

BRIDGING THE PAST AND PRESENT: INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND LEARNING PATTERNS OF GEN Z

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Abstract:

The vast and diverse body of knowledge developed over centuries across disciplines such as philosophy, science, medicine, mathematics, and ethics is included in the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). However, Generation Zoomers (Gen Z) displays distinctive learning behaviors shaped by rapid technological advancement. They are recognized for their digital fluency and a tendency to lean towards interactive learning. This study explores the relationship between Gen Z students' contemporary learning styles and traditional Indian knowledge systems. It aims to pinpoint the differences between these two methods and offer strategies for successfully integrating IKS into modern educational frameworks. The study emphasizes the importance of combining conventional knowledge with digital tools to create a thorough, worthwhile, and engaging learning environment. Additionally, it also supports the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's vision, which places a strong emphasis on value-based education, holistic development, and instilling democratic principles in students. In conclusion, this study suggests that combining IKS with Gen Z learning styles can enhance students' critical thinking, cultural awareness, and ethical development.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, Gen Z Learning Patterns, NEP 2020 Framework, Experiential Learning, Value-Based Education, Digital Learning, Integrated Approach.

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Introduction:

Education in India has undergone a significant transformation, moving from traditional systems such as the Gurukul to modern, technology-driven classrooms. The Indian Knowledge System (IKS), which is rooted in ancient texts and practices, emphasizes holistic development, ethical values, and experiential learning. However, modern learners, particularly Gen Z, are influenced by digital environments, rapid information access, and interactive learning formats.

This shift has created a gap between traditional knowledge systems and contemporary learning styles. Bridging this gap is essential to ensure that the richness of Indian heritage is preserved while meeting the needs of modern learners. This study examines how IKS can be adapted and integrated into the learning patterns of Gen Z to create a balanced and effective educational system.

Theoretical Framework:

Indian Knowledge System (IKS):

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) can be defined as the ways knowledge has been lived, experienced, and transmitted throughout India over many generations, not just through written works but also through customs, daily practices, and everyday life. It focuses on how to understand, live with, and maintain connections with oneself, society, and nature rather than just with subjects. IKS views learning as something ongoing and purposeful, where principles like balance, accountability, and awareness are just as significant as academic understanding, rather than dividing knowledge into strict categories. In this way, IKS is more than just the past; it is the basis of our ethical and cultural heritage, which can still direct education in the present.

Gen Z Learning Patterns:

Born roughly between the late 1990s and the early 2010s, Generation Z is the first generation to have grown up surrounded by technology. Their early exposure to social media, smartphones, and the internet has influenced how they think, communicate, and learn. Unlike earlier generations, Gen Z values individuality, practicality, and real-world applicability in all they do, including academics. They are also highly connected, flexible, and conscious of global issues.

Gen Z's learning habits reflect their upbringing in a digitally connected society where information is just one click away. In order to study in a way that feels rapid, easy, and interesting, students naturally turn to videos, online platforms, and engaging information rather than just classrooms or textbooks. Instead of only listening passively, they choose learning that is connected to the real world. This lets them explore independently and keeps them actively involved. However, because of their quick and adaptable learning style, they frequently switch between concepts quickly, looking for meaning and clarity rather than memorization. Overall, Gen Z students are not uninterested in learning; rather, they want it to be relevant, interesting, and aligned with their daily experiences.

Objectives of the study:

1. To establish the need for incorporating Indian Knowledge Systems with contemporary Gen Z learning patterns as an integrated approach in education, rather than treating them as two separate domains.
2. To find out effective ways of adapting culturally rooted and value-based elements of Indian Knowledge Systems through modern, technology-aided teaching methods to increase relevance and student engagement.

Aspects of The Concept:

1) Fusion, Not Division (Core Principle)

At the heart of this framework is the idea that education should not compel a choice between traditional and modern systems. Rigid educational frameworks have mostly created an artificial divide between Gen Z learning and Indian Knowledge Systems.

Instead, this approach emphasizes integration, where traditional wisdom is not replaced but reframed through modern methods. Education becomes meaningful and engaging when the profundity of IKS is combined with the accessibility of modern learning methods, guaranteeing continuity rather than discontinuity.

E.g., Students are asked to reply to a real-life scenario that the teacher presents, such as "You see someone cheating in an exam."

then incorporates values into the lesson rather than teaching them separately by connecting their responses to ethical reasoning.

2) Rooted Content, Modern delivery

This feature emphasizes how the distribution method needs to change even when the content (values, ethics, indigenous knowledge) is still based on Indian customs. Visual, interactive, and captivating methods are more effective for Gen Z learners. As a result, traditional information can be made more relevant without altering its fundamental principles by teaching ideas like mindfulness, environmental balance, and ethical living through straightforward illustrations, brief films, or organized exercises.

E.g., Students are asked to select two acts they may take at school after the teacher plays a short film about responsibility towards the environment.

then relates their reactions to the idea of coexisting peacefully with the natural world.

3) Value Integration Over Information Overload

While IKS stresses value-based understanding, modern education frequently places a higher priority on knowledge acquisition. The goal of this component is to move from simply "knowing more" to "understanding and applying better." Education becomes character-building rather than merely exam-focused by including values like respect, discipline, empathy, and sustainability into regular classes. This aligns with both traditional ideals and current demands.

E.g., "What value can you apply from this in real life?" the teacher asks after finishing a class. Students connect learning with behavior by sharing real-world solutions.

4) Bridge to Experiential Learning

Learning by doing is seen to share a common ground between Gen Z education and IKS. While Gen Z loves hands-on learning, traditional systems place more emphasis on observation and practice. By utilizing exercises and real-world applications, this component connects the two, making learning more engaging and useful.

E.g., after explaining a concept, the teacher provides a brief exercise to put it into practice right away. Instead of just listening, students learn by doing.

5) Inclusive and Selective Adaptation

This framework does not support adopting IKS in its entirety. Rather, it encourages a selective approach, emphasizing aspects that are ethical, non-discriminatory, and universal. In a diverse classroom, education stays inclusive, secular, and contemporary by focusing on knowledge that transcends religion, caste, or gender, such as environmental awareness, mental health, and ethical living.

E.g., Students are asked to offer answers when the teacher presents a scenario involving cooperation or equity in group projects.

Values like equality and accountability are discussed without reference to any particular faith or cultural background.

6) **Technology as an Enabler, Not a Substitute**

According to this, technology should be used to supplement valuable information rather than to replace it. Multimedia and digital platforms can convey ideas in ways that appeal to Generation Z, but the emphasis remains on understanding and depth, ensuring that learning is not surface-level. E.g., after introducing a concept with a short video, the teacher asks questions and goes into more detail. Instead of using the movie as their sole source of knowledge, students use it as support.

7) **Cultural Identity Continuity**

The gradual detachment of students from their cultural heritage is one of the main issues this framework attempts to solve. This component highlights how incorporating IKS into contemporary education ensures that students develop into internationally competent yet culturally grounded persons by preserving a feeling of identity and belonging. It keeps knowledge from drifting away from its source. E.g., The teacher presents a proverb that is relevant to the subject and asks the class to explain its meaning in today's context.

Students make connections between traditional concepts and their real-world experiences.

Educational Implications:

1. Curriculum Integration:

Instead of being taught as a distinct subject, IKS should be integrated into already-existing courses to ensure a fusion rather than a division approach.

2. Change in Pedagogy:

In order to accommodate Gen Z's learning styles, instruction should shift to interactive, experiential, and discussion-based approaches.

3. Readiness of Teachers:

To successfully integrate value-based content with contemporary teaching techniques in the classroom, educators must get training.

4. Technology Use in Balance:

Technology should be used as a support tool to deepen understanding, not replace conceptual teaching.

5. Encouraging Value-Based Education for All:

To create responsible and socially conscious students, emphasize universal, moral, and culturally based principles.

Conclusion:

This study highlights that Gen Z learning styles and Indian knowledge systems are complementary elements of education that can be successfully combined rather than being opposed. A fusion-based approach, as opposed to seeing them separately, enables the engagement and adaptability of contemporary learning techniques to coexist with the value-rich, rooted nature of IKS. This perspective also aligns with the framework of the National

Education Policy (NEP 2020) , which advocates for holistic, value-based and integrated learning. Education can become meaningful, relevant, and value-oriented by concentrating on both content and delivery. Traditional knowledge improves understanding and connection without losing its core when it is taught in ways that align with how students study now.

In summary, this integration helps students become not just academically proficient but also morally conscious, culturally aware, and capable of navigating a changing world.

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