Evaluating the Digital Footprint of Heritage Education: A Content Analysis of India's Official IKS Portal

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.102000011

Received: 17 October 2026; Accepted: 22 October 2026; Published: 19 November 2026

ABSTRACT

India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 asks for traditional knowledge to be brought into mainstream education, and the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) Division of the Ministry of Education uses its website as the main place to announce schemes, funding calls and learning resources. This study looked at that website to see how it organises and presents India's traditional knowledge. We carried out a structured content audit of the current portal (iksindia.org) and of the earlier AICTE-hosted site (iks.aicte-india.org) on 25 October 2026. Each element was coded under four headings: navigation and structure, content type, access and language, and technical signals. The portal was then set beside two national portals, the Vedic Heritage Portal and the National Digital Library of India (NDLI).

The homepage menu had nine top-level and 24 second-level items, arranged around funding schemes, events and a "Knowledge Repository". Most of the books, courses and articles that the portal points to were held on other sites, so the portal worked as a gateway more than a repository. Its branding was bilingual, but menus and body text were in English and no language selector was found on the homepage. The page source carried a "noindex" robots tag and no meta description, and ten homepage links led nowhere beyond "#". Webometric indicators were not collected, and mobile performance was not tested in this study. The findings may help web designers, library professionals and digital humanities scholars who work on presenting traditional knowledge online.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Systems; digital heritage; website content analysis; open access; NEP 2020

INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 names the integration of traditional knowledge into education as one of its aims. The Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) Division was set up in 2020 under the Ministry of Education and began work from the AICTE headquarters in New Delhi; it now receives administrative support from the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) (Indian Knowledge Systems Division, n.d.-a). In 2023 the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued guidelines on incorporating IKS into higher education curricula, which encourage students to take IKS courses worth at least five per cent of their total credits (University Grants Commission, 2023).

Colleges, faculty members and students mostly meet the Division through its website. How that site is organised, how easy it is to move around, and how much it actually holds are practical questions for a lecturer planning an IKS course, a student looking for an internship, or a researcher looking for sources. Yet the portal has had little scholarly attention. This paper offers a first structured audit of it.

Objectives of the study

- To describe the content architecture of the IKS portal.
- To examine how the portal organises and labels traditional knowledge topics across its pages.

- To assess its navigation tools.
- To identify strengths and weaknesses in free access to documents, language options and digital research tools, using evidence from the pages themselves.
- To compare the portal with two other national portals, the Vedic Heritage Portal and NDLI.

METHODOLOGY

Which Website Was Studied

Two domains carry the IKS Division's name, and earlier drafts of this paper mixed them up. The current official portal is iksindia.org, and it is the main object of study. The older site, iks.aicte-india.org, is still online. Its home page lists announcements from 2024 and 2025, such as the IKS–TKDL workshops and the UGC's recognition of IKS Centre training. We used it as a secondary source for those announcements and refer to it throughout as "the earlier site". Platforms that the portal links to, namely Bharatiya Jnana Sarita, Bharatiya Khel and Vyoma, were noted as link destinations only and were not audited.

What was analysed and when

The unit of analysis was the homepage of each domain, including its full navigation menu and footer. All pages were viewed and recorded on 25 October 2026. The footer of iksindia.org said the site was last reviewed on 18 August 2026, so the findings describe the site as it stood in that period. Inner pages were not coded one by one, so statements about language and media apply to the homepage level unless stated otherwise.

Coding Scheme

We built a simple checklist with four categories (Table 1). Most items are counts or yes/no checks, which keeps judgement to a minimum.

Table 1. Coding scheme

Category	What was coded	How recorded
Navigation and structure	Top-level and second-level menu items; links that point to another domain; links that lead only to "#"	Count
Content type	Funding schemes, events and competitions, repository items, media, outreach channels, partner organisations	Present / absent, with a count where possible
Access and language	Items hosted on the portal or elsewhere; languages used in menus, headings and body text; presence of a language selector	Present / partial / absent
Technical signals	Viewport tag, robots tag, meta description, path and encoding errors, spelling consistency	Present / absent, with examples

Reliability and Limits

Because the checks are counts and presence/absence calls, two people looking at the same page should reach nearly the same result. The core author coded the pages and the second author independently re-coded a sample, with the level of agreement. Page text and source were read as retrieved on the audit date. A page-source check cannot tell whether a layout works on a phone, and we did not run a mobile test.

No webometric analysis was carried out. This study does not report link counts, a web impact factor or domain authority, and it makes no claim about the portal's impact on the web. That kind of analysis needs a link-index tool and is a sensible next step.

Comparison Portals

To avoid describing the portal in isolation, we compared it with two government-backed national portals: the Vedic Heritage Portal, run by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), and the National Digital Library of India (NDLI), run from IIT Kharagpur. For these two we relied on what each portal says about itself in its "about" pages, so the comparison is shallower than the audit of the IKS portal and is marked "not assessed" where the sources were silent.

FINDINGS

Structure and Navigation

The homepage of iksindia.org has nine top-level menu items: Home, About, Events, Knowledge Repository, Funding Opportunities, Bharathiya Jana Sarita, Bharathiya Khel, Others and Contact. Under them sit 24 second-level items: four under About, three under Events, eight under Knowledge Repository, five under Funding Opportunities and four under Others. The menus follow the Division's activities (schemes, events, funding), not subject areas. Subject classification shows up in only one place, the article labels that come from Bharatiya Jnana Sarita, which are given in Sanskrit and English, for example "Mathematical, Physical and Astronomical Sciences". Earlier claims that the portal sorts IKS into fields such as agriculture, chemistry or town planning could not be supported from the menus.

Three of the eight Knowledge Repository items (E-Books, Vyoma IKS Courses and O-MANTRI) lead to other domains. The five e-books and the four featured articles on the homepage all open on Bharatiya Jnana Sarita. Ten homepage links led only to "#": the "More" link under About Us, the "More" links for all five scheme panels, the books counter, the event calendar link, the Archive menu item and the footer link for IKS Minors. Some of these may be script-driven panels, which a text reading cannot confirm, but a visitor clicking them would see nothing happen.

Content and Engagement

Three strands of content can be seen. The first is funding and capacity building. The homepage describes five schemes: IKS Centres, research projects, internships, IKS Minors and textbook writing. It states that research projects can receive up to ₹25 lakh over two years. The earlier site lists the 2025–26 schemes, including postdoctoral fellowships, and announces a series of online workshops with CSIR-TKDL on "Traditional Knowledge – Intellectual Property & People's Rights". Workshop-8 was set for August 2025, and a certificate went to participants scoring 75 per cent or more in an earlier round. The earlier site also announces that the UGC had recognised training by IKS Centres as equivalent to the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme (MMTTP), so the portal reports on teacher training but does not itself run it.

The second strand is events and public outreach. The homepage promotes a monthly national quiz run with MyGov (arts and aesthetics at the time of the audit, and architecture and engineering in the banner), an online certificate course in Prakrit, four documentaries on YouTube (water, Ayurveda, Krishishastra and learning traditions) and links to the Division's X, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube accounts. The third strand is the repository, which we take up next.

Repository and Open Access

The portal lists IKS Centres, funded research projects and institutional internships, each with its own search pages, and it points to five e-books and four articles, among them Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra: Timeless Strategies for Modern Governance and the Saṃvādasaṃgrahaḥ. None of that material sits on iksindia.org itself. We found no digitised manuscripts, no catalogue of primary sources and no archive of the portal's own content; the "Archive" menu item led nowhere. In short, the portal is a front door to schemes and to a separate reading platform, not a digital library. That is a reasonable design for a government division, but it means a researcher who wants primary sources has to look elsewhere. NDLI, by contrast, sets out to gather content from many institutions in one searchable place.

Language, Media and Technical Signals

Table 2. Access, language and technical checks on the homepage of iksindia.org

Check	Result
Language of branding	Division name and the Rigveda motto in Devanagari, with English translation; site title in Hindi and English
Language of menus and body text	English only
Language selector	None found on the homepage
Subject labels on linked articles	Bilingual (Sanskrit and English) on Bharatiya Jnana Sarita
Event language (earlier site)	IKS–TKDL workshops offered in "English, with Hindi support"
Video	Four documentaries and a lectures page, all linked to YouTube; live announcement streams on YouTube
Viewport tag	Present (width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0); this does not prove the layout works on a phone
Stated design target	Footer says the site is best viewed at 1024 × 768 resolution
Robots tag	noindex, follow
Meta description and keywords	Both empty
Path errors	Ten asset or page paths written with backslashes, for example assets\img\uploads\logo.png; browsers usually correct these, but they point to loose coding
Text errors	Spelling slips ("Divison", "Reseach"), inconsistent spellings of Bharatiya/Bharathiya, and a character-encoding fault ("Â·") in the article section

The language picture is mixed, not simply poor. The identity of the site is bilingual and its linked articles carry Sanskrit labels, but a visitor who reads only Hindi or a regional language would find no translated menus or descriptions on the homepage. The media picture is also better than the first draft of this paper suggested: video exists, but it lives on YouTube. The "noindex" tag is the most consequential technical finding, since it asks search engines not to list the homepage; whether it was deliberate cannot be known from outside.

Comparison With Other National Portals

Table 3. The IKS portal compared with the Vedic Heritage Portal and NDLI

Dimension	IKS portal (iksindia.org)	Vedic Heritage Portal	NDLI
Host and mandate	Division of the Ministry of Education; administrative support from NIEPA	Project of IGNCA under the Ministry of Culture; launched 2023	Ministry of Education (NMEICT); developed and run from IIT Kharagpur
Main function	Announces schemes, funding, events and outreach; links to resources	Gathers Vedic texts, audiovisual rituals and lists of scholars and learning centres	Single-window repository of learning resources with filtered, federated search
Where content is held	Mostly on linked sites	On the portal, by its stated aim	Aggregated from partner repositories
Language support	Bilingual branding; English menus and text;	Not assessed	Content in any language; interface in 10 Indian languages

	no selector found		
Intended users	Institutions, faculty, students, researchers, general public	Traditional learners, people wishing to know the Vedas, and professionals	School to research level, including differently-abled learners

Sources: iksindia.org; vedicheritage.gov.in/about-project; ndl.iitkgp.ac.in. "Not assessed" means the source consulted did not say.

Set against these two, the IKS portal is the most administrative of the three. The Vedic Heritage Portal aims to hold its own audiovisual and textual material, and NDLI aims to bring many collections together and to serve users in several Indian languages. The IKS portal does neither, and it does not claim to. Its strength lies in telling institutions what funding and training exist; its gap is in giving readers direct access to knowledge.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Table 4. Strengths and limitations with supporting evidence

Dimension	Strengths (evidence)	Limitations (evidence)
Structure	Clear scheme-based menu with nine top-level items; funding details stated, such as ₹25 lakh over two years	Menus are not organised by subject; ten placeholder links on the homepage; "Archive" leads nowhere
Institutional links	Joint workshops with CSIR-TKDL; recognition of IKS Centre training by the UGC (earlier site); partners listed on the homepage	Two live domains describe the same Division and carry different content, which can confuse users
Repository	E-books, articles and courses are reachable from the menu	None of the five e-books or four articles is hosted on the portal; no manuscripts or primary-source catalogue found
Language and media	Bilingual branding; Sanskrit and English subject labels on linked articles; four YouTube documentaries; four social channels	No language selector; menus and body text in English only; video not hosted on the portal
Technical	Viewport tag present; site reviewed in August 2026	"noindex" tag and empty meta description; backslash paths, spelling and encoding errors; mobile result not yet tested

CONCLUSION

The IKS portal does what a government division's website would be expected to do. It tells colleges, faculty and students which schemes are open, which workshops are running and where funded centres and projects are. It also brings in the public through a monthly quiz, documentaries and social media. In that sense it supports the NEP 2020 aim of bringing traditional knowledge into education.

It is not, however, a digital library of Indian knowledge. The books, articles and courses it advertises are held elsewhere, so a user has to move between sites to reach the material itself. Language support stops at the branding, a "noindex" tag works against discovery, and a number of small coding and spelling faults suggest the site needs a careful clean-up. Two domains carrying the Division's name add to the confusion.

Three steps would help most: add a language selector with translated menus for the main schemes; fix the placeholder links and remove or redirect the earlier domain; and consider hosting, or at least cataloguing, a

core set of open resources on the portal so users can search them in one place. The portal could then move closer to the role that NDLI and the Vedic Heritage Portal play for their own communities.

Limitations and further work

This was a single-time audit of two homepages. Inner pages were not coded, the comparison portals were read through their own descriptions, and no user testing was done. Later work could add a mobile and accessibility test, webometric measures such as inlinks and web impact factor, a repeat audit after a few months to see what changes, and interviews or a survey of faculty and students who use the site.

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