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1. Fostering Research Excellence through the Integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in Teacher Education: A Case Study of NEP 2020 Implementation in Nagaland

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Abstract

This article explores the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into teacher education, focusing on the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in Nagaland. With the NEP 2020 emphasizing the revival of India's ancient knowledge base and its infusion into modern education, this study highlights the potential for fostering research excellence through IKS. It discusses the opportunities and challenges in the context of Nagaland, a region rich in cultural diversity, where the implementation of IKS provides unique pedagogical insights. The study analyzes the impact of IKS on teacher education, drawing on qualitative data from a case study of Nagaland's teacher training programs. It also provides recommendations for policymakers and educators to further enhance the integration of IKS into teacher education across India.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, NEP 2020, Teacher Education

1. Introduction

The Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), rooted in ancient texts and traditional wisdom, offer a holistic approach to knowledge and learning. The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** recognizes the significance of these indigenous systems and stresses their integration into modern education. While teacher education in India has traditionally followed Western paradigms, the NEP aims to create an indigenous pedagogical foundation. This article presents a case study of **Nagaland**, exploring how the integration of IKS into teacher education aligns with NEP 2020 and fosters research excellence.

2. Theoretical Framework: Indian Knowledge Systems in Education

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Indian Knowledge Systems encompass a vast corpus of knowledge that spans disciplines such as **philosophy, mathematics, medicine, architecture, linguistics, and spirituality**. Concepts like **Tantrayukti** (logical reasoning), **Anubandha Chatushtaya** (fourfold approach to learning), and the **Pancha Kosha** (five sheaths of existence) provide a comprehensive framework for teaching and learning.

The NEP 2020 emphasizes the revival and contextualization of IKS in modern education, advocating for its inclusion in all levels of the educational system. For teacher education, IKS offers an avenue to develop culturally rooted pedagogical practices, enabling educators to harness the wisdom of India's past while addressing contemporary educational needs.

3. Methodology: A Case Study Approach

This study follows a **qualitative case study approach** to examine how IKS is being implemented in teacher education in **Nagaland**. The case study is based on:

- **Document analysis**: NEP 2020 and policy documents related to IKS integration in education.
- **Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**: Data were collected from teacher educators, pre-service teachers, and education policymakers in Nagaland.
- **Field observations**: Visits to teacher training institutions and schools in Nagaland to observe IKS-related teaching practices.

The study focuses on understanding the experiences of teacher educators and student-teachers in adopting IKS, the challenges faced, and the perceived impact on **research quality and teaching competencies**.

4. Context: Teacher Education and NEP 2020 in Nagaland

Nagaland, located in Northeast India, has a unique socio-cultural landscape, characterized by rich tribal traditions and knowledge systems. Teacher education in the state is influenced by its diverse cultural heritage, which provides fertile ground for the implementation of IKS.

The NEP 2020's mandate to incorporate local and regional knowledge into the curriculum aligns with Nagaland's efforts to preserve its indigenous knowledge. However, implementing IKS in teacher education presents challenges, including the **lack of resources**, **limited awareness**

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among educators, and the **need for culturally relevant curricula** that balances traditional knowledge with modern educational frameworks.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1. Fostering Research Excellence through IKS

The integration of IKS in teacher education promotes research excellence by encouraging teachers to explore **local knowledge systems** and their application in educational settings. In Nagaland, this has translated into research projects focused on:

- The **documentation of tribal knowledge** in relation to environmental conservation, agriculture, and community health.
- Studies on the **oral traditions and folk narratives** as pedagogical tools in classrooms.
- Research on the **impact of traditional practices** such as community-based learning on student motivation and engagement.

By aligning research topics with IKS, educators in Nagaland are contributing to the development of a **new body of indigenous research**, moving beyond the reliance on Western theories and methodologies.

5.2. Challenges in Implementing IKS in Teacher Education

Despite its potential, the integration of IKS into teacher education faces several challenges:

- **Curriculum adaptation**: There is a gap between the NEP's vision and its practical implementation. Teacher training institutions struggle to create a curriculum that effectively integrates IKS with modern pedagogical approaches.
- **Lack of resources**: Many institutions lack access to **IKS-based materials** and the expertise required to teach them. The need for more **translated IKS texts** and digital resources is critical.
- **Teacher preparedness**: While some educators are enthusiastic about IKS, many lack training in its concepts and relevance to modern education, leading to a disconnect between policy and practice.

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5.3. Opportunities for Growth

Despite these challenges, the study identified key opportunities for fostering research and teaching excellence through IKS:

- **Collaborative research**: Encouraging collaboration between **local scholars** and educators, **tribal elders**, and **research institutions** can bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and formal education.
- **Capacity building**: Providing **professional development programs** for teacher educators on IKS can enhance their understanding and ability to integrate these systems into their teaching and research.
- **Policy support**: Greater support from the **central and state governments** is necessary to provide funding, resources, and institutional backing for IKS-related research and curriculum development.

6. Policy Recommendations

To effectively integrate IKS into teacher education and foster research excellence, the following policy actions are recommended:

1. **Development of localized IKS curricula**: Institutions should work closely with local communities to develop curricula that incorporate both **national-level IKS** and **regional knowledge systems**.
2. **Capacity-building programs for teacher educators**: Regular workshops and seminars on IKS should be organized to familiarize educators with its principles and methodologies.
3. **Enhanced research funding**: The government and research councils should provide specific funding opportunities for research that focuses on IKS, particularly in regions with rich cultural heritage like Nagaland.
4. **Creating digital repositories**: A **national digital repository** of IKS resources, including translations and contemporary applications, should be developed to support research and teaching.

7. Conclusion

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The integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into teacher education, as envisaged by the NEP 2020, has the potential to transform the quality of both teaching and research. In Nagaland, where local cultures and traditions play a pivotal role in daily life, IKS offers an opportunity to build a pedagogical framework that is both **indigenous and contemporary**.

However, the journey toward fully realizing this vision is fraught with challenges, particularly regarding resource availability and curriculum adaptation. Through sustained efforts in **capacity-building**, **collaborative research**, and **policy support**, the integration of IKS can foster **research excellence** and create a new generation of educators equipped to carry forward the legacy of India's knowledge traditions.

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