

Indigenous Knowledge System in Formal Education

The knowledge system of a community or a localized group accumulated with time through their understanding of surrounding ecology, life experiences, aboriginal technology, and way of life, which is a time tested way of doing things since generations and passed on as traditions can be termed as Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS). It is also referred to as traditional knowledge (TK), Local Knowledge, Folk Knowledge, Tribal Knowledge, Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK), and many more similar terms. Indigenous knowledge is an integral part of the culture of a native community. It is progressive and dynamic in nature and provides sustainability. It is unique for a particular region, culture, or society. It is acquired by a new generation in the form of informal and formal learning, or in common terms, we can call it traditional education.

“Indigenous knowledge is a network of knowledge, beliefs, and traditions that are intended to preserve, communicate, and contextualize Indigenous relationships with their culture and landscape over time” (Bruchac, 2014). Indigenous knowledge system (IKS) covers almost all aspects of culture and includes embedded technology and understanding, such as skill, technology, tools, ethnomedicine, art, craft, material culture, ecological understanding, seasonal variations, thoughts, values, cosmology, history, oral narratives, language, governance, customary laws, food, agricultural techniques, livelihood techniques, astrology, astronomy and so on. According to Gadgil (1993), it is a cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs handed down through generations by cultural transmission about the relationship of living beings, including humans, with one another and their environment. According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Traditional Knowledge (TK) is knowledge, know how, skills, and practices that are developed, sustained, and passed on from generation to generation within a community, often forming part of its cultural or spiritual identity. Traditional knowledge can be found in a wide variety of contexts, including agricultural, scientific, technical, ecological, and medicinal knowledge, as well as biodiversity related knowledge. Few

Anthropologists and policymakers think that studying and preserving Indigenous knowledge aims to incorporate locally prevalent ideas and knowledge into mainstream knowledge or world knowledge.



Dr. Amit Soni

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) includes both classical knowledge as well as indigenous knowledge. Any knowledge that originated from *Akhand Bharat* embodies insights from experiences and traditions, whether oral or literary and is organized within a structured framework that connects and guides seekers, qualifies to be part of the knowledge of India or the Indian knowledge system. It includes:

IKS in ancient India; Indian Scholars; Indian Literature – *Chaturdash Vidhyasthana* (4 Vedas and their Up-Vedas, 6 Vedangas, Puranas, Dharma-Shastra and Smritis, Nyaya, Purva and Uttar Mimamsa):

Philosophy and Literature (Maharishi Vyas, Manu, Kanad, Pingala, Parasara, Banabhatta, Nagarjuna and Panini).

Mathematics and Astronomy (Aryabhatta, Mahaviracharya, Bodhayana, Bhaskaracharya, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta).

Medicine and Yoga (Charaka, Susruta, Maharishi Patanjali and Dhanwantri).

Sahitya (Vedas, Upvedas, Upavedas (Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandharvaveda) Puran and Upnishad) and shad darshan (Vedanta, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Mimamsa, Yoga, Adhyatma and Meditation)

Shastra (Nyaya, vyakarana, Krishi, Shilpa, Vastu, Nataka and Sangeet)

Indian Traditional/tribal/ethnic communities, their livelihood and local wisdom, Myths, Folk Stories, Songs, Dance, Play, Acts and Traditional Narratives, etc.

Tangible and intangible cultural heritage and traditional practices / applied knowledge.

Agriculture, animal husbandry, Forest, Sacred Groves, Water Mills, Sacred Water Bodies, Land,

water and Soil Conservation and management Practices, Indigenous Bio-resource Conservation, Utilization Practices and Food Preservation Methods, Handicrafts, Wood Processing and Carving, Fiber Extraction and Costumes, Knowledge of dyeing, chemistry of dyes, pigments and chemicals, etc.

Vaidya (traditional health care system), Tantra-Mantra, Amchi Medicine System, ethno-medicine.

The New Education Policy 2020 of India emphasizes the inclusion of IKS in courses and curriculums at all levels of formal education. Sections 4, 16, and 22 of NEP 2020 mainly talk about the inclusion and signification of IKS in Education. Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) Division is formulated under the Ministry of Education of Govt. of India for the promotion of IKS awareness, development of trained and knowledgeable faculty in IKS, and incorporation in all levels of formal education. Under University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines, it is advised that 5% of a student's total credits should be in IKS courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The UGC aims to train 1.5 million teachers in IKS by 2025 and has launched an online IKS MOOC course. Moreover, the inclusion of the Indigenous Knowledge system, local examples and teaching in local languages will increase closeness and familiarity with the curricula of formal education for students from tribal and rural backgrounds.

The current issue of the Indian Journal of Research in Anthropology (IJRA, Vol. 10.1) is composed of 9 articles, including research articles related to the Indigenous Knowledge System of various tribal groups as well as tribal education. An ethnographic research article, "Socio-Religious and Cultural Perspectives of the Sacred Place in Bastar, Chhattisgarh" by Dr. Digbijoy Giri, focuses on the religious practices and belief system of tribes at Bastar. The sacred shrine unites the tribal community and reflects elementary forms of the religious life of the tribal people. *Devgudi* is a symbolic representation of faith, beliefs and practices followed by the tribes of Bastar. *Devgudi* is a word originated from Telugu language, which means temple. It brings village people together on different occasions acting as a binding chord, and maintains social unity. In the tribal society, the Goddess is mainly established in *Devgudi* with the faith that the Goddess will protect the people from bad evil or spirits, diseases, and wild animals.

The research article on religious practices entitled "Gory and Ghoulish Practice among Hakki-Pikki

Tribal Community of Karnataka: Offering Animals to the Gods and Spirits" by Mr. Ashok Patil, Dr. Jai Prabghakar S. and Mr. Siddappa Mali describes the tradition of animal sacrifice by the semi-nomadic tribe Hakki-Pikki, the bird catchers. This tribe associates their mythical history with the legendary Rajput King Maharana Pratap of Mewar and calls themselves a part of his *Kshatriya* army that migrated towards the south after their defeat.

My analytical research article "Approach and Role of Chhattisgarh Government in Tribal Education" (Dr. Amit Soni) focuses on the efforts done by the government through various schemes and educational infrastructural development to increase tribal stake in formal education and subsequent increase in their living standards. The Chhattisgarh government runs various schools, hostels, *Ashramshalas*, and facilities for vocational education for tribals and other socio-economically deprived sections of the state to upgrade the educational standard and betterment of the tribal students.

An analytical research article, "The changing trend of tribal education in West Bengal," by Dr. Suchismita Sen Chowdhury and Mr. Suman Das, shows a critical analysis of the status of tribal education in four districts of West Bengal covering fourteen tribal groups. Low literacy rate, high dropout rate and less participation of tribal women in higher education are the issues related to socio-economic problems and cultural stereotypes. The present study discusses a number of development schemes run by central and state governments for the betterment of tribal education in West Bengal.

A nicely concise research article, "Totemic Tradition and Identity of Korku Tribe: An Anthropological Perspective," by Mr. Mahendra Kumar Jaiswal and Mr. Vivek Kumar, emphasizes the social role of totems in the society and culture of the Korku tribe. They describe the totem's role in life, identity formation, belief system, religion, and its origin and observance by clan groups within the Korku tribe.

The research article on indigenous disaster management entitled "Some Local Survival Strategies to Cope with Flood: Examples from Bhakat Chapori, Majuli, Assam" by Ms. Punam Paul describes the ecological understanding and Indigenous knowledge system of the inhabitants of the biggest river island 'Majuli' surrounded by the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries. It talks about their ways of understanding the arrival and level of flood and strategies to cope with the disastrous

situation.

An insightful article, "Socio-economic Impacts of Forests Rights Act on the Individual Title Holders: An Analytical Study among the Lanjia Saoras of Odisha" by Kalandi Singh and Prasant Kumar Sahoo, deals with the impact of IFR on the life of PVTG Lanjia Saoras. The majority of Tribal life is nested around forest produce, and it's boosted with the implementation of the Forest Rights Act of 2006. It has the potential to bring about long-term forest regeneration and conservation efforts in addition to opening up vast alternatives for tribal livelihood and development. Government schemes must be developed and implemented to meet the needs of tribal IFR title holders.

A policy driven analytical article, "From Boom to Bust: Unpacking India's Fertility Decline," by Mr. V. Nayana and Dr. J Sandeep, discusses the need for a policy framework for balancing the needs of the demographic shift and enabling India to effectively navigate the demographic challenges ahead and foster balanced population growth. It advocates for the adoption of a nationwide Two-Child Policy in states with TFRs nearing or

exceeding 2.0, while recommending a Three-Child Policy to promote sustainable growth in regions where rates fall below 1.0. The decline in India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by cultural, economic, educational and social factors.

An Ethno-Museological article "Significance of Visual Storage with Special Reference to Tribal Collection at Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS), Bhopal: An Overview" by Dr. Danish Mahmood describes the core purpose of the ethnographic museum collection to impart knowledge to the present as well as future generation about their glorious past and contemporary cultural heritage. When everything cannot be put on display, visual storage widens the scope of exposure for more interested viewers. The case study of IGRMS is specifically referred to analyse the potential and possibilities of visual storage in tribal collections and museums.

***How to cite this article:**

Amit Soni. Indigenous Knowledge System in Formal Education. Ind J Res Anthropol 2024;10(1):07-09.

