Indian Knowledge Systems and Library Resources in India

Manoj Kumar[1], Manoj Pandey[2], Dr. Rakesh Pant[3]

[123]Assistant Professor, Uttarakhand Open University, Haldwani, Nainital, India

Corresponding Author: Manoj Kumar, Email Id: mkrocksmanoj[at]gmail.com

Abstract: *The Indian knowledge system has a long history. It started in the Vedic period, and that knowledge is still relevant. People in our society still use their knowledge in their daily lives. The origin of our knowledge system was supported by our historical libraries. As we know, the library is the backbone of every institution or any school of thought. Libraries not only fulfil the demands of a reader but also provide the relevant literature related to the concerned study on time because libraries have the skill to manage the huge amount of knowledge, and organising the available knowledge is the primary mission of any library. In every era, particularly in the Indian context, there was always a library that supported our knowledge society. That supporting system still works the same, but may be in different ways. In this paper, we will try to discuss the knowledge system and the current library resources and their services.*

Keywords: Library and Society, Indian Knowledge System, Ancient Indian Libraries, New Education Policy, Modern Indian Libraries

1. Introduction

Indian knowledge systems (IKS) have developed over thousands of years and are firmly rooted in Indian philosophy, spirituality, and culture. Numerous aspects of these knowledge systems, including Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedanta, and Vedic sciences, are still much more relevant in the current time frame. India's civilisation values knowledge, with a vast collection of intellectual texts and manuscripts. Its tradition of thinkers and schools spans various domains, with knowledge being central to rational and speculative inquiry, as emphasised in the Rig Veda.

India is the world's oldest civilisation and is home to a diverse population with a rich cultural history. The world's population is greatest in India. In IKS, a guru used to impart knowledge to his students in ancient India, and the next generation used to carry on this tradition. This persisted in part even after it was discovered that people could write on stones, leaves, skin, papyrus, and eventually paper. Ancient India relied on Upanishadic knowledge transmission, even after writing on various materials like stones, leaves, skin, papyrus, and paper, ensuring continuous transmission without major systemic lapses. Up until that point, there were no significant systemic breakdowns because the information was passed down orally from generation to generation.

The history of the evolution of libraries is an essential part of the history of the intellectual development of civilisation, and there is always an intimate relation between the development of libraries and the spread of knowledge through recorded communication. The use of writing and education through written records naturally stimulated the practice of their collection and preservation, which ultimately made ground for the formation of libraries. Since the development of libraries in the sense of collections of manuscripts and books as repositories of recorded knowledge has everywhere been largely dependent on the evolution of the educational process, it is necessary to refer briefly to the system of the educational process of this country from the easiest times to the introduction of the printing press later in the 16th century and the beginning of modern education in the nineteenth.

2. Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the key Libraries of the Indian Knowledge System in India,
2. To analyse the resources of IKS.
3. To surface the library resources of IKS in India,
4. To trace the vast collection of intellectual texts and manuscripts available in India,
5. Provide information to the researcher for their further research.

3. The need for this study

The main purpose of this study is to figure out the resources related to the Indian Knowledge System. It will also describe the importance of the Indian Knowledge System and the rich collection of that time we possess, and also the flourishing heritage of that time. This study will help to accumulate the current library sources in the current progress and the Indian knowledge system, and current library resources. Finally, this paper compiled informational sources and the Indian knowledge system systematically.

4. Review of Literature

The review of literature is as follows-

Tamrakar & Jadon, (2022), It is vital to describe some of the most world-renowned Indian libraries of the ancient period. Considering this, Nalanda University comes in first place. It was in the 5th century A.D., enriched in the Ancient Indian higher education system, among the three huge buildings Ratnasagara, Ratnadadhi, and Ratnaranjaka. Ratnadadhi was the nine-story building that housed the sacred manuscripts. The Nalanda Monastery's library, considered an ancient university-grade institution, was well-organised and widely used. It was located fifty miles southeast of Patna and was a famous Buddhist centre. Academicians, scholars, and students attended Nalanda University from all over the world. Japan, China, Tibet,

Indonesia, Korea, etc., from Southeast Asia, and also Persia, and Turkey, were mainly from the Middle East. Second, in the 8th century A.D., Vikramsila (in Bihar), by King Dharmapala, housed almost every subject. Odantapuri, in Bihar, comes next, and this university was the reputed centre of learning and served as a model of that time. Somapuri, another institution that also occupied a position like Vikaramasila, which had a huge library. Jaggadal was established between 1084 and 1130 A.D., in Ramavati. This institute produces many renowned scholars, like Mahapandita Vibhutichandra, etc.

Mithila was a centre of Brahminical culture, which flourished in this period. This learning centre also produced remarkable scholars like Vachaspati Mishra, Jagaddhara, Yardhamana, Gahgesha, etc., Vallabhi from 475 A.D. to 775 A.D. Such a reputed centre of learning had a well-established library that supported its scholars and students. Kanheri flourished in the 9th century A.D. in the reign of Amoghavarsha. This shows that these libraries were rich in their collection, which attracted hundreds of thousands of students across the globe.

Kapoor & Singh (2002), Indian civilisation is always attached to great knowledge values. These values include intellectual text, a large collection of manuscripts, thinkers, and different schools of thought, which widen its knowledge base. He added that the 'Indian mind has depended more on 'Hypothetico-deductive' methodology than on inductive observation methodology. According to him, this knowledge system relies on some factors like structure and style of the text, memorisation, and culture of oral transmission, which is known as Guru-Sisya prampara. Amarkosa (dictionary), Astadhyayi (grammar).

Singh (2022), further mentions that the traditional knowledge system includes some major Vidyas, disciplines, and kalas, as well as applied or vocational disciplines and crafts, which can be seen in the New Education Policy 2020. The education was in many fields, such as the Vedas, Ayurveda in medicine, Gandharvaveda as part of the science of music, Silpa, which is an important discipline of architecture today, Dhanurveda, in weaponry, Purana, Nyaya, Mimamsa, and Vedanga. Some auxiliary sciences like phonetics, Vyakran, astronomy, etc., were constituted in ancient India.

5. Research Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is to analyse the web portals of these libraries, check the web-OPAC and take data from the websites. Also, this paper includes an extensive literature review. It will provide recommendations on various types of libraries or institutions to research scholars and also gather insights on how IKS is being integrated into modern practices and systems.

Central Sanskrit University Library

The library's collection of both classic and contemporary disciplines is extensive and educational. In addition to journals, periodicals, Sanskrit newspapers, theses, and dissertations, it contains a unique and ancient collection of almost 28,000 works on Sanskrit literature, Vedic Sahitya,

philosophy, grammar, Dharmashastra, Jyotisha, education, and Puranas, among other subjects. This library serves as the organisation's hub and is crucial to the social and academic development of Sansthan. For all Sanskrit scholars conducting studies in India and outside, the library offers an open-access system. This library is a reputable research facility that is solely focused on conducting studies on different areas of Sanskrit literature. The library has developed into a hub for study and knowledge expansion, particularly for Sanskrit (Central Sanskrit University, 2024).

Indian knowledge systems (IKS) division

The Ministry of Education (MoE) established the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) Division in October 2020, and it is housed in the AICTE Headquarters. The goal is to preserve and spread "Indian Knowledge Systems" for future study and societal applications, as well as to encourage interdisciplinary research on all facets of these systems. It compiles a database of people and institutions that made significant contributions to the study, instruction, publication, and preservation of rich ancient IKS. These systems include not only the arts, music, dance, and drama, but also "mathematics, astronomy, science, technology, life sciences, environment and natural sciences, health care, yoga, law, jurisprudence, economics, social sciences, psychology, philosophy, management, linguistics, and oral traditions of India". It will encourage and facilitate further research in several fields, such as "holistic health, psychology, neuroscience, nature, the environment, and sustainable development", provide new information, proof of concepts, and successful multidisciplinary work, to address the societal issues of the day. (Indian Knowledge Systems Division, 2024).

National mission for manuscripts (NMM)

The Ministry of Tourism and Culture founded the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) in February 2003. The Mission is unique in its scope and objectives, which aim to discover and conserve India's enormous manuscript wealth, and the mission is to find, record, conserve, and make these available so that India's history and ambitions can be linked. With an estimated five million manuscripts, India is likely to have the world's largest collection. These include calligraphy, scripts, languages, illuminations, pictures, and a wide range of topics, textures, and aesthetics. NMM is finding manuscripts using a nationwide survey, post-survey, and recording every manuscript and its repository for a national electronic database. This database is the largest on Indian manuscripts in the world, including information on four million manuscripts at this time (National Mission for Manuscripts, 2024).

Bhandarkar oriental research institute (BORI)

In honour of 'Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar', the leading pioneer of scientific Orientalism, the study of the old indigenous lore and wisdom of the East, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute was established in Pune in 1917. The BORI Library houses more than 1,25,000 volumes and more than 28,000 manuscripts collected over an extended period. The institute has one of the greatest collections of rare

books and manuscripts. Many languages and scripts, including Sanskrit, Prakrit, regional Indian languages, Classical, Asian, and European languages, are included in this collection. For the past nine decades, this institute has successfully fulfilled the duty of a highly important centre for Indological studies and research (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 2024).

Vedic heritage portal

This is a project design and development on Vedic Heritage initiated by the Ministry of Culture. It aims for a single window solution for the reader who seeks information related to the Vedic heritage. It tries to understand the Vedic wisdom through the modern sciences. This portal targets mainly three types of audiences: first, those who are part of traditional Vedic learning, second, those who are interested in Vedic content, and third, the professionals who are masters in re-contextualising it with modernity. In this portal, you will get Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads, Vedangas, etc (Vedic Heritage, 2024).

Indira Gandhi National Centre for The Arts (IGNCA)

One of the beautiful libraries in the heart of Delhi, the library of IGNCA, possesses a rich and vast collection related to current reference volumes. The collection includes bibliographies, conference proceedings, monographs, translations, catalogues of unpublished manuscripts with Asian and Indian origins, biographies, and autobiographies (Reference Library, 2024).

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri National Sanskrit University Library

The collection comprises contemporary reference volumes along with bibliographies, conference papers, monographs, translations, and catalogues of unpublished Asian and Indian manuscripts. It also provides its resources to whom is Sanskrit and ancient knowledge bibliophiles through its membership facility to anyone (Shri Lal Bahadur Shashtri National Sanskrit University Library, 2024).

Courses related to the IKS

Some of the online courses that are being offered through the SWAYAM and NPTEL portal, like, 'Indian Knowledge System (IKS): Concepts and Applications in Engineering', 'Indian Knowledge System (IKS): Concepts and Applications in Science', 'Indian Knowledge System (IKS): Humanities and Social Sciences' through SWAYAM portal started by Ministry of Education, Govt. of India in 2017 and basic, intermediate, and advanced levels for spoken Sanskrit language at NPTEL portal, which is a joint venture of the IIT's and IISc and was launched in 2003 by the Govt. of India.

6. Conclusion

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS), which is based on ancient traditions and ideas, remains highly relevant in the age of globalisation. The increased integration of global economies, cultures, and ideas has highlighted the importance of embracing multiple knowledge systems.

IKS, rooted in philosophy, spirituality, and culture, have evolved over thousands of years. The country values knowledge, with a vast collection of intellectual texts and manuscripts. The Rigveda emphasises knowledge as central to rational and speculative inquiry. India is the world's oldest civilisation and one of the largest nations, with a diverse population. The evolution of libraries is essential to the intellectual development of civilisation, which facilitates knowledge transmission through written communication. The development of libraries, stored manuscripts and books has been largely dependent on the evolution of the educational process, from the earliest times to the introduction of the printing press in the 16th century. This section contains the conclusions of a research study on the relevance of IKS worldwide. This will definitely help researchers and interest groups of the IKS implementers.

References

[1] Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. (2024, 22 01). Retrieved from Dr R. N. Dandekar Library: https://bori.ac.in/department/library/

[2] Central Sanskrit University. (2024, 02 24). Retrieved from https://www.sanskrit.nic.in/library.php

[3] Indian Knowledge Systems. (2024). Retrieved from Ministry of Education: https://iksindia.org/course-list.php

[4] Indian Knowledge Systems Division. (2024, 02 14). Retrieved from https://iksindia.org/

[5] Kapoor, K., & Singh, A. K. (2002). Indian Knowledge Systems- Nature, philosophy, and Character. In K. Kapoor. New Delhi: DK Printworld.

[6] National Mission for Manuscripts. (2024, 01 29). Retrieved from https://www.namami.gov.in/about-us-0

[7] Reference Library. (2024, 15 01). Retrieved from Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts: https://ignca.gov.in/divisionss/kalanidhi/reference-library/

[8] Shri Lal Bahadur Shashtri National Sanskrit University Library. (2024, 02 10). Retrieved from https://www.slbsrsv.ac.in/library/about-library-0

[9] Singh, A. (2022). Ancient Indian Knowledge Systems and their Relevance Today – With an Emphasis on Arthaśāstra. Retrieved from indiafoundation.in: https://indiafoundation.in/articles-and-commentaries/ancient-indian-knowledge-systems-and-their-relevance-today-with-an-emphasis-on-arthasastra/#_edn1

[10] Tamrakar, A. K., & Jadon, J. (2022). Library and education system in ancient Nalanda University. International Journal of Advanced Academic Studies, 130-134.

[11] Vedic Heritage. (2024, 01 20). Retrieved from About Vedic Heritage Portal: https://vedicheritage.gov.in/