शिक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION
सत्यमेव जयते

DESPU
ज्ञानानुसन्धाने
In pursuit of knowledge

प्रज्ञा प्रवाह
Prajna Pravah

International Strategic Conclave for Indian Knowledge Systems

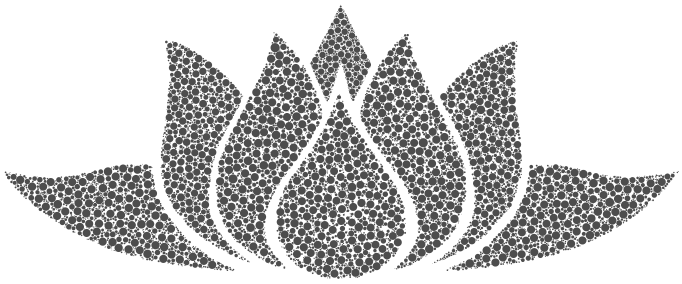
Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) is an innovative cell under the Ministry of Education (MoE) at AICTE, New Delhi. It has been established to promote interdisciplinary research on all the aspects of IKS, preserve and disseminate IKS for further research and societal applications.

Prajna Pravah is the national umbrella that stimulates, trains and synthesises individuals to recognize the inherent strength of Bharat with academic vigour directed towards decolonizing Indian minds from Eurocentric impact. It functions with the sole vision of uplifting and reviving Hinduness in culture for the emancipation of humanity.

DES Pune University is a flagship institution of higher education under DES. Its vision is to cultivate a thriving educational ecosystem that fosters holistic growth, intellectual curiosity, and global competitiveness.

ॐ सहनाववतु| सह नौ भुनक्तु| सह वीर्यं करवाव है| तेजस्वि
नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषाव है| ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः||

Om, May we be protected; May we be nourished;
May we work together with energy and vigor; May
our studies be enlightening and not give rise to
hostility. Om shanti, shanti, shanti.





The Strategic Conclave sought to answer some of these questions, and to serve as a roadmap for benchmarking and measuring progress on issues discussed upon.

What is our desired vision of the world, for the coming years, decades and centuries?

How are Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) placed to realise that vision?

How to mainstream IKS as the definitive knowledge tradition of Bhārata?

Questions

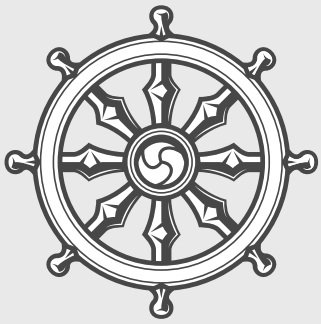
How to sustain the influence of IKS and realise the Vishwaguru ideal?

What is Bhāratiya Saṃskriti and Bhāratiya frame of reference?

What is the need of IKS in our lives?

"An education which only deals with man's secular concerns is self-defeating"

- Shri Ram Swarup



The heart of the Indian civilization can be described through one word: Dharma. Dharma is the core which guides interpersonal relations, human-nature relation and the relationship with the Ultimate. The vision that is generated with dharma as the pole star is called dharma dṛṣṭi, which is the guiding principle.

Through the ambit of dharma, three approaches were laid out:



Drisiti:
Symbolises knowledge and the inquiry into the nature of reality, depicted with elements that suggest vision, perception, and a connection to wisdom.



Parampara:
Represents the continuity of knowledge traditions, illustrated with motifs that evoke the transmission of wisdom across generations.



Laukika prayojana:
Focuses on practical utility for solving real-world problems, combining traditional and modern symbols to indicate the integration of values, material science, and skills.

Structure/Framework of Conclave

The conclave was structured over the course of two days, with various panels being formed to look at the problem statement from different angles and give their inputs. The vision consisted of a Qualitative and a Quantitative component, where the Qualitative Vision served as the intellectual and cultural foundation, offering conceptual clarity about the desired outcomes, and the Quantitative Vision being the actionable outcomes distributed as the roadmap for the future. The focus was to ground the vision into concrete, continually adaptable action points while keeping its inspirational and aspirational aspects intact.

Overarching Goal of the Conclave and Focus Areas

The recurring action points can be merged into clusters like - Academia, Social Work, Research, etc. and themes can be identified from them. The goal of the conclave was to develop a vision and action plan for reinforcing IKS as a popular worldview and solve the challenges of humanity through that. In that endeavour, 5 core verticals were identified:

- Academia: To instill values in education
- Industry: To recognize values in human capital
- Policy: To orient actions with outcomes
- Parents: To continue the chain of tradition
- Young Adults: To appreciate the value of heritage

Strategic Context

Humanity is going through a ‘multi-crisis’. Thinkers have characterized our current world as BANI - Brittle, Anxious, Non-Linear and Incomprehensible. At stake is shared Global Futures that can only be contextualized within planetary boundaries and ecological ceilings.

At its core, BANI is an admission of the epistemic failure of the dominant knowledge paradigm. We are unable to comprehend because we are not producing the right knowledge or the ways to learn. The world today needs epistemic diversity to deal with the complexity.

Civilizations around the world have had their worldviews shaped by their unique historical and cultural experiences. Worldview informs doctrines and doctrines decide policy and national strategy. The Western episteme looks at the world through an extractive anthropocentric lens, propelling consumerism and associating value only in monetary terms. The Bharatiya episteme however, has a very different view of man as a being. It has a strong spiritual core, which it sees reflected in every object, and education is seen as a means of unveiling that core through a gradual realization of the inherent perfection.

While Bharat gained political independence in 1947, the erstwhile colonial system of education was continued. However, with a recent favorable policy push and the resurfacing of crucial questions on identity, values and cultural awareness, the need was articulated to rediscover and reinscribe the virtues of the past, and steer the contemporary times under their guidance; as the descendants of an original and confident civilization should. The ability of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) to provide solutions in the three areas of Global futures, Indian National Strategy and Universal well being at the individual level is enormous.



In that backdrop, the IKS Division, CoE under Ministry of Education, Government of Bharat and DES Pune University (DES PU), in collaboration with Prajna Pravah, organized a two-day Strategic Conclave for Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) from December 14th to 15th, 2023, at the DES PU campus. This conclave aimed at crafting a National Vision for IKS, aligned with the National Education Policy 2020, to mainstream Indian epistemology and pedagogy as a legitimate alternative to Western thought models. The vision was structured around time specific milestones, with the long term vision guiding the shorter-term goals, and the action plan serving as a roadmap to implement and measure impact.

Vision

With a long term goal of reinstating IKS in India, the vision formulated through the conclave was:

- Rectify the aberration and discontinuation of IKS forced under the Macaulite system of education.
- Seamlessly amalgamate the laukika (folk) and shastrika (textual) traditions into the education curriculum of learners across age groups.
- Utilize IKS to solve challenges facing the world today, including but not limited to environmental, developmental, social, political and cultural.
- Integrating IKS into the microcosm of individual lives and the macrocosm of national identity, fostering conceptual clarity and actionable outcomes.
- Develop a new public culture of knowledge led by academia.



"The requirement of our present pedagogical situation is to restore the internal relation between knowledge and action, theory and praxis, thinking and living; a relationship that modern education completely disrupts"

- A K Saran



Objectives

The conclave was conducted to develop a short term and long term strategy to reinstate IKS in the Indian sphere of life. Following were few of the objectives:

- To Mainstream IKS as a Legitimate Alternative: A key objective was to position IKS as a viable alternative to Western-derived thought models by integrating it into higher education and related institutions through theorization, evolution of pedagogy, and extension of existing IKS for contemporary relevance.
- To Establish a Vibrant Ecosystem for IKS: The conclave focused on planning an ecosystem that includes institutions, distinguished individuals, and a web of interconnected relationships to support and extend the National IKS Vision into development of capabilities, policies, investments, and more.
- To Encourage Interdisciplinary Research and Education in IKS: The event aimed to promote research and academic initiatives in IKS across disciplines such as sciences, arts, and culture, by establishing dedicated cells and courses in prestigious institutions and encouraging a multidisciplinary approach to IKS studies.
- To Facilitate Public-Private Partnerships and Community Engagement: Another objective was to explore and enhance collaboration between government, academia, industry, and the community to support IKS initiatives, ensuring a broader and more inclusive approach to reviving and sustaining IKS.

"We want that education, by which character is formed,
strength of mind is increased, intellect is expanded and
by which one can stand on one's on feet"

- Swami Vivekananda

Key Stakeholders

To bring the vision into fruition, 5 key stakeholders were identified: Academia, Industry, Public Policy, Parents, and Young Adults

Key Highlights

- Day 1: The conclave began with addresses emphasizing the historical significance and future potential of IKS. Keynote speeches highlighted the need for rekindling Indigenous Knowledge Systems and ensuring their mainstreaming through education and research. Sessions covered institutional progress, interdisciplinary research, and the integration of IKS in academia and industry.
- Day 2: Focused on strategy sessions for implementing the IKS vision, discussing areas like documentation, textbooks, research methodology, and leveraging technology and media for IKS dissemination. Breakout groups addressed the development of an IKS-centric educational ecosystem, emphasizing teacher training, pedagogical innovation, and public-private partnerships.

To formulate the action plan and design the strategy keeping various stakeholders in mind, 'Three Working Groups' were created:

- Group I: This group provided their inputs from the perspective of independent scholars and platforms.
- Group T: This group provided their inputs from the perspective of thought leaders.
- Group A: This group provided their inputs from the perspective of academia.







"Knowledge must be aggressive, if it wishes to survive and perpetuate itself; to leave an extensive ignorance either below or around it, is to expose humanity to the perpetual danger of a barbaric relapse"

- Shri Aurobindo

Working Groups

- Documentation: Laid out the various types of documentation and emphasized the importance of exploring the linkages between Margiya and Deshiya knowledge through a formal platform.
- Textbooks: Creating textbooks with correct narrative of history; management and storytelling through IKS
- Research Methodology: Research methodology will become the canonical guideline for the purpose of any research which can be presented from the Indian perspective.
- Indic Journal: It was decided that the journal should not be part of any institutions or government, but rather it should be from an independent community of researchers with an editorial board and a scholarship scheme.
- Teacher Training: Incorporating IKS into the four constituent parts of teacher training that are: Content, Methodology, Administration and Psychology.
- PhD Network: Creating a network of doctorate scholars currently in IKS disciplines and enabling the government to fund 108 PhD scholars in IKS topics.

Action Plan and Commitments

- Ecosystem Development: Establishing a dynamic ecosystem for IKS, including institutions, distinguished individuals, and interconnected relationships.
- Vision Implementation: Creating action points for the short term and long term visions, ensuring adaptability, sustainability and scalability of IKS in modern society.
- Research and Education: Promoting IKS through interdisciplinary research, curriculum integration, and the development of formal degree programs in IKS at leading educational institutions.
- Public-Private Partnerships: Enhancing collaboration between academia, industry, and government to support IKS initiatives.
- Cultural and Intellectual Foundation: Strengthening the qualitative aspect of the vision to provide a robust intellectual and cultural base for IKS.

Implementation Instruments

Few of the implementation instruments which were proposed were:

- Establishment of Dedicated Cells and Courses in Educational Institutions: The initiative to create dedicated cells, centers, and departments within universities and centers of learning that promote excellence.
- Setting up of a dedicated digital portal: Linking academic institutions and scholars in IKS with each other to build a robust networking infrastructure.
- Accreditation and Certification for IKS Education: Discussion on the need for an accreditation system for gurukulas and other non-mainstream educational institutions teaching IKS to ensure recognition and standardization of IKS education. Creation of
- Content and Resources for IKS Education: The initiative to develop textbooks, research methodologies, and journals specifically for IKS, and leveraging technology to create platforms and tools that facilitate the teaching and learning of IKS.

Conclusion

The IKS Strategic Conclave marked a significant step toward reinvigorating India's rich knowledge traditions, fostering a national and global dialogue on integrating IKS with contemporary educational and research frameworks. With a clear action plan and collaborative efforts, the conclave set the stage for a transformative journey towards realising the full potential of IKS for India and humanity.

"The story of Arjuna focussing on the bird's eye embodies the culminating ideal of the nation, as concentration of mind stands among Hindus for the supreme expression of that greatness which we may recognise in honour or courage or any kind of heroism"

- Ananda Coomaraswamy



Dhanyawad