United International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research
ISSN: 3048-6726 (UIJMR) Impact Factor: 6.934 (SJIF)
An International Peer-Reviewed and Refereed Multidisciplinary Journal
www.uijmr.in Vol-3, Special Issue-II ,2026

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: FOUNDATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND MODERN RELEVANCE

Dr. K.V. Sobha Rani[1]
Lecturer in Computer Applications, GDC, Ramachandrapuram-533255, A.P., India
E-mail: vsobharanikadumu@gmail.com
CH. V Siva Ram Prasad[2]
Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics, Aditya University, Surampalem, A.P. India

ABSTRACT
The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is a massive and organized knowledge base of scientific and technological knowledge that has been developed in India over a period of several millennia. IKS has made important contributions to various areas of knowledge such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, metallurgy, architecture, linguistics, and logic. This seminar paper will discuss the basic principles of the Indian Knowledge System, its important contributions to science and technology, and its relevance in the modern world, especially in the context of modern computing, artificial intelligence, and sustainable development.

KEYWORDS: Indian Knowledge System, Ancient Indian Science, Science and Technology, Computing, Mathematics, Sustainability

1. INTRODUCTION
India has one of the oldest and uninterrupted traditions of knowledge in the world. The Indian Knowledge System is a body of knowledge that has been developed through observation, experimentation, logical analysis, and debate. Contrary to popular misconceptions, IKS is not only philosophical or spiritual in nature but is also very scientific and technological. The ancient Indians have made some outstanding contributions to science and technology that are still relevant in the modern disciplines of mathematics, computer science, medicine, and engineering.

The scientific tradition in India has its roots in the ancient texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and later Shastras and Samhitas. These texts record the observations of the natural laws, number systems, astronomical

observations, medical practices, material sciences, and engineering. The knowledge was not compartmentalized in separate disciplines but was based on an interdisciplinary approach, where science, technology, ethics, and philosophy were interwoven. This integrated approach enabled ancient Indian scientists to develop sustainable and responsible technologies.

From the science and technology point of view, specifically computer science, the Indian Knowledge System provides many insights into algorithmic thinking, formal language structures, logic, and data representation. The relevance of Panini's grammar, binary patterns in prosody, and logical frameworks in Indian philosophy to computer science, artificial intelligence, and natural language processing is immediate. Thus, the study of IKS is important not only for preserving our cultural heritage but also for providing future insights into scientific and technological innovations.

2. FOUNDATIONS OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

The bases of the Indian Knowledge System are rooted in ancient texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and various Shastras. Knowledge in IKS was divided into various disciplines like natural sciences, applied sciences, humanities, and philosophy.

2.1 Epistemological Foundation

IKS accepts various ways of knowledge acquisition:

- Pratyaksha (Perception) – knowledge acquired by direct observation
- Anumana (Inference) – knowledge acquired by logical inference from observation
- Upamana (Comparison) – knowledge acquired by comparison
- Shabda (Authoritative testimony) – validated knowledge from texts

This epistemology is a systematic and rational one, similar to contemporary scientific methods.

2.2 Educational Framework

Knowledge acquisition was done through the Gurukula system, where students resided with the teacher and acquired knowledge through discussions, debates, memorization, and application.

Education was imparted with discipline, morality, and all-round development.

3. SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGY IN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

The Indian scholars adopted a scientific methodology that included the following:

- Observation (Pratyaksha)
- Inference (Anumana)
- Experimentation and verification

- Logical reasoning (Nyaya)

The above scientific methodology is almost similar to the modern scientific research process.

4. CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

4.1 Mathematics

Indian mathematicians contributed to the following areas of mathematics:

- Zero
- Decimal number system
- Algebraic equations and solutions
- Trigonometric functions (sine, cosine)

These mathematical developments are the foundation of modern computing, digital systems, and algorithms.

4.2 Astronomy and Space Science

- Correct calculation of planetary positions
- Explanations of solar and lunar eclipses
- Rotation of the Earth on its axis (Aryabhata)
- Development of calendars and time measurement systems

Ancient Indian observatories indicate sophisticated astronomical engineering.

4.3 Medicine and Life Sciences

Ayurveda is a comprehensive healthcare system emphasizing prevention and treatment.

Major contributions include:

- Surgical practices (Sushruta)
- Herbal medicine
- Anatomy and physiology
- Mental health concepts

Most modern medical practices have their roots in these early developments.

4.4 Metallurgy and Material Science

- Rust-resistant iron pillar of Delhi
- High-quality steel production (Wootz steel)
- Metal extraction and alloying processes

These developments indicate sophisticated material engineering knowledge.

4.5 Architecture and Civil Engineering

- Vastu Shastra concepts
- Temple architecture with stability
- Advanced water harvesting systems

- Earthquake-resistant structures

Sophisticated engineering skills are apparent in ancient structures that have stood the test of time.

5. INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

From the computer science point of view, the relevance of Indian Knowledge System can be understood as follows:

- Algorithms: Step-by-step problem-solving techniques
- Formal languages: Panini's grammar as a rule-based system
- Binary numbers: Ideas in ancient prosody (Pingala)
- Logic and reasoning: Nyaya school of philosophy

Research in modern artificial intelligence and natural language processing is influenced by Sanskrit grammar and Indian logic systems.

6. RELEVANCE OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM IN MODERN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Indian Knowledge Systems provide an integrated framework that combines scientific thinking, ethics, and sustainable development. In the current scenario of fast-paced technological development, IKS provides important insights that add to innovation while maintaining social and environmental harmony. The relevance of IKS in modern science and technology can be explained in the following dimensions.

6.1 Sustainable Technological Development

Another important tenet of Indian Knowledge Systems is sustainability and harmony with nature. The ancient Indian technologies were developed in such a way that they would fulfill the needs of human beings without upsetting the balance of nature. The traditional methods of water resource management, agriculture, architecture, and energy use were sustainable by their very nature. In computer science, sustainability inspired by IKS helps in the development of energy-efficient algorithms, green data centers, and eco-friendly hardware design.

Modern Relevance

IKS-based solutions can provide answers to modern problems like climate change, energy efficiency, sustainable computing, and environmentally responsible technological development.

6.2 Ethical Frameworks in Artificial Intelligence and Computing

Ethics is deeply rooted in Indian philosophical thought, making IKS extremely relevant in the context of contemporary computing and AI technology. Theories such as Dharma (duty), Karma (action and consequence), and Ahimsa (non-harm) form the basis of ethics in the use of technology. Indian logical schools such as Nyaya

stress the importance of valid reasoning, truth, and accountability, which are critical in the context of transparent and explainable AI.

Modern Relevance

IKS is relevant in the context of ethical AI, trustworthy computing, data privacy, fair algorithms, and responsible use of emerging technologies.

6.3 Promotion of Interdisciplinary Research

IKS is necessarily interdisciplinary, combining science, mathematics, medicine, philosophy, logic, and technology. The ancient Indian scholars did not think of knowledge as compartmentalized; rather, they considered it a holistic system.

Modern Relevance

IKS promotes interdisciplinary research, problem-solving, and innovation in various scientific and technological fields.

6.4 Curriculum Development under NEP 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 stresses the need for the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems in higher education. IKS curriculum development helps in developing conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and contextual learning. Integration of IKS helps in developing an understanding among students to relate traditional knowledge with modern scientific concepts. In computer science education, IKS helps in developing logic, algorithms, ethics, and systems thinking from an indigenous perspective.

Modern Relevance

The integration of IKS helps in improving the quality of education, cultural relevance, innovation, and overall development of engineering students.

7. CONCLUSION

The Indian Knowledge System is a very rich and scientific tradition that has made a remarkable contribution to the world of science and technology. The Indian Knowledge System is still very relevant in the modern world, especially in the fields of computing, artificial intelligence, and sustainable development. By incorporating the Indian Knowledge System into modern scientific research and education, India can provide innovative and ethical solutions to modern problems.

6. 8. 8. REFERENCES

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