

Implementing IKS through Innovative Learning Pedagogies The BMCC Way

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has emphasized the revival and integration of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into higher education curricula to strengthen cultural rootedness while enhancing holistic learning. This paper is a case study of Brihan Maharashtra College of Commerce (BMCC), Pune, one of the pioneering Commerce colleges which implemented IKS in a structured manner with the help of institutions specialized in this domain. With a collaborative approach and an innovative mindset, the curriculum was upgraded to encompass the elements of IKS in the syllabi. The learning pedagogy and evaluation parameters were decided to include activity based and collaborative learning methods with rational use of technology.

BMCC innovatively expanded IKS integration through project-based learning, visits and experiential learning methods, where students got to explore diverse themes such as Indian art and architecture, ayurveda, folk traditions, ancient jewellery, traditional recipes etc. Further initiatives included introducing Arthashastra, Yoga - Meditation and Folk Arts as subjects and embedding Indian theories, concepts and entrepreneurial examples in courses.

This study reveals the BMCC way of integrating IKS with formal courses, creating a sustainable learning environment for IKS, fostering the spirit of national pride and creating awareness about India's profound gifts to the world. It provides insights into how educational institutes can effectively contextualize traditional knowledge systems to contemporary student life, thereby aligning with NEP 2020's vision of culturally grounded yet globally relevant education.

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Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises the importance of reconnecting contemporary education with India's traditional intellectual heritage and cultural wisdom. As its core objective, it visualises an education model that integrates ancient Indian knowledge with modern pedagogical approaches to inculcate a deeper understanding of the nation's historical, philosophical, and value-based traditions among the younger generation. It is important for the students to appreciate the depth and global influence of India's knowledge system, which have contributed significantly to Science, Mathematics, Governance, Medicine, and Philosophy across civilizations. (Sharma & Vanguri, 2025). It is important to link our young generation with Bharat's traditional knowledge so that they can be aware about the intellectual heritage of Indian Knowledge System and can feel pride over our long-existed identity (Kumar & Kishor, 2024).

Context:

In every culture and country, education has been considered as one of the strongest tools to transmit the cultural knowledge, skills and heritage from one generation to the another. (Gupta & Dhillon, 2025; Mandavkar, 2023). The restructuring of higher educational framework under NEP-2020 focuses on integration of higher education eco-system through making it multidisciplinary, experiential and learner oriented while keeping it flexible as well as enjoyable. For this purpose, radical changes in the curriculum, teaching pedagogies, and evaluation system have been suggested under NEP-2020. (MHRD, 2020). In this direction, the component of IKS (Indian Knowledge System) has been intertwined under NEP with the objective of inculcating the awareness, knowledge and value for the rich cultural heritage of Indian Arts, Sciences, Culture and Languages among younger generations of India. (Mandavkar, 2023). For this purpose, mechanism of institutional collaborations and use of digital learning platforms have been suggested under NEP-2020 with the aim to provide multidisciplinary and holistic knowledge. (Dalal, 2023; Khan & Husain, 2024).

Research Problem:

The successful implementation of this big dream requires detailed planning and efforts from all stakeholders. Not only the Government but institutional leadership, teaching fraternity, and all other decision makers need to plan stage wise strategies for the effective implementation of NEP. These steps require special planning, introduction of innovative teaching pedagogies and flexible assessment methods to implement the IKS component in the mainstream education system. (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). As per National Education Policy (MHRD, 2020) pedagogy should have the aim to make it more application oriented, innovation oriented, and student oriented. It should make the education enjoyable and flexible enough. The present study focuses upon this issue in the context of Commerce education, a discipline which is generally considered as quantitative, however, IKS is not only about Maths or Science or about numbers, it has its vast spread over qualitative

aspects also like Art, Dance, Philosophies, Values, Meditation etc. Thus, for implementing IKS in Commerce education, it requires little different planning and pedagogical efforts to instil the feeling of love, joy and pride towards its cultural roots amongst the learners.

Focus and Aim of the Study:

With an academic legacy of more than 80 years, BMCC (Brihan Maharashtra College of Commerce) is one of the best Commerce colleges of Pune. It has always given value to adopt learner-oriented teaching methodologies and focusing upon holistic development of the students. It has followed the development of multidisciplinary courses and its incorporation in main academic structure since the starting of its academic autonomy i.e. 2017-18. With the announcement of NEP-2020, BMCC immediately took steps to adapt the academic structure and syllabi for implementing the various components of NEP. The present paper 'Implementing IKS through Innovative Learning Pedagogies- The BMCC Way' being a case study explores and tries to document the structure in which IKS component of NEP 2020 has been implemented in UG & PG curriculums. It describes the ways through which IKS components are identified, planned and adapted into the curriculum and explains the well thought experiential learning pedagogies used for this purpose. In their study Singh and Bajvai (2025) have focused that introducing IKS component requires systematic approach, collaborations and prior preparations. This study is highly useful and unique in a manner as it gives an idea how this IKS component can be successfully adopted by even a Commerce college and what kind of prior preparations are required to make this effort successful.

Review of Literature

The literature is rich enough in the context of NEP, IKS and its different components like Mahesh, Aithal and Sharma (2023) have done a detailed review of ancient Indian universities and their role in creating Indian Knowledge System while Khan and Sharma (2024) have provided the overview of Indian Knowledge System. They have discussed the value, objectives and functional process of IKS in detail. They have also discussed the legal guidelines related to IKS given by regulatory bodies. Another view about IKS has been given by Thomas and Mishra (2023) by linking it with a cold war situation. According to them, it is an approach to preserve authentic culture from westernisation. Studies done by Channawar (2023), Thakur and Rathi (2020) and Jeder (2014) focus on the concept of Holistic Learning and transdisciplinary approach, one of the fundamental components of IKS. Ferrer (2018) has highlighted the value of Vedic syllabus while Pal (2022) has discussed the importance and effectiveness of ancient India Gurukul system in human development. Lal et al. (2024) have explored the various challenges for inculcating IKS in Indian Higher Education. Their study also discusses the potential applications of IKS in promoting sustainable growth. Studies have also been done to showcase the relationship between IKS and Commerce/Management (Ahmed, 2025; Kumar, 2024). Ahmed has recommended on including the managerial aspects of IKS from ancient text while Kumar has highlighted various principles from IKS like honesty, community welfare and ethical conduct which influence businesses.

Various researches have been conducted to discuss the pedagogical requirements for IKS (Joshi and Patil, 2020; Meitei and Devi, 2024; Nayak and Padhi, 2024; Verma, S. 2025). All the studies have suggested the use of indigenous pedagogies based on experiential learning, dialogue and debate, storytelling, trans-generational and community-based learning etc for implementing the IKS. These studies have focused on the Vedic and traditional aspects of IKS pedagogies, however, there is a clear dearth of studies which focus on explaining the implementation of IKS in Commerce education. The researchers have tried to bridge this gap through their study.

Relevance of the Proposed Study:

The present study intends to offer insights to adopt frameworks that can integrate the core philosophy of *Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi* in the learning environments. It is imperative that along with modern technologies like AI and ML, the connectedness of our education system to our roots is equally emphasised amongst the young adults. The glory of our civilization, its value system and its rich cultural heritage must reach to the Gen-Z in a manner that they learn to appreciate the contribution of our nation to the world. This also, opens up entrepreneurship opportunities for them to explore the soft power of Bharat. It is very clear that NEP 2020 can play a transformative role in this regard. But its actual implementation poses challenges and any contribution or experiment done by the educational institutions should be documented and transmitted for the success of NEP on a wider scale (Chattopadhyaya, 1986). In this regard, the present study explains the detailed process of IKS adaptation and implementation. How step by step, it was incorporated in the academic structure of UG and PG courses in BMCC.

Process of IKS Implementation at BMCC:

BMCC has adapted and developed the scope of inculcating IKS component in the curricula in a gradual and phased manner since 2017. BMCC, established in 1943 has a rich academic legacy with the management encouraging innovations in every aspect of academic development. It got academic autonomy in 2017. Using this opportunity, college established the Experiential Learning Board, and founded the very basic foundation of future NEP-aligned education system. This visionary approach gave BMCC the first mover advantages in aligning and implementing with NEP requirements.

Initially, under Experiential Learning Board, many multidisciplinary credit-based courses like Mandala, Moot Court, Foreign Languages like French, German, Spanish etc were offered. Other than this, many intra and inter college activities were also organised under Heritage Collective cell like Astitva, Virasat etc. It helped the students in getting experience of Indian Art, Culture, Music, Languages etc and put the fundamental stone for implementing NEP-IKS based policy.

With the introduction of NEP policy in the year 2020, it became easy for the college to modify the structure, courses and syllabuses to implement the various components of NEP 2020. The college formalised institutional collaborations with BORI (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute), Pune, for the course of

Introduction to Vedas. This was done after the feedback received from the students who had voluntarily opted for the same under the experiential learning board prior to introduction of NEP. Even some of the teachers enrolled for this course to understand it better. The course was then introduced to all the students of first year across different streams instead of restricting it to a selected few.

The evaluation assessment for these courses involved various ways like practice questions, MCQs, Assignments, Projects and Viva-Voce. These different methods were applied in different courses as per the requirements. In 2023, BMCC introduced MCQs and Project based evaluation for the course of Vedas. Students were given topics like Indian Architecture, Ayurveda, folk traditions, Classical dance, Yoga, Meditation and Indian Food heritage etc. Students researched about their chosen themes, made reports, presentations and participated in viva-voce as well. This assessment methodology promoted originality and deeper engagement of the students in IKS component instead of restricting to completion of a course. This gave an advantage of understanding the practical implications of Vedas.

In 2024, the assessment methodology was incorporated with little modification. This time, students were given a community linked project in which they were required to compulsorily visit the Pune Book Festival, organized in Fergusson College. There, the students got the opportunity to see and purchase books among a vast pool of books. Each student was supposed to take a book related to IKS and write its review in his/her own words followed by a viva-voce. This activity gave a chance to the students to come out of the digital world and go back to their childhood memories where they used to love the physical books. This activity diverted the students towards Bharatiya knowledge and heritage, encouraging them to develop a cultural bond. In 2025, the evaluation methodology was modified to have more teamwork and collaborative learning. This time, students were given group projects which helped them to get into the depth of IKS related topics. The objective of the course was not confined to a single subject of IKS in the curriculum but also encouraged several abilities and life skills amongst the students like working in teams, critical thinking etc.

Simultaneously, college incorporated IKS component in the curriculum of other subjects as well. For example, the syllabus of Business Management included IKS component in the form of management learnings from the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, ethics from Swami Vivekanand, moral and values from Panchatantra Tales to name a few. Business Entrepreneurship incorporated Indian entrepreneurs such as Pradip Lokhande, Hanumant Rao Gaikwad to name a few. Local entrepreneurs like Mapro, Chitle, Kinetic Green etc were also included. IKS was implemented in Economics by launching a new course named Integral Economics, aimed to include spiritual and moral dimensions of Economics. In the language section, Marathi, Hindi and Sanskrit were offered as part of syllabus and the English text included the contribution of Indian authors on a wider scale. By organizing or participating in many co-curricular activities like Digital Wari, Rangdiyam, Rangkalasham, visits to Bhimtadi Jatra, Mile Sur Mera Tumhara and long-standing cultural programmes students experienced the various aspects of IKS in an enjoyable manner.

For the post-graduate students, a course on Dharmashastra was offered in 2025-26 in collaboration with BORI. This course is based on monumental work of P. V. Kane. At UG level, a new IKS based course Bhartiya Chitra Shaili has been offered which focuses on Indian Tribal and Art forms like Warli, Madhubani and Gond. In total, BMCC has adopted a comprehensive, innovative and sustainable approach for IKS implementation with innovative additions every year in the structure.

Findings & Discussion

This case study presents the details as to how BMCC has adopted the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) across its all UG & PG courses in a refined and systematic manner. Introducing courses like 'Introduction to Vedas', 'Introduction to Arthshastra', 'Dharmashastra', 'Meditation & Yoga' and 'Bhartiya Chitra Shaili' etc. reflects the successful implementation of NEP-IKS component in curricula which is ultimately aligned to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. Further, students' response towards these courses shows their engagement and interest in India's intellectual and cultural heritage.

Similarly, the integration and implementation of these elements of IKS affirm the importance of experiential learning pedagogy. Pedagogies like individual and group-based community projects on varied topics like Ayurveda, Yoga, traditional food recipes, architecture, dance and arts etc. have been strongly recommended in IKS related literature. The use of Pune Book Festival as a source for experiential learning again presents the BMCC's unique and innovative pedagogy. The integration of this activity has enhanced the aura of IKS component not only in the life and opinions of the students but it has greatly affected their approach towards the richness of Indian culture and heritage. This methodology has also been successful in emphasising on trans-generational learnings, through the involvement of another important stakeholder, the parents, with whom the students collaborated at home for better clarity and comprehension of topics unfamiliar to their generation. For example, traditional food recipes at home, traditional remedies, rituals etc.

Further, from the lens of the college, doing collaborations with institutes like Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI) and Maharshi Vinod Research Foundation (MVRF) affirms the BMCC's commitment towards providing academic authenticity and scholarly knowledge to its students. It also aligns with NEP-2020 focus on institutional collaborations. It sets an example that academic autonomy status can be a contributor in bringing flexibility and designing interdisciplinary, culturally rooted strategies. The successful collaboration of BMCC with BORI served as a model for many colleges who have now collaborated with them.

Conclusion

The vision of NEP-2020 to integrate IKS can be effectively adapted to traditional colleges as well as professional colleges with the help of innovative use of collaborations, teaching learning pedagogies and involvement of all stakeholders. It can be recognised as an impactful educational model which proves that integration of our traditional wisdom with modern scientific temper can bring better learning outcomes.

In this journey of exploration, this study fills the crucial research gap of implementing IKS for mass education in Commerce stream. As India is moving towards achieving the vision of *Viksit Bharat*, the BMCC model provides evidences that culturally inclined approach (*virasat*) can coexist with contemporary thought process (*vikas*), in a harmonious environment. However, its adaptation will need a well thought of and structured approach with academic vigour.

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