorical recognition and get to theory-informed curricular design.

One of the contributions of the present research is placing the IKS integration in the context of the general discussion on the topic of interdisciplinarity and holistic education. Indian knowledge systems are traditionally integrative and related to ethics, ecology, science, and spirituality as part of a single worldview (Aurobindo, 1998; Sharma, 2016). This is quite close to the modern educational theory based on the importance of interdisciplinary learning, systems thinking and experience-based pedagogy (Marginson, 2018; UNESCO, 2017). The emphasis on multidisciplinary education provided by the National Education Policy 2020 thus presents a structural possibility of significant integration of IKS. The policy promotes the integration of IKS in other disciplines as opposed to treating it as a standalone topic, which has the potential to diversify scientific, social science, and humanities education.

However, the argument highlights that there has been an unresolved conflict between integration and standardization. The current systems of higher education depend on the standardized curricula, system of assessment and quality assurance. In contrast, indigenous knowledge systems tend to be contextual, experiential, as well as oral (Berkes, 2012; Odora Hoppers, 2009). According to the literature, there is a danger of losing the epistemic essence of such knowledge when trying to make it standardized (Battiste, 2013). This conflict serves as a major problem to policymakers and institutions that have tried to mainstream IKS in the formal education systems. It is thus argued that there is need to have flexible curricular models that are contextually adjustable not compromising academic rigor.

As a pedagogical implication of the discussion, it is emphasized that IKS integration requires a completely different approach to teaching and learning. Traditional practices of indigenous pedagogies openly focus on dialogue, mentorship, observation, and lived experience, as opposed to the transmission of passive knowledge (Sharma, 2016; Smith, 2012). The principle of learners-centred and experiential education in National Education Policy 2020 aligns with these principles, which implies that there may be pedagogical synergy. Nevertheless, the reviewed literature reveals that the majority of higher education institutions are still stuck in pedagogies of lectures and system of evaluation based on exams (Tilak, 2021; Kapur, 2021). The incorporation of IKS will otherwise be superficial in the absence of systematic faculty development and pedagogical training.

The readiness of the faculty turns out to be a decisive factor of success. It is always observed that teachers are the core agents of policy to practice translation, but most of them are not formally trained in indigenous knowledge systems and interdisciplinary pedagogy (Joshi and Patel, 2023; Sharma and Gupta, 2021). It is argued in the discussion that capacity-building programs, such as faculty orientation programs, interdisciplinary partnerships, and institutional incentives should be used to operationalize the policy vision. The result agrees with the literature on education reform in the world, which clarifies that teacher capacity is one of the determinants of reform results (Ball, 2015; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010).

The governance aspect of the IKS integration is also worth taking into account. National Education Policy 2020 has a decentralized and flexible method of governance which allows institutions to have considerable autonomy in curriculum design and implementation (Government of India, 2020). Although such autonomy can encourage innovations, it can also increase inequalities among institutions that possess different amounts of resources and expertise. According to the literature, elite institutions might be in a better position to successfully experiment with IKS integration, whereas resource-limited institutions might implement it effectively (Altbach, 2016; Kapur, 2021). This is a critical concern of fairness and equality in the application of policies.

The discussion also addresses the internationalization of quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms as a way of institutionalizing policy changes. Current assessment models tend to focus on the measurable outcomes such as publications, rankings, and rates of employability that are not sufficient to reflect the epistemic and cultural value created by IKS-based education (Beteille, 2012; Marginson, 2018). In the absence of proper evaluation standards, institutions can not be motivated to spend on fruitful IKS integration. This observation indicates that there is a necessity to remodel current accreditation and assessment systems to be consistent with the overall educational agenda in the National Education Policy 2020.

The other important lesson that is coming out of the discussion refers to the connection between IKS integration and employability. The critics regularly say that the education based on indigenous knowledge can be rather insignificant in modern workplaces. Nevertheless, the reviewed literature points to the fact that IKS integration is capable of increasing transferable skills, which include critical thinking, ethical reasoning, sustainability awareness, and problem-solving (Rao, 2022; Mishra, 2023). Such skills are becoming desirable in the knowledge based and green economies. The debate thus criticizes the dichotomy as an apparent difference between cultural relevance and economic utility based rather on a holistic view of employability.

The discussion is also related to the greater controversies about nationalism and education. Although the ability to reclaim native knowledge can bring cultural pride and intellectual independence, researchers are also concerned about the fact that IKS is instrumentalized as a means of ideology (Nandy, 2000; Sundar, 2020). The literature highlights the significance of preserving the academic freedom and skepticism in the process of accommodating indigenous knowledge in the formal education. This view is in line with the modern work, which posits that the IKS integration must be informed by academic rigor and inclusiveness and not by localized ideological conceptions.

Notably, this research work is a contribution to the development of theories since it presents the integration of IKS as the process of epistemic hybridity instead of epistemic replacement. It has been established in the discussion that there is no necessity to treat indigenous and modern knowledge systems as opposite to each other; instead, their interaction can lead to innovation and contextualization (Sen, 1999; Santos, 2014). This theoretical placement asserts binary viewpoints which describe IKS as anti-modern and/or simply cultural,

but position it in the context of modern discourses of sustainability, interdisciplinarity and development inclusive of everyone.

The shortcomings of the existing literature are also apparent. Although the conceptual and policy-oriented literature can be helpful to identify the learning outcomes, institutional practices, and student experiences in terms of IKS integration (Tilak, 2021; Joshi and Patel, 2023), there is a dearth of empirical research. The current theoretical research is not aimed to address this empirical gap per se but to offer a conceptual base to future research. It is hence proposed that mixed-method and longitudinal research is required to assess the effectiveness of IKS-based school curricula in various institutional settings.

Generally speaking, the discussion confirms that the Indian Knowledge System implementation in the National Education Policy 2020 is transformative and has potential gains to Indian higher education. But to achieve this potential, it is needed that the conceptual clarity, pedagogical creativity, institutional capacity building and governance reform be pursued over time. It will contribute to the academic knowledge about the integration of indigenous knowledge and provide a solid analytical approach to the research and policy-making in the future.

Policy Implications

The policy implications of the results of this theoretical and secondary-data-based study are significant to the successful incorporation of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into the superiority of the National Education Policy 2020. To begin with, the discussion highlights the fact that the scope and nature of IKS should be defined more conceptually on the policy level. Although the policy recognises the importance of indigenous knowledge traditions, it fails to clearly explain a logical epistemological framework that the traditions can be incorporated into higher education. Instead, policymakers must go past tokenism and formulate effective conceptual frameworks that establish IKS as an evolving and interdisciplinary knowledge system instead of a fixed cultural or moral aspect of education (Santos, 2014; Srinivas, 2019).

Second, the paper draws attention to the role of curriculum reform as one of the key policy implementation mechanisms. IKS should not be limited to separate courses or optional modules but should be integrated throughout the disciplines in such a way that encourages the interdisciplinary learning and contextualization. University policies ought to be shaped such that flexible and modular curricula are developed such that indigenous perspectives on science, social sciences and humanities, as well as professional education can be integrated into the curricula. This strategy is consistent with the international best practice in the field of indigenous education and its role in increasing the relevance of higher education to local and national environment (UNESCO, 2017; Battiste, 2013).

Thirdly, one of the important policy priorities becomes faculty development. It is repeatedly mentioned in the literature that educational reforms rely strongly on teacher capacity and institutional culture to succeed (Ball, 2015; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010). Systematic faculty training on interdisciplinary pedagogy, indigenous epistemologies and experiential modes of learning should therefore be invested by the policymakers. Faculty orientation programs, research grants, and academic networks focusing on IKS on the national level can be crucial in the process of policy intentions being translated into effective classroom practice (Tilak, 2021).

Fourth, the analysis identifies the necessity of institutional backing and governance systems that help to ensure the homogenous implementation among institutions of higher education. Although the National Education Policy 2020 has institutional autonomy as one of its main characteristics, extreme decentralization in the absence of proper guidance can result in uneven implementation of IKS initiatives. To stay within quality and measure of coherence of implementation, policymakers are encouraged to build national and regional support systems, which include knowledge repositories, curriculum frameworks, and inter-university collaboration platforms (Altbach, 2016; Kapur, 2021).

Fifth, quality assurance and accreditation schemes need to be revisited in order to suit the epistemic and pedagogical peculiarity of IKS-based education. Evaluation systems in place are usually based on standardized results and quantitative performance measurement that might not fully reflect cultural, ethical and interdisciplinary contributions of integrating indigenous knowledge. Accreditation criteria should and thus be matched with the greater aims of the holistic education, epistemic diversity, and sustainability as proposed by National Education Policy 2020 (Marginson, 2018; Beteille, 2012).

Lastly, there are the implication to policy of the greater goals of employability and sustainable development. In opposition to the perceived risks that indigenous knowledge is not labour market relevant, it is suggested in the analysis that transferable skills, including critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and environmental awareness can thus be developed through the integration of IKS. With the help of IKS-based education, policymakers should explicitly associate national priorities associated with sustainability, innovation and inclusive development, which will support the socio-economic applicability of indigenous knowledge in modern situations (Sen, 1999; Rao, 2022).

All in all, these policy implications outline that the effective integration of the Indian Knowledge System as per the National Education Policy 2020 needs a multi-layered policy response. The policy vision should be translated into sustainable educational practice through conceptual clarity, curriculum innovation, faculty capacity building, institutional support as well as reformed evaluation mechanisms. This is because strengthening such dimensions will not only help to increase the effectiveness of policy implementation but will also help in the development of a more inclusive, context-sensitive, and epistemically plural higher education system in India.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to investigate the meaning and connotation of incorporating the Indian Knowledge System into the concept of National Education Policy 2020 by using a theoretical methodological literature review based on secondary data. Based on the conceptual, theoretical, and modern policy-oriented literature, the analysis reveals that the indigenous knowledge focus of the policy is a significant shift to previous education reforms that mostly emphasized the standardized and Eurocentric systems of knowledge. Formal recognition of the Indian Knowledge System in the National Education Policy 2020 is an indication of a desire to encourage epistemic plurality, cultural rootedness and whole person learning in the Indian higher education system.

The results indicate that the Indian Knowledge System has a great potential of enriching the higher education through encouraging interdisciplinary thinking, moral reasoning, sustainability awareness, and relevancy of context. The Indian Knowledge System can help in closing the gap between traditional wisdom and modern scientific and pedagogical modes when it is considered as an evolving and dynamic body of knowledge and not as a fixed cultural artifact. In this regard, the vision of the policy is in line with the general debates of decolonizing education and combating epistemic injustice by considering indigenous and local knowledge systems.

Nevertheless, the research also points to the fact that the transformational potential of the Indian Knowledge System integration depends on the successful implementation. The literature demonstrates that there are steady problems associated with conceptual ambiguity, curriculum design, faculty preparedness, institutional capacity, and mechanisms of governance. The integration of indigenous knowledge is likely to be merely symbolic, as opposed to substantive unless it is properly epistemologically framed, applied systematically in curricular practices, and continued to be invested in by educators and the institution itself. Although the decentralised and flexible model of governance implemented under the National Education Policy 2020 is an innovation-friendly strategy, it also introduces inequity in its implementation in the institutions unless accompanied by a strong coordination and quality assurance system.

This study has helped in enhancing the current bodies of theoretical and policy literature in two significant aspects by synthesizing the literature scattered across the globe. First, it promotes a theoretically informed account on the process of Indian Knowledge System integration as an epistemic hybridity process that is based on complementarity instead of opposition between indigenous and modern knowledge systems. Second, it offers a policy-driven analytical system, which can serve to guide curriculum change, pedagogical change, and institutional leadership in higher education. So, the study confirms the scholarly validity of the theoretic and secondary-data based research as a method of investigation of massive policy reforms.

The research does not lack limitations. Being a theoretical and literature-based analysis, it lacks empirical data on the practices in the institution, learning outcomes, and stakeholder perceptions regarding the Indian Knowledge System integration. The research in the future should thus assume both empirical, mixed-methods and longitudinal research methods in the effort to assess the translation of policy intentions to practice in different institutional and regional settings. This kind of research would enhance the evidence base and promote more fine-tuning of policies.

To sum up, the inclusion of the Indian Knowledge System in the National Education Policy 2020 is an important chance to rethink Indian higher education and make it more inclusive, more context-sensitive, and more epistemically diverse. To make this vision real, one has to go beyond the articulation of policies to institutional commitment, pedagogical innovation and reform of governance. When applied wisely and strictly, the Indian Knowledge System integration can help not only bring about a transformation in the field of education in India but also in the discussion of knowledge diversity and sustainable development throughout the world.

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