

## **Roots and Wings: Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems into Modern Education through NEP 2020**

**Dr. Mala Laha**

Assistant Professor, Sanskrit Department,  
Saldiha College, Saldiha, Bankura, West Bengal, India.  
Email: malalahasans@gmail.com  
Page No: 1-10

**Abstract:** This manuscript explores the profound integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, highlighting the significance of ancient texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Itihāsas, and Purāṇas in shaping a holistic educational framework. By delving into the rich tapestry of IKS, the study underscores the timeless wisdom embedded in these traditions and their relevance in addressing contemporary challenges. The manuscript emphasizes the interdisciplinary approach advocated by NEP 2020, where philosophy, ethics, and history are taught alongside science and technology, fostering a balanced and culturally rooted education. It also examines the practical applications of IKS in modern contexts, such as environmental sustainability, ethical decision-making, and social harmony. However, the integration of IKS into the curriculum is not without challenges, including curriculum design, teacher training, resource availability, and cultural sensitivity. The manuscript concludes with recommendations for overcoming these hurdles through collaborative efforts among scholars, educators, and policy-makers. By revitalizing IKS in education, NEP 2020 aims to nurture a generation of students who are intellectually capable, ethically grounded, and deeply connected to their cultural heritage, ensuring a harmonious blend of tradition and modernity in the pursuit of knowledge.

**Keywords:** Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Holistic Education, Interdisciplinary Learning, Vedic Heritage.

### **Introduction to Indian Knowledge Systems**

Before we delve into the rich tapestry of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), it is essential to first understand what we mean by the term “literature.” Traditionally, literature is defined as written works, particularly those considered to possess superior or lasting artistic merit. However, in the context of India, this definition needs to be expanded. India boasts an unbroken, living oral tradition that spans over 5,000 years. This tradition includes a vast array of compositions—poems, hymns, stories, and philosophical discourses—that have been passed down orally from one generation to the next. Therefore, for our purposes, “literature” must encompass not just written texts but also these orally transmitted compositions. This broader understanding allows us to appreciate the depth and continuity of India’s intellectual heritage.

The Indian Knowledge System is not just a collection of ancient texts; it is a living, breathing tradition that has shaped the cultural, spiritual, and intellectual landscape of the Indian subcontinent for millennia. One of the earliest and most comprehensive classifications of knowledge in India comes from Chāṇakya’s Arthaśāstra, a seminal text on statecraft, economics, and political strategy. Chāṇakya, also known as Kautilya, was a visionary thinker who categorized knowledge into four primary types:

- **Ānvīkṣikī:** This refers to logic and philosophy, fields that are akin to what we today consider the sciences. It encompasses the rigorous inquiry into the nature of reality, existence, and knowledge.

- **Trayī:** This category is dedicated to traditional knowledge, particularly the Vedas, which are the oldest and most revered texts in Indian tradition. The Vedas are not just religious scriptures; they are comprehensive guides to life, encompassing everything from cosmology to ethics.
- **Vārttā:** This pertains to wealth creation through agriculture, commerce, and trade. It reflects the practical aspects of life, emphasizing the importance of economic stability and prosperity.
- **Daṇḍanīti:** This deals with politics and public administration, focusing on governance, law, and the maintenance of social order. It underscores the importance of justice and ethical leadership.

These four categories provide a holistic framework for understanding the diverse dimensions of knowledge in Indian tradition. They remind us that knowledge is not just about abstract philosophy or spiritual wisdom; it is also about practical skills, economic prosperity, and effective governance.

The classical literature of India is often described as *chaturdaśa-vidyā-sthānas*, or the “14 abodes of knowledge.” These include:

- **The Four Vedas:** The Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, and Atharvaveda. These texts form the foundation of Indian spiritual and philosophical thought.
- **The Six Vedāṅgas:** These are auxiliary disciplines that support the study of the Vedas. They include Śikṣā (phonetics), Kalpa (rituals), Vyākaraṇa (grammar), Chhandas (prosody), Niruktam (etymology), and Jyotiṣa (astronomy). Each of these disciplines plays a crucial role in preserving and interpreting the Vedic texts.
- **Itihāsa and Purāṇa:** The epics Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata, along with the Purāṇas, which include texts like the Viṣṇupurāṇa and Bhāgavata. These works are not just stories; they are repositories of moral, ethical, and philosophical teachings.
- **Dharmaśāstra:** Texts like the Manusmṛti, Yājñavalkya-smṛti, and Parāśara-smṛti, which provide guidelines for ethical living and social conduct.
- **Darśana:** The six orthodox and six heterodox schools of Indian philosophy, which explore the nature of reality, knowledge, and existence.
- **Nyāya:** This refers to logic and epistemology, the study of how we acquire and validate knowledge.

In addition to these, the four Upavedas—Āyurveda (healthcare), Dhanurveda (archery), Gandharva-veda (music and dance), and Sthāpatyaveda (architecture)—are sometimes included, bringing the total to 18 fields of knowledge. These Upavedas highlight the practical applications of Vedic wisdom, showing how ancient Indians integrated spiritual knowledge with everyday life.

The Indian Knowledge System is not just a relic of the past; it is a living tradition that continues to inspire and guide millions of people. By understanding and appreciating this rich heritage, we can gain valuable insights into the complexities of human existence and the timeless quest for knowledge and wisdom. This is the essence of the Indian Knowledge System—a profound and enduring legacy that continues to shape our world today.

#### Introduction to the Vedas

The Vedas are not just ancient texts; they are the very foundation of Indian civilization, culture, and spirituality. They are the oldest surviving literary works in the world, dating back thousands of years, and are often referred to as *trayī*, meaning “threefold,” because they consist of three primary types of mantras: metrical compositions, prose, and musical chants. These mantras were not merely written down; they were experienced, composed,

and transmitted orally by the ancient seers, or ṛṣis, who were deeply connected to the cosmos and the divine. The Vedas are not just religious scriptures; they are a comprehensive guide to life, encompassing philosophy, science, ethics, and spirituality. They are the bedrock of the Indian Knowledge System, and their preservation and transmission over millennia is a testament to the intellectual and spiritual rigor of ancient Indian society.

According to tradition, the great sage Veda Vyāsa is credited with compiling the Vedas into four distinct collections, each serving a unique purpose and containing a specific type of mantra:

- **R̥gveda:** This is the oldest and most revered of the Vedas, consisting of metrical hymns known as ṛks. These hymns are poetic compositions that praise the various deities of the Vedic pantheon, such as Agni (fire), Indra (king of the gods), and Varuṇa (god of cosmic order). The R̥gveda is not just a collection of prayers; it is a profound exploration of the relationship between humans, nature, and the divine. It contains hymns that reflect on the mysteries of existence, the cycles of nature, and the ethical responsibilities of individuals.
- **Yajurveda:** Unlike the R̥gveda, which is primarily poetic, the Yajurveda consists of prose mantras that are used in rituals and sacrifices. These mantras are practical in nature, providing detailed instructions for performing Vedic rituals. The Yajurveda is divided into two main branches: the Śukla Yajurveda (White Yajurveda), which contains only the mantras, and the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda (Black Yajurveda), which includes both mantras and explanatory prose. The Yajurveda emphasizes the importance of action (karma) and ritual in maintaining cosmic and social order.
- **Sāmaveda:** This Veda is unique in that it consists of mantras set to music. The Sāmaveda is essentially a musical rendition of selected hymns from the R̥gveda, arranged in a way that facilitates chanting and singing during rituals. The Sāmaveda highlights the importance of sound and vibration in spiritual practice, and it is often said that the melodies of the Sāmaveda have the power to elevate the mind and connect the practitioner with the divine.
- **Atharvaṇaveda:** The youngest of the four Vedas, the Atharvaṇaveda is attributed to the sages Atharva and Aṅgīras. It differs from the other Vedas in that it contains a mix of hymns, spells, and incantations aimed at addressing everyday concerns, such as health, prosperity, and protection from evil forces. The Atharvaṇaveda also includes philosophical and speculative hymns that explore the nature of reality and the self. It is often considered the Veda of practical wisdom, offering solutions to both material and spiritual problems.

Each of these Vedas is divided into two main parts: the saṁhitā (mantras) and the Brāhmaṇa (explanatory texts). The saṁhitā contains the core mantras, while the Brāhmaṇa provides detailed explanations of the rituals and their significance. In some cases, the Brāhmaṇa is further divided into two additional sections: the Āraṇyaka and the Upaniṣad. The Āraṇyaka texts are meant for meditation and contemplation, often intended for those who have retired to the forest (araṇya) to pursue a life of spiritual inquiry. The Upaniṣads, on the other hand, are philosophical texts that delve into the nature of reality, the self (ātman), and the ultimate truth (Brahman). Together, the saṁhitā, Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyaka, and Upaniṣad form the complete body of Vedic literature.

The mantras of the Vedas are not ordinary words; they are the crystallized experiences of the ṛṣis, who were seers (mantra-draṣṭā) of profound truths. Each mantra is associated with a specific ṛṣi, a deity (devatā), and a metrical structure (chhandas). The ṛṣis were not

mere poets; they were visionaries who had direct experiences of the divine and the cosmic order. Their insights were expressed in the form of poetry, which was then preserved and transmitted orally with utmost precision.

The preservation of the Vedas is one of the most remarkable achievements of ancient Indian civilization. Unlike other ancient texts, which were written down and subject to alterations over time, the Vedas were transmitted orally through an intricate system of recitation. This system, akin to modern-day “hashing” in computer science, involved multiple methods of recitation (pāṭha) that acted as checks on one another. For example, the saṁhitā pāṭha involves reciting the text as it is, while the krama pāṭha involves reciting it in pairs of words. Other methods, such as jaṭā pāṭha and ghaṇa pāṭha, involve more complex patterns of recitation. These methods ensured that even a single letter of the Vedas could not be altered or lost over thousands of years. This level of precision is unparalleled in the history of human civilization and demonstrates the extraordinary value that ancient Indians placed on knowledge and its preservation.

The Vedas were not just preserved for their own sake; they were considered the repository of all knowledge available at that time. The word Veda itself comes from the root vid, meaning “to know.” The Vedas were revered as the ultimate source of wisdom, encompassing everything from cosmology and ethics to mathematics and astronomy. Their preservation was seen as a sacred duty, and those who dedicated their lives to learning and teaching the Vedas were exempted from military service and other worldly responsibilities. This reflects the high regard in which knowledge and learning were held in ancient Indian society.

In contrast to the Indian tradition of oral preservation, other ancient cultures relied on written texts, which were often subject to alteration, loss, or destruction. For example, the Bible was compiled several centuries after the events it describes, and many early Christian texts were excluded from the canon. Similarly, the Quran was compiled about 300 years after the death of Prophet Muhammad, and conflicting versions were often destroyed. In some cases, the zeal to preserve religious texts led to the destruction of other knowledge, such as the burning of the Library of Alexandria. In India, too, there were instances of destruction, such as the ransacking of Nālandā and Vikramāśilā universities by invaders like Bhaktiyar Khilji. However, the oral tradition of the Vedas ensured that their core teachings remained intact, even in the face of such challenges.

The Vedas are not just ancient texts; they are a living tradition that continues to inspire and guide millions of people. They remind us of the timeless quest for knowledge, the importance of preserving wisdom, and the profound connection between humans, nature, and the divine. In a world that often prioritizes material progress over spiritual and intellectual growth, the Vedas offer a powerful reminder of the enduring value of knowledge and the need to preserve it for future generations.

### **Veda and Vedāṅga**

The Vedas are not just ancient texts; they are the poetic outpourings of the ṛṣis, the seers who experienced profound truths about the universe, life, and the self. These experiences were not limited to abstract philosophical musings; they encompassed everything from the visible cosmos—the sun, moon, stars, planets, and comets—to the natural world of flora and fauna, forests, deserts, rivers, seas, and oceans. The ṛṣis also turned their gaze inward, observing their own physical bodies, breath, mind, intellect, ego, and the inner Self that witnesses all. The Vedas, therefore, are a vast repository of knowledge, covering every aspect of existence, both external and internal. However, the sheer breadth and depth of this knowledge make the Vedas difficult to decipher. Their meanings are often layered, symbol-

ic, and open to interpretation, requiring a deep understanding of the context in which they were composed.

This complexity is further compounded by the challenges posed by natural calamities, famines, floods, and mass migrations, which can disrupt the continuity of knowledge transmission. Despite these challenges, the Vedas have been preserved with remarkable precision, thanks to the oral tradition that has safeguarded them for thousands of years. The ṛṣis did not create the Vedas; they revealed them. The Vedas are considered *apauruṣeya*, meaning “not of human origin.” They are *vastu-niṣṭha*—rooted in reality and existence—rather than *vyakti-niṣṭha*, which would mean they are influenced by individual emotions, likes, dislikes, or personal biases. This is why the Vedas are timeless and universal, holding relevance across ages and cultures.

The Vedas are classified as *śruti*, which means “that which is heard.” This term reflects the oral tradition through which the Vedas were transmitted. The ṛṣis “heard” these truths in deep states of meditation and passed them down through generations by word of mouth. In contrast, the *smṛti* texts—such as the *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, and *Dharmaśāstras*—are “that which is remembered.” While *śruti* represents eternal, unchanging truths, *smṛti* adapts these truths to the needs of society at different times and places. For example, the principle of respecting the opposite gender as thinking and feeling beings is an eternal value (*śruti*), but the specific social norms regarding marriage, such as the number of spouses one may have, can vary with time and place (*smṛti*). This distinction between *śruti* and *smṛti* has allowed Indian society to preserve its core values while adapting to changing circumstances.

The breadth of topics covered in the Vedas is truly staggering. A glimpse of this can be seen in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, where the sage Nārada approaches Sanat-kumāra, lamenting that despite his vast knowledge of the four Vedas, *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, grammar, mathematics, astronomy, ethics, and even snake-charming and music, he is still not free from sorrow. Nārada seeks *ātma-vidyā*, the knowledge of the Self, to attain liberation. This story illustrates that the Vedas are not just about external knowledge; they also guide us toward inner wisdom and self-realization.

Given the vastness and complexity of the Vedas, it is essential to have auxiliary disciplines to aid in their understanding. These are the six *Vedāṅgas*, or “limbs of the Vedas,” which serve as tools for deciphering the meaning of the Vedic mantras. Each *Vedāṅga* addresses a specific aspect of Vedic study, and together they form a comprehensive framework for interpreting the Vedas. Let us explore each of these six *Vedāṅgas* in detail:

- **Jyotiṣa (Astronomy):** Jyotiṣa is the science of celestial bodies and their movements. It is essential for determining the timing of Vedic rituals and understanding the cosmic order. The *Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa*, attributed to Lagadha, is one of the earliest texts on astronomy. Over time, this field saw significant contributions from scholars like Parāśara, Vṛddha-garga, Āryabhaṭa (author of the *Āryabhaṭīya*), Varāhamihira (author of the *Brhājāta* and *Pañcasiddhāntikā*), Brahmagupta (author of the *Brahmasphuṭa-siddhānta*), and Nīlakaṇṭha Somayājī (author of the *Tantra-saṅgraha*). These scholars made groundbreaking discoveries in astronomy and mathematics, laying the foundation for future scientific advancements.
- **Vyākaraṇa (Grammar):** Vyākaraṇa is the study of language and grammar, essential for understanding the precise meaning of Vedic mantras. The most renowned figure in this field is Pāṇini, whose *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is a masterpiece of linguistic analysis. Pāṇini’s work is remarkable for its use of a meta-language (a formal system of rules) and the concept of *kāraka*, which describes the relationships between words

in a sentence. These ideas have influenced modern computational linguistics and machine translation. Pāṇini's successors, such as Kātyāyana and Patañjali, further refined his work through commentaries and additional rules. Later scholars like Bhartṛhari (author of the Vākyapadīya) and Bhaṭṭoji Dikṣita also made significant contributions to the field.

- **Nirukta (Etymology):** Nirukta is the study of the origins and meanings of words, particularly those that are archaic or obscure. The oldest surviving text on Nirukta is by Yāska, who systematically analyzed Vedic vocabulary and created a glossary to aid in understanding the mantras. Later works, such as Amarasiṃha's Amarakośa and the Śabda-kalpa-druma, expanded on this tradition, providing comprehensive dictionaries and thesauruses for Sanskrit.
- **Chandas (Prosody):** Chandas is the study of poetic meters and rhythms, crucial for the correct recitation of Vedic hymns. The oldest text on Chandas is Piṅgala's Chandas-sūtra, which describes various metrical patterns. Later works, such as Kedāra Bhaṭṭa's Vṛtta-ratnākara, provide exhaustive compilations of over 600 meters, making Sanskrit one of the richest languages in terms of metrical diversity.
- **Śikṣā (Phonetics):** Śikṣā deals with the correct pronunciation of Vedic mantras, which is essential for their efficacy. Since the Vedas were transmitted orally, precise pronunciation was of utmost importance. The prātiśākhya texts provide detailed instructions on pronunciation, particularly for the different branches (śākhās) of the Vedas. Pāṇini's Śikṣā is a concise guide to phonetics, but the neglect of this discipline in some regions has led to the loss of correct pronunciation, even in languages like Tamil.
- **Kalpa (Rituals):** Kalpa deals with the practical application of Vedic knowledge through rituals. It includes four types of texts: śrauta-sūtras (for elaborate Vedic rituals), grhya-sūtras (for domestic rituals), dharmasūtras (for ethical and legal duties), and śulva-sūtras (for the construction of fire altars). These texts provide detailed instructions for performing rituals, ensuring that the spiritual and cosmic order is maintained.

The Vedāṅgas are not just technical disciplines; they are gateways to understanding the profound wisdom of the Vedas. They remind us that knowledge is not just about memorizing texts but about engaging with them deeply, critically, and creatively. The contributions of the great scholars in each of these fields have enriched not only Indian culture but also the global intellectual heritage. By studying the Vedas and their auxiliary disciplines, we can gain insights into the timeless truths that have guided humanity for millennia and continue to inspire us today.

### **Itihāsa and Purāṇa**

In the Indian tradition, there is a well-known saying: "itihāsa-purāṇābhyām vedam sam-upabṛmhayet"—meaning, the virtues and values of the Vedas are to be communicated through Itihāsa (epics) and Purāṇas (mythological texts). While the literal meaning of Itihāsa is "thus it happened" (iti ha āsa), it is far more than a mere chronicle of dates and events. Itihāsa is a profound medium through which the timeless wisdom of the Vedas is conveyed in the form of stories, making it accessible and relatable to people across generations. The two most prominent works of Itihāsa are the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. The Mahābhārata, with its 100,000 verses, is often referred to as the pañcama-veda (the fifth Veda) and is also considered a kāvya (poetic literature). Unlike the Vedas, which are more abstract and philosophical, the Itihāsas have a single, cohesive narrative that makes them im-

mensely popular and widely read.

The Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata are not just stories; they are repositories of moral, ethical, and spiritual teachings. They explore complex human emotions, dilemmas, and relationships, offering guidance on how to live a righteous life. These epics have inspired countless works of literature, drama, and art in Sanskrit and other Indian languages. For example, the Rāmāyaṇa has been retold in various regional languages, such as Kamban's Kamba Rāmāyaṇa in Tamil, Tulsidas's Rāmacaritamānas in Awadhi, and Kuvempu's Śrī-Rāmāyaṇa-darśanam in Kannada. Similarly, the Mahābhārata has been adapted into works like the Āndhra-Mahābhāratam in Telugu and Kumārvyāsa-bhārata in Kannada. These retellings have not only preserved the essence of the original epics but have also enriched regional literary traditions.

The Purāṇas, on the other hand, are a vast collection of texts that delve into cosmology, genealogy, and the lives of kings, sages, and deities. The tradition identifies 18 main Purāṇas and 18 upa-purāṇas (secondary Purāṇas). Among the most prominent are the Viṣṇupurāṇa, Bhāgavata-purāṇa, and Skanda-purāṇa, the latter being the largest with 81,000 verses. The Purāṇas are not as meticulously preserved as the Vedas, and over time, some interpolations may have crept into the texts. However, they remain invaluable sources of knowledge, covering five main themes (pañca-lakṣaṇa):

- Sarga: The creation of the universe.
- Pratisarga: The dissolution and re-creation of the universe.
- Vaṁśa: The genealogies of gods, sages, and kings.
- Manvantara: The reigns of the Manus, the progenitors of humanity.
- Vaṁśānucaritam: The legends and stories of various dynasties.

The Purāṇas have also inspired works beyond Hinduism. For instance, Buddhists and Jains composed texts like the Harivaṁśa, Dīpavaṁśa, Jātaka-kathā, and Mahāpurāṇa to popularize their own religious teachings. The Purāṇas have been retold and reinterpreted in various Indian languages, ensuring their relevance across time and space. Even in the 20th century, retellings of the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata by authors like Kuvempu and Viśvanātha Satyanārāyaṇa have won prestigious literary awards, such as the Jñānapīṭha.

### **Dharmaśāstra**

The Dharmaśāstras are texts that deal with ethical and moral codes, guiding individuals and societies in their conduct. They cover four main areas:

- **Ācāra:** This pertains to personal practices such as sandhyā-vandana (daily prayers), japa (chanting), pūjā (worship), yajña (sacrificial rituals), dāna (charity), and tapas (austerities). These practices are based on personal conviction and are not always evident to others, but they have a profound impact on the practitioner's inner purity and spiritual growth.
- **Vyavahāra:** This deals with social conduct, including laws and regulations that govern interactions between individuals and groups. For example, paying taxes and rent are duties under vyavahāra. Failure to fulfill these duties can lead to legal consequences.
- **Prāyaścitta:** These are remedial actions to be taken if one fails to perform their ācāra duties. For instance, if someone misses their daily sandhyā-vandana, they may skip a meal as a form of penance.
- **Daṇḍa:** This refers to punishment or fines for violations of social norms. For example, if someone fails to pay taxes, the state may impose a fine or other penalties.

In modern constitutions, we often see only vyavahāra and daṇḍa being emphasized,

while ācāra and prāyaścitta are overlooked. However, a society that neglects personal purity and ethical conduct will always require external policing to maintain order. A healthy society is one where individuals voluntarily follow their duties, even when no one is watching. Such responsible citizens are the true assets of a nation, far more valuable than mere numbers or material wealth.

### **Darśanas**

The term darśana is often translated as “philosophy,” but this translation does not fully capture its essence. While philosophy etymologically means “love for wisdom” (philos = love, sophia = wisdom), darśana is more than that. It literally means “vision” and refers to a system of thought that propounds a vision of the truth of existence. The darśanas are divided into two categories: āstika (orthodox) and nāstika (heterodox). The āstika-darśanas accept the authority of the Vedas and include:

- Nyāya: The school of logic and epistemology.
- Vaiśeṣika: The school of atomism and metaphysics.
- Sāṅkhya: The school of enumeration and dualism.
- Yoga: The school of meditation and self-discipline.
- Pūrva-mīmāṃsā: The school of ritual interpretation.
- Uttara-mīmāṃsā (Vedānta): The school of ultimate reality and self-realization.

The nāstika-darśanas do not accept the authority of the Vedas and include:

- Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika: Schools of Buddhist philosophy.
- Yogācāra and Mādhyamika: Schools of Mahayana Buddhism.
- Svetāmbara and Digambara: Schools of Jain philosophy.

### **Nyāya and Epistemology**

Nyāya, one of the six orthodox darśanas, is particularly concerned with logic and epistemology. It identifies six means of knowledge (pramāṇa):

- Pratyakṣa (direct perception): Knowledge gained through the senses.
- Anumāna (inference): Knowledge derived from logical reasoning.
- Upamāna (comparison): Knowledge gained through analogy.
- Arthāpatti (postulation): Knowledge derived from circumstantial evidence.
- Anupalabdhi (non-perception): Knowledge of absence.
- Śabda (verbal testimony): Knowledge gained through authoritative sources.

Each pramāṇa reveals a specific aspect of reality (prameya). For example, when a stick is partially immersed in water, the eye perceives it as bent due to refraction, while the sense of touch reveals its true, straight form. In this case, touch provides the intrinsic truth, while sight offers only an apparent truth. This example illustrates the importance of using multiple pramāṇas to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of reality.

### **Kautilya’s Arthashastra**

Kautilya’s Arthashastra is a seminal text on statecraft, economics, and military strategy. It provides timeless wisdom on governance, diplomacy, and the art of war. The text emphasizes three primary goals: good governance, economic stability, and territorial expansion. A prudent ruler, according to Kautilya, must prioritize the welfare of the subjects, as a healthy economy enables the state to extend its power. The Arthashastra also outlines six metrics for foreign policy, advising rulers to shift from decline to stabilization and then to growth. The text is a classic example of political realism, offering strategies for managing power dynamics and achieving national objectives.

### **The Relevance of IKS in NEP 2020**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative shift in India’s edu-

cational framework by emphasizing the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the curriculum. This move is not just about revisiting ancient texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, Itihāsas, and Purāṇas; it is about reconnecting students with their cultural roots and fostering a sense of identity and continuity. In a rapidly globalizing world, where young minds are often caught between modernity and tradition, the NEP 2020 seeks to strike a balance by blending ancient wisdom with contemporary knowledge. By incorporating IKS, the policy aims to provide students with a holistic education that nurtures not only intellectual growth but also ethical and spiritual development.

The NEP 2020 also highlights the importance of interdisciplinary learning, where subjects like philosophy, ethics, and history are taught alongside science and technology. This approach is crucial in today's world, where technological advancements often outpace ethical considerations. By integrating IKS, students can gain a deeper understanding of timeless values such as compassion, integrity, and respect for nature, which are essential for addressing modern challenges like climate change, social inequality, and ethical dilemmas in science and technology. For instance, the environmental wisdom found in the Vedas and Upanishads can inspire sustainable living, while the ethical teachings of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas can guide students in making morally sound decisions.

However, the integration of IKS into the education system is not without its challenges. One of the primary hurdles is curriculum design. Creating a curriculum that seamlessly blends traditional knowledge with modern educational requirements is a complex task. It requires careful selection of content, ensuring that ancient texts are presented in a way that is relevant and engaging for today's students. Another challenge is teacher training. Educators need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to teach IKS effectively, which may require specialized training programs and workshops. Additionally, resource availability is a concern. Authentic and accessible resources, such as translations, commentaries, and digital materials, must be made available to both teachers and students. Finally, cultural sensitivity is essential. There may be resistance or misconceptions about the relevance of ancient texts in modern education, and it is important to address these concerns through open dialogue and awareness campaigns.

To overcome these challenges, a collaborative effort is needed. Scholars, educators, and policymakers must work together to design a curriculum that respects and revitalizes IKS while addressing the needs of contemporary education. By doing so, we can create an educational system that not only imparts knowledge but also instills a sense of pride in India's rich cultural heritage. The NEP 2020, with its focus on IKS, has the potential to shape a generation of students who are not only intellectually capable but also ethically grounded and culturally aware. This is the true essence of education—preparing individuals to navigate the complexities of the modern world while staying rooted in timeless values.

### **Conclusion**

The integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant step toward creating a holistic, culturally rooted, and ethically grounded educational framework. By incorporating the timeless wisdom of the Vedas, Upanishads, Itihāsas, Purāṇas, and other ancient texts, the NEP 2020 seeks to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. This approach not only enriches the intellectual and spiritual development of students but also equips them with the ethical and moral foundations necessary to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

The interdisciplinary nature of IKS, as emphasized in the NEP, provides a unique opportunity to address contemporary challenges such as environmental sustainability, social

inequality, and ethical dilemmas in science and technology. For instance, the ecological wisdom found in the Vedas and Upanishads can inspire sustainable living, while the moral teachings of the Itihāsas and Purāṇas can guide individuals in making ethically sound decisions. By integrating these ancient texts into the curriculum, the NEP 2020 aims to cultivate a generation of students who are not only knowledgeable but also compassionate, responsible, and deeply connected to their cultural heritage.

However, the successful implementation of IKS in modern education is not without its challenges. Curriculum design must strike a delicate balance between traditional knowledge and contemporary educational requirements, ensuring that ancient texts are presented in a way that is both relevant and engaging for today's students. Teacher training is another critical area, as educators need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to teach IKS effectively. Additionally, the availability of authentic and accessible resources, such as translations, commentaries, and digital materials, is essential for both teachers and students. Finally, cultural sensitivity must be prioritized to address potential resistance or misconceptions about the relevance of ancient texts in modern education.

To overcome these challenges, a collaborative effort is required. Scholars, educators, and policymakers must work together to design and implement a curriculum that respects and revitalizes IKS while addressing the needs of contemporary education. By doing so, we can create an educational system that not only imparts knowledge but also instills a sense of pride in India's rich cultural heritage. The NEP 2020, with its focus on IKS, has the potential to shape a generation of learners who are intellectually capable, ethically grounded, and culturally aware. This is the true essence of education—preparing individuals to navigate the complexities of the modern world while staying rooted in timeless values. In this way, the integration of IKS into the NEP 2020 not only honors India's ancient wisdom but also ensures its continued relevance in shaping a brighter, more harmonious future.

#### References

- ◆ Amarasimha. (1940). *Amarakośa* (M. Krishnamachariar, Trans.). The Adyar Library.
- ◆ Bhartṛhari. (1977). *Vākyapadīya* (K. A. Subramania Iyer, Trans.). Motilal Banarsidass.
- ◆ Brahmagupta. (1929). *Brahmasphuṭa-siddhānta* (P. C. Sengupta, Trans.). University of Calcutta.
- ◆ Bühler, G. (Trans.). (1886). *Manusmṛti*. Clarendon Press.
- ◆ Chāṇakya. (1915). *Arthaśāstra* (R. Shamasastri, Trans.). Wesleyan Mission Press.
- ◆ Easwaran, E. (Trans.). (1985). *Bhagavad Gītā*. Nilgiri Press.
- ◆ Ganguli, K. M. (Trans.). (1883–1896). *Mahābhārata*. Bharata Press.
- ◆ Griffith, R. T. H. (Trans.). (1870–1874). *Rāmāyaṇa*. Trübner & Co.
- ◆ Kālidāsa. (1984). *Raghuvamśa* (C. R. Devadhar, Trans.). Motilal Banarsidass.
- ◆ Kautilya. (1960). *Arthashastra* (R. P. Kangle, Trans.). Motilal Banarsidass.
- ◆ Nikhilananda, S. (Trans.). (1949). *Upaniṣads*. Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center.
- ◆ Pāṇini. (1891). *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (S. C. Vasu, Trans.). Indian Press.
- ◆ Radhakrishnan, S. (1923). *Indian philosophy*. Oxford University Press.
- ◆ Tulsidas. (1989). *Rāmacaritamānas* (R. C. Prasad, Trans.). Motilal Banarsidass.
- ◆ Varāhamihira. (1975). *Brhājātaka* (V. S. Sastri, Trans.). Raman Publications.
- ◆ Vivekananda. (1989). *The complete works of Swami Vivekananda*. Advaita Ashrama.
- ◆ Wilson, H. H. (Trans.). (1840). *Viṣṇupurāṇa*. Trübner & Co.
- ◆ Zimmer, H. (1951). *Philosophies of India*. Princeton University Press.