

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

Concept and Applications

Edited by

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Foreword



It gives me immense pleasure to pen a few words for this timely and relevant anthology, which brings together original essays by distinguished experts in the field of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). With the adoption of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020—a transformative policy aimed at reshaping India’s education ecosystem to meet the demands of the 21st century—there is renewed emphasis on reviving and integrating IKS as a vital tool to address contemporary challenges.

It is heartening to note that many universities have embraced IKS as an undergraduate course, signalling a shift toward rediscovering and recontextualizing our ancient wisdom. The objective is not merely to preserve our intellectual heritage but to offer practical, relevant solutions to everyday problems. More importantly, IKS encourages us to go beyond conventional approaches and explore holistic methodologies that enrich modern scientific epistemology. Rooted in Bharatiyata and the Bhartiya Gyan Parampara, this initiative empowers the younger generation to contribute meaningfully to building an Atmanirbhar Bharat—a self-reliant India—and to realize the vision of a developed nation by 2047. Such a transformation requires us to shed the colonial mindset that has lingered for over two centuries and embrace a more inclusive, indigenous perspective.

It must be underscored that Bharatiyata does not advocate the rejection of Western knowledge. Rather, it seeks to complement it with innovative methodologies and tools tailored to the unique needs of our time. This anthology is a step in that direction—a bridge between the past and the future, tradition and innovation.

I commend the efforts of the editors and the contributors of different chapters of the book in bringing out the publication. I also hope that it shall be useful to the undergraduate students as well as to the general public to get a perspective about the rich Indian Knowledge tradition.

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Preface

The National Education Policy 2020 marks a historic milestone in India's educational journey, envisioning a transformative, holistic, and inclusive framework for learning in the 21st century. It aspires to reimagine the educational landscape by fostering creativity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning, while emphasizing India's rich cultural heritage and diverse traditions. The policy sets a bold agenda to align education with the needs of a rapidly changing world, empowering learners to become responsible citizens and global contributors.

This book titled "Indian Knowledge Systems: Concepts and Applications" is an edited volume that seeks to engage with the vision, philosophy, and implementation strategies of NEP 2020. It brings together varied perspectives of scholars, educators, and practitioners from different disciplines who critically analyze its provisions, reflect upon its opportunities, and deliberate on its challenges. By exploring key themes such as curriculum reforms, teacher education, use of technology, vocational learning, equity, multidisciplinary approaches, and governance, the book attempts to highlight both the promise and the practicalities of translating the policy into action.

We believe that this compilation will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, researchers, teachers, students, and all those invested in the future of education in India. Our aim is not merely to reproduce the text of the policy but to create a space for dialogue and debate—one that acknowledges the policy's vision while also critically examining its feasibility in diverse contexts.

Prof. (Dr.) K. Venu Gopal Rao

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Interrogating the Epistemological and Governance Tradition Through Kautilya's Arthashastra

1



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Abstract

The Indian knowledge system denotes a set of knowledge regarding institutions and actors associated with it - and the correlation between the two. India has been the land of cultures, traditions, wisdom, a hub for ancient thoughts and strategies that are still assisting human civilization in addressing the issues of the contemporary world today. One of the most important ancient Indian texts that has guided the state and the leaders in the management of the state, its organs and international relations, its image on the global pulpit for decades as well as the security of the nation is Kautilya's Arthashastra. It is a political manual for statecraft for the leader, a guide for inculcating and managing his qualities to be a good leader for the populace and the nation. As the world is transitioning rapidly in terms of its contemporary issues of state management, the quintessence of Arthashastra has only increased its significance. Employing a qualitative method, the paper thus delves into the nitty gritty of the text and its implementation in the current world order. It throws light on the following arenas: First, situating Arthashastra within IKS and its nature. Second, scanning through the concepts of Rajadharma and Kinship, Mandala theory and realpolitik. Third, relating the text with economic thought and resource management specific to fiscal discipline and revenue generation; agriculture and environment. Fourth, analyzing the concept of the Danda system in Arthashastra. Lastly, its educational implication and transmission of knowledge.

Keywords: Arthashastra, Danda, Realpolitik, Rajamandala, Knowledge, Statecraft, World, Revenue, Education, Environment,

INTRODUCTION

The concept of a knowledge system touches on a holistic conceptualization that specifies a set of knowledge about institutions and a few actors and tries to find an interconnection between them. India's unique history has been inspiring in various ways, and currently, there have been efforts to systematically refine and preserve it, so that it can provide the newer generation an insight to solve contemporary issues with wisdom. One of the most significant texts which remains at the heart of the IKS is the foundational text of Kautilya's Arthashastra which sheds light on political philosophy, management of economics, and statecraft. The masterpiece not only illuminates on the traditional political ethos, but it reflects on the broader contours of IKS. For any society, the concept of good governance is important, mainly for the welfare of its citizens. The government that will govern that society for its citizens must be characterized by features like efficiency, equity, ethics, and economics. Similarly, the process of governance and its machinery must also be reasonable and just. Today, the academic discourse on governance is especially looked at through the lenses of the Western model. However, ancient Indian scriptures, centuries and decades ago, had already laid down the framework for governance, statecraft, managing the international relations of a state, and how a leader should behave in the role of a conqueror/leader to adorn his state with strength, diplomacy, efficiency, and good governance. Kautilya's Arthashastra is one such innovation that constructed the base for all the aforesaid elements, making itself a manual for governance. This article aims to chart out the significance of Arthashastra through its teachings and integrate it with the IKS so that it can be made relevant to the current trends in education, governance, and intellectual traditions.

1. ARTHASHASTRA WITHIN IKS

1.1. Holistic and Interdisciplinary Nature

The IKS is characterized by a holistic worldview that blends dharma (ethics, not religion), artha (wealth), kama (pleasure), and moksha (ultimate liberation), which denotes the purpose and goals of one's life. The name "Arthashastra" is the combination of two Sanskrit words, 'Artha' meaning "aim" and Shastra meaning "treatise" (Mark, 2020). It combines within its fold mainly artha, but the meaning of artha in this context is not just wealth or material power, but also political power, which Chanakya believed are two sides of the same coin. He aimed to situate politics within a broader ethical and philosophical framework. The treatise combined the diversity of disciplines, and it was the first of its type to integrate Economics, Law and justice (Danda-Bheda), Military strategy, Foreign policy (Mandala Theory), Espionage and intelligence, Environmental management (Malhotra, 2025). This interdisciplinarity is a hallmark of the IKS, and unlike other cultures that have strict compartmentalization of disciplines, IKS aims for greater harmony between domains of knowledge. Indian history and heritage have always thrived on interdisciplinarity, and that has always made the nature of expertise more varied.

1.2. Indigenous Epistemology

Central to the Indian Knowledge system is the concept of *Pramana*, or the means to attain knowledge of a particular phenomenon. The *Arthashastra* provides three means to *pramanas*-

Pratyaksha- that is, perception, *anumana*, which is Inference, and *Shabd*, which is authoritative testimony. This nuanced understanding of knowledge sparked a global interest, and the methods of reasoning are still used to examine knowledge, as they are analytical, comparative, and empirical. What is significant to note here is that, throughout his writings, he cited prior authorities of Manu and Bharadwaja, yet in no way did this reduce the importance of his methodology, which is *Iti Kautilya*, reflecting a dynamic, critical tradition within the Indian intellectual heritage (Srivastava, 2024). Kautilya highlighted the importance of *Anvikshiki*, which was the method or a form of critical inquiry and philosophical reflection. His epistemological contribution lies in practical knowledge and experience, as compared to Western knowledge, which is purely theoretical and compartmentalized (Mark, 2020).

2. POLITICAL THOUGHT AND STATECRAFT

Kautilya, also known as Chanakya or Vishnugupta, was the guide to Chandragupta, helping him to dislodge the Nandas and install the Guptas' reign, enunciating the Mauryan dynasty. Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, till today, has been the most prominent work with realist terms - dealing with the concepts of state management, the organs of the state or the *Saptanga Theory*, system of taxation and economy of the state, managing the external and internal security of the nation, armed forces and network of spies, *Rajdharma* of the leader and the ways of kingship, and lastly the most important being the laying out the manual for the state's foreign policy and the *Rajamandala* theory. Given the period when the text was composed, it is essential to throw light upon the social structure that existed then, to deduce the significance of the principles laid down in *Arthashastra*. The ancient traditional Indian society was featured as *Varnashrama*, i.e., the society is divided into four *varnas* - *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Sudras* and *Vaishyas*; and *ashrama* indicates the four phases of a person's life - *Brahmacharya* (the learner observing celibacy), *Grihastya* (one observing the role of a householder), *Vanaspratha* (anchorite) and *Sanyasa* (the renouncer). The Brahmins were divided into two sections: Brahmins who were mainly engaged in sacred rituals and the *srotriyas* enjoyed special positions in laws, social relationships and ownership over properties, while the *Purohits* enjoyed a secondary position for the royal families, they served the role of a royal chaplain who advised. *Kshatriyas* were the protectors of the land, and only the noble lineage and royal lineages were considered important and the male heir could only succeed for the post of the king. *Vaishyas* and *Sudras* composed the largest portion of the society and were mainly artisans, agriculturalists, entertainers and craftsmen (Singh & Roy, 2011). They were also recruited into the army of the state, although the *Kshatriyas* were regarded as the best warriors. Given this societal structure, the composition of *Arthashastra* and its principles of kingship and statecraft become relevant to discuss.

2.1. Rajdharma and Kingship

Kautilya was very fundamental in composing a text that encompasses an overarching analysis of how a government should operate, establishing the foundation of social justice by the roles performed by the state leader, thereby highlighting the significance of moral values in leadership implementation. Kautilya has always emphasized on Dharma/duty or ethics to be imperative in the operation of state and society. It is the moral and ethical standard that enables the state, society and its people towards attaining a good life. Kautilya has highlighted four categories of dharma: First, Rajdharma that implies certain key responsibilities to be upheld by the ruler of the state towards his subjects, guaranteeing the latter a secured and a just life in his territory. This is the duty of the king or the Raja. Second, Prajadharma which indicates the duties of the people. They should fulfil certain responsibilities for the welfare of the common good. Third, Ashramdharma which highlights the responsibilities that arrive with the maturing of senses of a person, i.e., the duties of a person towards his family, children, extended families and community. Lastly, Varnadharma that implies the certain specific duties unique to people belonging to their specific caste or profession (Debbarma, 2023).

With regard to Rajdharma, the term is found in several ancient Hindu scriptures like Bhagavad Gita, wherein Lord Krishna imparted the knowledge of wisdom and life to Arjuna and also emphasized on performing the specified duty that one is entitled to. In Chapter three, verse eight, Krishna has guided Arjuna in making him prioritizing his duty and action rather than staying inactive -

*niyataà kuru karma tvaà
karma jyāyo hy akarmaēaū
çarēra-yātrāpi ca te
na prasiddhyed akarmaēaū*

It meant that a man cannot even sustain his physical body without doing any work, hence, one has to emphasize on performing his duty and abstain from inaction. (B.G.,3.8)

In Kautilya's Arthashastra, paramount importance has been accorded to the performance of the king in fulfilling his prescribed duties for the smooth functioning of the state machinery, orderly improvement of the society and ensuring the happiness of the subjects. Thus, Rajdharma in this text implies that the administration of a state must be based on the principles of dharma. Kautilya has footed the king with that of the soldiers where both received their wages and both had the share in the state's assets. All the more, the king must treat the public funds not as his personal asset, rather channelize the funds for public purposes - for the welfare of the commons. If he is found to be misappropriating the public funds, he would be accused of his offence and would be condemned to hell. Thus, the Raja could be content at his fullest only when his subjects were prosperous (Narayan, 2004). However, in this Rajdharma, the concept of *Danda* or punishment is also important.

2.2. Mandala and Realpolitik

Kautilya was always determined that every state seeks to maximize their self interest and therefore moral obligations cannot be realised in the nation's actions. Having an ally is good, however it has to be kept in mind that the alliance will only persist when it will align with the interests of the ally and the state. Hence, when one opts for warfare or chooses peace, one sees whether it is advantageous to one's own self-interest. This correlates with the realist theory of international relations. According to realism, the state is the principal actor in IR. It is an unitary actor. Second, national interest, especially during warfares, culminates in the state to speak and act with one voice. Third, decision-makers are rational actors as rational decision making leads to the pursuit of national interest of a nation. Lastly, states live in constant anarchy due to the absence of anyone being in charge internationally. Realists also believe that human nature is characterized by selfishness, ego, inability to trust other men and appetite for power, which leads to predictable results. Therefore, states also possess such features that influence the state's security. Here, Niccolo Machiavelli opines how basic human characteristics impact a nation's security. To him, the primary concern of the nation's leader is to preserve national security, be alert and simultaneously cope with the internal and external threats to his rule. Hence, the ruler needs to be a lion (indicative of power) and a fox (deception) to execute the foreign policy of the nation. According to the view of Machiavelli, ethics of responsibility must reign for the ruler rather than adhering to the conventional religious morality, i.e., he should be good when they can but also resort to violence when needed to secure the state (Antunes & Camisao, 2018). Kautilya's innovation of Arthashastra and its relevance in foreign policy execution have been prevailing since ages. The essence and stretching conglomeration of states, composing the Maurya dynasty, is an ultimate instance of well crafted diplomacy. In this respect, his Raja mandala theory (Circle of states) is important as it carries the quintessence of conquering a state perfectly and dealing with its foreign affairs.

While conceptualizing the theory and its current relevance in world politics today, it is imperative to craft the notion of state that Kautilya had conceptualized. To him, State is composed of seven organs (Saptanga theory) - *Swami* (the king), *Amatya* (Council of ministers), *Janapada* (the territory of the kingdom where the inhabitants reside), *Durga* (the fortified cities and the armies), *Kosa* (the treasury of the state), *Danda* (the punishment to inflict proper regulation), and the *Mitra* (the allies of the state). King is the most important element of the state and Kautilya had warned the Swami against calamities which could weaken the strength of the Saptanga. Having conceptualised the state, the Mandala theory of Kautilya becomes significant to discuss. The theory takes into account the geographical boundaries of the state along with the relationship of the wise king with his allies, enemies, friend of the ally, friend of the enemy, friend of the enemy's friend and; the rearward enemy, its friend, friend of the rearward enemy's friend and lastly the middle of the neutral king that concludes the circle of states.

Vijigishu: He is the aspirant for more power, the wise king who is the source of sound policy making. **Mitra:** He is the ally of the king. Mitra's territory lies past that of the enemy of the king.

Ari: He is the enemy of the king and shares a common boundary with Vijigishu. Kautilya has described three types of Ari (enemy) - *Prakrti Ari*, *Sahaja Ari*, *Krtrima Ari*. **Arimitra:** He is the friend of the enemy. **Mitra Mitra:** He is the ally of Ari Mitra. **Ari Mitra Mitra:** He is the ally of the enemy's friend, situated beyond Mitra Mitra. **Parsnigraha:** He is the enemy situated rear to the king and is the heel catcher when the king would be on the pursuit of an expedition in the front. **Akranda:** It is the friend of the king situated behind Parsnigraha. **Parsnigrahasara:** It is the friend of Parsnigraha. **Akrandasara:** He is the friend of Akranda behind Parsnigrahasara.

Madhyama: He is the middle-most king who shares territories with the king and king's enemy. He is stronger than both. **Udasina:** He is the neutral king who stays more potent than the king, his enemy and the middle king. Altogether, they make 18 circles including the Amatya, Janapada, Kosa and Durga. (Ghosh, 2021).

2.3. Relevance of Mandala theory in contemporary global politics

The current global political scenario can be described as the cobweb of military strategies, diplomacy, economic interdependence, and realpolitik. Kautilya's Mandala theory, thus, provides a nuanced understanding of international relations, ideological rivalries, alliances, diplomatic means of the state, complex interplay of national interests and power. The theory finds its manifestation in the current competition between China and the United States of America. Both the states engage in a strategic positioning through a web of alliances and counter alliances. Indo-Pacific is currently the most discussed topic in the field of international relations due to its strategic geography. It rightly demonstrates the Mandala theory that a state's immediate neighbor is the enemy or a threat to the nation's security whereas the distant states act as the allies of the nation. For instance, there is a critical relationship between India and China, hence India engages with the other states like USA, Australia, Japan in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) alliance as a counterbalance mechanism. The current tensions in the Himalayas and Pakistan-China alignment on one hand, and India's alliance with distant nations like USA and France reflect the relevance of the theory (Singh and Munde, 2025). This instance perfectly illustrates that the rajamandala theorization of Kautilya is still persistent in its manifestation in today's contemporary geopolitics. Even in the recent Russia-Ukraine warfare, India has been seen not reacting to it much, because of her strategic and economic relationship with Russia. Russia has been the prime exporter of military munitions to India. Thus, India opted for a diplomatic stance for the pursuit of her own national interest.

In the theory Kautilya spoke of two enemies - the enemy in the front which constantly tries to inflict injury on the state and another neighboring enemy. Here, Pakistan can be labelled as the enemy and China, being the contingent

enemy. Pakistan, as per Arthashastra, is seen as irrational as it continued inflicting armed forces (Danda) on India's territory (Janapada). With continued attacks on Kashmir for years by means of its extremist ideology and terrorist groups, Pakistan can never be seen as a trustworthy and legitimate actor in issues relating to Jammu and Kashmir. Thus, resolving the conflicts between Indo-Pak seem to remain unresolved. Thus, Pakistan with its very little chance of undergoing a fundamental transformation in its ideology, will never be able to stop being India's strategic opponent. On the other hand, China is India's strategic competitor. She does not aim to oppose India but be her competitor. It has moved up to the Rajamandala theory, from Samadhi to Samdhayayana, i.e., attacking a state even after signing a pact with it as seen in Ladakh Stand-off - reflecting a change in China's policy, and China is a potent obstacle for India from securing a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (Bajpai, 2023). Henceforth, China is a more danger factor for India than Pakistan and in this respect, Kautilya's Arthashastra would caution India not to engage in fight with China, rather understand its strategy and cooperate with it in order to advance India's own national interest.

3. ECONOMIC THOUGHT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

3.1. Fiscal Discipline and Revenue Generation

The treatise offers detailed suggestions on taxation, revenue generation and collection, Kosha or treasury management, and public expenditure. A thorough analysis of the economic planning reflects a proactive approach with an anticipation of the future challenges that could act as a threat to the king to achieve the long-term economic goal (HOUSE, 2012).

He emphasized a few key elements, including resource management, which encompassed not only natural resources but also human resources, and called for the protection of traders and merchants. He listed several revenue sources—including taxes on land, trade, and industry. What is significant here to note is that he considered land to be the most valuable resource of all, and a means to gain monetary supremacy, and stressed the need for proper investment in infrastructure. Emphasizing the importance of minimal taxes, he highlighted that "Kings must collect taxes like a honeybee," which signified the amount needed to keep the state functioning so that excesses don't lead to the state's self-destruction (HOUSE, 2012). This is particularly relevant in the current Indian context, as the state lags far behind in creating a self-sufficient economy, with a lack of equal opportunities for all individuals of similar merit.

3.2. Agriculture and Environmental Ethos

While planning to strengthen the economy, he mainly focused on agriculture, cattle raising, and commerce. Amongst the three, he considered agriculture to be the most important constituent of the economy. The state was directly responsible for land development and settlement, soil classification planning, forest conservation, and resource allocation, and the state would appoint a special officer called *Sitadhyaksha*, who would be the superintendent for the

crown lands. Agriculture cannot be dealt with in isolation, and variables of rainfall measurement, astronomy, the scientificity of the crop reaping, and arrangements of alternative crops in case of failed weather conditions are a part of sound planning, which was reflected in the treatise (HOUSE, 2012). He highlighted to the agriculturalists the benefits of cultivating a wide range of crops, which is relevant in today's times. India, post-independence, has not provided serious attention to the agricultural sector except for the fourth five-year plan. The sector still lacks enough investment from the state. The lack of even distribution of investment, on the one hand, and the politics of being under the state list, make it even more difficult for proper distribution.

4. DANDA SYSTEM

The system of Punishment or Danda Niti is a core concept of the treatise, as it formed the basis of governance and law enforcement in ancient India. Danda is a Sanskrit word, which denotes 'stick/punishment', and in Arthashastra, it was symbolically used to denote the sovereign power of the state to control the subjects and maintain law, order, and discipline. The principles of Dharma (Righteousness) and Nyaya, that is Justice, echoed throughout the chapter of Danda. The ultimate aim behind the danda system was not 'just punishing the subjects' but to enforce discipline in the minds of the offender, so that crime could be contained, and this eventually created the principles of successful implementation of the principles of deterrence and reformation. He firmly believed that without the enforcement of Danda, anarchy would set in (Singh, 2022). In addition to that, it is praiseworthy that, unlike other kings who used stringent punishment on the bodies of their subjects, Kautilya suggested different punishments according to the severity of not just the crime, but also the intent with which the crime was committed and the socio-economic status of the offender so that a nuanced justice system could be created. It reflected a balance between authority and moral responsibility because it aimed to create a model where accountability and ethical conduct would take the centre stage. (Views, 2013) In contemporary times, the establishment of a similar danda system can play a central role so that a free fair justice system can be created without the influence of the power on important decisions. Hence, Danda Niti, is not just an ancient doctrine but a timeless principle in the Indian Knowledge tradition, advocating for a disciplined society.

5. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSMISSION:

Kautilya's Arthashastra has been a pioneer for providing light to the several intricacies of governance, politics, the responsibility of the king to ensure a welfare state to his citizens, secure the internal as well as external security of his kingdom and also to build a controlled state in order to be beneficial for its inhabitants. As noted earlier, Kautilya was the first Indian philosopher who had assisted Chandragupta Maurya in building the first welfare as well as unified state in India by emphasizing on national interests, security, diplomatic foundation and alliances of the nation. In the contemporary era, we can see that the issues critical to the national security of a state, the significance of alliances

and national interests of the states, diplomacy, combat and realpolitik still persist. As noted earlier with respect to the contemporary instances in geopolitics, it can be very well deduced that the relevance of Arthashastra in the present world still exists.

6. CONCLUSION

Reviving the indigenous knowledge is of paramount importance, and especially the Arthashastra still remains as the seminal ancient treatise on statecraft, strategic planning, bureaucratic efficiency and governance. It has that scientific, rationale and context sensitive spirit of IKS– Integrating the insights on various sectors can promote– Contextual policy thinking, Indian models of economic and politics, Cultural self-confidence and intellectual sovereignty. Its realistic and holistic approach to politics, policy, and administration makes it more relevant to contemporary domestic and international geo-politics. Modern governance can benefit hugely from the treatise on welfare- oriented leadership, strategic diplomacy and international security. Looking back at this historical text can help in reclaiming India’s intellectual heritage and decolonizing education. It promotes an alternative to the existing Western paradigms, and context specific resolutions. In an era of global uncertainty and identity struggles, the *Arthashastra* reminds us of India’s rich tradition of governance and strategic thinking. Its revival, alongside other indigenous texts, is essential not just for historical pride, but for crafting resilient, inclusive, and future-ready systems grounded in India’s civilizational ethos.

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Globalization of Vaishnavism as an Indian Knowledge System and the International Spread of Krishna Conscious Bhakti Movement Through the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

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Abstract

India being a land of varied cultures, is an embodiment of knowledge in herself. The knowledge system that has developed through her cultures, traditions, values and ideas have been assisting human civilization since centuries today. As the world is transforming rapidly in the contemporary era, the significance of India's knowledge system has only increased - thereby adorning the lives of the living beings ingrained in moral values. This IKS has the characteristic of being a globalised trend like Vaishnavism. Vaishnavism, being a strand of the IKS and a part of the India's vedic culture embodies the essence of certain important philosophies for humankind like simplicity of life, combining the elements of love and devotion; concept of service to all the fellow living beings as they believe that their God - Lord Krishna resides in everyone. Although it is rooted in India, its philosophies have gone global, and have been accepted by the Western minds. This wave is propelled by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) under the stewardship of Srila Prabhupada. Thus, this paper, using a qualitative method, deals with certain aspects of Vaishnavism as an IKS that has become a globalizing factor for culture and also a soft power.

It delves into the following factors. First, the origin of Vaishnavism. Second, how Vaishnavism and the Hare Krishna Movement heralded by ISKCON have become a globalizing factor holding the hands of ISKCON. Lastly, how Harinaam Sankirtan has become a soft power for the world.

Keywords: Knowledge, India, Vaishnavism, Bhagavad Gita, Krishna, Globalization, Hare Krishna Movement, Srimad Bhagavatam, soft power, ISKCON, West.

INTRODUCTION

India has always been crowned as the Land of Cultures, the Cradle of human civilization, and the Grandmother of Stories and Customs. Here, hopes, belief systems, and aspirations are encapsulated in the land's motherly nurture; the roots of the disciplines like mathematics, religion, astronomy, philosophy, medicine and science can be backpedalled to the roots of India's culture. India's traditional knowledge system has been unique since centuries. As and when periods got transformed, this IKS has evolved and divided into several sections based on its culture and values, beliefs and transcendental legacies. However, as the time has undergone a vast change in the contemporary world, the significance of IKS has only increased and is spreading across the globe only for the welfare of humankind. India being a diverse nation, has several shades of cultures and values but the common string that binds all its culture together on a foundational base is knowledge. And, knowledge is abundant in India.

IKS and its education system were mostly concerned with the seven *Janmas*/births and the two important yet critical concepts that formed a base of it are - *Jnana* and *Ajnana*. Ancient IKS was characterized as being value-based and philosophical. It attaches immense importance to the actions committed by individuals in this material world or *bhoutik jagat*. Thus, focusing on Karma and duty become important. Even in the vedic scripture of Bhagavad Gita, Krishna has emphasised on duty, while not being attached to its results, when he unveiled the divine knowledge of Gita to His disciple, and a friend - Arjuna:

कमयवाधिकास्त मा फलष कदाचन ।

मा कमफलहतममा त सङ्गोऽ वकमिण ॥४७॥

(karmany evādhikāste mā phaleṣu kadācana

mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi)

(Prabhupada, A.C.B.S., 1972)

Here, Krishna had imparted the knowledge to Arjuna about the responsibility to perform one's duty but not remaining attached to the fruits of that action; not believing yourself as the one to be the reason for the consequences of the activity and not adopting inertia as it is sinful too.

The physical world is perceived to be a laboratory for the soul where human beings must receive methodical guidelines to garner their self development. Hence, the value of moral education and the significance of simplicity in lifestyle

are accorded prime positions for one's self improvement, in the ancient Indian knowledge system. This particular notion of life's simplicity, focus on actions or Karma, imbibing values of moral education are immensely highlighted by one of the most known strands of Indian culture, Vaishnavism.

EVOLUTION OF VAISHNAVISM

In the ancient India's Hindu religion, there were five communities namely the Surya (the ones who worshipped the Sun), Saiva (the believers of Lord Shiva), Saktya (the ones who rely on the female goddess and believe in the union of male and female deities), Ganapatya (the community who believed in worshipping Lord Ganesha) and lastly, the Vaishnava (the ones who worshipped Lord Vishnu and his form of Lord Krishna). Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was the founder of Vaishnavism, Vaishnav community believes Him to be the reincarnation of Lord Krishna. Before Him, the community was stranded into different sects like Madhavacharya, Advaita Society, Vallabhacharya and so on. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu sought to unite them under one single roof by positioning Krishna as the central idol, reversing the degraded form of the then society. However, the term *Vaishnava*, meaning Vishnu who possesses, first emerged in *Bajasaneyeti Sanghita* and the term of *Vaishnavism* also been conjectured to appear in the Mahabharata as the foremost religious community. The worship of Lord Vishnu has been existing in this land since the Vedic and mythological ages, continuing till the modern times today. Speaking of Lord Chaitanya, he followed a love-devotion theory, i.e., devotion towards God reflects reverence of love. Centering on this mystical theory, several devotional songs and carols, architectural sculptures, paintings, philosophical thoughts were made. Chaitanya's main motto behind the spread of Vaishnavism was peace and harmony. He wanted to eradicate casteism from the then society by binding all human beings together to flow with the rhythm of Kirtan and floating the love of Krishna. This love, that Chaitanya culture has spoken about, indicates both the love for the Lord and for the fellow living beings. Even today, as Vaishnavism has established itself so groundly across the world, believes that their idol, Lord Krishna resides in every living being. Mahaprabhu had travelled across the country alongside Bengal to deliver Krishna's love and then got settled in Vrindavan and Nilachal/Puri. After his departure, the Vaishnav community was divided into several strands. The branch in Vrindavan under the stewardship of six Goswamis under the name of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. The other branch was heralded by Mahaprabhu's parishad - Nityananda Abadhut, Janhaba Devi and Narattom Das Thakur with marginal Buddhists and Hindus.

However, the Vaishnav system heralded by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was not only restricted to India. The love of Krishna, the importance of simplistic lifestyle, concocted version of love and devotion and moral values were carried forward gracefully from the Indian lands to that of the Western world - to transform their eurocentric thoughts and inject Krishna, love, moral values and devotion in them. This was led by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, popularly known as ISKCON that enunciated the Hare Krishna Movement (HKM) across the globe. This very much has a linkage with the notion of cultural globalization and the concept of soft power.

GLOBALIZATION, ISKCON AND SOFT POWER

Globalization denotes a process of accelerated communion among societies, such that, any event happening in one part of the world, has an impact on people and societies across the globe. Hence, a globalized world reflects as one wherein social, political, cultural, economic events of one state also become interconnected, having a consequence on the people and societies of other nations (Baylis et al, 2011). Hence, it is a procedure of international integration that takes place with the interchange of ideas, products, world views and different aspects of a culture, thereby incorporating the people across the globe under one single roof, denoting a *global village*. To Anthony Giddens, globalization signifies the process of intensification of worldwide social relations that brings together the localities situated elsewhere, in a manner that local happenings are shaped and affected by the events taking place in another part of the world and vice-versa (Giddens, 1990). Here, we will be dealing with the cultural aspect of globalization with regard to Vaishnavism as a strand of IKS. The cultural pattern of globalization involves a complex concoction of homogenization and accelerated heterogeneity owing to the global diffusion of a popular culture, media corporations, communication networks and so on alongside the reassertion of ethnicity, nationalism and differences. If we try to make an idea of culture in its basic sense, it denotes people, goods, ideas, etc, reflecting that cultural globalization has a long standing history as these things have been circulating for millenia. In the era of pre modern globalization (from the early civilization to the 1500s), theorists have identified four processes that have contributed to cultural globalization - early human migration, genesis of world religions, early imperial systems and development of transregional networks. In these human activities, the common characteristics that bind them together is the exchange and absorption of ideas, technological innovations, culture, traditions among each other. Since we are dealing with Vaishnavism, its spread across the globe with regard to its knowledge and values, ideas and principles, we can look through the cultural globalization through the emergence of world religions. Unfurling of world faiths spreading across the world, leading to transregional identities and allegiance, is an indication of it. During the premodern era, religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Buddhism started to emerge and establish their stronghold gradually in other regions of the globe. This culminated in gaining adherents of these faiths in the regions far from their origination and were carried to other areas by travellers and traders. Their spread was catalysed by the core texts and writings that further garnered their expansion and dissemination to other regions, to the people (Paul Hopper, 2007).

Keeping this brief framework in mind, we can see the HKM that was carried out from India to the foreign lands of the United States of America. It was established when the ISKCON was founded by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Srila Prabhupada Swami (1896-1977) in 1966. He was an Indian saint (*Sannyasi*), who played a pivotal role in preaching Bhakti Yoga and the teachings of Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagvatam, the two primary ancient vedic literatures related to Krishna consciousness and Vaishnavism, and cultivating the sense of love and devotion towards the worship of Lord Krishna to the western minds which was

then inflicted with unpleasant habits. Prabhupada was deeply influenced by his spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura who was the foremost propounder of Gaudiya Vaishnav tradition. Briefing Prabhupada's journey to the USA, especially New York, he boarded a cargo ship named *Jaladuta*, to preach Krishna Consciousness and reached the USA in 1965. Initially, he did encounter several financial problems, however gradually his lectures enriched with spiritual awareness started fetching in more followers, especially the younger generation from the counterculture. As the process gained momentum in the foreign land, he institutionalized his spiritual teachings by means of registering an entity under the name of ISKCON. As Angela Burt has identified, in 1969, Prabhupada Swami entrusted three married couples with the responsibility to open a center in the United Kingdom. This unfurled a new era of globalizing the movement as they managed to meet the Beatles and thereafter recorded the Hare Krishna Mahamantra with the band. It was then released by Apple Records, resulting in its sales of 70,000 copies on the first day. Soon after this, the devotees appeared on a popular television programme - *Top of the Pops* where they sang the Hare Krishna Mahamantra - thereby garnering and bolstering the Hare Krishna Movement (Burt, 2023).

BELIEFS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE HARE KRISHNAS AND ITS GLOBALIZING TREND

As the name of ISKCON suggests, *International Society* indicating a global mission and an universal appeal; and *Krishna Consciousness* reflective of the fact that their central focus was on yielding a sense of devotion and love for Krishna and adhering to the principles of Bhakti Yoga in the minds of the people worldwide. The main philosophy that the movement centers on, till today, include stringent follow of vegetarianism, i.e., no meat eating and no intoxication; rejection of the materialism and lastly the daily chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra -

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna

Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama

Rama Rama Hare Hare

- a type of devotional prayer that the devotees chant with the belief that it will lead to the purification of their bodies and soul, thereby assisting them to establish a personal connection with Krishna - providing them peace, joy and ecstasy. Even in Srimad Bhagavatam's Canto Six and Chapter Two - the verse 14 of the scripture tells us -

साङ्केत्यं पारिहास्यं वा स्तोभं हेलनमेव वा ।

वैकुण्ठनामग्रहणमशेषाघहरं विदुः ॥ १४ ॥

(*sāṅketyaṁ pārihāsyam vā*

stobham helanam eva vā

Vaikuṇṭha-nāma-grahaṇam

aśeṣāgha-haram viduḥ)

(Prabhupada, A.C.B.S., 1975)

This explains that the one who chants the Mahamantra is instantaneously liberated from the reactions of his/her endless offences - even if one chants neglectfully, jokingly or passively. This has been accepted by all learned scholars of the scripture.

ISKCON, basing on the principles of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, adheres to monotheistic tradition i.e., the devotees (*Gaudiya Vaishnavs*), believe in one God - Krishna and His other forms. The members follow a set of regulated practices, known as *Sadhana Bhakti*. The aim of this practice is to develop Krishna Consciousness i.e., yielding purest love for Krishna by serving His Lotus feet, and His devotees, loving and treating all living beings kindly and with love and also meditating on Krishna continuously. For this, the Hare Krishna Mahamantra becomes the key as chanting it immediately attaches one to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna. Hence, the primary goal should be fixating one's mind onto Krishna. Swami Prabhupada himself gave an example of King Ambarisha who had fixed his mind on Krishna and anyone who tries to situate his mind on the Godhead will gradually attain the complete Krishna Consciousness. He further explained that *Sadhana Bhakti* is the practice of devotional service - consisting of two parts - *vaidhi* i.e., adhering different regulative principles as laid down by the spiritual master and the authoritative scriptures without any denial or question; and *raganuga* i.e., by following the principles, one gets closer to Krishna and thereby performs devotional service for the joy of the Lord out of natural love for Him (Prabhupada, A.C.B.S., 1970). Although this was viewed as very unconventional in the foreign land as spiritual upliftment and fulfilment was not given so much significance, later on, the younger section of the people in the West did get attracted by this philosophy.

Another aspect of ISKCON is Kirtan and bhajans. It is the congregational chanting of the Maha Mantra that is believed to express one's devotion towards Krishna and also to attract the newcomers in the community. Sankirtan is performed in public - streets, temples and parks accompanied by dancing, clapping and playing of instruments like *Mridanga* (drums), Harmonium and *Kartals* (hand cymbals) in order to align with the rhythm of the kirtan. During the 1970s, ISKCON gained momentum in terms of its followers mainly due to this practice where devotees often engage in joyful dance, singing, distribution of books, distributing prasadam (food which is sanctified and offered to the Lord) in the public areas (Bakshi, 2022). The importance of *Prasadam* is immense in the Vedic culture. With regard to this, verse thirteen of chapter three in Bhagavad Gita tells -

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
 भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥१३॥
 (yajña-śhiṣṭāśhinaḥ santo muchyante sarva-kilbiṣhaiḥ
 bhuñjate te tvaghaṁ pāpā ye pachantyātma-kāraṇāt)
 (Prabhupada, A.C.B.S., 1975)

It means that the Lord's devotees are released from all the sins as they consume food that is first offered in sacrifice. As they are always thinking about and in a compact of love with Krishna, they cannot accept anything without offering to the Supreme Personality of Godhead first. Hence, importance is given to *sravanam*, *kirtanam*, *smaranam* and *arcanam* which keep the devotees away from all sinful association of the material world. Contrariwise, a person who consumes for their self gratification is denoted as a consumer of sins. Deducing its scientific significance, it thereby puts importance on vegetarianism as only *Satwik* food can be offered to the Supreme person, eradicating animal killings for self pleasure. Hence, to lead a peaceful life, one needs to engage in *Sankirtana-Yajna* in full Krishna consciousness.

ISKCON has also accorded importance to *Prasadam* which has also been globalised as the concept has spread even to the West, thereby making Bhagavad Gita reach to everyone across the world. Referring to this, *Lord Krishna's Cuisine: the Art of Indian Vegetarian Cooking* by Yamuna Devi is an example of it as the book became the Cookbook of the Year (IACP).

One of the exciting events that proved that the HKM was globalised and accepted in the foreign lands was the counter-cultural music event that took place in the Avalon Ballroom, San Francisco in 1967 - Mantra Rock Dance. Renowned artists and bands like Moby Grape and Grateful Dead were invited alongside the presence of the famous poet, Allen Ginsberg. Mind expanding posters wherein *Krishna Consciousness Comes West* was put up across the town. The event was characterized to be consciousness-expanding as people arrived in bright clothes, and some with their musical instruments; devotees started the event with singing the Mahamantra and dancing; light show was arranged, pools were lit up and so on. The musical programme embodied the quintessential egalitarian counter-cultural ideal that enabled a psychotomimetic ordeal of blending with the totality (Ketola, 2004). These kind of events have crystallized the stronghold of the movement in the foreign land due to the communal lifestyle, street solicitation techniques in public places, unique dressing style of the devotees - their Kanthi around their necks and Tilak on their foreheads, public chanting, bhajans and Kirtan garnered the foothold more and more. Hence, with Prabhupada's strong spiritual vision to bring everyone in this world under the sheath of spiritual upliftment and self realisations, envisioning them embracing simple but profound spiritual practice; with younger generations especially getting attracted with the philosophy of the Hare Krishnas led ISKCON to unfurl its arms across the globe by means of building temples, schools and farms for *Gou-Seva* (service to the cows) dedicated to Krishna thereby fetching diverse group of followers across the globe into their community. This culminated ISKCON to be a worldwide religious organization, aiming to build a community with like-minded individuals focussing on humility, love, kindness, adhering to the principles of Bhakti Yoga and devotion, having a strong foothold in both the East and the West. This brings us to the last section of its soft power aspect.

SANKIRTAN AS THE SOFT POWER

Harinaam Sankirtan denotes a confederation chanting the holy moniker of Krishna, an accessible practice for self-realisation. Prabhupada had followed the teachings of Mahaprabhu in spreading the Harinaam and thereby awakening the souls across the globe, to the sublime practice of calling out the name of the Supreme Lord through Kirtan. It is the quintessence of the HKM - that had and has been uniting people from different walks of life, across the world, in glorifying Krishna's mercy and garnering Krishna Consciousness. It is a universal practice that was upheld by ISKCON, i.e., people irrespective of their backgrounds, origin, nationality, caste and creed - transcending the boundary of religion, can practice and participate in sankirtan. This universal appeal of ISKCON established the movement, not only as a globalizing factor for culture but also what we term as a soft power. The term was first coined by Joseph S. Nye who said that sometimes one can get what one desires without tangible threats or inducements, i.e., carrots and sticks. And, this indirect way of achieving what a state desires is the soft power. A nation, thus, may obtain the outcomes it wants as other countries emulate its values and traditions, aspire to the level of its prosperity and openness - thereby co-opting the people of other states rather than coercing them. This is soft power (Nye, 2004). Soft power is intertwined with globalization too. As ISKCON successfully globalised the concept of Bhakti Yoga and Krishna Consciousness across the globe - to the West while having a strong foothold in India, specifically Bengal. ISKCON has attracted a large hippie crowd with the association of its divine rewards, its philosophy of returning back to the Godhead or *Krishnaloka* and not returning back to this material world or *Samsara* and positive impact on people. In Sri Mayapur and Vrindavan Dham, several tourist devotees from across the world, especially from the West, are seen to be visiting ISKCON temples and the associated temples of the Dham(s) and participating in the events like Kirtan Mela. In Mayapur, the center for Sankirtan movement, Kirtan Mela are hosted in order to garner blossoming of spiritual talents, arrangements of Kirtan by Kirtanias, continual serving of prasadam to avoid any kirtan interruptions, Kirtanias speaking some realised words on the holy name of Krishna, holding of Bhagavatam classes and chanting sessions (Iskcon Desire Tree, 2014). Another example that proved that Harinaam Sankirtan has become a powerful soft power for the world is its expansion in the Middle East. Ekalavya Das Brahmachari Prabhuji writes that the Middle Eastern states which are sensitive regarding public display of devotion had never encountered the witness of public sankirtan of Harinaam. Bahrain witnessed its first Harinaam sankirtan on the day of 50th anniversary of ISKCON and World Holy Name Week in 2016. Fifty thousand Bahrain people turned up for the sankirtan event and people took over the stage, indulging in sankirtan of the holy name of Krishna - thereby fulfilling Mahaprabhu's prophecy of spreading Sri Hari's holy name across the world - reaching every living being on this planet. Among the other groups, the first group that took the stage consisted of the children with special needs in their wheelchairs along with their teachers and parents - performing with Beatles' song named *A Little Help from My Friends*- reflective of the fact that the band played a pivotal role in expanding Krishna Consciousness in the Western states (Dandavats, 2016).

WAY FORWARD

ISKCON has been emitting an unwavering ray of expansion with its establishment of innumerable centers, temples, farm community, schools and restaurants across the world. It beautifully blends spiritual wisdom with practical solutions to contemporary problems using the knowledge exhibited by Krishna to Arjuna in Bhagavad Gita. ISKCON has been arranging programmes of Bhagavat katha speakers for audiences to indulge in inculcating knowledge of Gita and Bhagvatam - providing spiritual knowledge to real life issues of the seekers who find solace in the meanings of their teachings. Another feature that ISKCON has adorned itself with is the aspect of adaptation after the demise of Prabhupada. It has been successfully navigating through the varied complexities of contemporary problems of the world while upholding its primary values, reforming and adjusting with the modern transformations of the world. It is understandable that ISKCON has been upholding the vision of a global community of devotees and followers across the world, transcending geographical boundaries; has been preserving the cultural ties of the foreign Hindus especially in the USA and also providing training to local leaders. The organization also addresses the critics through open dialogue and accepts reformations. Through its HKM, ISKCON has been serving as a beacon for spiritual realizations and upliftment, having a firm ground in the core values of Bhakti Yoga, while imbibing modern aspects to it, thereby inspiring and guiding severals in their spiritual journeys worldwide. This indicates its continued significance and growth in the years to come as well.

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Synergy of Indian Values and Knowledge: A Pathway to Holistic Education and Practice

3



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Abstract

India possesses a unique combination and blends up of values and knowledge system which has evolved over the years given its rich context of history and cultural landscape. This article attempts to explore the diverseness and intricateness prevalent in the interconnection of Indian Value System and Indian Knowledge System (IKS). It goes on to examine how the core values of dharma, karma, satya, and ahimsa have nurtured and shaped the foundation of knowledge and its system across varied domains ranging across disciplines and approach towards education and practice. It highlights extensively the interplay between the Indian Values and IKS, how this indigenous understanding has provided holistic outlook to knowledge that integrates spiritual, ethical, and practical life dimensions.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, Indian Value System, Core Values, Education, Disciplines

INTRODUCTION

India holds a strong narrative profound by its civilizational approach characterised by the continuous flow and evolving system of knowledge and wisdom, which allows it the stance to be regarded as a collective tool open for active engagement with the world. From philosophy, literature and arts to astronomy, mathematics and medicine, IKS is considered to be the oldest round the globe. This rich uphold of India in its knowledge system is the resultant of the contributions largely received and visibly rooted in its unique and stringent value system, which are significantly influenced by its ancient religious and philosophical texts – Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and many other intellectual and saintly writings. The Indian Value System is a diverse and complex structure built up by India's philosophical and spiritual traditions. It is the foundation which provides the ethical and moral framework within which knowledge is first created, then disseminated, and finally applied. This symbiotic relationship between Indian Value System and IKS has thus transparently and more effectively resulted in diverse and an array of discipline which are both broad and deep in context and perspective. This research as attempt to explore vividly the core value elements of Indian Value System and their strengthening influence on the evolution and development of IKS. The core value driven by dharma (righteous duty), karma (cause and effect), satya (truthfulness), and ahimsa (non-violence), have vastly guided the pursuit of knowledge in India and even ensured the alignment of the same for society at large. Understanding the connection between knowledge and values is key to understanding the uniqueness of Indian knowledge system, which has been regarded to be extensively linked with the moral and ethical principles of human life. Thus, a holistic understanding of knowledge which stands on considering the social, mental, spiritual and physical life aspects is the only way to uphold its beauty, admire its profoundness, and find success through its practice.

INDIAN VALUE SYSTEM

The Indian value system has four major components namely dharma, karma, ahimsa and satya. **Dharma** is considered to be of utmost importance and is equally complex in comprehension. It is based on the understanding that one is to live in sync with the universe, is to follow the moral code, the obligation, and the righteousness it represents. Dharma is contextual in nature and is highly influenced by a person's role in society, their situation and their stage of life. **Karma** is the idea of deeds and consequences that follow. Based on the knowledge ground that all actions whether verbal, physical or mental, produce energy which eventually comes back to the person. It is driven by the principle of moral causation or the law of cause and effect. In simple understanding, it is views that bad actions have bad effects and good actions have good effects. Through the process of reincarnation this cycle of action and reaction can affect future lives and shape a person's destiny. **Ahimsa** or non-violence highlights the essence of living harmlessly towards other beings in thoughts, words, and actions. It relates to peaceful coexistence. The idea that all life is precious and

interconnected. It promotes love, compassion and reverence for all living beings. **Satya** or truth is truthfulness in thought, words, and actions. Living in sync with the ultimate reality or truth is another aspect of this component. Authenticity, honesty, and integrity are all part of satya when it comes to making moral decisions.

INFLUENCE OF INDIAN VALUE SYSTEM ON INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

Holistic Approach to Knowledge: The IKS is significantly influenced by the holistic and comprehensive outlook of the Indian Value System, which builds its foundation of the approach which combines and integrates varied disciplines and domains into one whole. The practice of Indian Value System to emphasise on the interconnectedness and interrelationship between and among contexts has given a holistic perspective to IKS which enables it to hold the tag of being multidimensional in nature and thus nurturing varied disciplines under the same framework. In India knowledge is seen as a means to achieve moral and spiritual goals not just the result of intellectual work. **Philosophy and Spirituality** counts to be the strongest pillar. Indian philosophy especially Vedanta says Jnana or ultimate knowledge is both spiritual and intellectual. It is believed that gaining knowledge can take us out of this world and into moksha or liberation. True knowledge as per Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads is when we recognise the unity of self (Atman) with the ultimate reality (Brahman). This can only be achieved by a combination of moral behaviour, meditation and divine insight not just intellectual reasoning. **Interconnectedness of Disciplines**, on an additional front highlight that the IKS promotes inter dependence of many fields. For example, studying Ayurveda or traditional Indian medicine takes into account spiritual, psychological and environmental factors along with the physical body. Though based on practical observation astronomy and mathematics also have philosophical undertones in Indian philosophy.

Ethical Dimensions of Knowledge: In the Indian value system, ethics is most important in learning and using knowledge. The concept of dharma ensures that knowledge is used for the benefit of society and humanity as a whole and not just for individual benefit. This moral approach to knowledge can take many forms. The emphasis of dharma and karma has uplifted the insights of knowledge framework where knowledge is created and used in a responsible and ethical manner. This results in knowledge being considered a tool for societal welfare. **Scientific Practices** highlight that from ancient times, Indian scientific pursuits have placed a lot of emphasis on ethics in application of knowledge. Ancient intellectuals like Aryabhata, Brahmagupta and Charaka wrote philosophical as well as scientific works to advance human kind without harming it. Innovations were guided by principles of social responsibility and non-violence (ahimsa) so that moral and social values were not sacrificed in the name of technological advancement. **Sustainable Knowledge** driven by environmental consciousness has been a part of Indian knowledge systems which reflects the idea that nature and humans are connected. For example, traditional farming methods would stress on ethical and sustainable relationships with the land so that knowledge was used to conserve resources for future generations.

Inclusive and Integrative Education: In ancient India, the practice of education was to cultivate both spiritual and practical knowledge. Gurukuls or traditional educational institutions emphasized on all round education that included philosophy, ethics and practical skills. Along with academic courses students were taught virtues of integrity, humility and compassion. This practice and system of personal transmission of knowledge and understanding from a qualified teacher to a dedicated student, ensured the preservation and continuity of quality knowledge across generations. *The Role of Gurus* is of immense importance in the IKS. Indian education system was greatly influenced by the guru-shishya tradition. The guru was not considered a mere teacher but a mentor who morally exemplified compassion, truth and dharma. This personalized approach to teaching ensured that the information was not just transactional but also moral and transformative. *Liberal Arts and Sciences* inclusive of Literature, philosophy, mathematics and medicine are just a few of the subjects that have been part of the IKS. This inter-disciplinary foundational approach was the idea that knowledge is interconnected and studying one area of knowledge should illuminate and enrich the study of another.

Practical Application of Knowledge: The Indian value system has influenced the knowledge system in the emphasis on practical application of knowledge. It emphasises on the importance of direct experience and self-realisation through acquisition and application of knowledge driven by Indian values. IKS stress on practical application over theory. Applying knowledge in daily life – from healthcare to agriculture is considered a way to fulfil one's dharma. *Ayurveda and Traditional Medicine* in the ancient Indian medical system is an example of how philosophical and ethical ideas are incorporated into practical expertise. It advocates health with moral behaviour, healthy food and spiritual practices along with treating illness. This holistic approach to healing also includes yoga and meditation which are deeply connected to Indian intellectual ideas. *Architecture and Urban Planning* in IKS diversifies towards understanding the relationship between space, nature and human well-being is also reflected in Indian architectural expertise which is seen in the construction of cities, palaces and temples. The Indian value system is closely tied to the ideas of Vastu shastra, the traditional science of architecture which emphasizes harmony with nature.

CONCLUSION

The IKS has been shaped by the Indian value system and hence has a unique and holistic way of looking at the world. Besides shaping the intellectual frameworks of knowledge, values like dharma, ahimsa, karma and satya have ensured that knowledge benefits the society as a whole and not individual interests and gives it a moral and ethical base. Indian knowledge's ethical and holistic nature is still relevant today and provides valuable insights into creating inclusive, compassionate and sustainable knowledge systems. IKS integrates multiple disciplines in its holistic approach to knowledge, emphasis is on practical application and ethical responsibility. From ancient education to scientific discoveries Indian principles have shaped the knowledge production and dissemination throughout history. Modern knowledge systems along with

India's ethical and philosophical legacy gives us important clues to build a more connected, accountable and sustainable society as we interface with the outside world.

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Reclaiming Epistemic Sovereignty: A Theoretical Review Into Decolonizing Indian Knowledge Systems

4



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Abstract

The movement to decolonize knowledge has gained traction in both the academic and policy spheres in recent years. This movement has sparked a resurgence of interest in Indigenous Knowledge Systems in India as a way to recover intellectual and cultural independence. This chapter offers a theoretical exploration into the concept of epistemic sovereignty—the right of communities to define, validate, and transmit their own ways of knowing. The chapter explores how colonial legacies continue to influence prevailing narratives in education, science, and policy by drawing on critical theory, postcolonial philosophy, and classical Indian philosophies. It makes the case that IKS's marginalization is a systemic problem with roots in millennia of epistemic repression rather than just an academic error.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 presents both possibilities and problems for incorporating IKS into official curriculum, which the chapter goes on to examine. Using this perspective, the study emphasizes how crucial theory is to understanding the more profound ontological and epistemic ramifications of decolonization.

In order to bring India's knowledge ecosystem back into balance, the chapter concludes by advocating for a pluralistic and dialogic approach that critically synthesizes Western paradigms rather than merely replacing them. The goal is transformation, not nostalgia: to acknowledge IKS as dynamic, changing systems that may make a significant contribution to today's pressing global issues rather than as artifacts of the past.

Keywords: Epistemic Sovereignty, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Indian Philosophies, Knowledge Ecosystem, National Education Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The renewed interest in Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the context of the changing global knowledge production environment is a significant academic movement as well as a cultural renaissance. The fact that colonial legacies have disproportionately favoured Eurocentric epistemologies, frequently at the expense of marginalizing various knowledge traditions, especially those with roots in the Global South, is being more acknowledged across disciplines (Bhushan, 2021; Hoppers, 2020). Both past injustices and current goals—an effort to regain what academics refer to as epistemic sovereignty, or the freedom to establish one's own knowledge frameworks—have influenced the urgency of re-engaging with IKS in India (Rakodi, 2024).

It is not accidental nor neutral for IKS to be marginalized. Indigenous knowledge was routinely eliminated or undervalued by colonial education systems in favor of Western scientific paradigms (Mukherjee, 2023). In many institutional settings, the long-standing belief that Indian knowledge is mystical, unscientific, or archaic still endures. These accounts, however, ignore the intricate systems of astronomy, languages, logic, mathematics, environmental science, and medicine that flourished in India for millennia (Raina, 2024). Indeed, early foundations for logic and epistemology that are still applicable today were established by traditional Indian philosophies like Nyaya and Mimamsa (Deshpande, 2020).

The 2020 National Education Policy (NEP) presents a significant chance to include IKS into regular classroom instruction. The NEP indicates a move toward knowledge pluralism by promoting a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary learning approach (Ministry of Education, 2020). However, there are still many obstacles in the way of putting this vision into practice, such as curriculum revision, teacher capacity building, and epistemic opposition in educational institutions (Vittal & Sahay, 2025). Scholars have cautioned that tokenism—the reference to IKS without any real engagement or theorization—is dangerous (Debnath, 2023).

In light of Indian knowledge traditions, this chapter aims to explore the theoretical foundations of decolonization. Although the phrase “decolonization” is frequently employed rhetorically, it necessitates a more thorough examination of the hierarchies of power that determine what constitutes legitimate knowledge (Sharma, Awasthi & Soni, 2020). Simply reversing dominance is insufficient;

what is required is a critical framework that permits dialogical interactions between knowledge systems. Reclaiming old writings or practices is not enough. Importantly, the discussion of epistemic sovereignty needs to be situated in a larger global framework. The UN has acknowledged the importance of Indigenous knowledge in accomplishing sustainable development objectives, especially in fields like biodiversity preservation and climate resilience (UNESCO, 2022). If given the chance to rise above the shadows of colonial erasure, Indian knowledge systems, with their profound ecological senses and integrative methods, have a lot to offer these discussions. In this chapter, we seek to critically conceptualize the process of epistemic reclamation while also recognizing the conflicts and intricacies involved. The objective is to envision a more inclusive and dialogic future for knowledge generation and distribution, not to romanticize the past.

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1 Epistemic Injustice and the Colonial Knowledge Order

Fricker (2007) first proposed the idea of epistemic injustice, which has since been expanded to examine the systematic invalidation of indigenous worldviews by colonial frameworks (Rakodi, 2024). English-medium education that prioritized Western knowledge took the place of indigenous learning institutions like Gurukulas and Madrasas in India as a result of colonial education reforms like Macaulay's Minute (1835) (Mukherjee, 2023). It is currently being posited that this resulted in the loss of epistemic sovereignty, a structural rupture in India's epistemic autonomy, according to scholars (Bhushan, 2021). Reclaiming indigenous voices is a crucial step in addressing these historical injustices, according to decolonial theorists (Raina, 2024).

2.2 The Revival of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Growing awareness of IKS's latent intellectual treasure is reflected in its revival in academic and policy discourse. In addition to historical perspectives, Indian epistemological traditions such as Nyaya, Vedanta, Ayurveda, and Arthashastra provide different frameworks for reasoning, governance, ecology, and well-being (Deshpande, 2020). The Ministry of Education (2020) has praised the NEP 2020 as a groundbreaking policy that recognizes the importance of IKS in modern education. Critics, however, stress the necessity of critical and context-specific integration and warn against superficial inclusion (Vittal & Sahay, 2025).

2.3 Challenges in Integrating IKS into Modern Academia

There are several obstacles to incorporating IKS into contemporary academia, even with legislative backing. There is a lack of qualified teachers who can connect modern teaching methods with ancient literature (Sharma, Awasthi & Soni, 2020). Furthermore, the interdisciplinary character of IKS is frequently resisted by universities deeply ingrained academic boundaries (Debnath, 2023). Recent research also emphasizes the danger of "museumizing" Indian knowledge, which treats it as a static legacy rather as a dynamic way of thinking (Hoppers, 2020).

2.4 Global Resonance and Sustainable Futures

The importance of indigenous knowledge in accomplishing sustainability objectives is becoming more widely acknowledged on a global scale, especially in light of climate change and biodiversity (UNESCO, 2022). This worldview is intimately aligned with Indian traditions, which place a significant focus on harmony between humans and nature. According to Bajpai (2024), recovering IKS is an important contribution to global epistemic diversity as well as a nationalistic endeavour.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this research work is to censoriously study the concept of epistemic sovereignty within the framework of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and to theorize the progressions required for their expressive decolonization and reintegration into modern-day academic and policy frameworks. It seeks to explore how IKS can be relocated not as motionless heritage, but as dynamic and growing systems of thought accomplished of contributively to pluralistic knowledge production in a postcolonial ecosphere.

4. THEORETICAL FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 IKS as Epistemically Sovereign Frameworks

One of the dominant findings developing from the theoretical review is that Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) possess their own well-structured epistemological foundations, often unnoticed by overriding Western paradigms. Centuries before comparable frameworks appeared in the West, philosophical traditions such as Nyaya and Mimamsa established norms for reasoning, inference, and validation (Deshpande, 2020). Studies show that Indian traditions functioned with a strong grasp of observation, categorization, and causality, defying the notion that IKS is essentially spiritual or non-empirical (Bhushan, 2021). This bolsters the argument that IKS may regain its epistemic sovereignty through theoretically sound frameworks and is not a peripheral body of knowledge.

4.2 Colonial Disruption and the Legacies of Knowledge Hierarchy

The theoretical investigation also reveals how colonial power delegitimized Indian epistemes and destroyed indigenous learning systems through institutional transformation (Mukherjee, 2023). This established a long-standing hierarchy whereby Indian knowledge was confined to the “local” or “mythical,” while Western knowledge was positioned as “universal” (Raina, 2024). Knowledge practitioners and educators in postcolonial India have long suffered from internalized inferiority (Rakodi, 2024). This realization emphasizes the necessity of epistemic rehabilitation as opposed to merely maintaining cultural traditions.

4.3 Symbolic Inclusion vs. Transformative Integration

Although the official acknowledgment of IKS by policy frameworks such as the NEP 2020 represents a significant milestone (Ministry of Education, 2020), research indicates a gap between recognition and implementation. Researchers contend that such initiatives run the danger of turning into symbolic gestures in

the absence of a solid theoretical foundation (Vittal & Sahay, 2025). Moving from a one-way flow of information to a dialogic arena where several epistemologies coexist and complement one another is necessary for the transformational integration of IKS. This involves changing the ontological foundations of education itself (Debnath, 2023).

4.4 The Need for Inter-epistemic Dialogue

The significance of inter-epistemic dialogue—a process by which many knowledge systems interact with one another without dominance or erasure—is another theoretical realization (Sharma, Awasthi & Soni, 2020). This relates to the building of knowledge democracy and extends beyond multicultural inclusion. For instance, Ayurveda may contribute to contemporary healthcare through a co-created medical pluralism environment where Western biomedicine and indigenous diagnostics can work together in a positive way, rather than as an adjunct practice (Chakraborty, 2024).

4.5 Global Implications of Local Epistemic Sovereignty

Ultimately, the conversation shows that regaining Indian epistemic sovereignty is important on a global scale. IKS provides frameworks that are intrinsically eco-centric and morally based in response to growing interest in sustainability, biodiversity, and holistic well-being (UNESCO, 2022). According to theoretical results, the decolonization of IKS is about producing locally rooted, globally relevant knowledge that refutes assertions of absolute truth and enhances social understanding rather than about isolating IKS (Hoppers, 2020).

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: DECOLONIZING INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS THROUGH EPISTEMIC SOVEREIGNTY

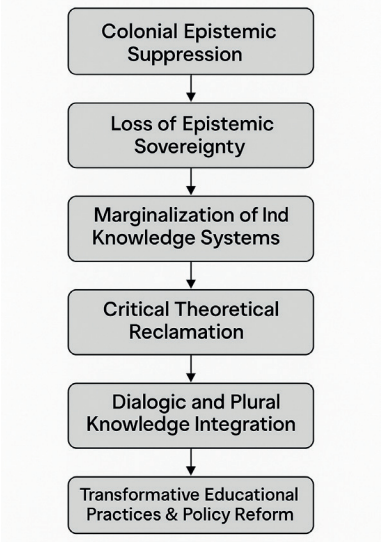


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework

Source: Author’s own compilation

Colonial Epistemic Clampdown: Denotes to the historical dislodgment of IKS through colonial education and Eurocentric chain of command (Mukherjee, 2023).

Forfeiture of Epistemic Sovereignty: A direct result of clampdown, where Indian scholars and institutions became epistemically reliant on Western endorsement (Rakodi, 2024).

Relegation of IKS: Established in academia, policy, and curricula, where IKS is understood as old-fashioned or non-scientific (Raina, 2024).

Critical Theoretical Renovation: Contains philosophical re-engagement with IKS, not as folklore, but as organized and effective knowledge systems (Bhushan, 2021).

Dialogic and Plural Knowledge Integration: Advocates for inter-epistemic dialogue—equal engagement between IKS and modern scientific frameworks (Sharma, Awasthi & Soni, 2020).

Transformative Educational Applications & Policy Restructuring: The goal line is to project inclusive programs and research methodologies that democratize knowledge construction in the society (Ministry of Education, 2020; Vittal & Sahay, 2025).

6. CONCLUSION

Recovering Indian Knowledge Systems is about reestablishing our connection to our true selves, not merely about going back in time. Our methods of thinking, healing, learning, and living were dismissed for far too long because they were considered antiquated or non-scientific. However, there is a silent power in those traditions—centuries of knowledge folded by our people’s culture, language, and way of life. This chapter demonstrates that achieving balance—reviving the voices we were taught to ignore—is more important to decolonizing knowledge than rejecting the West. It’s time for our own expertise to take center stage in schools, policy, and daily life as India strives for a more promising and inclusive future. Because when India contemplates in its individual rhythm, reasons in its own voice, and resolves from its own personality, we don’t just raise—we truly upsurge.

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Intersection of Indian Knowledge and Modern Entrepreneurship

5



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Abstract

The combination of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and contemporary entrepreneurship has become a powerful force influencing the direction of business in a world that is becoming more globally interconnected while maintaining a strong sense of local roots. This study examines how ancient Indian wisdom, which places a strong emphasis on sustainability, moral leadership, and social responsibility, is not just a cultural relic but also a powerful source of inspiration for contemporary enterprise. The study explores how modern entrepreneurs are using IKS to develop creative business models that prioritize ethical decision-making, environmental stewardship, and community well-being. The study also looks at the difficulties South Indian traditional enterprises confront, including declining skill transmission between generations, financial restrictions, and competition from mass-produced alternatives. Significant opportunities are also noted, though, such as the rising demand for sustainable and genuine goods, digital change, and government assistance programs. This study comes to the conclusion that there is a special way to achieve durable, significant, and culturally based entrepreneurial solutions at the nexus of contemporary entrepreneurship and Indian traditional knowledge.

Keywords: *Traditional Business, Entrepreneurship, Indian Knowledge Systems*

INTRODUCTION

Modern entrepreneurship is emerging as a potent new ally for the timeless knowledge of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in a world that is becoming more globalized while also becoming more localized. This convergence is a dynamic force propelling innovation rather than just a sentimental comeback. sustainability and distinctive value offerings in a range of industries. Understanding how India's ancient legacy may support modern commercial endeavors is crucial as the country moves closer to being a worldwide economic powerhouse. The principles of Ayurveda, Yoga, Vastu Shastra, traditional arts and crafts, sustainable agricultural methods, ethical philosophies such as those found in the Arthashastra, and advanced ancient sciences are all part of the extensive repository of insights that make up Indian Knowledge Systems, which span millennia. These systems provide holistic viewpoints on communal welfare, ecological balance, well-being, and the ultimate goal of human endeavor, frequently in opposition to the occasionally solely profit-driven goals.

REVIEWS OF LITERATURE

"Revisiting Indian Wisdom for Entrepreneurship Development: A Contemporary Perspective" by **Sood, A., and Pundir, A. (2020)**. The project is to investigate how contemporary entrepreneurial practices and mindsets might be influenced and shaped by ancient Indian wisdom, especially by ideas like yoga and Vedanta. According to the report, Indian philosophies should concentrate on community-focused entrepreneurship, ethical behaviour, and holistic growth, all of which have a big influence on sustainable company operations. Modern businesspeople may develop resilience, mindfulness, and moral leadership in the corporate environment by incorporating lessons from Indian literature like the Bhagavad Gita.

Singh, R. (2018) *"Indian Entrepreneurial Spirit: The Role of Traditional Knowledge in Modern Business"* To investigate how Indian traditional knowledge—including Ayurveda, Sanskrit texts, and local customs—influences business endeavours and leadership in the modern corporate environment. Singh contends that entrepreneurs may draw from a rich reservoir of inventiveness found in ancient knowledge systems. The study highlights how Indian traditions' emphasis on sustainability, environmental stewardship, and community involvement aids contemporary companies in developing moral leadership and social responsibility.

Mishra, P., & Sharma, S. (2017) *"Integrating Indian Philosophical Values in Entrepreneurship Development: A Case Study Approach"* The study comes to the conclusion that entrepreneurs are more likely to make moral decisions and succeed in the long run if they embrace Indian philosophical principles like self-control, honesty, and mindfulness. The paper's case studies show that companies rooted in Indian values typically see high levels of staff satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Gupta, M. K., & Desai, S. (2021) *"Entrepreneurial Leadership: An Indian Perspective"* The study emphasizes how ethical frameworks based on selfless service and

spirituality are frequently used to describe Indian business leadership. By balancing profit with purpose, entrepreneurs that live up to these ideals typically concentrate on building companies that benefit society as a whole as well as individuals.

Patel, K., & Bansal, P. (2019)“*Social Entrepreneurship in India: Leveraging Traditional Knowledge for Sustainable Growth*” According to the results, social entrepreneurs in India are increasingly addressing social concerns including poverty, health, and environmental sustainability through their enterprises by utilizing traditional expertise, such as organic agricultural methods and herbal remedies. These companies, which combine traditional methods with contemporary commercial techniques, are especially concentrated in rural regions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understanding the modern entrepreneurship and its fundamental characteristics.
- To explore the concepts of modern entrepreneurship system with IKS.
- **To discuss the Difficultiesof traditional business in IKS and Traditional Wisdom Used in Modern Entrepreneurship from IKS.**

THE INTERSECTION OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE AND MODERN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In contrast, the traits of modern entrepreneurship include technology integration, market responsiveness, scalability, creativity, and a proactive attitude to problem-solving. It thrives on finding unmet needs, coming up with innovative solutions, and negotiating market conditions. When these two apparently different worlds come together, there is a fascinating junction. More and more entrepreneurs are turning to IKS as a source of products as well as a guiding concept for ethical leadership, sustainable business methods, and distinctive brand identities.

Traditional to Modern Entrepreneurship:

Aspect	Traditional Entrepreneurship	Modern Entrepreneurship
Focus	Local/regional markets, established industries	Global markets, emerging industries, problem-solving
Business Model	Conventional, brick-and-mortar	Innovative, agile, lean startup, digital-first
Funding	Personal savings, family, traditional loans	Crowdfunding, venture capital, angel investors, online lending
Technology Use	Limited, often seen as a tool	Integrated, central to operations, disrupter, enabler
Scalability	Limited, often linear growth	High potential for rapid, exponential growth
Innovation	Incremental improvements, process efficiency	Disruptive, groundbreaking, new markets, new solutions

Market Approach	Personal connections, local advertising	Digital marketing, social media, data-driven insights
Risk Tolerance	Generally conservative, risk-averse	Willing to take calculated risks, embracing change
Organizational Structure	Hierarchical, rigid	Flat, flexible, remote teams, collaborative
Social Impact	Often secondary	Increasingly integrated, conscious capitalism

A core set of traits characterizes modern entrepreneurs and allows them to prosper in the fast-paced commercial world of today. They have an innate desire to be creative and innovative, and they are always looking for new ways to be efficient and effective. Together with this, they have a strong problem-solving mindset that enables them to recognize real-world problems and create solutions that add value. Most importantly, they are incredibly flexible and agile, quickly changing course when the market changes and adopting lean startup techniques. Their ability to use cutting-edge technologies for operations, reach, and innovation is closely linked to their success. With a global perspective and reach, they frequently start by focusing on foreign markets in order to take advantage of the borderless digital world.

IKS RELATE TO MODERN ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

Holistic and Socially Embedded Practice: IKS sees entrepreneurship as an activity that is linked to both societal well-being and harmony with the environment, rather than just as a way to make money. This is in line with contemporary ideas of stakeholder involvement, conscious capitalism, and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship: Ancient Indian methods of resource management, architecture (Vastu Shastra), and agriculture (such as organic farming, permaculture, and Vrikshayurveda) placed a strong emphasis on coexisting peacefully with the environment. These ideas are being embraced by contemporary businesspeople to develop green enterprises, sustainable supply chains, and environmentally friendly goods.

Ethical Decision-Making and Governance: Foundational ethical frameworks for leadership, government, and economic activity are contained in texts like as the Arthashastra and the Bhagavad Gita. This is translated into contemporary entrepreneurship by placing a strong focus on accountability to all stakeholders, long-term value generation, fair processes, and openness.

Innovation Rooted in Tradition: IKS encourages a distinct kind of innovation that blends contemporary technology with age-old knowledge. In industries like wellness (Ayurveda, Yoga), organic food, historic textiles, eco-architecture, and value-based education, this may result in the creation of new goods and services.

Community Development and Self-Reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat): The use of local resources and the welfare of the community were given top priority in traditional Indian economic systems like village industries and guilds (Shrenis). This is in line with current trends toward self-sufficiency, local economies, and empowering micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs).

TRADITIONAL WISDOM USED IN MODERN ENTREPRENEURSHIP FROM IKS:

- **Dharma (Righteousness/Duty):** This core idea from several Indian texts (such as the Bhagavad Gita and Arthashastra) stresses moral responsibility, ethical behavior, and behaving in accordance with cosmic order. It directs moral decision-making, just business operations, and a dedication to the well-being of society above and beyond financial gain in entrepreneurship.
- **Artha (Prosperity/Wealth Creation):** In IKS, Artha—which is sometimes interpreted as wealth—is pursued in tandem with Dharma rather than separately. It promotes the development of long-term prosperity by just methods that are advantageous to all. This promotes fair gain sharing and prudent resource management.
- **Nyaya (Justice):** Within the business ecosystem, fair deals, equitable distribution, and dispute resolution are guided by the idea of justice, which can be found in writings such as Arthashastra. It influences policies like equitable pay, reasonable prices, and open government.
- **Yoga:** Yoga represents the fusion of body, mind, and soul and goes beyond simple physical poses. It may be seen in the context of entrepreneurship as gaining self-control, mental clarity, and focus, which improves decision-making and stress management for both executives and staff.
- **Ayurveda:** Natural treatments, preventative health, and overall well-being are the main focuses of this ancient medical approach. Ayurvedic concepts are being employed by entrepreneurs in wellness tourism, health-focused services, and product creation (such as organic cosmetics and herbal supplements).
- **Vastu Shastra:** Vastu Shastra is an age-old architectural and design discipline that emphasizes balancing natural energies to create aesthetically pleasing living and working environments. For increased productivity and well-being, contemporary companies are applying Vastu concepts to real estate construction and workplace architecture.

DIFFICULTIES OF TRADITIONAL BUSINESS IN IKS

As Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) provide a wealth of opportunities for contemporary entrepreneurship, conventional companies that are only based on IKS frequently encounter a distinct set of difficulties in the current environment. The nature of traditional knowledge itself, market dynamics, and the larger socioeconomic context are some of the causes of these problems.

1. Declining Skill Transmission Between Generations

- **Specificity of South Indian Crafts:** Consider the delicate Udupi Mattu Gulla brinjal farming techniques from Karnataka, the elaborate Kanjivaram silk weaving from Tamil Nadu, the exact Kathakali costume production in Kerala, or the distinctive Bidriware metal workmanship from Karnataka/Telangana. These represent generations of collected knowledge, particular practices, and creative sensibilities; they are more than just talents.
- **Impact of Modern Education & Aspirations:** Children are encouraged to seek careers like engineering, medicine, or information technology (IT) even in families that have historically been linked with a craft because of the focus on formal education and white-collar occupations. As a result, the conventional apprenticeship network is broken. For instance, a young craftsman who struggles to make ends meet while making beautiful Kanjivaram sarees could decide to give up weaving after witnessing their cousin's much higher and more steady salary at a software company in Bengaluru or Chennai.
- **Demanding Nature of Work:** Various traditional crafts are physically taxing, require long hours, and may have negative health effects (e.g., lung problems for potters, eye strain for weavers). Young people are further discouraged by the ease and comfort of contemporary work.
- **Lack of Government or Institutionalized Support for Apprenticeship:** Although there are some programs in place, it is challenging for masters to locate committed apprentices since there isn't a broad, reliable structure to organize and incentivise the transmission of these talents.

2. Financial Restrictions:

- **Micro-Enterprise Nature:** The majority of them are tiny, frequently family- or individual-based microbusinesses. Due to their extremely narrow profit margins, they are extremely vulnerable to changes in the market, increases in the cost of raw materials, or abrupt declines in demand (for example, during holidays or tourist seasons).
- **Raw Material Volatility:** Silk weavers, for instance, are heavily reliant on the price of raw silk yarn, which is subject to extreme fluctuations. In a similar vein, the price of copper, brass, or silver is rising for metalworkers. Compared to larger producers, small artists are less able to withstand these shocks.
- **Lack of Marketing Budget:** Traditional craftspeople rarely have the funds for social media campaigns, e-commerce platform fees, or professional photography to reach a larger audience, in contrast to big corporations that make significant advertising investments. Their market is still regional or reliant on intermediaries.

3. Competition from Mass-Produced Alternatives:

- **“Fast Fashion” and “Use & Throw” Culture:** Trendy, inexpensive, and throwaway products are attracting more and more customers, particularly in cities. Even if a handcrafted Channapatna toy from Karnataka is exquisitely constructed and long-lasting, a youngster can choose a more affordable plastic toy that is more accessible and has more functions.
- **Imitation and Lack of Authenticity Labeling:** Large manufacturers or even smaller businesses creating machine-made replicas of classic designs pose a serious danger. These knockoffs (such as mass-produced “Thanjavur paintings” and printed “Kanjivaram-style” sarees) are offered for a fraction of the price, which frequently confuses customers and devalues the genuine handcrafted item. Authentic artisan items are frequently not easily distinguished from their mass-produced counterparts by labeling.
- **Marketing Disadvantage:** Mass manufacturers advertise their products widely, flooding the market. Traditional craftspeople sometimes lack the tools or expertise necessary to emphasize the special history, legacy, and love-filled work that go into their creations. They find it difficult to convey the inherent worth that supports a higher price point, such as the years of skill development, the environmentally friendly procedures, and the cultural relevance..
- **Distribution Network Disparity:** A traditional artisan may be restricted to a few local stores, weekly markets, or tourism expos, but a global brand may sell its goods in hundreds of retail locations and online retailers around the globe. Their commercial reach is severely limited as a result.

CONCLUSION

A significant area for innovation is the nexus between contemporary entrepreneurship and Indian knowledge systems. In addition to economic development, it offers a more ethical, culturally relevant, and sustainable method of conducting business, which will benefit not just the entrepreneur but also society and the world as a whole. India is positioned to provide the world with really innovative and significant entrepreneurial solutions by skilfully fusing traditional knowledge with modern commercial tactics.

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Revisiting Workplace Spirituality Construct from the Lens of Yoga: A Study in the Indian Higher Education Context

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Abstract

The connection between workplace spirituality (WS) and professional well-being persists in the indefinite realm of research. Extant research has delved into the constructive effects of spirituality on corporate employees' thriving at workplace, but there perseveres a lacuna in the means of implementing spirituality in academic work settings. The current study aimed to complement the construct of WS from yogic perspective and then develop a conceptual framework for investigating the effect of various attributes of workplace spirituality (i.e., 'spiritual orientation', 'meaningful work', 'compassion', and 'alignment of values') on teachers' professional well-being (TPW) (i.e., 'joy of teaching', 'connectedness' and 'teaching efficacy') in the Indian higher education context. The study encompassed 345 educators working in higher educational institutions (HEI) in the Indian cultural context. The research findings reported the positive influence of WS on TPW. Regression analysis revealed that 'meaningful work' (i.e. 'Karma yoga') influences 'joy of teaching' while 'connectedness' positively influences 'alignment of values' (i.e. 'Ashtanga yoga'). Thus, spiritually oriented teaching professionals feel fervent while teaching, thereby cultivating high teaching efficacy and nurturing cordial relationships in a holistic academic work environment.

Keywords: Workplace Spirituality, Teachers' Professional Well-being, Yoga, Higher Educational Institution, India.

INTRODUCTION

The academic excellence of higher educational institutions (HEI) is exclusively determined by the quality standards of their teaching professionals, who are entrusted with the primary duty of shaping the career and personality of their students. Extant literature has predicted the advantages exhibited by holistic contribution at work, such as pro-social outlook and decent organizational atmosphere (Otaye-Ebede et al., 2020), empowerment (Paul et al., 2020), work obligation (Bickerton & Miner, 2021), organizational trustworthiness. intent to leave the organization, gratification at work and efficiency (Sharma & Singh, 2020). Recent research findings confirmed the beneficial effects of spirituality on well-being, emphasizing gratitude towards organization as a noteworthy element in the relationship (Wnuk, 2024). Leading an evocative life with social support is necessary for improving psychological health. Further, in the archetype of positive psychology, psychologists have strived hard to discover the key elements underlying the means of the connection between spirituality and positive consequences by validating the functions of hope (Wnuk, 2023), gratefulness (Kane et al., 2021) and forgiveness (Wnuk, 2023; Kane et al., 2021; Sharma & Singh, 2020). Unfortunately, these thoughts are seldom conveyed to the academic arena as vital conjectural and realistic topics that require further investigation.

Despite growing interest in workplace spirituality over the last two decades, the connection between workplace spirituality and professional well-being persists

in an indefinite realm of research. It is essential to examine how various spiritual aspects influence professional well-being of faculties at higher academic workplaces. '*Professional well-being*' denotes working professionals' work approach, job interest, and fruitful relations with everyone at the workplace (Paul & Jena, 2022). Working professionals must possess dynamism, open-mindedness, emotional resilience, and agility to tackle unforeseen circumstances and concentrate upon improving their task performance and workplace wellness (Srivastava & Gupta, 2022; Jeon & Choi, 2021).

The '*teachers' professional well-being (TPW)*' construct designates the professional well-being of teaching professionals at higher academic workplaces. Educators persistently suffer from occupational stress due to escalating work overload, rising demands of pupils and their guardians, implementation of an array of educational policies and regulations, frequent quality audits by higher academic authorities, role inadequacy and equivocalness. Previously, individuals joined the teaching occupation for genuinely selfless reasons with much enthusiasm to make a vast difference in the lives of their pupils through constant motivation. However, the extra responsibilities that faculties must perform for which they are not trained, such as administrative tasks, exhibiting leadership qualities, performing various social works, serving as a liaison to guardians, and acting as a negotiator to different stakeholders, often make them feel disillusioned and distressed.

Extant research reported the perverse effect of academic workplace stress on teachers' job performance, classroom management, students' motivation level, academic grades, perceived support and mental health (Astuti et al., 2024; Tekin, 2023). Extended working hours, hapless relations with the top-level management, and improper work-life balance have immensely affected their mental health and teaching quality (Marsh et al., 2024). Higher educational organizations must integrate spiritual elements into the academic work atmosphere, as confirmed by a few recent studies that proved that various spiritual practices and interventions enhance teaching performance and employee loyalty (Astuti et al., 2024; Chirico et al., 2023; Srivastava & Gupta, 2022; Sapra et al., 2022; Soliman et al., 2021). Spirituality must be instilled to find meaningfulness at work and improve workplace well-being (Walter, 2024; Srivastava & Gupta, 2022; Saeed et al., 2022; Ghosh & Muduli, 2021; Paul et al., 2020). To thrive, educators must be professionally and mentally empowered to adapt to the hybrid academic work environment and remain mindfully engaged in their teaching job (Marsh et al., 2024; Paul et al., 2020). These changes can profoundly impact their professional well-being in the eons to come.

Contemporary learning organizations require teaching professionals to nurture personality traits like *agility* and *emotional resilience* in the post pandemic era (Tekin, 2023; Srivastava & Gupta, 2022; Saeed et al., 2022; Paul et al., 2020). Academicians face several challenges during remote working, such as accrued turnover, students' focus, digital networking issues and aesthetically designed infrastructure for conducting online classes (Saeed et al., 2022). Therefore, learning organizations are in dire need of earnest faculties who are eager to

learn new skills and advance rapidly while simultaneously maintaining an idyllic work environment. There is a paucity of research about TPW except for a few recent studies that have explored the influence of workplace spirituality on teachers' academic performance, mannerisms, and loyalty in diverse cultural contexts (Sapra et al., 2022; Soliman et al., 2021). The '*workplace spirituality*' construct has tardily garnered the scholarly inquisitiveness of researchers in the academic arena.

Yoga practices, which are profoundly rooted in spirituality, can mitigate stress and burnout, enhance concentration and intellectual wisdom, and develop a positive mindset. Yoga and spirituality are positively interrelated and lead to better emotional health outcomes (Singh & Sharma, 2024; Csala et al., 2021). A quantitative study conducted in the corporate sector recently attempted to ameliorate the WS construct from the doctrine of ancient Indian philosophy (Pande & Pande, 2021). Individuals and working professionals must regularly practice yoga to reap the spiritual benefits. The physical intentions of yoga were predominant in Western countries compared to India. However, research on the spiritual aspect of yoga is essential. According to prior research findings, positive attributes of '*yoga*' teachers and '*hatha yoga*' practices can manifest spiritual aspects applicable to novices and advanced learners (Chirico et al., 2023; Park et al., 2020). There is a paucity of research perceiving yoga as a methodological model. Workplace spirituality (WS) invigorates the feeling of compassion, egoism and meaningfulness, devotion, and integrity (Tekin, 2023; Jeon & Choi, 2021; Ciulla et al., 2018). Earlier, WS research revolved around attaining the subjective well-being of academicians at the school level in the Indian context (Sharma & Singh, 2021; Mahipalan & Sheena, 2019). There exists a gap in quantitative research establishing the linkage between '*yoga*' and '*spirituality*'. The general perception is that '*yoga*' is just physical exercise that has recently gained recognition. More exploratory research is encouraged to determine which aspect of '*workplace spirituality*' is linked to '*yoga*' and how it can contribute to the '*professional well-being*' of faculties in the higher education context.

The link between workplace spirituality and well-being remains unfamiliar and unexplored in the domain of organizational and work psychology. Prior studies have mostly explored employee samples other than teaching professionals. Therefore, the current study has focused upon teaching professionals, specifically in the Indian higher academic sector, since the authors have genuinely tried to realize which type of '*yoga*' might evoke that specific spiritual aspect of WS and improve their professional well-being. To foster this proposal, the present study aims to empirically validate the linkage between the parameters of workplace spirituality (WS) (i.e. '*spiritual orientation*', '*compassion*', '*meaningful work*' and '*alignment of values*'), formulated from the standpoint of four '*yoga*' discipline namely, '*Gyana yoga*', '*Bhakti Yoga*', '*Karma yoga*' and '*Ashtanga Yoga*' respectively, on the attributes of teachers' professional well-being (TPW) (i.e. '*joy of teaching*', '*connectedness*' and '*teaching efficacy*').

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Workplace spirituality (WS)

Daily life is an aggregation of various kinds of stress, and occupational stress has become a major hurdle at the workplace. Stress diminishes our aptitude to be productive in all aspects of our lives. Positive stress can chalk out creative and innovative ideas that are highly effective and beneficial to improve our lives. On the other hand, negative stress can enervate our daily lifestyle and immensely affect our sense of vitality. Employees need to be resilient to face the ups and downs of professional life.

Yoga substantially affects various mental and neurological disorders like declension, exhaustion, and sleeping problems. Yoga practices assist us in adopting a healthy lifestyle. The spiritual aspect of yoga points to the oneness in everything (Iyengar, 1994). A structured review has recently ingrained in the positive relationship between yoga and spirituality (Csala et al., 2021). In contemporary times, spirituality (WS) has gained recognition in the corporate workplace. Extant literature has disclosed several definitions and facets of spirituality in the workplace (Sapra et al., 2022; Garg & Gera, 2020). WS assists employees in revealing their true inner selves and inculcating spiritual consciousness. Spirituality being culture-oriented was befitting for the Indian cultural context (Saxena et al., 2020). Recently, few studies have explored the constructive effect of WS in reducing occupational stress through constructive deviance, improvement in academic performance, and retention of university teachers (Garg et al., 2022; Singh & Baral, 2022; Sapra et al., 2022).

For our present study, the construct WS has been formulated from the perspective of four different paths of '*yoga*' in the academic arena, apt for teaching professionals. High-spirited teaching professionals impart spiritual wisdom to their students through effective teaching and mentoring. Teachers must maintain academic integrity in their work. Faculties must abstain from unhealthy habits like workplace bullying, unhealthy gossiping, and making derogatory remarks against peer faculty colleagues at work. Instead, faculties must display mindful engagement inside the classroom and immerse themselves in various holistic activities to augment intellectual wisdom and spiritual well-being. Pandey and Navare (2018) elucidated how the four different paths of yoga (i.e., '*Gyana yoga*', '*Bhakti yoga*', '*Karma yoga*' and '*Ashtanga yoga*') have practical implications. Therefore, the authors have made a conscious effort to ameliorate the construct of WS from the standpoint of the four different paths of yoga relevant to teaching professionals.

Spiritual orientation from the standpoint of '*Gyana Yoga*'

The expression '*Gyana*' means 'knowledge'. Therefore, '*Gyana yoga*' is a form of yoga which facilitates an individual to acquire the proper understanding and seek the ultimate truth. It is also known as the '*Yoga of Science*'. Modern science reveals a mystical universal domain where everything is inter-correlated. It is the process of gaining spiritual enlightenment and attaining oneness with one's inner self. This form of yoga allows aspirants to seek answers to basic questions and

critically examine them to find their true calling in life. When we tardily acquire knowledge of the laws of nature, we might be trapped by arrogance that inflates our ego and engulfs our spirit. This form of '*yoga*' helps us to liberate ourselves from the claws of arrogance and seek the path of humbleness. '*Gyana yoga*' can be considered a beautiful path that reveals the light of spiritual awakening. At the organizational level, persistent enquiries about the organizations' objectives shed light upon principles of unity in a larger societal context.

The first dimension of workplace spirituality, i.e., *spiritual orientation* (SO), defines individuals seeking a definite purpose in their job through '*Gyana yoga*' (Kinjerski & Skrypnik, 2004). Spiritual practices of self-realization pave the pathway for personal identity and assist working professionals in taking logical decisions at all levels. From the WS perspective, '*Gyana Yoga*' concerns self-inquiry about the nature of work, the role of groups within organizations, and redefining the role of organizations within a community grounded on the notion of oneness. In the academic workplace, spiritually conscious professionals remain passionate and mindful while teaching and imparting the right knowledge to their students. Spiritually inclined teaching professionals cultivate a work atmosphere where they enjoy autonomy in their work, collaborate with peer faculties like a team, and also promote healthy interpersonal relationships with everyone.

Compassion from the standpoint of '*Bhakti Yoga*.'

The term "*Bhakti*" means '*to serve*' and this form of '*yoga*' i.e., '*Bhakti yoga*' is the path to serve the Almighty. This form of '*yoga*' helps us to express love in our relationships and, in the process, discover our inner selves. Love must not be confused with self-care. Instead, the '*yoga of love*' must be used to communicate the gestures of love and expression to others. The significant aspect of '*Bhakti yoga*' is flaunting an open mind, portraying a compassionate heart, and completely surrendering to the divine reality.

The second dimension of workplace spirituality, i.e. *compassion* (CM), deals with empathy for others. It is an act of displaying altruistic love and compassion within organisations. In the academic workplace, teaching professionals must be portrayed as loving and caring individuals who work selflessly for their students' well-being. Teachers can articulate empathy by providing mental support to students and colleagues, catering to their needs, and assisting them whenever required.

Meaningful work from the standpoint of '*Karma Yoga*.'

The term '*Karma*' means action, and '*Karma yoga*' is the routine activities we perform for the Almighty. Misery and happiness both equally contribute to the formation of character. The power of '*Karma yoga*' unveils them with time. The two epochal aspects of '*karma yoga*' are '*Swadharma*' and '*Lokasangraha*' (Pandey & Navarre, 2018). '*Karma yoga*' is dictated by a person's profession and state of life. When an individual performs an activity as per his own choice, it is termed "*Swadharma*"; when he serves the community, it is called "*Lokasangraha*". Recently, a "*Karma Yoga*" research instrument has been developed and validated in the Indian context (Rastogi et al., 2020)

The third dimension of workplace spirituality, i.e., *meaningful work* (MW), refers to spiritual aspect where an individual gets engrossed in personal work and experiences a divine connection with one's inner self. Meditative work is done solely to serve the community. Academicians are passionate about teaching and by assisting students to accomplish their goals, they contribute to society.

Alignment of values from the standpoint of 'Ashtanga Yoga.'

The word '*Ashtanga*' means '*eight limbs*', and '*Astanga yoga*' is that form of '*yoga*' which emphasizes on gaining physical strength and emotional flexibility. The central theme of this '*yoga*' posture is to harmonize the mind, body, and soul. *Firstly*, practising '*yoga*' harmonizes our body and mind irrespective of our beliefs and rituals. *Secondly*, it enhances body flexibility by strengthening our muscles, acting as a shield against various ailments. *Thirdly*, maintaining a healthy balanced diet equips individuals with vigour and vitality to perform daily tasks and reduce negative stress. *Finally*, '*yoga*' results in the spiritual transformation that enables our mind to face and accept challenges positively. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of '*Ashtanga yoga*' in education (Trivedi, 2022). '*Yama*' and '*niyama*' will start developing the personality of individuals. '*Asana*' and '*pranayama*' will make the body physically active to cope with stress. Meditation ('*Dhyana*') will help individuals focus on their goals and accomplish them easily without any mental distractions.

The fourth dimension of workplace spirituality, i.e., '*alignment of values* (AV),' shows how a person's vision connects with those of an organization's core ethical values (Milliman et al., 2003). In the academic workplace, faculties must be passionate about their teaching job and uphold academic integrity.

Teachers' Professional Well-being (TPW)

The hubbub of our daily life has led to rising levels of stress both in our personal and professional lives. Excessive workload, disparities with partner and children at home, indifferences with top management and peers at workplace have immensely affected our mental and physical health condition. Employees experience severe mental health problems. Therefore, it has become crucial to adopt various holistic means to improve our professional well-being. Eudaimonic well-being encompasses spiritual attributes that promotes holistic development of individuals through the creation of pathways that provide innumerable growth opportunities and cultivate positive relationships at workplace (Kinderen & Khapova, 2021). Professional well-being is determined by work attitude, meaningfulness, professional autonomy, technical competencies, and emotional support (Flynn & Messias, 2020).

In academics, *teachers' professional well-being* (TPW) focuses upon educators' physical strength and enables them to work with vigor and nurture cordial relationships with everyone. A mentor in a higher educational institution (HEI) must possess the requisite competencies to excel at teaching and research, interpersonal skills to guide and motivate students to become independent thinkers. The advent of a hybrid work environment and better accessibility of digital repositories and resources have compelled faculties to improve their

teaching performance. While fostering their students' fundamental knowledge and analytical capabilities, teachers must present their educational resources to students so that those resources are not just recognized as intellectual hoops to jump through but as hands-on opportunities to find purpose in them. Integrating contemplative practices in higher education is necessary to imbibe mindfulness among students and faculty.

Meditative practices respond powerfully to unforeseen challenges and provide a holistic work environment. When teaching professionals invigorate spiritual consciousness at the academic workplace, exhibit altruism by providing emotional support, and receive constructive criticism from students and peers, they feel more attached to their teaching job. The mounting stress of teaching professionals through constructive workplace deviance (Garg et al., 2022); enhancing employee engagement (Baskar & Indradevi, 2022) and augmenting teacher workforce agility (Saeed et al., 2022; Paul et al., 2020). Spirituality must be integrated into academic organizations as it proves to be beneficial for teaching professionals (Sapra et al., 2022; Singla et al., 2021). More empirical research in the higher education sector needs to focus on improving the professional well-being of faculties.

For our current study, we have conceptualized the TPW construct through three attributes, namely, '*joy of teaching* (JT)', '*connectedness* (CN)', and '*teaching efficacy* (TE)', as elucidated below in the subsequent segments.

Joy of Teaching

A teaching professional feels blissful when one is internally satisfied with the job. A spiritually oriented teaching professional remains proactive, keeps them engrossed in work assignments, and exhibits mindfulness inside the classroom. Very few studies have been conducted to scientifically investigate the causes for augmenting the felicity of teaching professionals (Lavy & Bocker, 2018; Benevene et al., 2018). Positive vibes assist academicians to rejuvenate their energy levels for improving teaching performance.

Connectedness

The capability of listening actively, communicating clearly and feeling connected at the workplace enables an employee to develop a sense of community. Being able to build strong trusting relationships with learners and colleagues is the key to creating a warm and supporting work culture. The deeper the connections between teaching professionals and their peers at the academic workplace, the better are the chances of remaining job-embedded (Lee et al., 2004). The challenge of effective teaching is to find connections that foster motivation, enhance knowledge, creative thinking power, integrate old and new information, and bridge the real and academic worlds of both students and teachers.

Teaching Efficacy

Teaching efficacy (TE) denotes a teacher's opinion about own capability to take logical decisions and fulfil goals. TE is mainly determined by general self-efficacy and personal self-efficacy. General self-efficacy (GSE) usually denotes

the strength of mentoring to remain accessible to arduous students. Personal self-efficacy (PSE) designates an educator's self-confidence and work attitude to handle challenges effectively. Faculties possessing higher TE are bound to be more creative and broad-minded. TE facilitates work satisfaction and teaching performance (Collie et al., 2012). Therefore, educators must be dynamic and perform unconventional duties.

Workplace Spirituality and Teachers' Professional Well-being

Spirituality initiated in the Indian philosophy and slowly proliferated to the Western traditions. *Meaningful work* denotes the level to which employees remain absorbed in their work. *Sense of community* aimed at cultivating healthier relationships at the workplace. *Inner life* is enriched by nurturing divine wisdom that helps working professionals to find a sense of meaning at work (Paul et al., 2020). Early Indian spiritual customs have enormously contributed to WS (Paul & Jena, 2022). Practicing yoga regularly fosters attentiveness, physical awareness, self-love, inner peace, and freedom (Szabolcs et al., 2021). Studies reflected those individuals who perceived yoga as a spiritual path displayed more significant levels of dedication, personal fulfillment, integrity, and self-control compared to those who considered yoga as a mere form of gymnastics (Bussing et al., 2021). In the academic domain, academicians faced problems due to heavy workloads and often quit their jobs. Gradually, scholars altered their research interests towards positive work-related outcomes, self-development, and workplace well-being (Lavy & Bocker, 2018). It is essential to incorporate spirituality into academic organizations.

In this study, the construct of WS focuses on the key attributes, derived from extant literature, namely, "*spiritual orientation (SO)*" (proclivity for achieving heavenly knowledge), "*compassion (CM)*" (assisting individuals), "*meaningful work (MW)*" (designates greater objective to duties and job) and "*alignment with organizational values (AV)*" (coalition of own principles with organization's mission) relevant for teaching professionals working in higher academic institutions. Teaching professionals should be broadminded, compassionate, and emotionally resilient in the academic workplace, depicting a spiritual bent of mind and displaying academic integrity. Teachers must be mindful inside the classroom premises and completely absorb themselves in holistic activities thereby contributing to professional well-being at the academic workplace.

Currently, the authors' responsibility is to concentrate upon "*teachers' professional well-being (TPW)*" in higher academic organizations. Teaching professionals suffer from anxiety because of their heavy teaching workload and often resign. Henceforth, top management and psychologists have shifted their focus towards evaluating task-related experiences to comprehend the significance of teacher well-being (Collie et al., 2012). A recent study was conducted among Russian school teachers for determining the positive attributes that influences TPW (Federov et al., 2020). The present study has denoted TPW construct through the attributes "*joy of teaching (JT)*," "*connectedness (CN)*" and "*teaching efficacy (TE)*" and has been executed particularly among teaching professionals in the Indian higher academic context.

WS has gained momentum in the field of positive psychology. It is essential to create a satisfying work ambience that provides scope for development of personality, expression of true potential, and happiness through work. Employee well-being, measured by employee loyalty, work-life balance and work satisfaction, is highly influenced by WS (Garg, 2017). Researchers must conduct investigations that deliberately concentrate upon the positive traits and strategies promoting the professional well-being of academicians. However, there is a dearth of empirical research to relate WS and the professional well-being of teaching professionals in the higher education sector. The overall framework is presented in *Figure 1*:

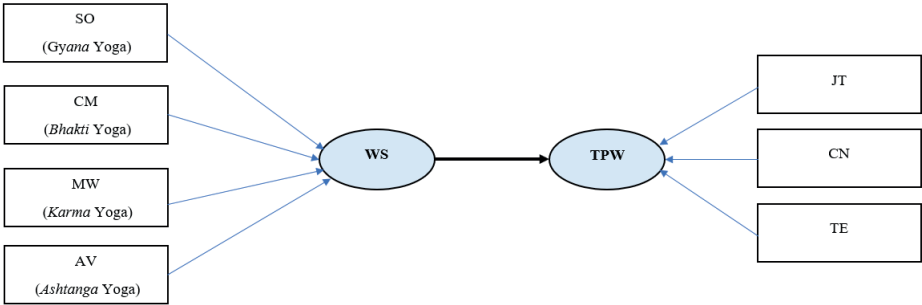


Figure 1: Proposed model for the study

Legends: **WS**-Workplace Spirituality, **TPW**- Teachers’ Professional Well-being, **SO**-Spiritual orientation, **CM**- Compassion, **MW**- Meaningful Work, **AV**-Alignment of values, **JT**-Joy of teaching, **CN**- Connectedness, **TE**- Teaching efficacy.

Source: Author’s own

METHODOLOGY

Sample size and sampling procedure

The sample respondents selected for the present study were teaching professionals employed in various universities of the Indian subcontinent. The target respondents were selected through a random sampling method. A self-reported structured survey questionnaire was designed. Field survey research was conducted. The researcher individually handed over the survey questionnaire to target respondents after obtaining the informed consent and prior approval from the Academic Deans of Indian higher educational institutions.

The respondents were assured of their responses’ confidentiality and informed that they would be exclusively used for academic research. Further, due to its expediency, the authors designed the digital questionnaire on Google Forms (Bryman, 2012). After that, the questionnaire was circulated on professional networks and social media platforms to solicit more online responses. The digital survey technique plausibly diminished bias and maintained the respondents’ discretion and obscurity (Rubin & Babbie, 2017). Finally, the study encompassed

345 responses during the entire survey and discarded the incomplete responses. The demographic characteristics of all the sample respondents of the main study are presented in *Table 1*:

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants

Sl. No.	Demographic variables		No. of respondents	Percentage (%) of the sample population	Mean
1	Age		345		39.23
2	Gender	Male	250	72.5	1.28
		Female	95	27.5	
3	Marital Status	Single	67	19.4	1.81
		Married	278	80.6	
4	Educational Qualification/ Level of Education	UG	4	1.2	2.59
		PG	142	41.2	
		Doctorate	189	54.8	
		Post-Doctorate	10	2.9	
5	Stream	Engineering	250	72.5	1.28
		Management	93	27.0	
		Art/Science/ Humanities	2	0.6	
6	Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	103	29.9	1.96
			176	51.0	
		5 years to 15 years	44	12.8	
			22	6.4	
		16 years to 25 years			
7	Present designation	More than 25 years			2.35
		Lecturer	4	1.2	
		Assistant Professor	258	74.8	
			40	11.6	
		Associate Professor	43	12.5	
8	Type of Higher Educational Institution (HEI)	Govt PSU	21	6.1	1.94
			324	93.9	

Source: Author’s findings

Measuring Scales

WS: Spirituality has garnered the interest of researchers in recent years. The psychologists have genuinely tried to develop and validate a WS scale in the Indian cultural context. Until now, only a few studies have explored the needs of teaching professionals. Pradhan et al. (2017) developed a WS scale for the corporate sector in the Indian context. The current study has adapted the concerned scale catering to the needs of teaching professionals in the Indian higher academic context. The Cronbach alpha (α) of WS for 345 respondents was found to be 0.936 which is appropriate and acceptable also.

TPW: Nowadays, teaching is considered a very challenging profession. Teachers suffer from occupational burnout and other ailments because of the heavy teaching workload and administrative tasks. So, it has become inevitable to enhance teachers’ well-being at the workplace. With this thought in mind, Renshaw, Long and Cook (2015) developed a teachers’ professional well-being questionnaire (TPW). The current study has used the same scale for determining the professional wellness of academicians in the Indian higher education context. The reliability measure determined by Cronbach Alpha (α) of the TPW scale comprising 345 respondents was found to be 0.868 which is quite relevant.

Analysis and Results

Reliability was tested using the Cronbach alpha (α) method. In general, the α less than 0.60 indicate poor reliability, whereas the α of 0.70 is acceptable, and the α above 0.80 is considered very high (Nunnally, 1978). The Cronbach alpha’s (α) of WS and TPW was found to be 0.936 and 0.868, respectively, which fulfilled the necessary condition. The reliability for both constructs is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Determination of reliability

Constructs		No. of items	Cronbach Alpha
Workplace spirituality (WS)	Spiritual Orientation (SO)	12	0.936
	Compassion (CM)	4	
	Meaningful Work (CM)	8	
	Alignment of Values (AV)	6	
Teachers’ Professional Well-being (TPW)	Joy of Teaching (JT)	4	0.868
	Connectedness (CN)	4	
	Teaching Efficacy (TE)	4	

Source: Authors’ findings

The present study endeavored to shed light upon the relationship between WS and TPW. *Table 3* (level of WS and TPW) exhibited that the relationship between WS and TPW of sample respondents was relatively high. As the target participants were deeply attached to their jobs, their level of connection to the academic work environment also increased. The findings are presented in *Table 4*.

Table 3: Level of WS and TPW

Constructs	No. of samples (N)	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	Level of Significance
Workplace Spirituality (WS)	345	3.9927	.51462	0.000
Teachers' Professional Well-being (TPW)	345	4.1462	.49994	0.000

Source: Author's findings

Table 4: Component Matrix

Spiritual Orientation (SO)	0.852
Compassion (CM)	0.579
Meaningful Work (MW)	0.867
Alignment of values (AV)	0.861

Source: Author's findings

Correlation and Regression Analysis

Workplace spirituality (WS) was based on the fact that working professionals experience a sense of togetherness in a spiritual workplace. Faculties experience a sense of belongingness with their organization, enhancing their personal and general teaching efficacy. The present study attempted to confirm the relationship between WS and TPW, which was previously ignored. The *Pearson's correlation analysis* revealed a notable constructive correlation between WS and TPW, as presented in *Table 5*. The *meaningful work* (MW) displayed a robust *correlation* (0.664) with the joy of teaching (JT). The results indicated that increased WS positively augments their happiness in their teaching job.

Table 5: Correlation of WS and TPW

Constructs	Statistical observations	Joy of Teaching (JT)	Connectedness (CN)	Teaching Efficacy (TE)
Spiritual Orientation (SO)	Pearson Correlation	.362	.613	.424
	Sig. (2- tailed)			
Compassion (CM)	Pearson Correlation	.401	.295	.409
	Sig. (2- tailed)			
Meaningful Work (MW)	Pearson correlation	.664	.646	.487
	Sig (2-tailed)			
Alignment of values (AV)	Pearson correlation	.473	.778	.370
	Sig (2-tailed)			

Source: Author's findings

The results showed that the presence of WS in academics undoubtedly enhances teachers’ professional well-being (TPW), which is beneficial in the academic workplace. It aligns with the earlier research findings. Further, there also prevails a positive rapport between WS and personnel in the form of enhanced job satisfaction, happiness at work, and improved teaching performance (Milliman et al., 2003)

Regression analysis was conducted between WS and TPW, as presented in *Table 6*. The regression analysis was meted out subject to the fulfillment of all necessary conditions, and the data was found suitable for further analysis.

Table 6: Effect of WS on TPW

	Joy of Teaching (JT)			Connectedness (CN)			Teaching Efficacy (TE)		
	B-unstandardized Coefficients (A)	B-standardized Coefficients (B)	Sig (C)		(B)	(C)	(A)	(B)	(C)
Constant	1.531		0.000	0.161		0.503	1.673		0.000
SO	-.111	-.133	0.023	0.091	0.073	0.129	0.157	0.185	0.006
CM	0.167	0.153	0.001	0.052	0.032	0.388	0.247	0.223	0.000
MW	0.497	0.591	0.000	0.235	0.188	0.000	0.243	0.286	0.000
AV	0.085	0.126	0.045	0.592	0.590	0.000	-0.008	-0.12	0.867
R2	0.466			0.635			0.304		
Significance (ANOVA)	0.000			0.000			0.000		

Source: Author's findings

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the current study showed a significant constructive influence of WS on TPW indicated through regression analysis. The R^2 value exhibited a 63 percent change in connectedness (CN). From the standardised coefficients, it is perceived that connectedness (CN) was highly influenced by alignment with values ('*Ashtanga yoga*') ($\beta=0.590$) followed by meaningful work (*Karma Yoga*) ($\beta=0.188$), spiritual orientation ('*Gyana Yoga*') ($\beta=0.073$) and compassion ('*Bhakti yoga*') ($\beta=0.032$). Thus, a teaching professional, who exhibits connectedness at the academic workplace, contributes to accomplishing a healthy atmosphere.

The R^2 value reported 46 percent and 30 percent variations in *joy of teaching* (JT) and *teaching efficacy* (TE), respectively. Meaningful work ('*Karma Yoga*') ($\beta=0.591$) on the joy of teaching and meaningful work ($\beta=0.286$) on teaching efficacy proved teaching professionals feel happy while teaching. Holistic people with high TE can effectively handle work stress because they believe in their innate potential. Moreover, the F-statistic value (605.594) affirms WS as a strong predictor of TPW. The affirmative relationship established between WS, from the viewpoint of yoga, on TPW, has expanded the pathways for potential researchers in future. WS aids employees in ameliorating their relationship with academic work settings and seeking meaningfulness in their teaching job. The positive outlook of employees at the workplace results in a healthy organizational work culture and develops cordial relationships with students and peers. Thus, the spiritual aspect of yoga can assist faculties in developing the integration of the true self with the Divine. Recognizing the dynamic self of teaching professionals enables them to express their divine essence entirely and contribute to society. The modern findings also relate to the theories derived from ancient spiritual scriptures. Constructive deviant work attitude promotes students' well-being and gives educators immense personal contentment, as recent research indicates (Garg et al., 2022).

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Theoretical implications

The research findings have made a noteworthy theoretical contribution to the WS literature in positive psychology by enriching the construct from a yoga perspective. The lack of empirical studies forbids the expansion, formulation, and practical application of WS. As per the *self-determination theory* (SDT), self-driven teachers can undertake logical decisions and accomplish tasks smoothly. The inner desire to excel helps educators to enhance their teaching performance (Singla et al., 2021; Garg et al., 2022). *Firstly*, learning organizations must take initiatives about cultivating those forms of yoga (i.e., '*Karma yoga*' and '*Bhakti yoga*') among teaching professionals that specifically augment their '*teacher efficacy* (TE)' and invigorates a feeling of '*connectedness* (CN)' at the academic workplace. *Secondly*, the results validated the claims of prior Western studies about the antagonistic relationship between WS and stress (Bussing et al., 2021). *Thirdly*, the findings further substantiated the *broaden-build theory*, which stated that positive emotions enhance work performance (Fredrickson, 2001). A

neologism of traditional Indian scriptures and recent scientific apprehensions of psychology can benefit emerging literature on positive organisational psychology.

Practical implications

The empirical validation has confirmed that educators experience happiness while teaching, exhibit high teaching efficacy, and develop cordial relationships under the influence of WS. Spiritual practices assisted educators to remain calm during online teaching inside virtual classrooms. An agile teaching workforce gets accustomed to flexible strategic approaches, embraces Faculties must navigate work-life interface to work passionately in a remote work environment (Goswami et al., 2025). Faculties must endorse knowledge and digital technology with an open mind. Mindful academicians possess high self-esteem and an inner zeal to strive for teaching excellence. More wellness workshops must be encouraged to tackle work stress and augment psychological resilience. The significance of meaningful and meditative work is to help students. Therefore, non-academic work that causes work overload, role ambiguity, anxiety and stress must be avoided. Academic managers must be hired to monitor the proper delegation of tasks. Educational leaders must implement an array of spiritual interventions to benefit educators. Knowledge requirements for academicians, such as research funding opportunities, setting up quality assurance cells, provision of translation services for improved communication with clients and networking capabilities, need to be implemented. Educational institutions must provide the proper infrastructure to conduct research project activities, digital library facilities to access global research journal databases and finally, imbibe an appropriate research environment for advancement in research.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study has certain restrictions. *Firstly*, the study's generalizability was restricted to public and private universities in eastern India. *Secondly*, there is a need to cross-validate research in different academic sectors for its global acceptance. Future research is expected to verify the presented model in a sample of employees coming from diverse cultural contexts. Both culture and religious denominations could be potential moderators of the relationship between employees' spirituality and organizational gratefulness. *Thirdly*, the present research concentrated mainly upon knowledge workers within a particular industry. Future research must consider service sectors like healthcare, tourism, banking etc. *Fourthly*, the information was gathered from the same source utilizing self-report measures, raising the prevalence of a common-method variance. Longitudinal studies and mixed-method techniques must be embarked upon to comprehend the variables' association better. Learning organizations must invigorate teacher workforce agility (Saeed et al., 2022; Paul et al., 2020). *Finally*, future research must focus upon more attributes of TPW and rethink the workplace well-being of non-teaching staff and top-level administrators of academic institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Teachers shape the destiny of humanity and enthuse future generations to conquer national goals fruitfully. Teachers' mental health condition must be good to effectively discharge duties. There is an urgent need for mindfulness-based leadership training for teachers to cultivate resilience and curb stress for effective classroom management. Mindfulness based spiritual practices are essential for enhancing self-esteem and teaching efficacy of teaching professionals (Paul & Jena, 2022). Cultivating mindfulness helps teaching professionals to improve their teaching pedagogies and create a stimulating classroom environment for students. Mindful practices help faculties to create innovative teaching approaches that keep students engrossed in their lessons, relieve stress and enhance positive mindset (Caroll et al., 2022). For instance, it is quite natural for students to display disruptive behaviour inside the classroom and teachers failing to handle the situation by exhibiting anger upon their pupils. To tackle and prevent such unhealthy scenario, it is indispensable to identify the emotional strength of teaching professionals. Mindfulness practices enable teachers to learn how to react to complicated situations and handle their emotions consciously at that spur of moment. Yoga and other meditation techniques can help teaching professionals to tackle the crisis.

Creating positive environment is a vital aspect for augmenting student learning and enforcing the worth of academic feat. However, pupils exhibiting non-academic attributes such as helpfulness, altruism and friendliness must be equally admired to arouse their sense of belongingness to the act of learning. Yoga practices prove to be constructive for self-management of anxiety and improvement of wellness during the pandemic (Sahni et al., 2021). Regular yoga practice can aid in developing teachers' flexibility and core strength while also reducing fretfulness. Learning organizations must focus upon enhancing the professional well-being of teaching professionals (Paul & Jena, 2022). Yoga is a mind-body practice that has gained appreciation. The post pandemic era is realizing the need for invigorating teacher workforce agility (Paul et al., 2020). Promoting spirituality will result in nurturing an agile teaching workforce.

CONCLUSION

Positive and innovative thoughts thrive in an idyllic mindset. The current research empirically validated how WS, comprising various '*yoga postures*', can cultivate TPW at higher academic workplaces. When educators adopt the healthy '*yoga lifestyle*', they cultivate amicable relationships and feel more relaxed at the academic workplace. Recent studies have indicated that meaningfulness has a positive impact on teachers' professional engagement, occupational resilience, and extra-role behavior (Lavy, 2022). Learning organizations must nurture a holistic work environment that values intellectual autonomy, collaboration, and respect. Providing opportunities for professional development, recognizing genuine efforts through remuneration and rewards that align with teacher's intrinsic motivation, focusing on work-life balance are crucial for plummeting burnout and enhancing job satisfaction. TPW can be achieved through skill training that augments professional skills, interpersonal and social skills, research

aptitude skills that assist faculties to acclimatize with the hybrid academic work settings. Positive attribution contributes to teachers' self-efficacy and teaching abilities. Therefore, it is crucial to create a spiritual organizational culture where teachers are respected and valued, their freedom of expression is given utmost importance, and their mental and physical health is made a top priority.

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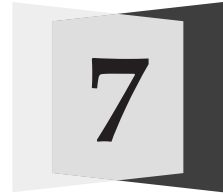
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Indian Knowledge System as A Catalyst for Entrepreneurial Innovation: A Holistic Paradigm for Integrative Development



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Abstract

The present study is an exploration of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) as an innovative paradigm of Indian entrepreneurial innovation and sustainable development. Going beyond a Western centric approach, the study challenges how the traditional Indian philosophies, native pedagogies and grass-root activities can continue to support entrepreneurial ventures that are context specific. Indian entrepreneurial environment, a mixture of high-tech and low-tech startups besides microenterprises based on need is productive ground the integration of IKS to minimize developmental gaps and subsequently inclusive growth. The paper presents the epistemological complexity and generalised approaches to the nature of IKS, establishing associations between the ancient forms like the Gurukula system and craft guilds with the modern design of enterprises. It highlights the importance of pluralistic thinking, system-level problem-solving, and highly embedded concepts of sustainability and social responsibility onto IKS. The research points out the IKS catalytic role in changing the adaptability, resilience, and grassroots innovativeness through analysis of cases and thematic perspectives.

The paper also identifies such enablers as policy and education reforms to use traditional knowledge in the world of modern entrepreneurship. The conclusion also provides strategic advice on integrating IKS within national frameworks of innovation, higher education, as well as, mutually beneficial business development. With a vision of an ecosystem that can integrate the ancient with the advanced, the paper advances a truly Indian paradigm of innovation that is culturally meaningful and globally competitive, and that leads to ventures that are economically feasible, as well as socially fair and environment friendly.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, Entrepreneurial Innovation, Sustainability, Grassroots Development, Holistic Education.

INTRODUCTION

It is common to discover that entrepreneurial innovation forms one of the major factors of economic growth and social change across geopolitical frontiers (Kumar, 2017; Bayo & NumbaraBari, 2015). The currently developing economy of India allows offering another special setting where the classic knowledge system clashes with the use of modern entrepreneurial plans. Despite statistically substantial growth careers in the economy of the country, it, in parallel, has been experiencing uneven economic dividends, as well as a wide technological discrepancy between the advanced and non-advanced sectors (Raman, 2010; Shavlay, 2020). Since, historically, innovation as a term of academic research has been produced mostly by views offered by developed economies, it can be overlooked regarding the particularities of the dynamics of transforming economies like that of India (Bhagavatula et al., 2017a; Bhagavatula et al., 2017b). This gap therefore comes with a vehement exploration into the ability of indigenous knowledge in informing and picking up the pace of entrepreneurship. This type of inquiry is more extensive than dominant paradigms, as it takes into account culturally relevant mechanisms of nurturing new enterprises (Jafary, 2019).

The existence of this gap highlights the necessity of a more closely related to the Indian peculiarities of development educational approach, which can help view the experience of traditional knowledge in the context of the new needs of entrepreneurship. Sustenance of self-employment and national production has been emphasized by the Government with the introduction of schemes like Make in India and Start-Up India (Sawale & Karpe, 2019).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research paper will mainly focus on addressing the following issues (1) discussing the salient features of the indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in terms of innovation; and (2) explaining how the conversion of traditional knowledge into the modern entrepreneurial contexts can be carried out. In the analysis, the paper can improve the understanding of the innovation process in emerging economies by taking the knowledge beyond the Western-centric paradigm (Acs, 2010). The results are of special interest to policymakers, teachers,

and businesspersons generally, as it can offer evidence-based recommendations to help them utilize India cultural heritage to bring about long-lasting and steady economic and social progress.

THEMATIC REVIEW OF THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM AND INNOVATION LANDSCAPE

Indian Knowledge System is a very broad body of intellectual/philosophical tradition, a corpus of knowledge and experience in practices that have evolved over thousands of years. Its relevance to contemporary innovation goes beyond historical curiosity and offers alternative paradigms to generation, diffusion and utilization of knowledge. The development of the knowledge-based economy in the global world also stresses the need of strong systems of knowledge management and transfer to support the innovation (Braunerhjelm, 2008). Specifically, India stands out due to high-velocity expansion of the knowledge-intensive areas in the country (Herstatt et al., 2008).

Epistemology and Paradigms

The Indian philosophical traditions propose unique epistemological frames in the exploration of the kind of knowledge and how knowledge can be achieved. Such ideas as are held in Jainism where inconsistent truths are a possibility challenge the conventional Western two-valued logic of logigos scientific some modern thinkers. Such a pluralistic orientation has the potential to develop cognitive flexibility, which is an aspect that is important in the context of problem-solving as an entrepreneur. Approaches common to the IKS tend to emphasize the integrated knowledge and interrelationship in opposition to reductionism which is a characteristic of certain contemporary scientific models. This type of methodological orientation promotes the thorough perception of the challenges and opportunities (Devy, 2020).

Indigenous Pedagogy, Gurukula and Shastras: Tradicial Systems of Learning

Immersive, holistic teaching systems Traditional Indian systems of learning, even the Gurukula tradition used immersive systems of teaching where the knowledge acquisition was through direct experience with the teacher as a guide. The study of Shastras, archaic texts encompassing a broad spectrum of fields, offered well-organized areas of knowledge on issues such as medicine to government. Native methods of teaching generally placed emphasis on the practicability of what they taught and development of community welfare and how to pass information between generations. These past modalities generated profound experience and issue-solving within the local sociocultural and environmental contexts, which can be used to guide modern skill development programs (Sawale & Karpe, 2019).

The Transfer of Pre-Colonial Craft Guilds into the Contemporary Startups

Before colonial rule India had strong craft guilds and indigenous enterprises that encouraged innovation at the level of discrete communities and jobs. These structures were used to train skills, quality management and knowledge transfer across generations. After the independence, the trend was a transition toward

industrial production, but the old smaller-scale companies did not cease existing and involved in small scale, gradual innovations to stay on the market (Dey, 2017, 2019). Although today Indian startups are often technologically oriented, they can be compared to the adaptive kind of startups and community-focus that characterized such historical businesses. Such industries like the software industry have been the first to introduce new forms of entrepreneurship in India (Arora & Athreye, 2002).

INTERSECTIONS OF INDIGENOUS WISDOM AND MODERN ENTERPRISE

The contact between the indigenous knowledge and the modern business develops unique spheres of innovations. An example is where the traditional methods of farming can teach new-fangled methods of farming, and the indigenous healing mode can teach innovative ideas of wellness and drugs (Kondaiah, 2004; Sahasranamam et al., 2019). This convergence is not a way of giving the past a place to stay; on the contrary, it is a process of reinvention and recontextualization of traditional knowledge into modern use. Indian-wide example of resourcefulness and ingenuity based on local circumstances creating observable results in terms of widely available affordable solutions is the phenomenon of frugal innovation in India, which is reflection of the feature of adaptability underlying indigenous problem solving (Raman, 2010).

ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVES: CATALYTIC DIMENSIONS, CHALLENGES, AND CASE ANALYSIS

The Indian knowledge system is characterized to be different such that a system of intrinsic characteristics has the catalytic power of entrepreneurial innovation. These features meet and rise to principles of sustainability, community stability, and social responsibility and as it happens it provides other samples that do not necessarily adhere to the solely profit-based models. However, integrating such qualities in the present entrepreneurial activities is a problem. Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem is quite different to the developed market economy and is mainly covered by more of need-based entrepreneurship (Bhagavatula et al., 2017). Such setting makes inherent advantages of IKS especially relevant in driving innovation capable of responding to domestic needs and problems. The topic of entrepreneurial development is particularly important in the case of a micro and a small enterprise, particularly in the case of a first-generation entrepreneur (Kumar, 2017).

Systems thinking and Holistic Problem-solving

The Indian, traditional ways often promote a holistic approach towards problem-solving, analyzing the concept of connectedness instead of the individual parts. This systems-thinking orientation is able to deliver more encompassing and long-term solutions in the entrepreneurial activities. The case in point is that traditional water-management systems are an icon of integrated resource management capable of contributing to modern sustainable-development initiatives (Kondaiah, 2004). Such paradigm, as compared to the fragmented and reductionist problem-solving, enables the entrepreneur to create the value in several dimensions.

The Sustainability and Social Responsibility engraved in the Indigenous Approaches

Sustainability and social responsibility, in turn, are frequently embedded in indigenous knowledge systems through the placement of human activities as part of a more encompassing figure of the ecological, the communal. These values are able to guide business initiatives in the direction of sustainable environment and fair wealth allocation. These indigenous values are naturally aligned with social entrepreneurship which is characterised by the fact that it puts a strong emphasis on social impact rather than solely on profit. One may cite the examples of community based enterprises conserving the traditional crafts or encouraging the eco-tourism, as the cases in which the direct advantages are gained by the local population, whereas cultural heritage and natural resources are protected.

Adaptability, Resilience, and Mechanism of Grassroots Innovation

The Indian cultures have proved to be quite resilient and adaptable with respect to environmental and social pressures. This ability to generate solutions at the lowest levels of society allows grassroots innovation to emerge whereby solutions become generated at the local levels that have come into contact with particular issues. These localised, adaptive mechanisms can inform the entrepreneur and develop the context-specific innovation robust and able to expand on the ground floor. This do-it-yourself off the cuff approach, necessitated by need and local creativity, has a lot of promise in terms of bridging the development gaps.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYNERGY: PATHWAYS FOR ENHANCED INNOVATION

Despite the apparent hindrances, a large potential of creating self-renewing synergies between Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) of India and entrepreneurial innovation is present. These synergies are capable of producing a unique form of development that is economically viable and at the same time has cultural resonance.

Achieving competitive strategic success by exploiting Cultural Plurality

The cultural and knowledge framework of India is heterogeneous, which forms a unique source of competitive advantage. Such plurality enables the production of highly bifurcated products and services that target the market niches and home as well as global markets. The large pool of traditional medicinal plants and practices provides an all-embracing potential source within the pharmaceutical and wellness industries (Sahasranamam et al., 2019). Synthesis of this diversity fosters innovation that can hardly be imitated by competitors that do not share similar cultural patrimony.

Building Inclusive Processes of Sustainable Economic Growth

Inclusive and sustainable growth is usually encouraged with the help of entrepreneurial plans based on IKS. These means of supporting local contexts and traditional practices focus on using innovation to empower marginalized groups and encourage domestic-based employment as well as self-sustenance (Meyer et al., 2019). This orientation forms a growth path whereby environmental

factors are coupled with the social fairness and economic benefits meaning that it would lead to the balanced national growth (Kumar, 2017). Such development as the encouragement of grassroots self-employment, as an example, is a key development priority (Dr A. Aruna Devi & P. Nandhini, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Indian Knowledge System is a strong, hitherto underexploited, system of fostering entrepreneurship innovation in India. Its philosophical richness, its conservative learning practices, and inherent focus on the importance of a holistic approach to problems, sustainability, and grassroot survivability, offer distinctive values to arrive at ventures that are economically feasible, culturally relevant and socially responsible. However, there are various issues such as validation, scale-up, institutional utility, that can be resolved with the help of a proper policy implementation, educational changes, and technology. Obtaining the knowledge-based economy in India would be enhanced greatly by blending the fibers of the old wisdom into the new (Cahyaningtyas, 2018).

POLICY, PRACTICE AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Various strategic options can be recommended in an aim to utilize the true potential of IKS when it comes to entrepreneurial innovation. Public policy makers are advised to come up with mechanisms that enshrine and secure indigenous intellectual property rights and thus promote commercialization of traditional knowledge. Curricula in educational institutions need to be redesigned so that classic wisdom and updated knowledge on business are combined and cross-disciplinary research and practical skills are acquired on topical issues in the context of the local environment (Jafary, 2019)(WANG et al., 2017). Practitioners are also directed to consider the collaborative models enabling the communication between the traditional knowledge holders and the modern business people and technology experts aiming at the translation of the traditional practice into the new applications. Potential future studies may be directed at assessing the long-term socio-economic benefit of IKS-inspired enterprises, establishing a typical approach to the verification of traditional knowledge and considering some particular examples of effective mixing in different spheres of activity.

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Indian Knowledge Systems and Its Relevance to Contemporary Leadership and Management

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Abstract

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is deeply rooted in ancient texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Puranas, and the Arthashastra. These books inculcate philosophical insights into governance, leadership, and ethical decision-making. This chapter analyses the exclusivity of IKS and its applications to deal the modern corporate challenges, particularly in leadership, organizational culture, and employee productivity. The lessons of the Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, and Mahabharata are briefly described here. Also it highlights the timeless and valuable insights, their suitability of ancient Indian wisdom in contemporary management practices.

Keywords: *Indian Knowledge System, Leadership, Leadership Styles, Management*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership and management, both the subjects have long been related with philosophical discourse, evolving over centuries through various cultural and intellectual traditions. While modern management theories mainly rooted from Western industrial models. Ancient Indian texts offer alternative frameworks that remain relevant to modern organizational challenges. India's Knowledge

System (IKS) suggests a complete detailed perspective of leadership and governance, rooted in ethical principles and spiritual wisdom.

Rishis and Yogis from Ancient India have developed a structured knowledge system emphasizing strategies related to the governance, ethical guidelines, and conduct related to personal and professional principles. The Arthashastra, teaches us about the strategies related to corporate life from lower-level management to foreign policy. Indian philosophy is depicted by six principal schools which are offering unique perspectives on knowledge, logic and decision making. These are Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa, and Uttara Mimamsa etc.

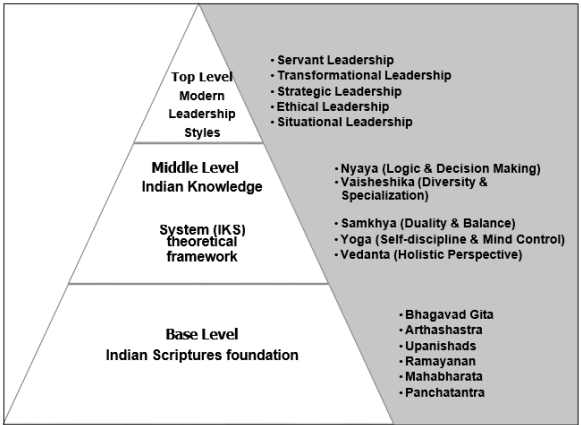
Many organizations are facing the issues related to leadership effectiveness, organizational culture, and employee engagement. In any organization, managers have to face challenges related to stress management, work-life balance, and ethical dilemmas. This chapter explains the principles of IKS and their pragmatic solutions to manage the concerns.

Previous researches have revealed the corporate lessons from India’s ancient knowledge system. Satish et al. (2020) highlighted the lessons of leadership from the ancient epics such as Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Bhagavad Gita. These epics emphasize their impact on handling contemporary corporate challenges. Gupta and Garg (2020) explored and described the strategic management principles and the framework was given to apply in the modern businesses. Similarly, Rajpurohit (2020) and Gupta and Singh (2019) identified leadership models and they demonstrated their continued relevance in current business era.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This article describes the valuable output of IKS and their vision on contemporary leadership, bridging the gap between traditional and modern management frameworks.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:



I. ANCIENT INDIAN TEXTS AND MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The chapter specifies the leadership and management principles from main ancient texts and the applications of their valuable insights into their practical applications in modern organizations.

Bhagavad Gita and Leadership Principles

The Bhagavad Gita gave the management principles from the conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. Some of the suggestions are given below-

- We should give full commitment to our work and should perform duties without attachment to the outcomes.
- We should give importance to our organizational gains rather than personal gains.
- There should be resilience and focus in challenging situations.
- There should be a clarity on decision-making processes.
- We should encourage the openness to change and innovation.

Ramayana and Ethical Leadership

The Ramayana showcased the qualities adopted by Lord Rama:

- Visionary Leadership: Setting a crystal clear picture for the followers.
- Ethical Governance: Adherence to principles of righteousness (Dharma).
- Crisis Management: Resilience in the face of adversity.
- Inclusive Leadership: Respect and equal treatment of all individuals.
- Strategic Decision-Making: Seeking wise counsel before making crucial decisions.

Mahabharata and Strategic Leadership

The Mahabharata, particularly through the leadership styles of Krishna and the Pandavas, presents strategies for effective management:

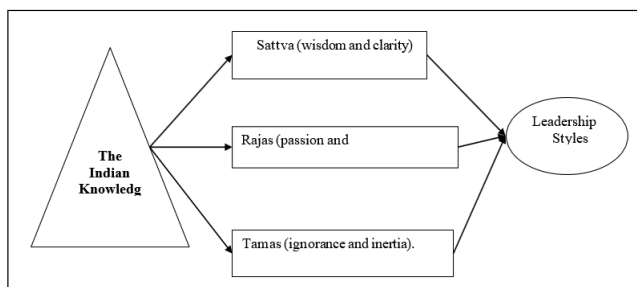
Mentorship and Guidance: The role of a mentor in leadership development.

Goal-Oriented Strategy: Developing a clear path to success.

Team Coordination: Aligning individual efforts with collective objectives.

Ethical Leadership: Demonstrating integrity and moral fortitude in decision-making.

II. LEADERSHIP STYLES AND THE THREE GUNAS



Indian philosophy classifies human tendencies into three Gunas—Sattva (wisdom and clarity), Rajas (passion and dynamism), and Tamas (ignorance and inertia). These Gunas influence leadership styles:

- **Sattvic Leadership:** Thoughtful, strategic, and ethical.
- **Rajasic Leadership:** Ambitious and proactive but potentially impulsive.
- **Tamasic Leadership:** Lacking direction and clarity.

An ideal leader integrates these Gunas to maintain a balanced and effective leadership style.

The fundamental principles of Indian leadership—righteousness (dharma), sacrifice, wisdom, humility, respect for others, and resilience—are reflected in these Ramayana lessons. Leaders who uphold these ideals are not only in charge but also serve as social advisors, grounded in moral principles and spiritual knowledge.

III. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM (IKS) AND SELECTED INDIAN SCRIPTURES

A. THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM AND RAMAYANA

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and the ageless leadership concepts found in the Ramayana are closely related. These findings and insights are talking about ideas like knowledge, selflessness, the value of relationships, and dharma (righteous responsibility). There are following leadership teachings set by Ramayana which go consistently with IKS:

Sacrifice for the Greater Good

Lesson: Lord Rama sacrificed his self-ambitions for the sake of maintaining his family's honor. He kept his values superior in the odd times too.

IKS Insight: The leader's role in IKS is frequently viewed as sacrifice as well as service. Real leaders see the value of serving others, may be at personal expense. The selflessness preserve harmony within society and guarantees its well-being.

The Value of Loyalty and Cooperation

Lesson: Ramayana has shown the examples of loyalty and virtue through different characteristics. We should follow the virtues set by them in our day to day life as per the situation's requirement.

IKS Insight: IKS specifies that Cooperation, Loyalty and Coordination are going to create a value for the management system. A leader must be able to motivate and bring people together in order to accomplish common objectives. A true leader encourages teamwork, builds on the team's skills, and acknowledges their contributions.

1. Knowledge and Discernment in Decision Making

- **Lesson:** Throughout the Ramayana, Rama takes deliberate choices after considering many facets of the circumstance, seeking advice from reliable teachers, and maintaining his knowledge. Before making important judgments, he consults sages and wise people like Vashistha and Vasishtha.

- **IKS Insight:** IKS leadership values insight and wisdom. Instead of acting on impulse, a leader should act with insight and seek expertise. The future of the leader and their community is shaped by the quality of their judgments, therefore sound advice and in- depth contemplation are essential components of IKS-based leadership.

2. Empathy and Compassion in Leadership

- **Lesson:** Rama is a warrior, but his leadership is characterized by empathy. He demonstrates compassion for his people, allies, and even adversaries.

IKS Insight: IKS showcased the role of empathy and compassion in leaders. An effective leader should understand the needs of others, settle disputes fairly and give respect to everyone rather than dominate.

Upholding Integrity and Commitments

Lesson: Lord Rama has demonstrated the importance of personal integrity by keeping his word to his father. Likewise, Sita has shown her dedication to her husband in the adverse situation is an example of integrity.

IKS Insight: As per IKS, integrity and maintaining promises are essential qualities of a successful leader. Even in the odd circumstances, a leader is supposed to uphold his integrity and show the stability. Trust has to be gained through these activities.

Balance between Professional and Personal Life

Lesson: Rama's life exemplifies the fine line that separates carrying out one's social and personal obligations. Despite his intense love for Sita, he chooses to send her away despite the suffering it gives him in order to fulfill his obligation to his realm.

IKS Insight: IKS highlights a leader's capacity to manage a variety of duties, including those of a family member, ruler, or advisor. Being a leader involves more than simply making decisions; it also involves handling personal obligations and responsibilities while maintaining an eye on the bigger picture. The peace of social and personal life is guaranteed by this equilibrium.

B. THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA

In addition to being a very spiritual book, the Bhagavad Gita contains everlasting leadership teachings. It imparts a variety of leadership skills through the dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, emphasizing self-improvement, self-control, and sound judgment. The Bhagavad Gita provides the following essential leadership abilities:

3. Self-Discipline and Self-Awareness

Ability: The foundation of successful leadership is self-awareness. Bhagwat Gita has suggested that leaders should cultivate inner consciousness and master their feelings, impulses, and desires.

Leadership insight: Self-discipline is playing a vital role for leaders to control their responses and behaviors. A Leader should behave consistently and act with a broader vision.

According to the Gita, “An established person is not influenced by pain or pleasure and lives in self-realization.” (Gita Bhagavad 2.14)

4. Discernment and Decision-Making (Viveka)

Ability: The lessons from Gita emphasizes the importance of leader’s judgement skills. Krishna helps Arjuna make decisions based on knowledge rather than feelings when he is initially perplexed and overwhelmed by the difficulties of combat.

Leadership insight: Even in challenging or stressful circumstances, leaders need to learn how to make well-considered judgments. They measure the situations, maintain composure, and act accordingly with the better solutions rather than their whims or fancies.

Reference from the Gita: “Whenever there is a decline in righteousness and an increase in unrighteousness, O Arjuna, at that time I manifest myself on earth.” (Bhagavad Gita 4.7)

5. Delegation and Empowerment

- Ability: Krishna gives Arjuna the insight to accept accountability for his own deeds rather than immediately resolving his issues. He exhorts Arjuna to assume his responsibilities and carry out his warrior’s duty.
- Leadership insight: Successful leaders enable others to take charge, make choices, and share their abilities. Instead of controlling everything, a leader should motivate, mentor, and assign work according to each person’s strengths.
- Reference to the Gita: “You have to perform your prescribed duties in this world, but you should not think of them as your own.” 3.35 in the Bhagavad Gita

6. Integrity and Ethical Leadership

Ability: According to Krishna we should behave as per our ideals and morals only. For decision making even in the crisis situation, he has shown the right path to Arjuna to choose the morally upright route rather than taking short cuts or using wrong deeds.

Leadership Insight: Being a leader requires integrity. To provide a good example, leaders must constantly match their behavior with moral principles. Building trust and cultivating an honest and accountable culture are two benefits of ethical leadership.

Reference to the Gita: “Performing one’s own dharma, however imperfectly, is better than performing another’s dharma perfectly.” 3.35 in the Bhagavad Gita

PERSEVERANCE AND RESILIENCE

Ability: Krishna counsels Arjuna to maintain his resolve no matter what happens as a result of his acts. There will be challenges and disappointments in life, but a true leader must endure and keep going on the path of duty without giving up.

Leadership insight: Resilience, or the capacity to maintain strength and concentration in the face of difficulties, failures, or setbacks, is a quality that leaders must exhibit. Being resilient encourages others to persevere and reaffirms the importance of perseverance.

According to the Gita, “A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires— who can suppress them at will, without being disturbed—by the mind is said to have attained tranquility.” (Gita Bhagavad 2.70)

Deep insights on leadership are provided by the Bhagavad Gita, which emphasizes moral conduct, emotional intelligence, inner development, and strategic decision-making. Leaders may develop compassion, strength, and knowledge by applying these teachings to their life. This will enable them and others to overcome obstacles and advance society. In addition to being useful for effective leadership, these lessons encourage a well-rounded, meaningful existence that is consistent with universal principles.

The Indian Knowledge System and The Mahabharata

The Mahabharata is an epic that offers profound leadership lessons deeply rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), embarking upon ethics, duty, wisdom, and governance. There are lots of teachings which focus on holistic approach towards leadership, sustainability, and community well-being. Given below are some key leadership lessons from the Mahabharata that are similar to IKS:

Dharma (Duty & Ethical Leadership)

In the Mahabharata the core idea of Dharma, or “righteous duty,” aligns with the ethical governance ideals of IKS’s. It emphasizes leaders should make choices cautiously to ensure that it is not only beneficial to them but also to the society as a whole. As in Mahabharata Yudhishtira was steadfast in his commitment towards justice and truth despite of all the obstacles he has to face representing a leader with a strong moral grounds.

Responsible Governance and Sustainability

The Mahabharata emphasizes a fundamental tenet of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) of prioritizing long-term sustainability over short-term gains. In the epic Bhishma reminds Yudhishtira that as a king it is his duty to ensure safe environment, economic stability and welfare of the people of his kingdom.

Collective Decision-Making

In Mahabharata importance is being given on respecting advice and valuing collective wisdom over authoritarian rule. Krishna, though a divine strategist and guide, never forces his will on the Pandavas rather he counsels and lead them and allowed them to decide for themselves. This approach reflects a key

principle of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) that consensus-building and shared knowledge are means of fostering leadership.

Flexibility and Strategic Thought

The epic well illustrated us that an effective leader need to be flexible and able to learn from changing environments. Even during their banishment, the Pandavas use the time to grow stronger and wiser. This aligns with the ideas of IKS, which emphasis that effective leadership requires adaptability, awareness of local dynamics, and strategic negotiation. Krishna's strategic diplomacy throughout the war reflects this ideal of dynamic and responsive leadership.

Self-Sacrifice for the Common Good

Like Arjuna, one person should sacrifice their own comforts to achieve something uncommon. IKS leadership highlights upon selflessness and sacrifice, so that selfishness should be replaced with societal benefits and team benefits.

Appreciation of Mentorship and Knowledge

The Bhagavad Gita's has portraits Lord Krishna as Arjuna's instructor who is giving lessons regarding crucial component of IKS and Value creation. A success leader should take the decisions on the basis of consultation, brain storming sessions with the teammates.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significance of the Indian Knowledge System in solving modern organizational challenges with the lessons suggested by IKS System. Since ancient time, leadership is known for its comprehensive values. The true leaders in IKS exhibit traits like righteousness, altruism, knowledge, humility, and resilience. These valuable advice suggests that leaders can motivate people and communities to flourish in peace and moral fortitude. IKS motivates a leader to develop a long-term vision, for the sound present and the future. A successful Leadership is for future vision, strategic planning, and the ability to inspire others to achieve common goal.

A successful leader should be a mastery over the thoughts, desires, emotions and controls. By accepting the mindfulness and self-control, any leader can lead with clarity and wisdom and will take the right decisions that are aligned with their higher purpose. Leadership is a tool through which the business will be handled with ease and a sustainable business can be developed. By taking into account the lessons from the Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, and Mahabharata, leaders can enhance their management strategies, cultivate ethical leadership, and create productive work environments. IKS plays a crucial role in the transformation from traditional to modern leadership styles and we should adopt ethical and morally sound leadership in our corporate life. The ancient teachings provide timeless wisdom for navigating complexity, fostering resilience, and ensuring sustainable organizational success.

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An Exploration of Modern Business Principles through the Lens of Kambaramayanam

9



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Abstract

Kambaramayanam, the Tamil epic by the poet Kambar, though rooted in ancient times, holds timeless lessons that continue to resonate in today's corporate landscape. Themes such as integrity, leadership, resilience, loyalty, and strategic thinking are interwoven throughout the narrative and align closely with modern business values like ethical conduct, customer-centricity, adaptability, and innovation. The decisions and actions of central characters offer valuable insights: Rama exemplifies moral leadership, Hanuman demonstrates analytical thinking and decisive action, while Vibhishana represents the power of forging wise alliances. These character traits serve as metaphors for successful management and corporate strategy. Thus, beyond being a literary and spiritual treasure, the Kambaramayanam stands as a relevant source of guidance for modern businesses operating in an ever-changing global environment.

Keywords: *Leadership, Problem-Solving Skills, Competitive Strategic*

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and competitive global business environment, values such as integrity-driven leadership, strategic foresight, adaptability, innovation, and customer-centric thinking have become vital for organizational success. Companies not only strive for financial growth but also seek models that ensure ethical responsibility, sustainability, and long-term trust among stakeholders. While much of this is examined through the lens of modern management theories, ancient Indian epics offer equally powerful insights that align surprisingly well with these contemporary ideals.

A notable example is *Kambaramayanam*, the Tamil adaptation of the *Ramayana* penned by the eminent poet *Kambar* in the 12th century. Far beyond a devotional or mythological tale, this epic is a profound narrative that captures the complexities of leadership, emotional intelligence, moral judgment, and strategic decision-making. Its relevance today lies in its rich portrayal of character traits and choices that mirror real-world challenges faced by leaders and professionals.

The characters within this epic *Rama*, *Hanuman*, *Vibhishana*, *Bharata*, *Vaali* and *Ravana* each reflect different facets of organizational behavior. *Rama* symbolizes ethical leadership and unwavering commitment to values; *Hanuman* embodies loyalty, problem-solving acumen, and dedication; *Vibhishana*'s pivotal decision to support *Rama* illustrates the power of alliance-building and stakeholder loyalty; *Vaali* was the very much eminent autocratic leader, his courage to oppose the *Rama* and *Ravana*'s eventual defeat serves as a powerful reminder of how arrogance, unethical choices, and resistance to wise counsel can lead to failure.

This paper delves into how *Kambaramayanam*'s narrative elements can be interpreted through a modern business lens. It seeks to identify how timeless ethical and strategic principles embedded in this literary masterpiece can guide contemporary leadership and management practices. Ultimately, the *Kambaramayanam* is not just a symbol of cultural and spiritual heritage, but also a valuable resource offering enduring lessons for governance, team leadership, and principled decision-making in the 21st-century corporate world.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In recent years, there has been a growing academic interest in examining how ancient literary works intersect with contemporary management theories. A number of researchers have analyzed the relevance of Indian epics such as the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in shaping ethical frameworks and leadership paradigms. *Chakraborty* (1995), for instance, argues that Indian philosophical thought offers a profound foundation of values and leadership principles applicable to today's corporate world. Likewise, *Sinha and Sinha* (2007) point out that *Rama*, as portrayed in the *Ramayana*, exemplifies leadership grounded in justice, fairness, and a commitment to serving others. *Sundararajan* (2012) further discusses how epic narratives can offer models for resolving conflicts and fostering moral clarity in organizational contexts.

Within the Tamil literary corpus, Kambaramayana stands out for its artistic brilliance and deep ethical dimensions. Scholars such as Dr. T.P. Meenakshisundaram have highlighted how Kambar's retelling integrates devotion with guidance on ideal human conduct. Despite its rich philosophical undertones, direct applications of Kambaramayana to modern corporate practices remain relatively underexplored. This research aims to address that gap by analyzing key characters Rama, Hanuman, and Vibhishana through the lens of business leadership, creativity, and stakeholder engagement, positioning their decisions as illustrative case studies for current business scenarios.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the fast-paced and highly competitive global business landscape, companies are constantly challenged to maintain a delicate balance between achieving financial success and upholding ethical values, sound strategy, and social accountability. Although modern management frameworks offer structured methods to address these complexities, a noticeable gap often exists between theoretical ideals and their ethical execution in practice. Despite progress in business education and leadership training, recurring instances of corporate misconduct, leadership crises, and governance failures highlight the limitations of conventional approaches. This leads to a pressing inquiry: Can age-old epics and cultural narratives offer enduring, value-centric wisdom to fill this void? The Kambaramayana, a classical Tamil rendition of the Ramayana by Kambar, presents a wealth of moral conflicts, leadership decisions, and strategic thinking that align closely with contemporary corporate challenges. This research aims to explore how the ethical and leadership lessons embedded in this timeless epic can be reinterpreted through a business lens, offering meaningful applications for today's leadership practices and organizational governance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To explore the moral and strategic themes in Kambaramayana that align with modern business principles.
2. To analyze key characters and events in the epic in the context of leadership, ethics, and organizational behavior.
3. To interpret how ancient wisdom can be practically applied to contemporary business challenges.
4. To evaluate the relevance of Kambar's narrative in developing ethical, responsible, and strategic business leaders.
5. To promote a culturally enriched approach to business education and corporate governance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach, utilizing textual analysis of the Kambaramayana to extract themes relevant to modern business principles. The methodology involves a comparative analysis of characters, events, and moral teachings found in the epic with core elements of modern

business such as leadership, organizational behavior, ethics, strategic decision-making, and corporate governance. Primary data is derived from selected passages of *Kambaramayanam*, focusing on pivotal moments that reflect decision-making, crisis management, leadership traits, and ethical dilemmas. Secondary data includes scholarly articles, management case studies, leadership theories, and commentaries on Indian epics.

The framework for analysis is built around:

Character-based study (Rama, Sita, Hanuman, Vibhishana, Ravana)

Theme-based analysis (Ethics, leadership, strategy, loyalty, alliances)

Business principle mapping (Linking literary actions to modern business concepts)

This interpretive method allows for contextual relevance, drawing philosophical insights and relating them to practical business scenarios.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The *Kambaramayanam* offers rich narrative layers, each reflecting different aspects of business conduct. The following key interpretations illustrate how the epic aligns with business principles:

Ethical Leadership: Rama as an Exemplar of Corporate Governance

Rama, the protagonist, embodies dharma (righteousness), reflecting the archetype of an ethical leader who prioritizes integrity over expediency. Contemporary business scholarship emphasizes ethical leadership as foundational for long-term organizational success (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Rama's adherence to moral principles amid adversity demonstrates the importance of values-driven leadership, which builds trust among stakeholders and enhances organizational legitimacy.

Brand Identity and Customer Loyalty: Sita's Symbolism

Sita's unwavering loyalty and virtue function as metaphors for brand integrity and customer value propositions. Brand management literature highlights the significance of emotional connections and consistent value delivery in cultivating brand loyalty (Keller, 2003). Sita's role underscores how core values and identity contribute to sustained relational equity between organizations and their customers.

Operational Management: Lakshmana as the Chief Operating Officer

Lakshmana's supportive role to Rama typifies effective operational management ensuring execution aligns with strategic vision. Contemporary management theory recognizes the COO's critical role in translating leadership strategy into operational realities (Guth & MacMillan, 1986). Lakshmana's dedication reflects the necessity of reliable operational leadership in achieving organizational objectives.

Agility and Advocacy: Hanuman's Multifaceted Role

Hanuman exemplifies agility, innovation, and brand evangelism, qualities essential in dynamic markets. The role of brand advocates and agile problem-solvers is increasingly recognized in contemporary marketing and organizational agility studies (Teece, 2014). Hanuman's resourcefulness illustrates how adaptability and passionate advocacy drive organizational resilience and market presence.

The Risks of Hubris: Ravana as a Cautionary Figure

Ravana's arrogance and unethical behavior serve as a cautionary tale about the perils of overconfidence and ethical lapses in leadership. Literature on corporate governance warns that hubris can impair decision-making and precipitate organizational failure (Hayward & Hambrick, 1997). Ravana's downfall illustrates the consequences of neglecting stakeholder interests and ethical norms.

Resilience and Strategic Adaptation: The Exile as Metaphor for Market Challenges

Rama's exile symbolizes forced strategic retreat, paralleling how organizations must navigate market disruptions and crises. Strategic management literature emphasizes resilience and adaptability as key factors for survival and growth during adverse conditions (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). The epic advocates for endurance and strategic repositioning in the face of challenges.

Collaboration and Supply Chain Management: The Construction of Rama Setu

The collective effort in building the bridge to Lanka symbolizes the importance of collaboration and effective supply chain coordination. Interorganizational collaboration is widely regarded as essential for accomplishing complex projects (Cousins et al., 2006). The narrative exemplifies how diverse stakeholders can align resources and efforts toward common goals.

Competitive Strategy: The Battle Against Ravana

The climactic conflict reflects the realities of competitive strategy, where success depends on planning, execution, and leveraging strengths. Porter's (1980) competitive strategy framework underscores similar principles, emphasizing the need for strategic positioning and effective implementation. Rama's victory epitomizes disciplined execution of strategy against formidable competition.

FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of the *Kambaramayanam* in relation to modern business principles, the study reveals several important insights:

1. **Timeless Values in Modern Contexts** The *Kambaramayanam* contains leadership, ethical, and strategic values that closely mirror modern business principles. Concepts such as integrity, service-oriented leadership, and collaborative decision-making are embedded within its narratives.

2. **Characters as Corporate Role Models** Key characters like Rama, Hanuman, and Vibhishana serve as metaphorical role models for different roles in business—ethical leadership, innovation and execution, and strategic alliance, respectively.
3. **Strategic and Ethical Lessons are Intertwined** The epic shows that strategy devoid of ethics (as seen in Ravana’s case) leads to failure, while ethically driven strategy (as seen in Rama’s approach) results in sustainable success.
4. **Teamwork and Loyalty as Success Factors** The success of Rama’s mission highlights the importance of collective effort, mutual trust, and dedication among teams, which is essential for organizational growth today.
5. **Applicability Across Business Functions** Themes from the epic apply across multiple areas such as leadership, human resource management, conflict resolution, stakeholder management, and organizational culture.
6. **Epics as a Learning Tool** The study confirms that epics like *Kambaramayanam* can be effectively used as educational tools to enhance leadership qualities, emotional intelligence, and ethical thinking among business professionals.

SUGGESTIONS

1. **Incorporate Ethical Literature into Business Education** Business schools and training institutions should consider integrating Indian epics like the *Kambaramayanam* into leadership and ethics courses. This will help students and professionals develop a deeper understanding of moral decision-making, rooted in cultural context.
2. **Promote Value-Based Leadership** Organizations should encourage leaders to adopt value-based leadership inspired by characters like Rama, who emphasized fairness, compassion, and long-term vision. Ethical leadership can enhance stakeholder trust and organizational integrity.
3. **Encourage Strategic Thinking through Storytelling** Business leaders can learn from the strategic moves of characters like Hanuman and Vibhishana. Case studies derived from epics can be used to teach strategic decision-making and risk assessment in corporate environments.
4. **Develop Emotional Intelligence in Management** Characters in the *Kambaramayanam* often display emotional balance, empathy, and self-control. These qualities are essential for modern managers and can be cultivated through reflective learning from such texts.
5. **Leverage Cultural Narratives in Corporate Training** HR departments and training teams can use stories from the *Kambaramayanam* to communicate business values, build team spirit, and resolve conflicts, especially in culturally diverse workplaces.
6. **Recognize the Role of Loyalty and Teamwork** Hanuman’s loyalty and the Vanara Sena’s teamwork highlight the importance of trust and collaboration. Companies should foster a culture where team members are encouraged to contribute with loyalty and unity towards common goals.

7. **Avoid Leadership Pitfalls Demonstrated by Ravana** Training modules can include negative examples like Ravana's downfall to illustrate the consequences of arrogance, unethical behavior, and poor decision-making. These can serve as powerful lessons for current and aspiring leaders.
8. **Use Ancient Wisdom for Corporate Governance Models** Corporate governance frameworks can be enriched by integrating timeless principles from the *Kambaramayanam*, ensuring that decisions are not only strategically sound but also ethically grounded.

CONCLUSION

The *Kambaramayanam*, while primarily a literary and spiritual epic, offers profound lessons that transcend its historical and cultural origins. When interpreted through the lens of modern business principles, the epic emerges as a valuable resource for understanding leadership, ethics, strategy, and organizational behavior. Characters like Rama exemplify ethical leadership; Hanuman demonstrates innovation and loyalty; and Vibhishana reflects the importance of principled alliances. Conversely, Ravana's downfall underscores the risks of arrogance, unethical governance, and ignoring wise counsel.

This comparative study reinforces the idea that ancient wisdom and contemporary business practice are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they can complement each other, offering a more holistic approach to leadership and corporate success. By integrating cultural narratives like the *Kambaramayanam* into modern business education and practice, leaders can be better equipped to make decisions that are not only effective but also morally sound and socially responsible. In essence, the past continues to illuminate the path forward.

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An Analysis of Rama as a Character In “Ramacharitamanas” and “Ram-Scion of Ikshvaku

10



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Abstract

This paper conspicuously contributes to create an understanding how ancient myths are retold in modern texts, highlighting the dynamic coaction between traditional mythological narratives and contemporary cultural. By engaging and interdisciplinary lens that intertwines thematic and comparative analysis with psychological and cultural studies, the paper offers valuable insights into how myths are reshaped and redefined across different media and perspectives. The paper ultimately reflects how these modern retellings not only preserve the cultural theme of ancient myths but also infuse contemporary relevance, addressing current societal issues while ensuring the continued echoing of these narratives for future generations.

This paper presents a comparative analysis of Lord Rama's portrayal in Ramcharitmanas by Tulsidas and Ram-Scion of Ikshvaku by Amish Tripathi. While Tulsidas' Rama is divine and flawless, Tripathi's Ram is multidimensional, with flaws and vulnerabilities. Some view this postmodern version as stripping Rama of divinity, while others appreciate his relatability. Ramcharitmanas presents Rama as an ideal son, husband, and brother, whereas Tripathi's version explores his complex relationships, including with Ravan. This paper highlights how mythology is rewritten to create a more inclusive and humanized version of Rama, making him more relatable in the contemporary era.

Keywords: *Ramacharitamans, Ram-Scion of Ikshvaku, Lord Rama, Retelling, Mythology, Post Modern*

INTRODUCTION

Art and literature have always played a vital role in re-imagining human existence, offering fresh perspectives on identity, society, and the universe. Through creative expressions, artists and writers question the boundaries of human perception, reframe historical narratives and envision alternative futures. They challenge perception and expand identity and experience. Reinterpretations or retelling of Mythology and its characters help us to explore modern questions about existence. For example, James Joyce's *Ulysses* reinterprets *Odyssey* in a modern setting. Indigenous and post-colonial literature reclaims historical narratives, reshaping cultural identities. They blur the line between reality and fiction. They play with the structure of storytelling itself, which questions the nature of truth and existence. Literature and art frequently serve as a warning or dreamscape projecting visions of the future that reflect on the present, for example Orwell's 1984 or Afrofuturist art.

The growing demand for fresh narratives in literature and visual media has made the fictionalization or retelling of Indian epics and Puranic myths a highly lucrative venture. While the practice of reinterpreting what the West terms as "myths" is not new—India has long produced diverse versions of the *Ramayana*, penned by poets such as Kumbhan, Krittivas, Bal Ramadas, Bhoj, and Tulsidas—the current wave of retellings, emerging since the 1970s, differs significantly from earlier renditions (Shejale). Contemporary retellings, often aligned with postmodern perspectives, function more as reinterpretations rather than mere reproductions of the original texts. The application of epistemological tools, combined with a Re-orientalist critique of indigenous literary and philosophical traditions, suggests the influence of a lingering colonial mindset. (Nimavat)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Postmodern literature often reinterprets ancient mythology through a lens of inclusivity, questioning traditional narratives, amplifying marginalised voices, and deconstructing dominant ideologies. Many contemporary authors have taken myths and rewritten them to centre women, LGBTIQ characters, people of colour, and non-western perspectives. "Circe" by Madeline Miller in 2018 is a notable example of rewritten mythology with inclusivity in mind, which is a feminist retelling of *Odyssey* from the perspective of Circe, a witch often villainized in Greek myth. Miller explores gender autonomy and power dynamics in a male-dominated war. "Kaikeyi" written by Vaishnavi Patel in 2022 reimagines *Ramayana* through the eyes of Kaikeyi, often cast as a villain, reinterpreting her choices as those of a strong woman navigating power, duty, and patriarchy. "The Silence of the Girls" by Pat Barker, written in 2018, shifts the focus of *Iliad* from Achilles to Briseis, a Trojan woman enslaved by the Greeks, emphasising the often-overlooked voices of women in mythology.

Seeing mythologies through a postmodern lens has centralised gender perspectives that were often sidelined in the original myths. Queer relationships, which were often minimalised in classical narratives, were acknowledged in modern retellings. To explore the intersection between myths and colonial race

and modern social issues, mythology is reimagined by some authors. Gods and heroes are represented with greater complexity and in these works challenge the moral simplicity of ancient myths (Shejale).

The first book of the Ramachandra series by Amit Tripathi is “Scion of Ikshvaku” which was written in 2015. The book represents a postmodern imagining of Lord Rama, through a socio-political, philosophical and a more humanised form. Postmodern themes such as moral relativism, gender dynamics and inclusivity in characterization have been infused in the modern narrative, while it does not completely break away from the traditional Hindu narratives. “Scion of Ikshvaku” portrays him as a deeply human figure who struggles with societal expectations, duty, and morality whereas in traditional telling Ram is depicted as a flawless divine incarnation. He shares a troubled relationship with his father King Dashrath and his desire to bring justice and order to a fractured society. This retelling and improvisation in his character makes him more relatable and acceptable(Nimavat).

Almost in its own historical framework, the book deconstructs the supernatural elements of Ramayana and depicts Ram’s journey in a rationalised and humanised way. Modern audience that may not necessarily follow religious narratives, witness events in these retellings, that are explained through politics, strategy and human actions making the story more inclusive, instead of divine intervention. In the epic Ramayana, Sita has been exemplified as the ideal wife and queen, her story largely defined by her relationship with Rama. From the perspective of gender inclusivity, Sita is given agency and leadership qualities, who is often relegated to a passive role in traditional texts. She is a warrior and strategist, rather than just a stoic or devoted wife(Bayes)cultural and more-than-human entities are in frequent contact; however, the non-human is often seen as expendable in these human-centric places. While much important work has been done on improving care for the more rural and wild areas of the globe, to really address environmental damage we must work towards reimagining the city. These are places where the majority of people live and work, and where the majority of decisions are made about the care and protection of many environments within and beyond the city. This book contributes to the still under-developed field of urban ecocriticism by adding a posthumanist perspective, as well as expanding current discussions within urban studies and environmental activism that seek to shift political and cultural imaginaries of urban nature. Importantly, this investigation is grounded in the Australian (and more broadly, the Australasian. Manthara, usually depicted as a villainised scheming maid, is depicted as a powerful merchant who influences politics. The traditional binaries of good or evil or strong or weak are dismantled, which aligns with postmodern feminism.

The novel ingeniously critiques stringent societal structures. The Asuras and Rakshasas are represented not as inherently evil beings but as misunderstood or oppressed communities. This aligns with postmodern perspectives that question dominant historical narratives and challenges traditional binaries.

Dharma versus Adharma is the framework of Valmiki's Ramayana and Rama in "Ramacharitamanas" by Tulsidas. The modern retelling by Amish embraces moral ambiguity. Ram coheres to the law but struggles with its repercussions, especially regarding Sita's trial by fire. The story instigates readers to question whether strict adherence to rules is always just. The novel infuses elements of world building like western epic fantasies instead of treating Rama as a character from an Indian myth. It represents Lanka, Mithila, and Ayodhya as a part of a larger interconnected civilization much like Tolkien's Middle Earth or George RR Martins Game of Thrones Universe. This makes the character accessible to a global audience (Sp and Banu).

Amish's Ram is not purely divine but is conditioned by circumstances and choices. The story emphasises subjectivity and is told from different viewpoints across the series. Characters like Sita, Manthara and Asura figures get more complex and empathetic portrayals (Dr. Saroj Bala and Dr. Rajiv Ranjan Dwivedi). The novel retells events from the classical narratives with historical and modern socio-political parallel lens, making mythology relevant to contemporary audience. While "Scion of Ikshvaku" does not radically sabotage traditional image, it presents a more clear, inclusive and humanised version of the legend, aligning with postmodern literary techniques (Kumar P.S).

The portrayal of Rama in "Ramacharitamanas" by Tulsidas and Ram in "Scion of Ikshvaku" by Amish Tripathi differs significantly in terms of divinity, characterization, morality, and purpose. Ram in Ramcharitamanas written in the 16th century is a divine character and is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu embodying perfection. He is "Mariyada Purushottam" often defining the norms of being the ideal man, king, husband, and son. His actions are beyond questions because they are in alignment with Dharma and divine will. However, ram in "Scion of Ikshvaku" by Amish Tripathi, written in 2015, is a mortal man shaped by circumstances without divine power. His struggles are political and social rather than cosmically preordained. He follows Dharma but he questions it and faces internal conflicts. Tulsidas' Ram is a God beyond human flaws, while Amish's is Ram is a mortal hero burdened by expectations and self-doubt.

Tulsidas' Rama always does what is right without hesitation. His actions, even when harsh, for example Sita's exile, are seen as necessary for the greater good. Dharma is absolute and Rama upholds it unquestioningly. Amish's Ram, on the other hand, is more pragmatic and conflicted. He struggles with duty versus personal emotions. His decisions are rationalised, sometimes questioning tradition. He does not blindly follow Dharma but interprets it based on justice. In Ramcharitamanas, Dharma is fixed but in "Scion of Ikshvaku," Ram must define Dharma for himself. In Ramacharitamanas, Sita is an ideal devoted wife (Rathod). Their relationship is divine with Rama being unquestionable in his actions. Even in painful moments like Sita's exile he is beyond personal emotions. In Amish's "Scion of Ikshvaku," the relationship of Ram and Sita is a true partnership where Sita is a warrior and strategist. He deeply loves and respects her but still adheres to loss even when it pains him. Sita is not just devoted but also critical of societal norms, influencing Rama's thoughts. Amish's Ram and Sita have a more

balanced and modern relationship, while in Ramcharitamanas their dynamics is rooted in divine duty(Hegde).

In Tulsidas' Ramcharitamanas, Rama is born to be a king and upholds divine order without question. His exile is fate driven and he accepts it with unwavering grace. Leadership is about serving and upholding Dharma and is not a personal struggle. In Amish's "Scion of Ikshvaku," Ram is portrayed as a reluctant and struggling leader, criticised by his father Dashrath. He earns his greatness through hardships rather than being predestined. Leadership is seen as responsibility that requires difficult choices not just divine duty. Ramcharitamanas represents Rama as a naturally perfect character while in "Scion of Ikshvaku" Ram learns through struggles(Shejale).

In Ramcharitamanas, Ravana is pure evil and his defeat is a moral and divine necessity. The battle is about good versus evil with Rama as a righteous force. But in "Scion of Ikshvaku," Ravana is completely antagonistic and not entirely evil. The conflict is political, ideological, and strategic rather than just cosmic. Tulsidas's Rama fights a black and white war a battle of good and evil while Amish is Rama faces a grey morally complex war(Sp and Banu).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, contemporary Indian writers have effectively represented India's rich and diverse culture and history. The tradition of Indian spiritual literature has existed from the Vedic period to the present, with mythical stories serving as a source of inspiration for generations of Indian writers. These structured narratives connect us to the profound questions of life that religions have long explored and sought to answer (Kumar).

Unlike other creatures, humans are deeply engaged with spiritual matters, including cognitive, social, artistic, and political concerns. Since the dawn of time, if not earlier, faith and humanity have shared a profound connection. Myths serve as reflections of diverse religious and cultural beliefs, making the history of civilizations inherently linked to mythology and religion. Through mythology and culture, individuals gain a deeper understanding of their world and the meaning of life. Although centuries have passed since epic narratives were first written, their extraordinary stories continue to hold significance across all artistic genres, captivating and inspiring people even today. These epics are cherished not only for their poetic brilliance but also for the profound philosophical wisdom they convey, offering valuable lessons on the art of living. Among them, the Ramayana stands as one of the most influential texts in Indian culture. Its timeless stories, familiar to nearly every individual from childhood, remain relevant in contemporary society. More than just a moral tale passed down through generations, it serves as a rich and enduring source of study(B. and Lourdasamy).

Scholars and critics have analysed the Ramayana from numerous perspectives, yet there is still much to explore. This study examines four modern retellings of the epic, focusing on the powerful female characters like Sita, Manthara, and Kaikeyi. By employing feminist analysis, power dynamics, and gender

perspectives, the study aims to uncover the self-crisis and personal struggles of these prominent women within the epic. Re-representation of Mythology and its characters provide a fresh perspective, where the character adapts to the existing environment and is more acceptable in the modern context where realistic entities are more acceptable than the idealistic ones.

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Seed of Corporate Perceptions Through Practical Indian Knowledge System- A Conceptual Study

11



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Abstract

The corporate dominion has possibly never been as exacting and viable as it is today. The Indian Knowledge System, profoundly engrained in ancient mythology, has long been measured a source of reflective knowledge by scholars worldwide. Mythological chronicles, straddling epochs, have meaningfully prejudiced various scopes of human civilization. This study explores how insights derived from these age-old Indian scriptures can be applied to contemporary corporate contexts. It magnets upon secondary data obtained from commanding texts to demeanour this theoretical analysis. The epics—Ramayana and Mahabharata—assist as introductory gears for extracting tactical standpoints embedded within the parables and images of ancient India. Moreover, this study disparities the metaphysical deviation between Western epitomes of virtue and the symbolic foundations of Indian mythic thought, offering a ethnically nuanced method to corporate knowledge.

Keywords: *Indian Knowledge System, Corporate, Parables, Ramayana, Mythic.*

INTRODUCTION

It is from the initial episodes of the Indian evolution that the preserves and shrines of Indian practice have conspicuously contained the idol of the Goddess Lakshmi— who represents prosperity and affluence (Mehta, Thakur, Chauhan & Uprety, 2018). This stipulates that the concept of wealth making has been apprehended in tall regard in Indian culture subsequently from the time of the **Vedas and Upanishads**. Whether it is Ravana in the *Ramayana* or a modern-day Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the chase of prosperity has steadily continued to be a central objective. However, a profounder examination of the Puranas discloses interesting symbolic understandings of this hunt.

The Puranas articulate two primary approaches to capital generation. One is analogous to a lion chasing a deer—aggressive, competitive, and survival-driven. This represents the concept of *Sangrama* or continuous struggle, wherein wealth is pursued through conflict (Wisker, Muniapan & Rosinaite, 2020). The second method is more delicate and strategic: like a floret producing scent to attract bees, which in turn help it embellish into fruit. This method highlights the farming of intrinsic value that certainly lures resources, rather than fighting for them. In mythological terms, this difference is signified through **Indra**, the king of gods who fights the *Asuras* to retain his territory, and **Vishnu**, who naturally draws wealth toward himself without fight. The widely dispersed imagery of Lakshmi massaging Vishnu's ends is a evidence to this charisma.

These allegories find striking relevance in today's corporate environment. Some leaders resemble Indra—constantly engaged in market battles to attract capital and customers—while others reflect Vishnu, radiating such influence that investors and stakeholders gravitate toward them without coercion. The Indian Knowledge System, as reproduced in manuscripts like the *Vedas*, *Puranas*, and epics such as the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, grasps huge possible opportunities to notify and guide modern business strategies (Sharma & Gamlath, 2018). These epics, collected thousands of years ago by sages Valmiki and Vyasa, correspondingly, continue to captivate scholars and experts alike.

The *Ramayana*, which is observed as the journey (*Ayana*) of Shri Rama, was collected around the 5th century BCE. The *Mahabharata*, on the other hand has been amassed by Sage Vyasa in the 3rd century BCE, suggests equally amusing ground for explanation. Both texts present narrative outlines that can be analogized to present-day corporate dynamics. The values, decisions, and leadership models exhibited by their central figures provide practical templates for decision-making in human resource management, leadership, and governance. This study explores these mythological symbols not merely as tales but as tools—**functional insights from the Indian Knowledge System**—for transformative corporate learning and leadership development.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives are as follows:

1. **To improve understanding** of the Indian Knowledge System through mythical stories and discover their pertinence in current corporate backgrounds.

2. **To decode metaphors and allegories** embedded in Indian scriptures and examine how they can be adapted for business learning.
3. **To contrast Western management ideologies** with Indian philosophical insights, particularly those grounded in practical mythology.
4. **To identify essential leadership traits** in the modern corporate sphere inspired by Vishnu's divine persona and qualities.
5. **To explore parallels** between Vishnu's avatars and the stages of the business life cycle, offering symbolic models for corporate evolution and strategy.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bhandari (2016)

Exploring the role of religious institutions in education, this study underlines how **Hindu schools interpret secularism** within the Indian context. It provides an indirect but valuable insight into how **spiritual ideologies continue to shape organizational behavior and decision-making**, relevant for leadership thinking rooted in Indian tradition.

Manda (2017)

The study dissimilarities Rama and Krishna as **figurative leadership styles**, both personifications of Vishnu but massively dissimilar in implementation. Rama is principled and morally unbending, while Krishna is realistic and flexible. Manda strains the requirement for corporate leaders to **identify and achieve both models** within teams—inspiring the “Ramas” and deliberately aligning the “Krishnas.”

Mehta, Thakur, Chauhan & Uprety (2018)

This article discusses how **mythological characters influence modern management practices**. It identifies a cultural pattern where figures like Lakshmi and Vishnu are revered in temples, suggesting a long-standing association between spirituality and prosperity. The researchers link this to the current corporate focus on **value-based leadership and sustainability**.

Sharma & Gamlath (2018)

This paper proposes the **“Rishi Route” to management**, highlighting the relevance of introspection, detachment, and moral clarity in leadership. Drawing from Indian epics and Vedic practices, the study advocates for a leadership model that aligns with **sustainability and ethical governance**, diverging from transactional Western models.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This theoretical study employs a **qualitative research framework**, using non-numerical foundations and theoretic clarification to build understandings. The researchers trailed a **three-phase methodological process**, drawing influences between ancient Indian sacred scripture and modern corporate realisms.

- **Phase I** involved a detailed study of ancient Indian transcripts, including the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and the *Puranas*, to originate symbolic understandings pertinent to modern business tasks. The importance was on thoughtful **applied mythology**—the real-world usefulness of mythic tales within real-world decision-making.
- **Phase II** comprised an valuation of the **modern business environment**, recognizing organizational predicaments and strategic intricacies. This stage also scrutinized **Western mythic epics** such as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to contrast core cultural viewpoints, highlighting differences between Indian and Western worldviews.
- **Phase III** integrated lessons from Indian mythological stories into modern business disciplines like **Human Resource Management** and **corporate leadership development**. Specific episodes were analysed emblematically to uncover actionable corporate lessons from the Indian Knowledge System.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Divergence Between Indian and Western Thought

Understanding the **ethical gulf** between Indian and Western civilizations needs reflection on historical events and abstract opinions. This is generally believed that in around the year 326 BCE, **Alexander the Great** from Macedonia attacked India, starting the well-known **Battle of Hydaspes** against King Porus (Verma & Singh, 2016). During his excursion, according to Plutarch, Alexander met a **gymnosophist**—a naked austere or truth-seeker often stated in Jain scriptures. When enquired by Alexander what he was doing, the ascetic replied that he was “doing nothing.” In reappearance, he questioned Alexander the identical, to which Alexander bragged about “conquering the creation.” Both mocked at each other’s worldview—reflecting the profounder contrast between **conquest and observation**.

This difference stalks from alterations in **afterlife views**. The Greeks believed that the soul, upon death, toured across the **River Styx**, facing decision before inflowing either **Elysium** (heaven) or **Tartarus** (hell), strengthening a **one-life, one-chance worldview**. In dissimilarity, Indian philosophy understands life as part of an **eternal cycle**—birth, death, and rebirth—with the soul’s voyage across the **Vaitarini River** multiple times, signifying **continuousness rather than conclusiveness**.

This difference also smears to modern business ideologies. For instance, the **Companies Act of 1956 (as per the principle of perpetual existence)** defines that a company enjoys **perpetual succession**, suggesting that it can exist forever (Verschuuren, 2016). Though, Indian sacred scripture advocate for **recurring renewal**. In the Indian Puranic custom, Lord **Vishnu (the preserver)**, Lord **Brahma (the creator)**, and Lord **Shiva (the destroyer)** are considered to form the Sanctified trio or the holy trinity. Fascinatingly, while Shiva relishes extensive adoration, Brahma has very few shrines—accenting **destruction and regeneration** over durability. This reproduces the Indian belief that **nothing is eternal**, and that creative obliteration is vital for development.

Vishnu as the Perfect Corporate Front-runner

Leadership—whether in legend or contemporary business—is the keystone of advancement. Western scholars have well-defined leadership as the aptitude to **influence others** or as the **art and science of actual management**. In Indian tradition, **Vishnu** is depicted as the **personification of leadership**, guiding celestial forces against disorder (Salin et al., 2017). He is often shown with **four arms**, each holding a figurative item that signifies essential leadership traits.

- **Shankha (Conch Shell):** Used in rituals, the conch indicates the **need for presence and visibility**. Leaders must proclaim their influence and launch their authority to be actual.
- **Chakra (Discus):** A boomerang-like weapon representing **return on input**. Whatever vigour or speculation is made—be it capital or manpower—ultimately returns to the foundation. This represents the law of **corporate trade-off**.
- **Gada (Mace):** It is a close-combat weapon connotating **discipline and implementation**. Successful organizations have to maintain strong chastisement at every level. The mace imitates the leader's ability to sustain a structured and ordered organization.
- **Padma (Lotus):** A sign of **wealth, understanding, and sensible flow**. Leadership is not only about authority but also about **allotment of value**, whether in the form of currency, information, or empowerment.

Each of these cyphers cooperatively signifies the **all-inclusive leadership viewpoint** entrenched within the Indian Knowledge System.

AVATARS OF VISHNU AND THE BUSINESS LIFE CYCLE

The **Business Life Cycle** mentions to the stages a business goes through—ranging from beginning to decay. These phases imitate the **natural tempo of development, steadiness, and change**, closely reflecting both **human life** and **mythical concepts**.

The Four Business Phases:

1. **Introduction:** Branded by high costs, low income, and adverse cash flow. The business is just captivating root and facing its first working sprints (Bhandari, 2016).
2. **Growth:** Fast growth, rising sales, and productivity. The organization commences meeting its short- and mid-term goals.
3. **Maturity:** The phase of peak presentation, where the business relishes supreme goodwill. However, productivity begins to slow, and cash flow uplands (Ratna, 2018).
4. **Decline:** The phase where marketplace share and efficiency dip. Existence requires invention or transformation through strategic leadership.

This life cycle is similar to the **four Yugas** defined in Indian mythology, with **Vishnu's avatars** shimmering the leadership styles needed in each phase:

- **Parashurama (Satya Yuga):** Fierce and inflexible—a metaphor for introduction to a business with force and gravel.
- **Rama (Treta Yuga):** Organized and ethical—perfect for the growth stage, concentrating on permanency and trust-building.
- **Krishna (Dwapar Yuga):** Strategic and political—perfect for steering the intricacies of the maturity phase.
- **Buddha (Kali Yuga):** Logical and transformative—guiding regeneration or elegant end. Some ethnicities also anticipate **Kalki**, a yet-to-come avatar for complete conversion.

These models show how **leadership progression is vital** across the business journey. Leaders must familiarize their approaches to suit each stage, as **stationary leadership leads to business inactivity**.

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Indian Knowledge Systems: Re-Examining Social Order and Cultural Practices in the 21st Century

12



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Abstract

In today's world, where we are interconnected but diverse cultures, it is important to understand the social structure and the changes that have taken place in it. India, with its age- old traditions and treasure troves of knowledge, offers a unique way to view these changes. This chapter explores the deep relationship between age-old social systems and changing cultural practices that characterise Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the 21st century. This study also examines the interrelationships between social structures and cultural traditions within Indian Knowledge Systems in today's India. It recognises that Indian tradition is not something static but it keeps changing and adapting with time. Hence, it is important to study its current state. The main objective of the study is to understand how Indian knowledge systems conceptions of social order have changed and adapted amid modernity, globalization, and socio-political change, as well as to explore the continuities and new meanings of key cultural practices in 21st century India. Conceptual and analytical approaches are adopted for the study and secondary sources are referred to.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, Social Structure, Cultural Practices, Tradition, Caste System, Varna

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Knowledge System represents a vast and intricate tapestry of intellectual, philosophical, and practical wisdom that has evolved over millennia. In India, religion originated from the concept of 'Brahma' and from religion, culture and traditions were born. Which is also called Sachchidananda. "Satya" means that which existed in the past, exists now and will always exist in the future. "Chit" means that which is the form of consciousness which has sensation and "Anand" means that which is the form of bliss. The vedic structure believed in the origin of this "Brahma" and all traditions, culture and values of India are growing on this concept. The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is a valuable collection of doctrines and involves a holistic understanding of existence, where knowledge, values and social organization are deeply interlinked also in social set up IKS provides a unique structure to understand human relationships, governance, ethics and people's life. It focuses on how ancient Indian societies transformed themselves in formal institutions and shared valuable philosophical thoughts and cultural practices. The core area of the IKS is deeply interlinked with various aspects of life. It does not move in isolation. The IKS through their guiding lights said that dharma, artha, kama, and moksha are not dead concepts, they are shaped by social norms, economic activities, and individual life. Furthermore, In the IKS the importance of self-realization and inner transformation plays an important role in shaping the moral dimensions of social interactions and respect. Sometimes IKS is understood as a rigid approach in the living process but continuous transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next needs constant adaptation and reinterpretation in changing times .In the 21st century, as global societies grapple with complex challenges ranging from social fragmentation and ethical dilemmas to environmental crises, re-examining the social structures and cultural practices embedded within IKS holds immense relevance. By delving into these ancient yet enduring frameworks, we can uncover alternative perspectives on community building, sustainable living, ethical governance, and the pursuit of collective well-being.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to re-examining the social order and cultural practices in the 21st century and to understand the concepts of the Indian Knowledge System.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper adopts a conceptual and analytical approach. It synthesizes existing knowledge on ancient Indian social structures, including varna and caste systems, ashramas, dharma, purusha artha, and family structures, based on classical texts and historical interpretations. Secondary sources are opted for the study. Different books, journals and Vedic text referred for the study.

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

The social structure in Indian Knowledge Systems is founded on interconnected concepts. The Varna system, initially a functional categorization based on qualities, emphasized karma and dharma. The Jati system, evolving from Varna, represents its complex, hereditary, and often regional manifestation. The Ashrama system outlines four stages of life, guiding individual and societal development. Dharma serves as the core principle for ethical and moral conduct, encompassing both individual (Swadharma) and universal (Samanya Dharma) duties. The Puruṣārthas – Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha define the aims of human life and influence social roles.

Varna System: The Ideal Functional Understanding

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकमववर्भागशः ।

गुण और कर्मों के वर्भाग से चातुर्वर्ण्य मेरे द्वारा रचा गया है ।

॥ 4.13 ॥ श्रीमद् भगद्गीता ।

Geeta is a universally accepted text in India and it is a universally accepted principle that the Varna system has been theoretically and religiously created on the basis of the nature of qualities and actions. The Varna system based on “Guna” and “Karma”, rather than birth. It is classified in four broad functional categories, each contributing distinctly to the collective good: First is “**Brahmin**” which means “one who knows Brahman” and once who is associated with knowledge, learning, teaching, spiritual guidance. Their primary role was to preserve and transmit education and culture in the social setup. “**Kshatriya**” is rulers, warriors, and administrators. Their function was to protect society, maintain law and order, administer justice, and ensure the welfare and security of the people. “**Vaishya**” comprises merchants, farmers, artisans, and those engaged in economic activities and “**Shudra**” designated for service and labour, supporting the other three varnas through their skills and physical effort. The philosophical texts of the Indian knowledge system presented varna as a fluid, functional division, over the centuries its practical application became increasingly rigid, hereditary, and hierarchical, leading to the emergence of the caste system.

Jati : The Practical Manifestation

The Jati system, commonly known as the caste system, represents the practical, historical manifestation that evolved from the theoretical Varna framework. Unlike the four broad Varnas, Jatis are numerous, localized, endogamous (marriage within the group), and hereditary groups. While conceptually distinct, Jatis often mapped onto the Varna categories but others are not too because this is not fully according to varna vyavastha. The defining features of Jati were strict endogamy, where one’s Jati was determined solely by birth and was immutable.

The Jati system structure, customs, and hierarchies varied significantly across different regions, linguistic groups, and even villages within the same region. It's traditionally linked to specific occupations and also each Jati held a particular ritual status. In the Indian knowledge system Jati system significantly evolved from the ideal Varna concept.

Ashrama System: Stages of Life and Social Roles

The Ashrama system was a stage of life of an individual including specific duties and responsibilities on each stage and contributing in both individual development and societal stability. It was divided into four ideal stages with specific social and spiritual roles. The first stage "**Brahmacharya**" is dedicated to learning, discipline, and celibacy. Individuals would reside with a Guru, acquiring knowledge, developing character, and preparing for future responsibilities with the aim of intellectual and spiritual growth. Second "**Grihastha**" is related with marriage and active participation in social setup. Third "**Vanaprastha**" focus on transition towards spiritual pursuits, contemplation, and detachment, often living a simpler life and last fourth "**Sannyasa**" characterized by complete renunciation of worldly attachments and a sole focus on spiritual liberation (moksha). The Ashrama system functions as a guide for individual growth in the society.

Puruṣārtha (Aims of Human Life)

In the Indian Knowledge System "Puruṣārthas" provides a comprehensive framework for human development.

अथवः कामश्च मोक्षश्च, त्रयः पुरुषार्थवकाः ।
जीर्णस्य लक्ष्यावण, वहताय मानानाम्

It is considered Artha, Kama and Moksha. "**Artha**" includes wealth, economic security, and comfort which are necessary to sustain in life. "**Kama**" encompasses the enjoyment of emotional fulfilment including love and intimacy. It is considered as a natural human desire and finally "**Moksha**" represents liberation from the cycle of birth and death and the attainment of spiritual self-realization.

Key Traditions and Social Dimensions

Indian society is a vibrant setup with ancient traditions, rituals, and communal celebrations that deeply influence life. The practices of Indian traditions serve as a tool of reinforcing community bonding's, transformation of cultural values and maintaining social development with stability. There are various key traditions in India known by Sanskaras that mark the various stages of an individual's life from birth to death. In Bhartiya Gyan Parampara, Four Sanskars are performed before the birth of a child and eleven Sanskars after the birth and one Sanskar is performed after the death of a person. "**Garbhadhan**" is the first Sanskar performed by parents with a view to get a noble and intelligent child. Prayer is performed to the pious Runanubandhi Atma and wish for Saubhagyavati is also cherished. After that "**Punsavan**" is performed for the physical and mental development of the child in the womb of the mother, with chanting the Vedic

Mantras. **“Simantonayan”** is related with the physical and mental development of a child in the womb of the mother and directly connected with the achar-vichar-shravan of the mother. **“Jatkarma”** this ritual is performed wherein the baby is released from the Doshas of the birth-time and the Dosha of remaining in the womb of the mother and for the long life of a child. After performing Suraksha Kavach of Dev-Devi of Kul Parampara, the concerned deities and Pitrus are satisfied through Pooja. Even Ghee and honey are touched at the lip of the child and nabhi-dand is cut. **“Naamkaran”** is performed after the birth of a child according to kul parampara rituals. Astrology also plays a vital role in selection of name. **“Nishkramana”** means to go out. It means a child can be taken out of home for Darshan of Panchmahabhut – Pruthvi, Jal, Tej, Vayu and Aakash and prayer is performed for the well-being and health of the child. **“Annprashan”** first time meals are offered to the child with the poojan activity. **“Chaul”** removal of hair for the first time from the head was called Mundan Sanskar to protect the child. **“Vidyarambh”** Sanskar initiated an appropriate formal education with the poojan of Maa Sharda Devi. **“Karnavedh”** Ears of a child are pierced with the help of a golden needle and make it convenient to wear gold ornaments. This sanskar helps in free flow of blood in the brain of the child so that the memory power of the child is increased. **“Upnayan”** sanskar performed in front of Guru by accepting a three-layered cotton thread popularly known as Yagnopavit. After accepting and wearing this Yagnopavit, a person is known as Dwij – born second time. In the knot of Yagnopavit are said to be residing Brahma-Vishnu-Shiv and in nine Sutra Tantu is said to be performed poojan of Omkar, Agni, Shesh, Chandra, Pitru, Prajapati, Agni, Surya, Vishwadev. **“Vedarambha”** connected imparted Vedic Gyan in child. **“Keshani Samskar”** is performed prior to starting education, the head is kept clean shaved for Keshant – Siddhi of Brahmcharya because it is believed that Kaamdev is said to be residing in Kesh. **“Samavartan”** Sanskar is performed upon the return of the child after completing education. **“Vivah”** most important ritual, Agni is lightened and by performing Parikrama in the presence of Agnidev, bride and bridegroom takes oath and performs Sankalp of adhering to Dharma assigned to each of them by this Lagna-Sanskar. **“Antyesthi”** After leaving this human body, agni (fire) which is lighted at the time of Lagna Sanskar is carried from home to crematorium and there body is offered to fire. By doing so, Atma becomes free from all types of Runas.

PRESENT SCENARIO: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

In the 21st century, India presents a fascinating scenario where traditions continue to interact with modernity and globalization. This dynamic interaction has brought about significant changes in various aspects of Indian society, including family structure, caste system, religion. The pervasive influence of modernity and globalization has deeply affected India's traditional social order. Urbanization, a major factor resulting in the weakening of traditional lifestyles and community bonds. In urban environments, a sense of anonymity weakens traditional rural customs, giving individuals greater independence and a sense of alienation from roots. Western education, which began in the colonial period and

expanded after independence, has promoted rational thinking, individualism, and scientific exploration. This intellectual shift often contrasts with traditional, community-centred, and faith-based education that challenges existing social hierarchies, especially those related to caste, gender, and family. In addition, media exposure to diverse lifestyles and ideas has accelerated the adoption of modern values and challenged entrenched customs, raising concerns about possible cultural homogeneity. One of the most obvious changes is seen in family structure. The historically prevalent joint family system, where several generations live together, is rapidly changing into nuclear families consisting of only parents and children. The caste system, an entrenched social hierarchy, has undergone significant changes in modern India, although its influence persists in complex forms. After independence, the Indian Constitution ensured equality and abolished untouchability. To remedy historical injustices, the government implemented affirmative action policies, commonly known as “reservations” that inadvertently perpetuate caste identities. Despite legal reforms, caste marriages continue to play an important role. Inter caste marriage, or marrying within one’s own caste, is still common. Religion and tradition occupy a central place in Indian public life, displaying both remarkable flexibility and evolving roles. Recent decades have seen a notable resurgence of religious identity, evidenced by more public displays of religious symbols and increased participation in festivals. This can be attributed to the search for meaning in an increasingly globalized world, the rise of religious nationalism, and strategic incentives. At present Indian Knowledge system is continuously changing due to modernity and globalisation impact but still values are available. The knowledge and thoughts or beliefs are available in the social set up of India. It is the guiding light of Indian society.

CONCLUSION

This study covered the various aspects of the Indian Knowledge System in relation to social set up and their impact on society or people in 21st century. India’s current landscape is evolving in complex change. The forces of modernity and globalization reshaping traditional social structures, especially the family unit and caste system. The philosophy of Indian Knowledge System existed in this social set up in change mode. Religion remains a strong force in public life, oscillating between its pluralistic essence and sectarian manifestations but at the same time due to unexpected bad effects on individual life or a social set up Indian knowledge system is appreciated globally as well as domestically. People are talking about revival and reinterpretation and contemporary relevance of Indian Knowledge System.

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Guru-Shishya Parampara: Reflection of the Role and Stature of Guru from the Mahabharata

13



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Abstract

“Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru devo Maheshwara” this Sanskrit chant from the Guru stotram signifies the stature of Guru in our life. Guru Brahma meaning Guru is the creator of our character, he is the one who ignites the process of thinking in us and builds the rationales of an individual just like Brahma creates the universe.

Guru Vishnu here Guru is Vishnu who is the preserver signifying that the Guru preserves its Shishya, sustains their knowledge and prevents them from falling back into ignorance. Guru devo maheshwara, the Guru is Maheshwara who is the destroyer or transformer, reflecting that Guru destroys the wrong doings and misconceptions of a shishya, while transforming them into a better individual.

This linkage from the Guru Stotram which clearly defines the Role of Guru in our society is what shows their stature of being a Highly dignified person in our society. This Personification of Guru builds upon the Guru Shishya Parampara- rooted deep in our Indian Mythological epics. The Mahabharata is one where we see the multiple Guru- Shishya relationship and how they signify the moral values, dharma and answer to the ethical dilemma. Through this paper we are likely to show these learnings in the Guru shishya Parampara from the epic is the foundation of the Indian knowledge system and how these values are incorporated in our society to prepare better individual (Shishya) guided by true Mentor (Guru).

Keywords: *Guru- Shishya Parampara, The Mahabharata, Indian Knowledge System, The Bhagavad Gita, Guru Stotram.*

INTRODUCTION

ওঁ অজ্ঞানতিমিরাক্ষয় |

চক্ষুরুন্মীলিত্ যেন তস্মৈ শ্রীগুরবে নমঃ |

In English meaning that when a child is born there is darkness all round him and it's the Guru who through his wisdom and knowledge enlightens the child(shishya) which opens the shishya's eyes and he sees the light of Knowledge and wisdom. The Guru enlightening the shishya is the pillar of the Guru – Shishya Parampara existing from the time of the Epics.

This Guru Shishya Relationship from the ages of the Mythological epics have been a relationship of sheer bond and belief upon each other.

Earlier during the Vedic period, the existence of Gurukul shows how the shishya spent most of his Brahmacharya with their Guru. The Guru not only focussed on teaching scriptures rather focused on the Holistic development of the shishya through real life examples, learning from the observations of real-world situations and occurrences.

The Shishya idolised their Guru and we're connected to them through determination. The Guru shaped the shishya as an individual, identifying their strengths and weakness. Like In Mahabharata, Guru Dronacharya through the

assignment of hitting the eye of a bird sitting on a branch of a tree far away, tried to identify the Focus of his Shishya. During this Assignment when he asked Arjuna what he could see, Arjun's reply of only looking at the bird's eye, showed Arjun's focus as his strength, for which he could become an archer, which required same grit and focus.

In the same way Guru identified each and everyone's potential and helped them channelize that through hard work and dedication. The Guru also focused on independence of the Shishya, as in the Gurukul every shishya had to work for their own things, making them disciplined and independent. The Shishya were so connected that when they finished their Gurukul, on their own capabilities offered Guru Dakshina. Guru Dakshina symbolised how a shishya was inspired from his staying with the Guru and wanted to give something back out of their respect and love for the Guru.

This established the Love and Respect between the two and reflected how a shishya was grateful to the Guru for his learnings. Also, how Guru saw shishya as his own child and made them a better individual for the society.

Teachings of Dharma, ethics and morality helped the shishya build this love and affection for others and be individuals of higher order for the society.

These learning of the shishya prepared them for the next stages of their life Grihastha, Vanaprastha, Sannyasa.

THE GURU – SHISHYA RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRONACHARYA (GURU) AND EKALAVYA (SHISHYA)

The Relationship between Dronacharya and Ekalavya showed the respect and admiration of a shishya towards his Guru. Ekalavya a self-learner, belonging from a lower caste admired Dronacharya and considered him as his Guru. Guru Dronacharya bounded by a promise to the Kuru Family, could not teach anyone outside of the Kuru family. But on knowing that Ekalavya had learnt his skills of archery by watching Guru Dronacharya teaching his disciples, Guru Dronacharya was not happy as this wasn't ethically correct. To Keep his Disciple as the best archer, Guru Dronacharya asked for Ekalavya's right thumb as Guru Dakshina as Ekalavya learnt everything from Guru Dron and considered him as his Guru. Ekalavya showing his respect gave away his thumb as Guru Dakshina. It symbolised that guru was a person whom the shishya aspired to be like. A commendation from the Guru was the honour of the shishya.

Also, the amount of respect and devotion to the Guru, was so high that without even questioning the Guru, they paid what the Guru asked as Guru Dakshina as Guru was considered to be correct in his place. Such was the level of trust and bond shared between the Guru and shishya.

THE GURU- SHISHYA RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARASHURAM (GURU) AND HIS TWO SHISHYA: - BHISMA AND KARNA (SHISHYAS)

Another Reference of the Guru – Shishya relationship from the Mahabharata is that of Parashuram and his two Disciples Bhishma and Karna. Bhishma was a fine shishya of Parashuram. There was a conflict between these two when Bhishma

abducted Princess Amba, for his half – brother. Amba liked Bhishma but Bhishma who had pledged to continue brahamacharya refused to do so, being rejected Amba went to Parashuram to avenge Bhishma.

To protect and preserve dharma Parashuram avenged his own shishya, this shows that Guru- shishya is not a relationship bounded by blind- obedience, rather Bhishma and Parashuram both adhered to the teachings of dharma and ethics, they fought against each other's as warriors defending their own pledge and Dharma.

While the relationship between Guru Parashuram and Karna was different, though Karna was a great shishya of Parashuram but was cursed by his guru to not being able to implement his learnings when it will be required the most. Parashuram was deceived by Karna, as Parashuram only taught the Brahmins and Karna belonging from other caste, personified himself as a Brahmin which made Parashuram felt betrayed, so he cursed Karna. This instance showed how the Guru- Shishya relationship was guided by honesty, the Guru was morally held upright when his Shishya was true to him. But deceiving and falsifying by the Shishya hurt the Guru emotionally and morally. Thus, the Guru Shishya Parampara highlights the honesty demanded from both the ends.

BROAD EMPHASIS OF THE GURU SHISHYA RELATIONSHIP FROM THE SHRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA - SRI KRISHNA (GURU) AND ARJUN (SHISHYA)

At the battle of Kurukshetra, before the start of the battle, Prince Arjun felt confused and put his weapons down as he was in a dilemma that he was going to fight against his relatives.

This is where he expresses this feeling of his to Sri Krishna who was his Chariot driver.

Arjun surrenders to Sri Krishna and seeks him as his Guru and asks him to guide him.

*“Now I am your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto you. Please instruct me “ -
Arjun to Sri Krishna (Bhagavad Gita 2.7)*

This highlights when there is dilemma, confusion or any state of imbalance a shishya must approach his Guru with open mind and humility.

As the Guru we know is the person who guides us to the right path clearing our dilemma and confusion.

Sri Krishna turns to be a Guru and helps Arjun resolve his confusion.

This also symbolises that the relationship between a Guru and Shishya tradition is not a blind adherence, but rather is more logical and rational questioning (pariprashena) combined with service (sevyā).

Shishya should derive more insights into his thinking through questioning to his Guru.

Just as Arjun questions Sri Krishna on different aspects.

“My delusion is destroyed. I have regained memory by your grace. I am firm; I will act according to your word”. (Bhagavad Gita 18.73) - Arjun to Sri Krishna

Highlights that Guru guides us and transforms us to gain clarity and control over our thoughts.

The confusion or dilemma gets cleared.

But Sri Krishna tells him “Deliberate on this fully, and then do as you wish”. (Bhagavad Gita 18.63)

Shows that Guru never forces the shishya to accept his teachings, but understand and do of their own choice as the Guru derives Autonomy and independence in its shishya.

This reference of Sri Krishna and Arjun shows that Guru enlightens the path of belief and righteousness among its shishya. And Shishya must also not blindly adhere to the Guru rather bring up rational questions to construct its character.

And here also Guru (Sri Krishna) doesn't fight the battle for Shishya (Arjun) rather he shows him the path and brings in him the clarity. Based on which Arjun (Shishya) understands his duty and performs it.

THE FOUNDATION/ LEARNING TO THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

The roots of Guru shishya relationship, the Parampara is a profound base to the Indian Knowledge system, and the Epic of Mahabharata contribute to the Indian Knowledge system.

From the interaction of Sri Krishna and Arjun it reflects that Guru is not only a person who imparts academic knowledge through scriptures but is also the person who builds the character, teaches about the values and morals of life. Thus, the Guru goes beyond and imparts wisdom and spirituality.

Bhishma on his Death Bed also preached Yudhisthira the Shanti Prava, where he teaches him the Raj Dharma (Duties of a King). Ethics, governance and leadership. This portrayed the message that learning is a continuous process of life and one should never stop learning.

And the Concept of Guru Dakshina where references of Ekalavya giving away his right thumb, Kuru Princes the Kauravas and Pandavas attacking the Kingdom of Panchal, and making its King Draupad a prisoner. Such strong appeal from the Guru and the shishya delivering them reflected the Devotion, Love and respect to the one who imparted them learnings and shaped them. Keeping the Guru at a place that of the parents was reflected asking the shishya to go to their maximum potential to deliver.

These teachings are very relevant in today's world where Shishya looks up to his guru for clarity of thought and believes in continuous learning.

CONCLUSION

The Guru-Shishya Parampara has been deep rooted in the Indian Mythological epics and is being carried forward in the modern world. The role of the Guru in transforming his shishya to a better individual and the shishya's respect towards the guru is the main essence of the Guru -shishya Parampara in the Indian Knowledge system. The different angles of the Guru-Shishya relationship from the Hindu Mythological epic Mahabharata as discussed here throws light on how this Parampara has different shades to it of human psychology, ethics, morality and also the action and reaction mechanism. The lessons from the epic have shaped the culture of our society. The stature of Guru being of great respect is the fundamental lesson taught in Indian households. Shishya idolise their Guru and take immense pride in being their shishya. In the modern world this relationship exists were shishya shaped by his guru, idolise their Guru and take immense pride in preaching their Guru's thoughts. At the end the Guru-Shishya Parampara explored from the epic Mahabharata has paved the way and is what being carried forward in the modern value as our culture and ethics.

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