

IKS IN ANCIENT AND MODERN LIBRARIES

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Abstract :

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) represents a vast and diverse repository of ancient wisdom, encompassing philosophy, science, medicine, arts, and governance, rooted in texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, and epics such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana. Its holistic and interdisciplinary approach emphasizes interconnectedness, sustainability, and ethical living, distinguishing it from Western knowledge systems. IKS has significantly influenced Library and Information Science (LIS) in India, with ancient centres like Nalanda and Takshashila serving as early models for knowledge organization and preservation. Traditional methods, such as palm-leaf manuscripts and oral transmission, laid the groundwork for modern LIS practices, including classification systems like S. R. Ranganathan's Colon Classification and the Five Laws of Library Science. The integration of IKS into LIS has been further advanced through digital initiatives like the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) and the National Digital Library of India (NDLI), which aim to preserve and disseminate India's intellectual heritage globally. These efforts address challenges such as intellectual property rights and accessibility while promoting interdisciplinary research and cultural democratization. By blending traditional knowledge with contemporary digital technologies, IKS enriches modern LIS frameworks, fostering inclusive, user-centric, and culturally resonant information environments. Government initiatives, such as the National Mission for Manuscripts and the National Mission on Libraries, further underscore the importance of preserving and integrating IKS into education and policy. Ultimately, the enduring impact of IKS on LIS lies in its ability to bridge ancient wisdom with modern innovation, ensuring the preservation of India's cultural heritage while addressing contemporary global challenges in knowledge management and dissemination.

Keywords : IKS, Ancient Libraries, Modern Libraries, digitization preservation, curation, dissemination, etc

Introduction :

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is a very large and varied body of knowledge that includes old texts, oral histories, and traditional ways of keeping knowledge alive. The IKS has made important contributions to many fields, including Library and Information

Science (LIS). Its ideas come from theories like Nyaya, Mimamsa, and Vedanta. Information Systems (LIS) is the study of how to organize, store, and share information. This is similar to the ideas behind traditional Indian learning systems. Nalanda, Takshashila, and Vikramshila, which were ancient learning sites, were early versions of modern libraries. They focused on organizing, collecting, and managing information in a structured way. Native methods, like palm leaf texts, copper plate markings, and oral transfer, were used to keep information safe and pass it down from one generation to the next. This set the stage for organizing knowledge. The usual way of sorting Vedic literature, Puranas, and other holy writings has had an impact on how libraries and archives work today. With the rise of digital technologies, digitization projects, document protection efforts, and open-access knowledge platforms have been used to bring traditional Indian knowledge into modern LIS frameworks. The National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) are two very important organizations that help protect and share India's rich educational history. But problems like intellectual rights, validity, and ease still make it hard to fully incorporate IKS into modern LIS. Even with these problems, the moral and social aspects of IKS, which stress sharing information in a complete way and allowing everyone to learn, can teach us a lot about how library science is changing. For future generations, knowing how IKS affects LIS will not only make modern information systems work better, but it will also help protect India's huge intellectual wealth.

Objectives :

To examine how ancient Indian methods of preserving and transmitting knowledge influence modern library .

Indian Knowledge System :

IKS stands for Indian Knowledge Systems, a broad term referring to the collective body of traditional knowledge, wisdom, and practices originating from the Indian subcontinent. These systems encompass philosophy, spirituality, arts, health (like Ayurveda and Yoga), agriculture, basic sciences, engineering, architecture, literature, and more. The Indian government's National Education Policy 2020 promotes the integration and application of IKS to solve modern challenges and foster holistic

IKS in Ancient Libraries and Modern Libraries :

Ancient Indian Libraries were centres of knowledge where manuscripts were preserved on palm leaves and birch bark. Famous ancient libraries like Nalanda and Takshashila stored texts on subjects such as science, mathematics, medicine, philosophy and art knowledge was shared through oral tradition s as well as written records.

Modern libraries have evolved with digital technology. Today libraries preserve and promote Indian Knowledge Systems through digitized manuscripts, online databases, e-

books, and research archives. They provide easy access to ancient texts, translations and scholarly works helping to connect traditional wisdom with modern education.

The rapid evolution of teacher education reflects global trends, with digital tools—virtual classrooms, AI-based assessments, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and interactive learning platforms—redefining how educators are trained and how they engage students. In India, initiatives like SWAYAM and the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) Exemplify this shift, offering scalable access to educational resources. Yet, this technological advancement often adopts a universalist lens, sidelining the cultural and philosophical richness of IKS. As the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 underscores, India must develop an education system rooted in Indian ethos”

The role of libraries in digitizing IKS :

Libraries serve as linchpins in the digitization of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), fulfilling three critical functions—preservation, curation, and dissemination—that enable the integration of traditional wisdom into technology-enhanced teacher education. As custodians of India’s intellectual heritage, libraries not only safeguard ancient knowledge but also transform it into a dynamic resource for modern pedagogy. This section explores these roles in depth, illustrating how libraries bridge the gap between IKS and digital education, empower educators, and align with India’s educational aspirations as outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Preservation :

Many IKS resources—such as manuscripts inscribed on palm leaves, brittle paper scrolls, and oral narratives passed down through generations—are vulnerable to physical decay, environmental damage, and cultural erosion. Libraries employ advanced technologies like high-resolution scanning, optical character recognition (OCR), and audio-visual recording to preserve these materials, ensuring their longevity. For instance, the Tamil Digital Library has digitized over 100,000 pages of ancient Sangam literature—texts like *Tolkāppiyam* and *Tirukkural*—safeguarding Tamil poetic and ethical traditions for future use. Similarly, the National Manuscript Mission (NMM) has preserved over 3 million manuscripts, including rare Sanskrit works like the *Atharvaveda*, using non-invasive digitization techniques..

Curation :

Preservation alone is insufficient; libraries must curate IKS content into structured, educator-friendly formats to maximize its utility. Curation involves cataloging texts, assigning metadata, translating where necessary, and creating multimedia resources that align with modern teaching needs.

Dissemination :

The goal of digitization is dissemination—making IKS accessible to educators through technology-enhanced channels. Libraries achieve this by integrating digitized resources into online portals, mobile applications, and educational software, ensuring broad reach and usability. The National Digital Library of India (NDLI), with its repository of over 60 million items, provides a prime example. These resources are embedded in technology-driven environments—such as MOOCs on SWAYAM, virtual reality simulations of ancient Gurukuls, or AI-powered apps that adapt content to learner needs—enabling innovative Delivery methods.

Dissemination extends beyond online access. Libraries collaborate with educational institutions to distribute IKS content via offline formats, such as USB drives or DVDs, reaching rural teachers with limited connectivity.

Conclusion :

The Indian Knowledge System represents a timeless and holistic approach to understanding the world. From its ancient roots in the Vedic era to its integration into modern education and global culture, the IKS reflects India's commitment to intellectual growth and spiritual evolution. As digitization and interdisciplinary research gain momentum, the IKS is poised to offer solutions to contemporary global challenges while preserving the essence of India's heritage.

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