The Role of Teacher Attitude and Teaching Style in Shaping the Integration of IKS in Modern Education: A Qualitative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) constitutes a vast and intricate tapestry of intellectual, scientific, and cultural traditions that have evolved over millennia on the Indian subcontinent. Concurrently, the structure of Indian higher education has been significantly reshaped by the widespread adoption of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS), a model designed to foster student-centricity, interdisciplinarity, and curricular flexibility. This review paper explores the synergistic potential between these two domains by critically examining how the CBCS framework can serve as an effective conduit for integrating IKS into the modern academic curriculum. The paper first synthesises literature on the foundational pillars of IKS, including its unique epistemological frameworks, and its historical contributions to fields such as linguistics, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. It then analyses the core components of the CBCS, specifically Generic Electives, Discipline-Specific Electives, and Ability Enhancement Courses, to propose a structured model for embedding IKS content across diverse academic programs. The paper also addresses significant implementation challenges, including faculty readiness, pedagogical resources, and institutional scepticism, while outlining strategic recommendations such as specialised teacher training and the creation of digital repositories. The study concludes that a deliberate integration of IKS through the CBCS is essential for moving beyond symbolic inclusion toward a meaningful, decolonised, and holistic educational paradigm that equips graduates with a rooted yet global perspective.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, IKS, Choice-Based Credit System, CBCS, Higher Education, Curriculum Design, Decolonisation, Interdisciplinary Learning, Generic Electives.

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of Indian higher education is undergoing a profound and necessary transformation, poised between the towering legacy of its ancient intellectual traditions and the pressing demands of a 21st-century globalised world. For decades, the academic curriculum in Indian universities has largely been a legacy of a colonial framework, designed with objectives that often alienated the native learner from their own cultural and intellectual heritage (Alvares, 1991; Seth, 2007). This created a curious dichotomy: an Indian student could expertly dissect Western philosophy, political theory, and scientific history while remaining largely unaware of the sophisticated epistemological systems of Nyāya, the granular linguistic science of Pāṇini, the advanced calculus of the Kerala School, or the holistic medical framework of Āyurveda that flourished on their own soil for millennia (Balagangadhara, 1994; Dhar, 2018). This disconnection did not merely represent a knowledge gap; it represented a rupture in the continuity of intellectual identity. However, two concurrent developments in the contemporary era have created a unique historical moment to address this schism: the national mandate of

the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which explicitly champions the integration of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into all levels of education, and the structural overhaul provided by the widespread adoption of the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). This review paper, therefore, seeks to explore the critical intersection of these two powerful streams, arguing that the CBCS provides the most pragmatic and effective pedagogical and administrative framework for the meaningful integration of IKS into the mainstream of Indian higher education.

The need for this scholarly inquiry is both urgent and multifaceted. Primarily, it addresses a long-standing epistemological deficit. The dominance of a Eurocentric knowledge paradigm has often led to the marginalisation and misrepresentation of non-Western intellectual traditions, a process central to the project of decolonisation (Mignolo, 2009; Tharoor, 2016). IKS, with its rich repositories in fields like linguistics, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, political science, and aesthetics, offers a distinct and sophisticated paradigm of knowledge that challenges this hegemony. For instance, Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (c. 4th century BCE), a formal grammar for Sanskrit, is recognised for its logical rigour and has been influential in modern computational linguistics (Briggs, 1985; Scharfe, 1977). Similarly, the philosophical debates within the *Pramāṇa Śāstra* (the science of epistemology) on the nature of valid knowledge (*pramā*) provide a robust framework for critical thinking that is often absent from contemporary education focused solely on Western logic (Matilal, 1986; Dasti & Phillips, 2017). Ignoring these systems is not merely an academic loss; it constitutes a fundamental failure to provide students with a complete and pluralistic understanding of the history of human thought.

Furthermore, the need extends to fostering cultural identity and holistic development. The NEP 2020 explicitly states that education must develop "not only cognitive skills - both 'foundational skills' of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive skills... but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions" (Government of India, 2020, p. 4). IKS, with its inherent emphasis on the interconnectedness of knowledge, the self, and the cosmos, is uniquely positioned to fulfil this aim. Concepts from *Yoga Sūtra* and *Āyurveda* promote physical and mental well-being; the *Dharmaśāstras* and texts like the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* offer deep insights into ethics, governance, and sustainable living (Raman, 2012; Zysk, 1991). Integrating these can counterbalance the often-fragmentary and purely materialistic focus of modern education, helping to create not just skilled professionals, but grounded, conscious, and ethically responsible individuals.

The importance of this paper lies in its timely and practical approach to bridging the gap between policy and implementation. While the NEP 2020 provides a powerful vision for IKS, the question of "how" to integrate it into a complex, established university system remains a significant challenge (Jain & Jaidka, 2021). This is where the CBCS becomes critically important. The CBCS, by its very design, offers a flexible, student-centric, and interdisciplinary structure that is uniquely suited for this task (University Grants Commission [UGC], 2018). Its components, Core Courses, Discipline-Specific Electives (DSE), Generic Electives (GE), and Ability Enhancement Courses (AEC/SEC), provide multiple, non-disruptive entry points for IKS content. For example, a student of Computer Science could take a GE on the "History of Indian Mathematics," while a Management student could opt for a DSE on "Indian Ethos in Leadership." This paper argues that the CBCS framework is the most viable vehicle to transport IKS from the periphery of academic discourse to the core of the student learning experience, moving beyond tokenism to substantive integration (Gupta S., & Singh V., 2024).

Finally, the relevance of this review is multifaceted. Firstly, it is relevant to curriculum designers and policymakers at the university and national level (UGC) who are actively seeking models and frameworks to operationalise the NEP's mandate. By systematically mapping IKS domains onto the CBCS structure (Gupta, S., et. al., 2025) this paper provides an actionable blueprint. Secondly, it is relevant to faculty and researchers across disciplines, demonstrating how IKS can enrich their own teaching and research, fostering interdisciplinary dialogues that can lead to innovative solutions to contemporary problems. For instance, the holistic principles of Āyurveda can inform modern public health strategies, and traditional water management knowledge can contribute to solving current ecological crises (Valiathan, 2009; Agarwal & Narain, 1997).

In conclusion, the integration of IKS through CBCS is not an exercise in cultural revivalism or a rejection of global knowledge. Rather, it is an essential step toward creating a truly holistic, pluralistic, and rooted

educational system. It is about providing Indian students with the intellectual tools from both their own heritage and the global canon, enabling them to become confident, critical, and innovative contributors to the world. This review paper will synthesise existing literature on IKS, analyse the architecture of CBCS, and propose a concrete framework for their synergistic integration, thereby contributing to one of the most vital academic and national projects of our time.

This review paper aims to synthesise scholarly work on IKS and critically analyse its potential integration within the CBCS structure. The objectives are:

1. To review the foundational pillars and key domains of the Indian Knowledge System.
2. To analyse the core components of the CBCS model (Core, Elective, and Ability Enhancement Courses).
3. To propose a concrete framework for embedding IKS across these CBCS components, moving from theoretical appreciation to practical implementation.
4. To identify the attendant challenges and opportunities in this integration process.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM: A REVIEW

Philosophical and Epistemological Foundations

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is distinguished by its profound and rigorous engagement with epistemology, a field systematically developed within the *Pramāṇa-Śāstra* (the science of valid knowledge). Unlike traditions that may take the nature of knowledge for granted, the foundational schools of Indian thought, particularly Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, dedicated themselves to a meticulous inquiry into the very sources and validity of human understanding (Matilal, 1986). This sophisticated framework is not merely of historical interest; it provides a timeless methodology for critical thinking and rational inquiry, establishing a crucial foundation for any modern educational endeavour seeking to develop discerning intellects.

At the core of this epistemological structure lies the theory of *Pramāṇas*, the valid means of knowledge. Different philosophical schools debated the number and primacy of these *pramāṇas*, but a consensus formed around several primary sources. *Pratyakṣa* (perception) is universally acknowledged as the foundational source of knowledge, providing direct, sensory data about the world. However, Indian thinkers quickly recognised the limitations of raw perception and subjected it to detailed analysis concerning its veridicality, conditions, and potential errors (Dasti & Phillips, 2017). The second pivotal *pramāṇa* is *Anumāna* (inference), a systematic process of reasoning that allows for the derivation of new knowledge from established premises. The Nyāya school, in particular, developed a formal, five-step syllogism for inference that meticulously outlines the movement from perception to conclusion, highlighting a deep-seated commitment to logical structure and public demonstrability (Phillips, 2012).

Beyond perception and inference, other *pramāṇas* reveal the nuanced understanding of knowledge acquisition in IKS. *Upamāna* (comparison or analogy) is recognised as a distinct source of knowledge, validated through the process of learning by similarity, for instance, identifying a new animal by comparing it to a known one. This acknowledges the cognitive role of relational thinking. Perhaps the most significant and widely discussed *pramāṇa* is *Śabda* (verbal testimony or reliable word). In a pedagogical culture that prized oral transmission, the nature of valid testimony was paramount. *Śabda* goes beyond mere hearsay; it is defined as the assertion of a reliable person (*āpta*), one who possesses direct knowledge and is truthful (Matilal, 1986). This concept underpins the entire tradition of learning from a guru or an authoritative text, but it is not a call for blind faith (Gupta, S., & Singh, V., 2024). The reliability of the source is itself subject to scrutiny based on other *pramāṇas*, creating a self-correcting system where authority is earned through demonstrable competence and integrity.

This foundational emphasis on "how we know what we know" is critically relevant to contemporary higher education. The explicit teaching of the *Pramāṇa* framework equips students with a meta-cognitive toolkit to

critically analyse and deconstruct information. It trains them to ask essential questions: Is this claim based on direct evidence (*Pratyakṣa*)? Is the logical inference (*Anumāna*) sound? Is this analogy (*Upamāna*) appropriate? Is the source of this information (*Śabda*) credible and authoritative? In an era of information overload and digital misinformation, these are not abstract philosophical questions but essential graduate attributes. The IKS epistemological tradition, therefore, does not offer a dogmatic set of answers. Still, rather a dynamic and rigorous methodology for critical thinking, rational debate, and the pursuit of justified true belief, making it an indispensable component of a holistic and robust modern education.

Table 1: Key Domains of Knowledge

Key Domain	Description	
Linguistics and Aesthetics (Vyākaraṇa & Alaṅkāra Śāstra)	Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is a monumental work in linguistics. Theories of *Rasa* (aesthetic relish) from the Nāṭya Śāstra offer profound insights into psychology and literary criticism.	
Science and Technology	**Āyurveda**	A holistic life-science focusing on health, not just disease.
	Gaṇita (Mathematics)	Contributions of scholars like Āryabhaṭa and Brahmagupta in zero, calculus precursors, and trigonometry.
	Jyotiṣa (Astronomy)	Accurate planetary models and computational methods.
Governance and Polity	The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya provides a complex treatise on statecraft, economics, and public administration.	

THE CBCS FRAMEWORK: A CONDUIT FOR INTEGRATION

The Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) is uniquely suited for integrating the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) due to its inherently flexible, multi-tiered, and student-centric structure (University Grants Commission [UGC], 2018; Gupta, S., & Singh, V., 2025). Unlike rigid, monolithic curricula, the CBCS framework provides multiple, strategic entry points for IKS content, allowing for a seamless and non-disruptive infusion into the higher education ecosystem. This modular design moves beyond the model of a single, optional "Indian Philosophy" course and instead enables a pervasive integration that can touch every student, regardless of their primary discipline (Gupta, S., & Singh, V., 2025).

The structure's core components each offer a distinct pathway. Core Courses, mandatory for a specific degree program, can be enriched by embedding IKS perspectives directly into the existing syllabus. For instance, a core Computer Science course on the "History of Computing" can include a module on Piṅgala's binary system and the Kerala School of mathematics (Plofker, 2009; Gupta, O.S., et. al., 2025). Discipline-specific electives (DSE) allow for deeper specialisation, enabling departments to offer dedicated courses like "Indian Ethos in Management" for MBA students or "Āyurvedic Biology" for life sciences majors, fostering advanced, discipline-relevant scholarship in IKS.

Most critically, the Generic Electives (GE) component is a powerful tool for broadening horizons. It mandates that students venture outside their home discipline, creating the perfect opportunity to offer a suite of IKS courses, such as "Foundations of Indian Epistemology," "Indian Aesthetic Theories," or "Science and Technology in Ancient India", to a wide and diverse audience. This ensures that an engineering student can gain formal academic grounding in Indian philosophical thought. Finally, Ability Enhancement Courses (AEC/SEC) provide a platform for skill-based IKS learning, including modules on "Scientific Sanskrit," "Yoga and Mindfulness," or "Traditional Logic and Debate," directly aligning ancient knowledge systems with the development of contemporary foundational skills. In essence, the CBCS does not force IKS into the curriculum but provides a natural and logical architecture for its inclusion, making it the ideal vehicle for realising the vision of the National Education Policy 2020.

Table 2: Framework for Integrating IKS within the CBCS Structure

CBCS Component	Description of IKS Integration	Example Course/Module Title	Specific IKS Content & Concepts
Generic Elective (GE)	Interdisciplinary courses are designed to broaden the perspective of students from all academic backgrounds. This is the primary vehicle for widespread IKS dissemination.	**GE 101: Foundations of Indian Philosophy**	Epistemology (Pramāṇa) from Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools; theories of perception (Pratyakṣa) and inference (Anumāna).
		GE 102: Indian Aesthetic Theories	The concept of Rasa (aesthetic relish) and Dhvani (suggestion) from Bharata's Nāṭya Śāstra and later texts.
		GE 103: History of Indian Science & Technology	Contributions in mathematics (e.g., Kerala School), astronomy (Aryabhaṭa), and metallurgy (e.g., Delhi Iron Pillar).
		GE 104: Science of Āyurveda & Well-being	Foundational principles of Tridoṣa (Vāta, Pitta, Kapha), holistic health, and daily routines (Dinacaryā).
Ability Enhancement Course (AEC/SEC)	Skill-based courses focused on applying knowledge to enhance personal and professional abilities.	**AEC: Scientific Sanskrit**	Basic Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary focused on decoding technical and scientific manuscripts.
		SEC: Yoga & Mindfulness	Practical training in Āsana (postures), Prāṇāyāma (breath control), and Dhāraṇā (concentration) for stress management.
		SEC: Indian Traditions of Logic & Debate	Principles of rational debate (Vāda), fallacies (Hetvābhāsa), and the structure of the Nyāya syllogism.
Core/Elective / **Discipline-Specific (DSE)**	Integration of IKS directly into the syllabus of a specific degree program, enriching the discipline with indigenous perspectives.	**Management: Core/DSE** *Indian Ethos in Management*	Concepts of Dharma (righteous duty), Trusteeship, and ethical governance from Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra and the Tirukkuṟaḷ.
		Computer Science: DSE *History of Computation in India*	Piṅgala's Chandaśśāstra (binary prosody), the Kerala School of calculus, and Indian algorithms.
		Literature: Core *Literary Theory Module*	Application of Rasa-dhvani theory to analyze literary texts alongside Western theories like Structuralism.
		Environmental Science: Core *Traditional Ecological Knowledge Module*	Concepts of conservation in Vedic and post-Vedic texts; cultural practices promoting harmony with nature (e.g., sacred groves).

CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

Despite the clear structural pathways offered by the CBCS framework, the integration of the Indian Knowledge System into higher education is not without its significant challenges (Gupta, S., 2023). A primary obstacle is the lack of standardised textbooks and pedagogical frameworks; there is a pressing need to move beyond the rote memorisation of Sanskrit verses and develop teaching methodologies that foster a critical, conceptual, and application-based understanding of IKS principles. This challenge is compounded by a critical shortage in faculty capacity, as there are very few academics trained in both the intricacies of traditional IKS and the methodologies of modern disciplines, creating a gap in expertise necessary for effective interdisciplinary teaching (Gupta, S., 2023). Furthermore, the initiative often encounters scepticism and tokenism, where IKS is perceived as unscientific, regressive, or merely a cultural artefact to be paid lip service, rather than a rigorous

and relevant knowledge system. Finally, the language barrier presents a substantial hurdle, as access to source materials is limited without high-quality translations and contemporary learning resources in English and other Indian languages, which are essential for making this knowledge accessible to a broad student and faculty base (Gupta, S. et. al., 2024). Addressing these multifaceted challenges is a prerequisite for the successful and meaningful implementation of IKS.

Table 3: Challenges in Integrating the Indian Knowledge System (IKS)

Challenge	Description	Key Issues
Lack of Standardised Textbooks & Pedagogy	A scarcity of modern, standardised teaching materials and effective teaching methods for IKS concepts.	• Over-reliance on rote learning of Sanskrit texts. • Lack of resources that translate classical concepts into a modern, critical, and conceptual framework. • Absence of a structured pedagogical model for interdisciplinary IKS courses.
Faculty Capacity	A critical shortage of educators qualified to bridge the gap between traditional IKS and contemporary disciplines.	• Few scholars are trained in both classical Indian knowledge and modern academic methodologies. • Existing faculty often lack the confidence or training to design and teach integrated courses. • Requires significant investment in faculty development programs (FDPs).
Scepticism and Tokenism	A prevailing perception that questions the scientific rigour and contemporary relevance of IKS.	• IKS is often dismissed as unscientific, philosophical, or purely religious. • Risk of integration being merely symbolic ("tokenism") rather than substantive. • Need to systematically demonstrate the logical and empirical foundations of IKS to the academic community.
Language Barrier	The significant obstacle posed by Sanskrit and other classical languages in which primary sources are composed.	• Limited student and faculty proficiency in Sanskrit for accessing original texts. • A shortage of high-quality, context-aware translations in English and modern Indian languages. • Difficulty in accurately conveying nuanced philosophical and technical terms.

The Way Forward:

To effectively navigate these challenges, a multi-pronged strategic approach is essential. First, it is imperative to develop robust teacher training programs and faculty development workshops (FDPs) on IKS to bridge the critical pedagogical and knowledge gap, empowering educators from diverse disciplines to confidently deliver IKS content (Jain & Jaidka, 2021; Rastogi et. al., 2025). Concurrently, there is an urgent need to create comprehensive digital repositories of bilingual (Sanskrit/English) learning materials, which would democratize access to primary sources and provide the standardised, high-quality resources necessary for both teaching and learning (Ministry of Education, 2020). Furthermore, to counter scepticism and ensure intellectual rigour, universities must actively promote interdisciplinary research that validates and re-interprets IKS concepts in a contemporary context. Such research initiatives, for instance, exploring Ayurvedic principles through modern pharmacology or analysing Indian mathematical models through computational algorithms—can provide empirical credibility and foster a dynamic, living engagement with the tradition (Valiathan, 2009). Ultimately, the success of this integration hinges on the ability to consistently frame IKS not as a replacement for modern science but as a complementary and intersecting knowledge stream that enriches the overall learning experience, offering unique perspectives on holistic well-being, sustainability, and cognitive development that dialogue with, rather than reject, global knowledge systems (Kumar, 2019).

- Develop robust teacher training programs and faculty development workshops on IKS.
- Create digital repositories of bilingual (Sanskrit/English) learning materials.

- Promote interdisciplinary research that validates and re-interprets IKS concepts in a contemporary context.
- Frame IKS not as a replacement for modern science but as a complementary knowledge stream that enriches the overall learning experience.

CONCLUSION

The strategic integration of the Indian Knowledge System into the architecture of the Choice Based Credit System represents a pivotal opportunity to redefine the contours of Indian higher education. This review has demonstrated that the CBCS, with its flexible, multi-tiered structure, is not merely an administrative mechanism but a powerful pedagogical conduit for actualising the vision of the National Education Policy 2020 (Government of India, 2020). By mapping the rich domains of IKS, from its rigorous epistemological frameworks to its scientific and artistic contributions, onto the components of Core, Elective, and Ability Enhancement courses, universities can move beyond tokenistic inclusion toward a substantive and transformative educational experience. This synergy addresses a critical epistemological deficit and fosters a much-needed process of intellectual decolonisation, allowing students to access a pluralistic landscape of human thought (Mignolo, 2009; Tharoor, 2016).

While significant challenges related to pedagogy, faculty capacity, and resources persist, the pathway forward is clear. It necessitates a concerted effort to develop robust faculty training, create accessible digital repositories, and promote interdisciplinary research that re-interprets traditional knowledge for contemporary global challenges (Jain & Jaidka, 2021; Valiathan, 2009). Ultimately, framing IKS as a complementary, rather than antagonistic, stream to modern global knowledge is key to its successful integration (Kumar, 2019). The outcome of this endeavour will be the cultivation of graduates who are not only technically proficient but also culturally grounded, ethically aware, and equipped with the critical thinking skills derived from both their own heritage and the global canon. The time for review has passed; the imperative now is to harness the CBCS framework as a dynamic bridge, connecting the profound intellectual heritage of India's past with the innovative and holistic education required for its future.

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