

1 A Comparative Study of Holistic Development of Students in the Context of IKS and NCF- 2 SE-2023.

3 4 **Abstract:**

5 This study examines the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) with the National
6 Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE 2023) as a transformative approach to
7 holistic education. Grounded in indigenous philosophical constructs such as the Pancha Kosha
8 model and pedagogical frameworks like Panchapadiya, the study adopts a conceptual and
9 comparative methodology to analyze the convergence between traditional knowledge systems
10 and contemporary curriculum design. While IKS emphasises multidimensional human
11 development encompassing physical, mental, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions, NCF-SE
12 2023 operationalises these principles through structured, competency-based, and experiential
13 learning approaches.

14 The study identifies key similarities, including the shared focus on holistic development, value-
15 based education, and experiential learning, alongside differences in epistemological foundations
16 and implementation strategies. To address the existing gap in the literature, the study proposes an
17 integrated IKS–NCF conceptual model that bridges philosophical depth with pedagogical
18 structure, enabling scalable and contextually relevant educational practices. The findings suggest
19 that this integration not only enhances cultural rootedness but also addresses contemporary
20 educational challenges such as sustainability, mental health, and social cohesion.

21 The study highlights important implications for teachers, curriculum designers, and
22 policymakers, emphasising the need for capacity building, contextualised curriculum
23 development, and institutional support. It further recommends empirical validation of the
24 proposed model through advanced methodologies such as structural equation modelling and
25 longitudinal research. Overall, the integration of IKS and NCF-SE 2023 provides a robust
26 framework for developing learners who are intellectually competent, emotionally balanced,
27 ethically grounded, and socially responsible, thereby aligning education with both national
28 priorities and global educational goals.

29 **Keywords:** Indian Knowledge Systems, NCF-SE 2023, holistic development, Pancha Kosha,
30 Panchapadiya, experiential learning

31

32 **Introduction**

33 **Defining Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)**

34 Education systems across the world are increasingly shifting from content-centric approaches
35 toward holistic frameworks that emphasise the development of the “whole learner.” This
36 transformation is driven by the recognition that education must address not only cognitive
37 development but also emotional, ethical, social, and spiritual dimensions (Sankar, 2025). In this
38 context, Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) offer a rich philosophical and pedagogical foundation
39 for conceptualising holistic education.

40 Indian Knowledge Systems represent bodies of knowledge developed through centuries of lived
41 experiences, cultural practices, and ecological interactions within local communities (Battiste,
42 2002; Semali&Kincheloe, 1999). These systems encompass diverse traditions, including Vedic
43 philosophy, tribal knowledge, folk practices, and regional cultural systems, all of which
44 contribute to a comprehensive understanding of human development and sustainability (Rao,
45 2018). Unlike fragmented modern educational models, IKS emphasises interconnectedness,
46 balance, and harmony between individuals, society, and nature.

47 The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE 2023), developed by the
48 Ministry of Education, Government of India, reflects a significant shift in educational philosophy
49 by integrating IKS into mainstream schooling (Ministry of Education, 2023). It proposes a 360-
50 degree learning approach that aligns with global frameworks, such as Sustainable Development
51 Goal 4 (Quality Education), while remaining rooted in indigenous knowledge traditions.

52 Despite the growing emphasis on integrating IKS into contemporary education, existing research
53 often treats traditional knowledge systems and modern curriculum frameworks as separate
54 domains. There is limited scholarly work that systematically examines the integration of IKS and
55 NCF-SE 2023 through a unified lens of holistic development. This study addresses this gap by

56 providing a comparative and analytical exploration of these frameworks, focusing on their
57 conceptual foundations, pedagogical approaches, and implications for education.

58 **Conceptual Foundations of Indian Knowledge Systems**

59 Indian Knowledge Systems are grounded in a holistic worldview that perceives knowledge as
60 interconnected and experiential rather than compartmentalized. Knowledge in IKS is not merely
61 transmitted through formal instruction but is embedded in daily practices, rituals, arts, and
62 community interactions (Semali&Kincheloe, 1999). This epistemological orientation emphasises
63 the integration of cognitive, emotional, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of learning.

64 One of the key features of IKS is its emphasis on sustainability and ecological consciousness.
65 Traditional practices related to agriculture, medicine, architecture, and resource management
66 reflect a deep understanding of environmental balance and interdependence (Rao, 2018). This
67 aligns with contemporary discourses on sustainable development and environmental education.

68 Another defining characteristic of IKS is its value-oriented approach. Education is viewed as a
69 means of cultivating ethical behavior, social responsibility, and self-awareness. Concepts such as
70 dharma (duty), karma (action), and ahimsa (non-violence) play a central role in shaping
71 individual and societal conduct (Sarkar, 2024).

72 Furthermore, IKS emphasises experiential learning and reflective practices. Learning occurs
73 through observation, participation, and reflection, rather than rote memorisation. This aligns with
74 modern constructivist theories of learning, which emphasise active engagement and meaning-
75 making (Tyagi, 2025).

76 **Proposed Conceptual Model of Holistic Development**

77 This study proposes an integrated conceptual model that synthesises the philosophical
78 foundations of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) with the pedagogical framework of the
79 National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE 2023). The model is grounded
80 in the Pancha Kosha framework, which conceptualises human development as a
81 multidimensional process encompassing physical, vital, mental, intellectual, and spiritual
82 dimensions (Ambika et al., 2024; Sankar, 2025).

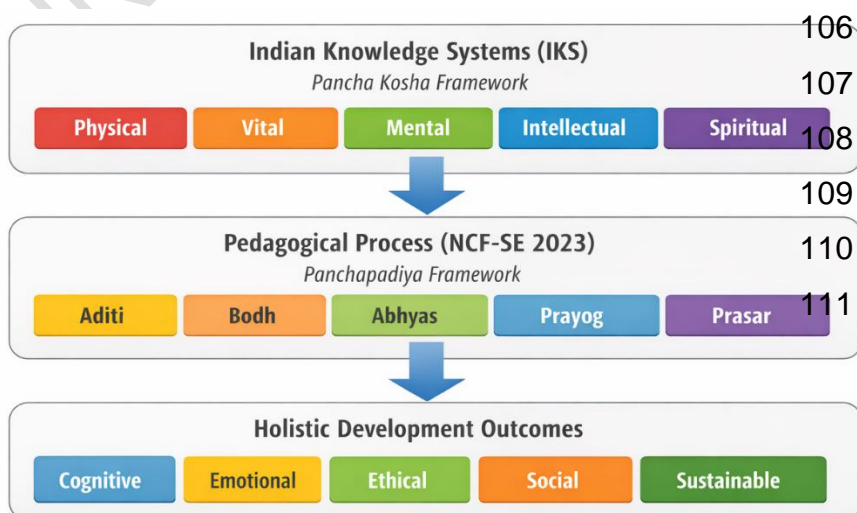
83 The Pancha Kosha serves as the foundational layer of the model, representing the holistic nature
84 of human development. Each layer corresponds to a specific dimension of learning and
85 development, emphasising the need for balanced growth across all aspects of human personality.
86 This aligns with contemporary educational perspectives that advocate for whole-child
87 development and socio-emotional learning.

88 The pedagogical operationalisation of this framework is achieved through the Panchapadiya
89 model proposed in NCF-SE 2023 (Ministry of Education, 2023). The five stages, Aditi
90 (introduction), Bodh (understanding), Abhyas (practice), Prayog (application), and Prasar
91 (expansion), provide a structured process for translating holistic educational principles into
92 classroom practices. This sequential approach ensures that learning is experiential, inquiry-based,
93 and competency-driven.

94 The interaction between these two frameworks results in a set of holistic developmental
95 outcomes, including cognitive competence, emotional stability, ethical orientation, social
96 responsibility, and sustainability awareness. These outcomes reflect the integrated nature of
97 learning, where knowledge acquisition is complemented by value formation and practical
98 application.

99 The proposed model highlights the dynamic relationship between philosophical constructs and
100 pedagogical processes, demonstrating how traditional knowledge systems can be effectively
101 integrated into modern educational frameworks. By bridging IKS and NCF-SE 2023, the model
102 provides a comprehensive, holistic approach to education that is both culturally rooted and
103 globally relevant.

104 **Figure 1: Integrated IKS–NCF Model of Holistic Development based on Pancha Kosha and**
105 **Panchapadiya Frameworks.**



106 The proposed model
107 offers a novel
108 contribution by
109 integrating philosophical
110 and pedagogical
111 dimensions into a

112 unified framework. It moves beyond theoretical discussions by providing an operational structure
113 that can be implemented in classroom settings. This integration enhances the applicability of
114 holistic education and supports the development of sustainable and value-based learning
115 environments.

116 **Holistic Development: The Pancha Kosha Model**

117 The concept of holistic development in IKS is most prominently articulated through the Pancha
118 Kosha model, which conceptualises human existence as comprising five interconnected layers
119 (Ambika et al., 2024; Sankar, 2025). These layers represent different dimensions of human
120 development, each requiring balanced nourishment for overall well-being.

- 121 1. **Annamaya Kosha (Physical Layer):** The physical dimension focuses on bodily health,
122 nutrition, and physical activity. It recognises the body as the foundation for all higher
123 forms of learning and development.
- 124 2. **Pranamaya Kosha (Vital Layer):** This layer relates to life energy and physiological
125 processes. Practices such as yoga and pranayama are emphasised to maintain energy
126 balance and enhance concentration.
- 127 3. **Manomaya Kosha (Mental Layer):** The mental dimension addresses emotional and
128 psychological well-being. It involves developing resilience, emotional regulation, and
129 ethical awareness.
- 130 4. **Vijnanamaya Kosha (Intellectual Layer):** This layer focuses on cognitive development,
131 including critical thinking, reasoning, and knowledge acquisition.
- 132 5. **Anandamaya Kosha (Bliss Layer):** The innermost layer represents spiritual fulfilment
133 and inner harmony. It emphasises the importance of meaningful learning experiences and
134 self-realisation.

135 The Pancha Kosha model aligns with contemporary frameworks such as social-emotional
136 learning and whole-child education, highlighting its relevance in modern educational contexts
137 (Sankar, 2025).

138 **NCF-SE 2023 and the 360-Degree Approach**

139 **Table 2: Key Components of NCF-SE 2023 and the 360-Degree Approach to Education**

Dimension	Key Focus	Description	Educational Implication
Holistic Development	Multidimensional learning	Emphasises integration of physical, cognitive, emotional, and ethical dimensions of learning (Ministry of Education, 2023)	Promotes balanced development of learners beyond academic achievement
Competency-Based Education	Skill-oriented learning	Focuses on the development of competencies rather than rote memorisation	Enhances critical thinking, problem-solving, and real-life application
Experiential Learning	Learning by doing	Encourages activity-based, inquiry-driven, and reflective learning approaches	Improves engagement, retention, and practical understanding
Interdisciplinary Approach	Integrated knowledge	Connects multiple subjects and domains for a comprehensive understanding	Facilitates holistic and contextual learning
Contextual Learning	Local and cultural relevance	Incorporates local contexts, indigenous knowledge, and cultural practices	Makes learning meaningful and relatable to students
Value-Based Education	Ethical and social development	Embeds values such as empathy, responsibility, and cooperation	Develops socially responsible and ethically grounded learners
Teacher Role Transformation	Facilitator of learning	Teachers act as guides, mentors, and facilitators rather than knowledge transmitters	Supports student-centred and inquiry-based learning
Capacity Building	Teacher education and training	Focuses on professional development and continuous learning for teachers	Ensures effective implementation of holistic education principles

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142 **Panchapadiya Framework: Pedagogical Integration**

143 To operationalise its vision, NCF-SE 2023 introduces the Panchapadiya framework, a five-step
144 pedagogical model derived from traditional Indian teaching methods (Ministry of Education,
145 2023).

- 146 1. Aditi (Introduction): Engaging learners by connecting new concepts with prior
147 knowledge.
- 148 2. Bodh (Understanding): Facilitating conceptual clarity through exploration and inquiry.
- 149 3. Abhyas (Practice): Reinforcing learning through structured activities.
- 150 4. Prayog (Application): Applying knowledge to real-life contexts.
- 151 5. Prasar (Expansion): Extending learning through collaboration and reflection.

152 This framework aligns with modern instructional models such as the 5E model, demonstrating
153 the compatibility of traditional and contemporary pedagogies (Tyagi, 2025).

154 **Comparative Analysis of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and NCF-SE 2023**

155 A comparative analysis of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and the National Curriculum
156 Framework for School Education (NCF-SE 2023) reveals both conceptual convergence and
157 structural divergence in their approach to holistic education. While both frameworks emphasise
158 multidimensional development, experiential learning, and ethical orientation, they differ in
159 epistemological grounding, pedagogical formalisation, and implementation scale.

160 **Comparative Framework**

161 Table 1 presents a structured comparison of IKS and NCF-SE 2023 across key educational
162 dimensions.

163 **Table 2: Comparative Dimensions of IKS and NCF-SE 2023**

Dimension	Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)	NCF-SE 2023	Integrated Insight
Philosophical Foundation	Rooted in metaphysical and experiential traditions (Pancha Kosha)	Based on developmental psychology and policy frameworks	Integration of philosophical depth with a structured curriculum
Nature of	Holistic, intuitive,	Structured,	Blending experiential

Knowledge	experiential	competency-based, measurable	learning with assessment-driven models
Pedagogical Approach	Guru–Shishya tradition; observation, reflection, lived experience	Panchapadiya framework: inquiry, practice, application	Experiential pedagogy within a structured sequence
Development Focus	Physical, mental, intellectual, and spiritual growth	360-degree development (cognitive, emotional, social, ethical)	Unified holistic learner model
Cultural Integration	Embedded in local traditions, languages, and ecological practices	Explicit curricular inclusion of IKS and cultural ethos	Contextualised and institutionalised cultural learning
Implementation	Decentralised, community-based, flexible	Centralised, policy-driven, scalable	Scalability of indigenous principles
Assessment	Implicit, qualitative, reflective	Formal, competency-based, outcome-oriented	Need for hybrid assessment models

164 Analytical Discussion

165 The comparison highlights that both IKS and NCF-SE 2023 share a commitment to holistic,
166 experiential education. Both frameworks reject rote memorisation and instead emphasise
167 learning as an active, meaningful, and value-driven process (Kumari et al., 2024). The
168 integration of ethical principles and socio-cultural contexts into education is central to both
169 approaches, reflecting a shared vision of developing responsible and conscious individuals.

170 However, the frameworks differ significantly in their conceptual orientation and operational
171 mechanisms. IKS is inherently philosophical and experiential, relying on intuitive knowledge
172 transmission and personalised learning environments. In contrast, NCF-SE 2023 translates these
173 philosophical ideas into structured curricular frameworks, making them accessible and
174 implementable at scale (Ministry of Education, 2023).

175 Critical Evaluation

176 Despite their strengths, both frameworks exhibit certain limitations that must be addressed for
177 effective integration.

178 **Limitations of IKS**

- 179 • Lack of formal structure: IKS lacks standardised frameworks for curriculum design and
180 assessment, which limits its scalability in formal education systems.
- 181 • Context-specific nature: Its reliance on local traditions and practices makes it difficult to
182 generalise across diverse educational contexts.
- 183 • Limited empirical validation: Many IKS principles are philosophically rich but lack
184 systematic empirical research to support large-scale implementation.

185 **Limitations of NCF-SE 2023**

- 186 • Implementation challenges: Translating holistic principles into classroom practice
187 requires extensive teacher training and institutional support.
- 188 • Risk of superficial integration: There is a possibility that IKS elements may be included
189 symbolically rather than meaningfully.
- 190 • Standardisation constraints: Large-scale implementation may limit flexibility and
191 contextual adaptation.

192 **Linkage with the Proposed Conceptual Model**

193 The above comparative analysis directly informs the Integrated IKS–NCF Conceptual Model
194 proposed in this study. While IKS provides the philosophical foundation through the Pancha
195 Kosha framework, NCF-SE 2023 offers the pedagogical structure through the Panchapadiya
196 framework. The integration of these two dimensions enables the operationalisation of holistic
197 education within contemporary schooling systems.

198 Specifically, the model addresses the limitations identified in both frameworks by:

- 199 • Providing a structured pathway for implementing IKS principles through Panchapadiya
200 stages
- 201 • Enabling scalability of holistic education within institutional contexts

- 202 • Bridging philosophy and practice, ensuring that traditional knowledge is translated into
203 measurable learning outcomes

204 Thus, the proposed model represents a synthesis of indigenous wisdom and modern educational
205 design, offering a comprehensive approach to holistic development that is both culturally rooted
206 and globally relevant.

207 **Discussion**

208 The integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the National Curriculum Framework
209 for School Education (NCF-SE 2023) represents a significant paradigm shift in contemporary
210 educational philosophy. This transformation moves beyond the dichotomy of traditional and
211 modern knowledge systems by establishing a synergistic framework that combines indigenous
212 epistemologies with structured, policy-driven educational practices (Ministry of Education,
213 2023; Tyagi, 2025). Such integration not only revitalises traditional knowledge but also enhances
214 its relevance within formal educational settings.

215 By bridging the gap between experiential, value-oriented traditions and contemporary
216 pedagogical frameworks, this hybrid model offers a culturally grounded yet globally adaptable
217 approach to education. IKS contributes philosophical depth through concepts such as the Pancha
218 Kosha, which emphasises multidimensional human development, while NCF-SE 2023 provides a
219 systematic structure through frameworks like Panchapadiya, enabling practical implementation
220 in classrooms. This convergence ensures that learning is not limited to cognitive acquisition but
221 extends to emotional, ethical, social, and spiritual development.

222 Furthermore, this integrated framework responds effectively to several pressing contemporary
223 challenges. In the context of **sustainability**, the ecological wisdom embedded within IKS aligns
224 with global sustainability goals, encouraging learners to develop environmentally responsible
225 behaviors and practices (Rao, 2018). The inclusion of sustainability-oriented learning within
226 NCF-SE 2023 ensures that such values are systematically embedded in the curriculum.

227 In terms of **mental health and well-being**, IKS's holistic approach, which incorporates practices
228 such as mindfulness, meditation, and emotional regulation, supports the development of
229 psychological resilience and emotional balance among learners (Sankar, 2025). NCF-SE 2023

230 reinforces this by promoting socio-emotional learning and well-being as integral components of
231 education.

232 Additionally, the integration supports **social cohesion and ethical development** by emphasising
233 values such as empathy, cooperation, and respect for diversity. These values are essential for
234 fostering inclusive and harmonious societies in an increasingly globalised world (Sarkar, 2024).

235 By prioritising holistic development, the integrated framework equips learners with the
236 competencies required to navigate complex global realities. These include critical thinking,
237 ethical reasoning, emotional intelligence, and adaptability, all essential for addressing
238 contemporary challenges and contributing to sustainable development.

239 The integration of IKS and NCF-SE 2023 represents a forward-looking educational model that
240 not only preserves cultural heritage but also enhances the relevance and effectiveness of
241 education in the 21st century. It provides a robust foundation for developing learners who are
242 intellectually competent, emotionally resilient, ethically grounded, and socially responsible.

243 **Implications**

244 The findings of this study have significant implications for multiple stakeholders within the
245 education system, particularly in the context of integrating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)
246 with the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE 2023).

247 1. **Implications for Teachers:** Teachers play a central role in translating curricular
248 frameworks into meaningful classroom practices. The integration of IKS into NCF-SE
249 2023 requires teachers to move beyond traditional content-delivery methods and adopt
250 experiential, reflective, and value-based pedagogies. Teacher education programmes
251 should therefore focus on equipping educators with the skills required to integrate
252 indigenous knowledge, cultural contexts, and ethical dimensions into teaching–learning
253 processes (Sarkar, 2024). Additionally, teachers must be trained to facilitate inquiry-
254 based learning, promote socio-emotional development, and create inclusive classroom
255 environments that respect diversity and cultural heritage.

256 2. **Implications for Curriculum Design:** The integration of IKS calls for a
257 reconceptualization of curriculum design that incorporates indigenous knowledge

258 systems, local contexts, and interdisciplinary approaches. Curriculum developers should
259 ensure that learning experiences are contextualised, culturally relevant, and aligned with
260 real-life applications. This includes embedding sustainability, ethical values, and
261 community-based learning within subject areas. Furthermore, aligning the Pancha Kosha
262 framework with competency-based education can support the development of
263 comprehensive curricula that address multiple dimensions of learner development
264 (Kumari et al., 2024).

265 3. **Implications for Policy and Institutional Practice:** At the policy level, the successful
266 implementation of NCF-SE 2023 requires systematic capacity building, resource
267 allocation, and institutional support (Ministry of Education, 2023). Policymakers must
268 ensure that adequate training programmes, teaching resources, and assessment
269 frameworks are developed to support the integration of IKS into mainstream education.
270 Institutions should also foster collaborative partnerships with local communities and
271 knowledge holders to enhance the authenticity and relevance of learning experiences.
272 Continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are essential for assessing the
273 effectiveness of implementation and ensuring alignment with holistic educational goals.

274 **Future Research Directions**

- 275 • While the present study provides a conceptual and analytical framework for integrating
276 IKS with NCF-SE 2023, there is a need for empirical validation and further exploration
277 of this integrated model. Future research should focus on developing standardised
278 measurement tools based on the Pancha Kosha framework to assess holistic development
279 among learners.
- 280 • Additionally, advanced statistical techniques such as Structural Equation Modelling
281 (SEM) can be employed to examine the relationships between different dimensions of
282 holistic development and educational outcomes. Such analyses would provide deeper
283 insights into the effectiveness of the proposed model.
- 284 • Longitudinal studies are also recommended to investigate the long-term impact of holistic
285 education on student outcomes, including academic achievement, emotional well-being,
286 ethical orientation, and sustainability awareness. Comparative studies across different
287 educational contexts can further enhance the generalizability of findings.

- 288 • Moreover, future research can explore the integration of digital and AI-enabled learning
289 environments with IKS-based pedagogies, thereby extending the applicability of the
290 model in contemporary educational settings.

291 **Conclusion**

292 The integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) with the National Curriculum Framework
293 for School Education (NCF-SE 2023) offers a comprehensive and forward-looking framework
294 for holistic education. By combining the philosophical depth of indigenous knowledge with
295 structured pedagogical approaches, this integration bridges the gap between traditional wisdom
296 and modern educational practices.

297 The proposed framework emphasises the development of learners as multidimensional
298 individuals, encompassing cognitive competence, emotional balance, ethical awareness, social
299 responsibility, and sustainability consciousness. Such an approach aligns with global educational
300 priorities while remaining rooted in cultural and contextual relevance.

301 In an era characterised by rapid social, technological, and environmental changes, the need for
302 holistic education has become increasingly critical. The integration of IKS and NCF-SE 2023 not
303 only addresses this need but also provides a robust foundation for developing future-ready
304 learners who are capable of navigating complex global challenges while maintaining a strong
305 sense of identity and values.

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