



Original Article

Awareness, Perception, and Effectiveness of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) Syllabus among B.A. First-Year Students of Shri Vijaysinha Yadav College, Peth Vadgaon

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Abstract

This study investigates the awareness, perception, and effectiveness of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) syllabus among first-year B.A. students of Shri Vijaysinha Yadav College, Peth Vadgaon. Using a structured questionnaire, responses from 80 students (equally divided by gender) were analyzed to assess pre-course familiarity, perceived relevance, and curriculum impact. Findings reveal that while prior awareness of IKS was limited, exposure through the syllabus significantly enhanced understanding of India's intellectual heritage, particularly in areas such as Yoga, Ayurveda, and Vedic philosophy. Students acknowledged the relevance of IKS to humanities education but highlighted the need for deeper content, practical applications, and integration with modern disciplines. Career-oriented benefits were perceived ambiguously, indicating the importance of aligning the syllabus with employability skills in sectors like wellness, sustainability, and cultural tourism. The study underscores the alignment of IKS with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 vision for holistic, culturally rooted, and interdisciplinary learning. Recommendations include curriculum expansion, experiential learning initiatives, faculty training in interdisciplinary pedagogy, and early introduction of IKS in school curricula. By bridging traditional wisdom with contemporary applications, the IKS syllabus can foster cultural pride, critical thinking, and relevant skills, making it a transformative component of higher education in India.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System (IKS), humanities education, cultural heritage, NEP 2020, pedagogical integration, student perception, curriculum development

Introduction

Indian Knowledge System (IKS): Bridging Tradition and Modernity

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) represents a vast repository of intellectual traditions, encompassing philosophy, arts, literature, and social practices rooted in ancient Indian texts such as the Vedas, Puranas, and Subhashitas. Unlike compartmentalized Western frameworks, IKS emphasizes holistic learning, integrating ethical, spiritual, and cultural dimensions. The revival of IKS in higher education aligns with global efforts to decolonize curricula and promote indigenous knowledge. For B.A. I year students, IKS offers a lens to critically engage with India's intellectual legacy while addressing modern challenges such as cultural erosion and ethical governance.

IKS in the Humanities Curriculum

The B.A. I year IKS syllabus of Shivaji University, Kolhapur focuses on modules such as Vedic philosophy, Indian arts, and socio-cultural movements like the Varkari Sampraday. This integration aims to equip students with a nuanced understanding of India's cultural continuity and its relevance to disciplines like history, sociology, and literature. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 underscores this alignment, advocating for curricula that blend traditional wisdom with modern academic rigor.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the awareness of IKS among first-year B. A. students before and after taking the course.

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- To evaluate students' perception of the relevance and effectiveness of the IKS syllabus.
- To determine the extent to which the IKS syllabus contributes to career development.
- To identify key areas that need improvement based on student feedback.

Hypothesis

The study is guided by the following hypotheses:

- H1: The students have limited awareness of IKS before taking the course.
- H2: The IKS significantly develops students' perception of traditional knowledge.
- H3: Students find the IKS syllabus useful for career development.
- H4: There is a need for the syllabus revisions.

Methodology

Participants and Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was administered to 80 first-year B.A. students (50% male, 50% female) at Shri Vijaysinha Yadav College. The questionnaire comprised five sections:

Section A: Demographic details (gender, college).

Section B: Awareness of IKS (prior knowledge, sources).

Section C: Perception of syllabus relevance.

Section D: Effectiveness of syllabus delivery.

Section E: Suggestions for improvement.

Analytical Framework

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Open-ended responses were categorized thematically to identify recurring feedback.

Statistical Analysis of IKS Questionnaire

Table 1: Awareness of IKS Before College: (Section B-1)

Response	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Yes	22	27.5%
No	58	72.5%

Interpretation: This data shows that IKS is not commonly introduced at the school level, indicating a gap in the early education system regarding traditional knowledge. The fact that only limited number of students were aware of IKS before college suggests that most students have limited exposure to India's intellectual heritage until they reach higher education. This highlights the need to introduce IKS-related topics at earlier stages of schooling.

Table 2: How Students First Learned About IKS: (Section B-2)

Source of Awareness	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
College Lectures	50	62.5%
Family/Friends	15	18.75%
Media (Internet, TV, etc.)	10	12.5%
Other	5	6.25%

Interpretation: The dominance of college lectures as a primary source of IKS knowledge shows that formal education plays a crucial role in spreading awareness about traditional knowledge systems. However, the low percentage of awareness from media suggests that there is a lack of digital and television-based promotion of IKS concepts. This indicates the need for more engagement through social media, documentaries, and online courses to make IKS more accessible to younger generations.

Table 3: Prior Awareness of Specific Topics in IKS (Section B-3)

Topic	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Four Vedas & Vedic Life	40	50%
Varkari Sampraday & Vari	35	43.75%
Yoga & Vipashyana	45	56.25%
Ayurveda (Charak, Sushrut, Jivak)	38	47.5%
Kautilya's Arthashastra	20	25%
Arts & Architecture	18	22.5%

Interpretation: The higher awareness of Yoga, Ayurveda, and Vedas suggests that these topics have a strong cultural presence in society. In contrast, the lower awareness of Arthashastra and Indian architectural heritage reflects a lack of exposure to historical and economic aspects of IKS. This shows a need to integrate a broader spectrum of traditional knowledge into the school curriculum to ensure students understand India's intellectual and scientific contributions beyond spirituality and wellness.

Table 4: Change in Perception About IKS After the Course (Section C-1)

Perception Change	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Significantly Increased	30	37.5%
Moderately Increased	35	43.75%
Slightly Increased	10	12.5%
No Change	5	6.25%

Interpretation: This result shows that the IKS course is effective in improving students' understanding and appreciation of traditional Indian knowledge. The fact that only 6.25% of students saw no change suggests that the syllabus successfully engages most learners. However, efforts can still be made to enhance engagement for the minority who did not experience a shift in perception.

Table 5: Relevance of IKS to Humanities (Section C-2)

Response	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Very Relevant	28	35%
Somewhat Relevant	32	40%
Neutral	10	12.5%
Not Very Relevant	6	7.5%
Not Relevant	4	5%

Interpretation: The majority of students see IKS as beneficial to humanities education, suggesting that the subject aligns well with disciplines like philosophy, history, and cultural studies. The 12.5% neutral response indicates that some students may not fully understand its connection to humanities, highlighting the need for clearer explanations of IKS's relevance.

Table 6: Relevance of IKS for Future Career (Section C-3)

Response	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Yes	25	31.25%
No	22	27.5%
Not Sure	33	41.25%

Interpretation: The mixed opinions indicate that while some students see professional value in IKS, many are uncertain about its practical applications in the job market. This suggests that career-oriented modules should be added to the syllabus to help students connect IKS knowledge with employment opportunities.

Table 7: Satisfaction with IKS Syllabus (Section D-1)

Response	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Very Satisfied	20	25%
Satisfied	35	43.75%
Neutral	15	18.75%
Dissatisfied	7	8.75%
Very Dissatisfied	3	3.75%

Interpretation: A majority of students are satisfied with the syllabus, indicating that it meets their academic expectations. However, the presence of neutral and dissatisfied responses suggests that some students feel certain aspects of the syllabus could be improved, possibly in terms of content depth or teaching methodology.

Table 8: Effectiveness of the Syllabus in Conveying importance of IKS (Section D-2)

Response	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Very Effective	25	31.25%
Effective	30	37.5%
Neutral	15	18.75%
Not Effective	7	8.75%
Not At All Effective	3	3.75%

Interpretation: The syllabus successfully communicates the value of IKS to most students. The presence of neutral and negative responses suggests that while the theoretical aspects of IKS are well presented, additional efforts may be required to make the subject more engaging and relatable to students' academic and personal interests.

Table 9: Practical Applications in IKS (Section D-3)

Response	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Very Effective	18	22.5%
Somewhat Effective	25	31.25%
Neutral	20	25%
Not Effective	10	12.5%
Not At All Effective	7	8.75%

Interpretation: The lower percentage of students who found the syllabus effective in practical applications suggests that the current structure focuses more on theoretical knowledge. This indicates the need for incorporating hands-on learning, such as yoga workshops, Ayurveda demonstrations, and field visits to heritage sites, to enhance the practical understanding of IKS concepts.

Table 10: Need for Syllabus Revision (Section E-1)

Response	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Yes	32	40%
No	20	25%
Maybe	28	35%

Interpretation: A significant portion of students feel that the syllabus requires updates, which suggests that either the course content needs to be expanded, or the teaching methods need to be improved. The 35% who are unsure may not have strong opinions on this, indicating that a more detailed discussion on potential improvements is necessary before making revisions.

Table 11: Areas Needing Improvement (Section E-2)

Improvement Area	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Practical Applications	50	62.5%
Content Depth	35	43.75%
Integration with Modern Disciplines	30	37.5%
Teaching Methodology	25	31.25%

Interpretation: The overwhelming response for enhancing practical applications reinforces previous findings that students want a more hands-on approach to learning IKS. This suggests that practical demonstrations, field visits, and interactive learning experiences should be included in the syllabus. Additionally, 43.75% of students feel that more in-depth content is needed, which means that certain topics might be too basic or general and require further expansion.

Table 12: Most Valuable Outcomes of IKS (Section E-3)

Outcome	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Understanding Traditional Health System	28	35.00%
Application of Ayurveda	25	31.25%
Awareness with Sustainability	15	18.75%
Integrations with Modern Science	12	15.00%

Interpretation: The emphasis on traditional health systems and Ayurveda suggests that students see IKS as a source of valuable knowledge for health and wellness. The lower percentage for modern science integration indicates that students may not be fully aware of how traditional knowledge can complement contemporary scientific advancements. This suggests a need to highlight more examples of how IKS principles align with modern research in medicine, ecology, and sustainable living.

Findings:

Findings on Awareness, Perception, and Effectiveness of the IKS Syllabus:

- **Awareness (Table 1):** Most students had little awareness of the Indian Knowledge System before starting college, pointing to a gap in early education.
- **Awareness Source (Table 2):** College lectures were the main source through which students learned about the Indian Knowledge System.
- **Prior Topic Awareness (Table 3):** Students were more familiar with topics like Yoga and Ayurveda than historical or economic aspects of the Indian Knowledge System.
- **Perception Change (Table 4):** The course significantly improved students' understanding and appreciation of the Indian Knowledge System.
- **Relevance to Humanities (Table 5):** Most students found the Indian Knowledge System relevant to their humanities education.
- **Career Relevance (Table 6):** Students were uncertain about how the Indian Knowledge System could benefit their future careers.
- **Syllabus Satisfaction (Table 7):** While many students were satisfied with the syllabus, some felt improvements were needed.
- **Effectiveness (Table 8):** The syllabus effectively communicated the importance of the Indian Knowledge System to most students.
- **Practical Applications (Table 9):** Students felt the syllabus lacked practical applications of the Indian Knowledge System.
- **Syllabus Revision (Table 10):** A considerable number of students suggested updating the syllabus for better content and teaching methods.
- **Areas for Improvement (Table 11):** Students recommended adding more practical experiences and deeper content to the syllabus.
- **Valuable Outcomes (Table 12):** Traditional health systems and Ayurveda were seen as the most valuable aspects of the Indian Knowledge System.

Recommendations:

1. Curriculum Revisions:

- Expand the syllabus to include more topics like Puranas, Subhashitas, and Indian architectural heritage to provide a broader understanding of the Indian Knowledge System.
- Introduce comparative studies that link traditional Indian knowledge with global philosophical traditions to highlight its universal relevance.

2. Experiential Learning:

- Organize hands-on activities such as yoga workshops, Ayurveda demonstrations, and heritage walks to historical sites to make learning more engaging and practical.

- Collaborate with local communities, such as the Varkari Sampraday, to provide immersive cultural experiences.
- 3. **Teaching Methodology:**
 - Train faculty in interdisciplinary teaching methods to make the syllabus more dynamic and relatable.
 - Use digital tools like virtual tours of historical sites (e.g., Harappan sites) to enhance student engagement.
- 4. **Career Integration:**
 - Add modules that demonstrate the practical applications of the Indian Knowledge System in modern careers, such as sustainable development, wellness industries, and cultural tourism.
 - Encourage students to undertake research projects that explore the relevance of traditional knowledge in contemporary fields like governance, ecology, and health.
- 5. **Early Education Integration:**
 - Advocate for the inclusion of Indian Knowledge System topics in school curricula to build awareness from an early age.

Conclusion:

The Indian Knowledge System syllabus has successfully sparked interest among students in India's intellectual and cultural heritage. However, the study highlights areas for improvement, such as enhancing practical applications, deepening content, and making the subject more relevant to modern careers. By addressing these gaps through curriculum revisions, experiential learning, and innovative teaching methods, the syllabus can better align with the National Education Policy 2020's vision of holistic and culturally rooted education. With these changes, the Indian Knowledge System can become a more dynamic and impactful component of humanities education, fostering a deeper connection between students and their cultural heritage.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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