

THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM AND ITS ROLE IN PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

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Abstract.

The study explore is about the importance the Indian Knowledge System is a vast and diverse repository of ancient Vedic wisdom and traditions that have endured through centuries. It is a framework that highlights its significance in physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. From the early Vedic era to the present day, Indian knowledge has adapted and evolved, yet its fundamental principles remain deeply embedded in the culture and society of India. through ancient wisdom and practices. Rooted in Ayurveda, Yoga, meditation, and Vedic philosophy, these traditions emphasize harmony between mind, body, and spirit. his paper explores the foundational principles of IKS and their relevance in contemporary wellness paradigms. It examines the scientific and philosophical aspects of Yoga for mental resilience, Ayurveda for physical health, and spiritual practices for inner peace. The study also compares these traditional approaches with modern healthcare methodologies, highlighting their effectiveness in stress management, disease prevention, and overall quality of life. Furthermore, the paper discusses the integration of IKS into modern medical and psychological frameworks to develop a holistic model of well-being. The findings suggest that adopting Indian traditional practices can enhance mental clarity, emotional stability, and physical vitality, offering a sustainable approach to holistic health in the modern era. The paper give out with the following objectives. 1. To explore the foundational principles of the Indian Knowledge System and their relevance to holistic well-being. 2. To analyze the role of Yoga, Ayurveda, and meditation in promoting physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System (IKS), Holistic Well-being, Traditional Health Practices, Vedic Philosophy, Integrative Healthcare.

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Introduction:

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is an initiative under the Ministry of Education (MoE) aimed at promoting interdisciplinary research, preserving, and disseminating traditional Indian knowledge. It covers diverse fields such as arts, literature, agriculture, engineering, architecture, management, and economics. The UGC has proposed guidelines requiring college and university teachers to undergo training in IKS, covering topics like

Ayurveda-based chemistry, Vedic mathematics, and historical economic perspectives from the Mahabharata and Arthashastra.

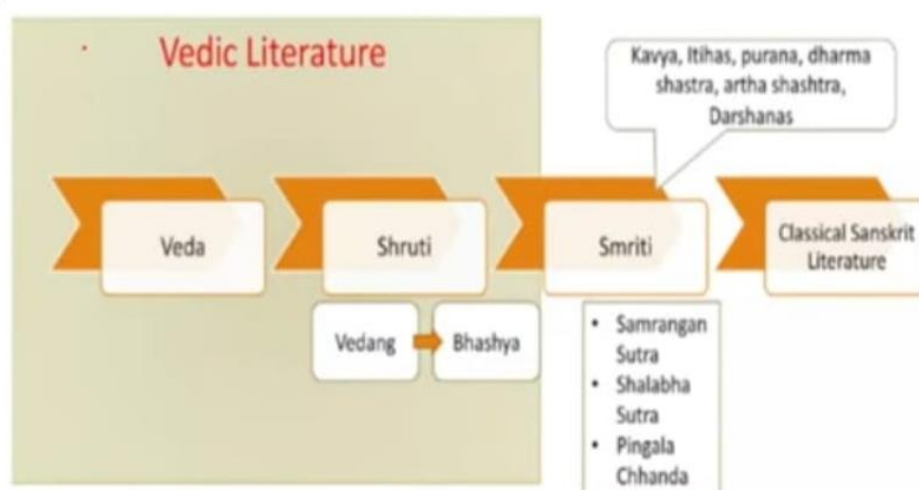


Fig. Vedic literature (Hindu Scriptures) & its Classification

“The term Veda means ‘knowledge’, and Vedas indicate ‘the books of knowledge’. Composed in ancient Sanskrit, Vedic Literature (Hindu Scriptures) is a vast body of books on the topics of religion, philosophy, medicine, astronomy, politics and many other subjects”

First level of classification of Hindu Scriptures:

“Shruti and Smritis : While Shruti means ‘that which is heard’, Smriti indicates ‘that which is remembered’. Shrutis are regarded as divine in their origin. Narrated by the ancient sages as they were revealed to them by God, Shrutis are considered more authoritative than Smritis. Shruti literature is also treated as akin to natural law, the laws of God, or the foundational truths of the universe. Smritis were also written by the sages but are based on memory than revelations. These are supplementary to the main body of Vedas, are more flexible in nature, and are to be interpreted in the context of circumstances, i.e. *desa* (location), *kala* (time) and *patra* (personality)”

The Vedas: Pillars of Ancient Indian Wisdom

The Vedas, the foundation of Hindu philosophy and knowledge, are divided into four primary scriptures, each offering a distinct perspective on life, rituals, and spirituality.

Rigveda: The Oldest Testament of Vedic Thought

“Considered the earliest and most revered Vedic scripture, the **Rigveda** is composed of **10 Mandalas (divisions)**. The **2nd to 7th Mandalas** are the most ancient, while the **1st and 10th** were later additions. Comprising **1,028 hymns**, this Veda predominantly contains prayers seeking material and spiritual prosperity. It mentions prominent sages like **Vashistha, Vamadeva, and Gautama**, and invokes deities such as **Indra, Agni, Varuna, Rudra, and Usha**”

Samaveda: The Melodic Essence of the Vedas

Derived from the word **Sama (melody/song)**, the **Samaveda** is a treasure trove of **16,000 Ragas and Raginis**, making it the cornerstone of ancient Indian music. Known as the "**Book of Chants**," this Veda highlights the artistic and spiritual significance of melody in Vedic rituals.

Yajurveda: The Science of Sacrifice

Rooted in the concept of **Yajna (sacrifice/worship)**, the **Yajurveda** serves as a manual for performing rituals and ceremonies. It contains sacred **mantras and procedural guidelines** for various sacrifices. The text is categorized into two branches: **Shukla (White) Yajurveda** and **Krishna (Black) Yajurveda**, each offering a unique interpretation of rituals.

Atharvaveda: The Wisdom of Everyday Life

Also called the **Brahmaveda**, this Veda reflects the spiritual and practical knowledge of common people. Unlike the other Vedas, which focus on rituals, the **Atharvaveda** encompasses **folk traditions, magical charms, spells, and remedies**. It provides insights into **social, political, and familial structures** of the later Vedic period and contains ancient treatments for **99 ailments**.

Four subdivision:

“Each Veda is further classified based on text style into **Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads**, forming a comprehensive knowledge system”

Samhitas: The earliest and most sacred portion, consisting of **hymns, prayers, and benedictions** dedicated to various deities.

Brahmanas : The ritualistic section, offering **detailed explanations of Vedic ceremonies and the science of sacrifices**.

Aranyakas : Known as “**Forest Treatises**,” these texts explore deeper philosophical concepts such as **the soul, rebirth, and the afterlife**, often studied by sages in isolation.

Upanishads : The pinnacle of Vedic wisdom, these texts derive their name from **Upa (near) and Nishad (to sit down)**, symbolizing knowledge acquired under the guidance of a guru. The **Upanishads, also called Vedanta (“the culmination of the Vedas”)**, delve into profound philosophical questions on **the universe, consciousness, life, and death**.

“**Subdivision of Vedas:** The four classifications are as follows, though they are not distinct texts but rather integral parts of each Veda. Each Veda is further categorized into Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads, based on their literary style. Samhitas: Comprising chants, sacred hymns, invocations, and blessings, these form the earliest and most fundamental part of the Vedic scriptures”

Bramhanas: Giving a detailed explanation of Vedic rituals, ceremonies and instructions. Bramhanas deal with the science of sacrifices.

Aranyakas: They are wilderness texts dealing with the soul, birth and death and life beyond it. They were awareness about studied and taught by men in Vanaprastha and the inhabitants of the forest.

“**Upanishads:** Up means nearby, and Nishad means to sit down, indicating the way in which this knowledge should be acquired (by sitting near Guru). These compilations mark the culmination of Indian thoughts and are the final part of the Vedas. For this reason, Upanishads are also called Vedanta (the last part of Vedas). Upanishads deal with philosophical questions like the origin of universe, the spiritual world, life and death, nature of knowledge etc. Upanishads are the crux of Vedic knowledge and seek to explain the aim of human life”

Literature	Deals with
Ayurveda	Science of health and life. How to cure diseases and prevent it.
Gandharvaveda	Study of aesthetics, knowledge of art forms such as singing, dancing, writing, poetry, sculpture etc.
Dhanurveda	Science of warfare
Arthashastra	Public administration, governance, economy, politics etc.

Fig. Upavedas (Applied Knowledge of Vedas), consists of four main texts i.e. Ayurveda, Gandharvaveda, Dhanurveda and Arthashastra.

Literature	Contents
Shiksha	Education
Vyakarana	Grammar
Kalpa	Ritual
Nirukta	Etymology (origin of words)
Chanda	Matrix
Jyotish	Astrology

Fig. These are the supplements of Vedas which would help in understanding and studying Vedas.

“NEP20 Para 4.27: 4.27 Knowledge of India will include knowledge from ancient India and its contributions to modern India and its successes and challenges, and a clear sense of India’s future aspirations with regard to education, health, environment, etc. These elements will be incorporated in an accurate and scientific manner throughout the school curriculum wherever relevant; in particular, Indian Knowledge Systems, including tribal knowledge and indigenous and traditional ways of learning, will be covered and included in mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, yoga, architecture, medicine, agriculture, engineering, linguistics, literature, sports, games, as well as in governance, polity, conservation. Specific courses in tribal ethno-medicinal practices, forest management, traditional (organic) crop cultivation, natural farming, etc. will also be made available. An engaging course on Indian Knowledge Systems will also be available to students in secondary school as an

elective. Competitions may be held in schools for learning various topics and subjects through fun and indigenous games. Video documentaries on inspirational luminaries of India, ancient and modern, in science and beyond, will be shown at appropriate points throughout the school curriculum. Students will be encouraged to visit different States as part of cultural exchange programmes”

“NEP20 para 22.1 crores of people from around the world partake in, enjoy and benefit from the cultural wealth of India daily, India is a treasure trove of culture, developed over thousands of years and manifested in the form of arts, works of literature, customs, traditions, linguistic expressions, artefacts, heritage sites, and more. Crores of people from around the world partake in, enjoy, and benefit from this cultural wealth daily, in the form of visiting India for tourism, experiencing Indian hospitality, purchasing India’s handicrafts and handmade textiles, reading the classical literature of India, practicing yoga and meditation, being inspired by Indian philosophy, participating in India’s unique festivals, appreciating India’s diverse music and art, and watching Indian films, amongst many other aspects. It is this cultural and natural wealth that truly makes India, India’s rich **cultural and natural heritage** is what makes it truly "**Incredible India.**" Preserving and promoting this heritage is vital, not only for **national identity** but also for its **economic significance**. Prioritizing cultural conservation strengthens the country’s global image while contributing to its tourism and economy”

The knowledge in IKS is available in both formal literary sources and informal non- Literary sources and informal non -Literary sources. There categories can be identified among the literary sources: Sanatana- Dharma literature(in Sanskrit language). “Literature on other Dharmic traditions. Various organizations and digital initiatives, such as the **National Digital Library of India (NDLI)**, **Bhasha Research and Publication Centre**, **People's Linguistic Survey of India**, and Wikipedia in regional languages, are working to preserve and expand access to knowledge in Indian languages” Along with these , Buddhist and Jain literature have contributed to IKS. The Jain sacred literature consists of canonical texts among which a portion is dedicated to mathematics. There are multiple regional languages, and in each there is a huge corpus of sacred and other religion. “The Vedas are the primary source of knowledge in the IKS. There are ideas on three different aspects of life moving together: Spiritual, Religion and Material”

Importance of Ancient Knowledge:

“The thinking patterns and the repository of knowledge created by the ancestors in any society enable the current generation to understand the thought processes and frameworks of the previous generations. It allows them to analyze the received wisdom in a contemporary context and identify new opportunities to assimilate the collected wisdom and synthesize new knowledge. Therefore ,keeping the current generation in the dark about the contributions of the ancestors is an inefficient , and a shortsighted option for society. Transforming knowledge into economic value has been fully formalized with the intellectual property rights regulations and patent laws. This might benefit India, keeping in mind its ancient knowledge system”

Health, Wellness and Psychology:

Health of an individual can depend on different factors like their constitution, food habits, strength, mentality, age and adaptability. The Indian health system, Ayurveda, emphasizes the importance of knowing one’s own

nature and it focuses on both preventive and curative aspects of health. the mental of a person plays a significant role in their wellness and thus, psychology is closely linked to health and wellness. As many students and office workers suffer from lifestyle diseases, it is important to incorporate yoga and Ayurveda, which are among 20 IKS domains, in the Indian pedagogy.

Psychological Aspects to Health:

According Ayurveda and yoga, the notion of health is that one must be in a pleasant state of mind and the senses. The mind is seen as an internal organ of our awareness of happiness, unhappiness etc. for example, when someone enjoys a dish they love, they enjoy it.

But this enjoyment is not related to the tongue or dish itself since it does not induce the same enjoyment in everyone. From this it can be inferred that there might be some other organ that experiences joy and other such emotions. In the Indian approach the “body-mind-consciousness” plays a significant role in the matters of health and wellness. The goal of health in Indian tradition is to promote happiness and a sense of satisfaction and fullness for an individual along with the longevity and physical aspects of health. The Indian approach to psychology has long years of introspection, testing, completion, and experiential learning. It draws its framework concepts, tools and techniques from a rich repository of diverse knowledge traditions starting from Upanishads. Understanding the influence of Indian traditions and Hinduism is essential in psychiatry, as they shape various aspects of mental health care. These cultural factors impact how patients **perceive and report symptoms, react to stress, seek help, and cope with distress. They also influence treatment acceptance, family involvement, and community responses to mental health issues.** Recognizing these cultural nuances is crucial for providing effective and culturally sensitive psychiatric care.

Integrating Indian Wisdom into Modern Life:

IKS can be relevant in contemporary times. Balancing modern life coping with stress, anxiety and lifestyle diseases. Incorporating Ayurvedic practices dietary changes, herbal remedies and mindfulness. Yoga and meditation making these practices a part of daily routines for mental and physical health psycho-spiritual growth using Indian psychology to enhance personal development and self -awareness. The Indian knowledge system is health care psychology, often referred to as Ayurveda and Yoga, has long has long history and is deeply rooted in ancient texts and practices. Modern Western practices, on the other hand, are highly based on scientific research, clinical trials, and evidence-based medicine.

Relevance in Today’s Scenario:

“Holistic Approach: IKS emphasize holistic approach to health, considering the mind body, and spirit as interconnected. This approach is gaining recognition in the western world as well, with increasing focus on integrating mind- body practices into healthcare”

Prevention and Lifestyle Management: Ayurveda emphasizes preventive measures and lifestyle management to maintain optimal health and prevent illnesses. This preventive aspect is increasingly recognized and adopted in Western medicine due to the rising prevalence of chronic diseases”

“Mental Health: Indian Psychology, particularly in the form of yoga and meditation, has gained worldwide recognition for its effectiveness in managing stress, anxiety, and other mental health conditions. Western psychology has also started incorporating mindfulness-based interventions, showing the relevance and effectiveness of Indian practices”

“Individualized treatment: Ayurveda and yoga emphasize personalized approaches taking into account individual variations in body constitution, temperament, and lifestyle. The personalized approach is gaining attention in Western medicine, as there is increasing recognition that a” one size fits all” approach may not work for everyone”

Modern Techniques and Health Care:

“Artificial intelligence and machine learning: India is witnessing an increased interest in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in healthcare. These technologies help in improving the accuracy of diagnoses. Predicting disease outcomes, and optimizing treatment plans. AI- powered chatbots are also being utilized to provide mental health support and counseling services”

Integration of traditional medicine:

“India has a rich tradition of traditional medicine systems like Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, and Homeopathy. this integration caters to the holistic well- being of individuals and address the growing interest in alternative and complementary therapies”

“This study explores the **core principles of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS)** and their relevance to **holistic health**. It examines the impact of **Yoga, Ayurveda, and meditation** on **physical, mental, and spiritual well-being** while proposing integrative approaches to incorporate IKS into **modern healthcare and lifestyle management**”

Review Literature:

Historical Developmental Thinking in Free India:

“To correct the imbalance as envisaged in free India, in the background of political and economic developments and to renew individual commitment to an active value-based life, many distinguished thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, have made a plea for integrating human values in education. If these human values are inculcated in our children at an early stage the twenty first century can promise a hope for a much better future. Efforts can be made to inject the dose of values into the entire educational system. The various Commissions and special committees set up by the Government of India to review and update the system of education from time to time, have stressed the need for incorporating the programmes for further development and internalizing of values into one's personal life and the system of education. This has been reviewed as under:

The University Education Commission headed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (1943-49) considered the issues pertaining to the inclusion of religious and moral education in the educational content at the University stage. Further, it reports, "No amount of factual information would make ordinary men into educated or virtuous men unless something is awakened in them, an innate ability to live the life of soul." (ii) The Secondary Education

Commission (1952-53) headed by Dr. Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar considered the issue under the title, "Education of Character", saying that religious and moral instructions play an important role in the growth of character. (iii) The Committee on Religious and Moral Instruction (1959) under the Chairmanship of Shri Sri Prakasha felt that a workable system in moral and spiritual values, could be evolved for the good of the country and the emotional integration of its people”

“**Pepper (1958)** conceives value as "In the broadest sense, anything good or bad is value". Among such things, the following have been considered: pleasures and pains, desires and purposes, satisfaction and frustration, preferences, utility, means, condition, instrumental, correctness and incorrectness, integration and disintegration, character, vitality, selfrealisation, health, survival, evolutionary fitness, adjustability, individual freedom, social solidarity, law, conscience, virtuous ideas, norms, progress, righteousness and sin, beauty and ugliness, error, reality and un-reality. Pepper has given a broader range in the field of values in common sense view”

“**Modern psychologist Maslow (1959)** stresses the central trend of human actualization. He speaks of "the human being as having within him, and pressure towards of personality which is creative, co-operative and open to experience".

“**Cattel (1965)** defines value thus: "By values we mean the social, artistic, moral and of standards which the individual would like others and himself to follow". He also states that the value attitudes are embedded in the self-sentiment and the super-ego structures. The connotation of the term value is the quality of anything that renders it desirable or something that is prized, 'held in respect', deemed worthy, or esteemed. The dominant values that give meaning to a man's life, making them the centre around which actions revolve, determine the type of person he will be”

“**Gokak (1975)** states, what is the new turn that the Sathya Sai Colleges in India is expected to give to Indian education? An educational system of this kind, aims at a two-fold transformation. It aspires to train the individual in the process of creative self sculpture and to promote his creative contribution to the building up of a society based on co-operation and love”

“**Kahneman and Deaton (2010)** define emotional well-being as an emotional quality of an individual's everyday experience. They have examined how monetary factors influence individual emotional wellbeing. Authors explain life evaluation as the thoughts that people have about their life and he raised the question whether money brings happiness and well-being of an individual. The questionnaire comprised of Gallup-Health ways Well-Being Index and Cantril's Self Anchoring Scale was used to measure life evaluation. Survey was conducted among 1000 US residents organized by Gallup Organization in a daily basis. Since emotional well-being was measured by questions prepared to record yesterday emotional experiences of an individual. Results of this study proved that income and education have more positive correlation with life evaluation, meanwhile health, care giving, loneliness, and smoking represents experienced emotions of a day. When compared with individual income, life evaluation rises steadily. Emotional well-being also reported with income, but the increase in emotional wellbeing has not reported with the increase of income beyond an annual income of -\$75,000. Low income group showed emotional pain incorporated with misfortunes as divorce, ill health, and loneliness.

Researcher concluded that high income brought life satisfaction but not happiness, and that low income is always associated with low life evaluation and low emotional well-being”

“**Kaur, Sambasivam & Kumar(2013)** studied the effect of spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, along with psychological ownership and burnout on caring behavior of nurses. They proposed a model of predicting caring behavior of nurses including spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, psychological ownership and burnout. A cross-sectional survey method was employed, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling method. Data were collected from a sample of 550 nurses working from seven public hospitals in and around Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). In addition to nurses, 348 patients from seven hospitals contributed their response for the study expressing overall satisfaction with hospital and the services offered by them. Results of the study exposed that spiritual intelligence has an impact on emotional intelligence and psychological ownership. The emotional intelligence 62 influences psychological ownership, burnout and caring behavior of nurses. Psychological ownership has shown an impact on burnout and caring behavior of nurses. Burnout has also predicted caring behavior of nurses. Psychological ownership played a mediator role between spiritual intelligence and caring behavior, similarly between emotional intelligence and caring behavior of nurses”

“**Genia (1996)** attempted to study the impact of spiritual wellbeing with religious aspect, psychological aspects and social desirability. Allport-Ross religious orientation scale (Genia 1993) and the religious fundamentalism (RF) Scale developed by Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992), **Paloutzian and Ellison's (1982)** spiritual wellbeing scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg 1965), Depression- Inventory (Beck et al. 1961) and Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability (SD) scale developed by Strahan and Gerbasi (1972) were used to frame a questionnaire. Data were collected through online survey method. Questionnaire was sent to various college students with the heading of religious and spiritual values. Two hundred and eleven college students completed and have mailed their response. Result of the study indicated that religious orientation, fundamentalism and depression showed negative association with selfesteem, whereas spiritual wellbeing and social desirability showed positive association”

Objective: To explore the foundational principles of the Indian Knowledge System and their relevance to holistic well-being.

To analyze the role of Yoga, Ayurveda, and meditation in promoting physical, mental, and spiritual health.
To suggest integrative approaches for incorporating Indian Knowledge System principles into modern healthcare and lifestyle management.

Research Methodology: Descriptive and exploratory analysis

Data collection methods: Case studies of individuals practicing IKS , Content analysis of ancient texts and modern interpretations.

Data analysis techniques: Thematic analysis and pattern recognition

Textual Analysis: Reviewing classical Indian texts like the **Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Charaka Samhita, and Patanjali's Yoga Sutras** to extract principles related to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Case Studies: Analyzing real-life cases where individuals have experienced transformative health benefits through IKS practices.

Data Coding and Categorization:

Identifying key themes such as **balance (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas), mind-body connection, self-awareness, and integrative healing.**

Grouping data into categories related to **physical health (Ayurveda, diet, lifestyle), mental health (meditation, mindfulness, stress management), and spiritual well-being (consciousness, self-realization, ethical living).** Pattern recognition will be employed to observe commonalities in IKS applications and their relevance to modern wellness.

Identifying Cross-disciplinary Patterns:

Examining **similarities between Ayurveda's dosha system and modern personalized medicine.**

Recognizing parallels between **Yoga's breathing techniques and contemporary stress-reduction therapies.**

Comparing **Indian meditation practices with Western mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs).**

Detecting Recurring Outcomes:

Analyzing case studies to find recurring patterns in **disease prevention, mental resilience, and spiritual growth** among individuals practicing IKS.

Observing trends in **how traditional Indian practices are being integrated into modern medical, psychological, and wellness programs.**

Conclusion:

“The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) presents a time-tested, holistic framework for physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Through thematic analysis and pattern recognition, this study has highlighted the foundational principles of IKS, emphasizing the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit. The exploration of Yoga, Ayurveda, and meditation reveals their significant contributions to disease prevention, stress management, and self-awareness, aligning with modern scientific findings on holistic health. Furthermore, the study identifies recurring patterns in traditional Indian health practices that resonate with contemporary wellness models, reinforcing their relevance in modern healthcare. The integration of IKS into personalized medicine, mental health therapies, and preventive healthcare can enhance overall well-being and bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and evidence-based practices. While challenges such as scientific validation, accessibility, and cultural adaptation remain, the growing global interest in Ayurveda, Yoga, and meditation underscores the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration. Future research should focus on developing standardized methodologies for integrating IKS into mainstream healthcare policies and therapeutic frameworks. Ultimately, adopting Indian traditional practices within modern healthcare and lifestyle management offers a sustainable, natural, and holistic approach to well-being, fostering a balanced and healthier society. The Vedic and Post-Vedic educational philosophies emphasize a well-rounded approach to knowledge, combining spiritual wisdom with practical sciences. The Indian Knowledge System continues to be relevant today, offering holistic solutions

for health, mindfulness, and sustainable living. By integrating traditional wisdom with modern education, we can achieve a balanced life enriched with ethical values, intellectual growth, and inner peace”

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