

Indian Knowledge Systems: A Study of Institutional Initiatives in India

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Abstract

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) represent India's rich intellectual and cultural heritage encompassing traditional knowledge in disciplines such as arts, literature, agriculture, science, engineering, architecture, management, and economics. This paper examines the institutions and centres engaged in preserving, promoting, and disseminating IKS across India. The study aims to identify these institutions and analyze their major activities in advancing traditional knowledge. Data were collected from the official Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) portal under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, and verified through the respective institutional websites. The findings reveal that 34 institutes and centres are actively engaged in IKS-related education, research, documentation, and outreach. Several institutions, including Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), have established dedicated Centres for Indian Knowledge Systems to foster interdisciplinary research. Many centres also offer certificate, diploma, postgraduate, doctoral, and post-doctoral programmes, thereby strengthening the preservation, research, and dissemination of India's traditional knowledge heritage.

Keywords: *Traditional Knowledge, Indigenous Knowledge, Indian Knowledge Systems, Interdisciplinary Research*

I. Introduction

India possesses one of the world's oldest continuous civilizations, with a rich legacy of knowledge accumulated over more than 5,000 years. This knowledge, preserved through oral traditions and written texts, encompasses diverse fields such as philosophy, science, mathematics, medicine, agriculture, arts, literature, architecture, and governance. Although foreign invasions and colonial influence marginalized many indigenous knowledge traditions over the past two centuries, there is now renewed recognition of their significance for contemporary society. Understanding the intellectual heritage of India helps preserve cultural identity, inspires innovation, and provides a foundation for creating new knowledge.

Recognizing this importance, the **Ministry of Education, Government of India**, established the **Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) Division** in October 2020 at AICTE, New Delhi. The division promotes interdisciplinary research, preservation, documentation, and dissemination of India's traditional knowledge while creating a national repository of scholars and institutions working in diverse disciplines, including arts, science, technology, health, philosophy, management, languages, and oral traditions.

1.2 Need for Indian Knowledge Systems

The preservation and promotion of IKS are essential not only for safeguarding India's intellectual heritage but also for ensuring economic security, protecting traditional knowledge through intellectual property rights, and strengthening national identity. In the emerging knowledge economy, indigenous knowledge has significant academic, social, and commercial value.

1.3 Definition of Indian Knowledge Systems

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) refer to the vast body of indigenous knowledge developed across the Indian subcontinent over thousands of years. The concept comprises three components:

- **Indian:** Knowledge originating from the cultural and intellectual traditions of the Indian subcontinent.
- **Knowledge:** Wisdom gained through experience, observation, experimentation, analysis, and transmitted through both oral and written traditions.
- **System:** The organized collection, classification, documentation, and dissemination of knowledge to facilitate learning, research, and application.

1.4 Importance of Ancient Knowledge

Ancient knowledge plays a vital role in preserving cultural continuity and fostering sustainable development. Its major contributions include:

- **Identity:** Strengthens individual and national identity by preserving traditional values and practices.
- **Culture:** Sustains India's diverse cultural heritage and promotes social cohesion.
- **Received Wisdom:** Provides a foundation for innovation by building upon the accumulated knowledge of previous generations.
- **Economic Value:** Supports knowledge-based development, intellectual property protection, and the commercialization of indigenous innovations.

Overall, Indian Knowledge Systems provide an invaluable intellectual resource that contributes to education, research, cultural preservation, innovation, and national development.

II. Literature Review

Chakravarty (2010), discusses in his paper that traditional knowledge is a valuable asset for any country as it plays a vital role in making the nation more progressive and transforming its society. He examines the need for preserving traditional knowledge. The paper describes the role of the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library and its activities in preserving traditional medicinal knowledge in India

This paper traces traditional indigenous knowledge management in terms of the structure of traditional knowledge, its delivery system, its selective application and utilization, the reactions from competing groups, and ultimately the technological issues in democratizing the knowledge system.(Chandran, 2011)

Over time, Indigenous peoples around the world have preserved distinctive understandings, rooted in cultural experience, that guide relations among human, non-human, and other-than human beings in specific ecosystems. These understandings and relations constitute a system broadly identified as Indigenous knowledge, also called traditional knowledge or aboriginal knowledge. (Bruchac, 2014)

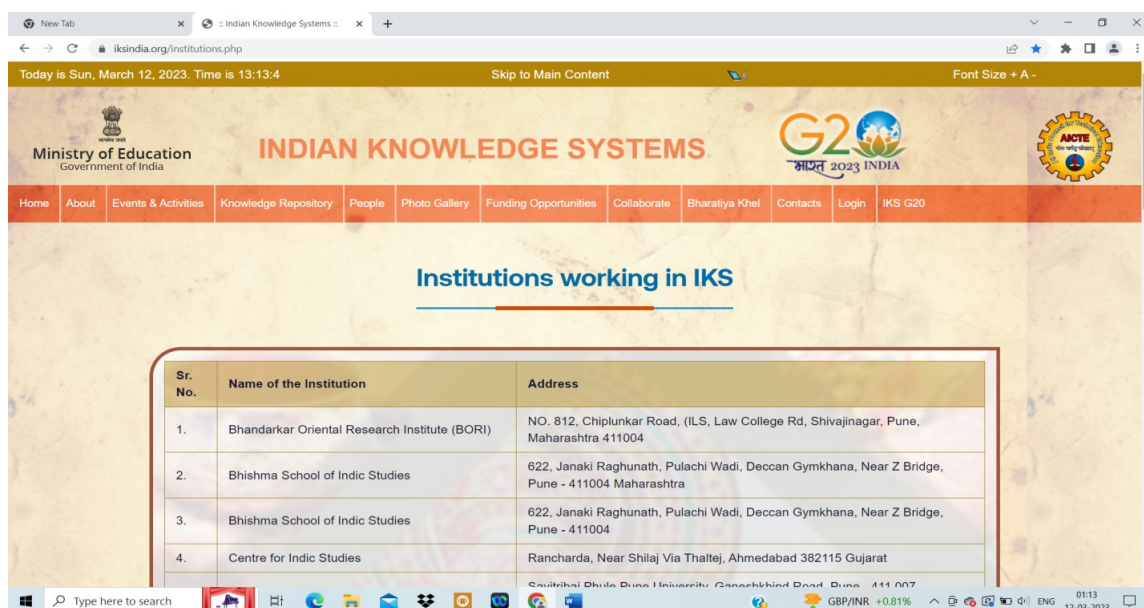
III. Objectives

The objectives of this paper are as follows: -

- To discuss the importance of traditional knowledge among the people of India.
- To know the different institutes and centres situated in India working on traditional knowledge systems and
- To find out year wise growth, courses offered and areas of work of IKS.

IV. Methodology

For the purpose of this study, the website of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) has been studied. The names of the institutes and centres have been enlisted under the “Knowledge Repository” of the home page of IKS. The website of each institute and centres has been further checked for its activities. Data has been collected up to 28th February 2023.



The screenshot shows the website of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) at <https://iksindia.org/institutions.php>. The page features a header with the Ministry of Education logo, the IKS logo, and a navigation menu. Below the header, there is a section titled "Institutions working in IKS" which contains a table listing four institutions.

Sr. No.	Name of the Institution	Address
1.	Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI)	NO. 812, Chiplunkar Road, (I.L.S. Law College Rd, Shivajinagar, Pune, Maharashtra 411004
2.	Bhishma School of Indic Studies	622, Janaki Raghunath, Pulachi Wadi, Deccan Gymkhana, Near Z Bridge, Pune - 411004 Maharashtra
3.	Bhishma School of Indic Studies	622, Janaki Raghunath, Pulachi Wadi, Deccan Gymkhana, Near Z Bridge, Pune - 411004
4.	Centre for Indic Studies	Rancharda, Near Shilaj Via Thaltej, Ahmedabad 382115 Gujarat

Snapshot-1 The website of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), <https://iksindia.org/institutions.php>

V. Limitations

Each and every work has certain limitations. This work has no exception. For the purpose of this study, only the website of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) has been consulted. At the time of searching, there is no such website is available where exhaustive list of institutes and centres are enlisted as it is available in IKS. So, any institutes engaged in IKS but not listed in the website of IKS may be excluded.

VI. Analysis of data

Table-1 Name of Centres & Institutes working in Indian Knowledge Systems

Sl. No.	Name of the Institutes	Year of Establishment	Courses Offered	Areas of Work	URL
1	Bhishma School of Indic Studies, Pune (BSIS)	1976	MA in Vedas & Kautilya Political Science and Arthashastra	Indian History and Culture	https://www.bhishmaindics.org/about
2	Center for Art and Archaeology (AIIS-CAA), Gurgaon, Haryana	1961	-	The study of art and archaeology in India	http://www.dliir.org/partners/120.html
3	Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems, IIT Guwahati	2020	-	Multi-disciplinary research for preserving, documenting, and building upon a philosophic and scientific understanding of Indian Traditional Knowledge Systems.	https://iitg.ac.in/iitg_academic?aca=centre-for-indian-knowledge-system
4	Centre for Indic Studies, Ahmedabad, under Indus University	-	Short Term Course on Indian history, Indian Knowledge Systems, Ancient Sciences	Various aspects of Indian Civilization, Dharmic Narratives of India	https://cisindus.org/about-us/
5	Centre for Study and Research in Indology, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Delhi	1938	-	Sanskrit & Sanskriti	https://www.bvbdelhi.org/about-bharatiya-vidya-bhavan/
6	Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit (CASS), Savitribai Phule University, Pune	1964	MA in Translation, Indian Logic and Epistemology, Sanskrit Linguistics, Diploma in Sanskrit Linguistics, Certificate Course in Manuscriptology	Sanskrit learning	http://www.unipune.ac.in/dept/fine_arts/centre_for_advanced_study_in_sanskrit/default.htm
7	Centre of Excellence for Indian Knowledge Systems (CoE-IKS), IIT Kharagpur	-	-	Hist. Sc& Tech in Ancient India, IKS, Language in Society and Culture	http://www.iitkgp.ac.in/departments/KS#:~:text=Shiksha%20Mantri%20Shri%20Ramesh%20Pokhriyal,for%20Indian%20Knowledge%20Systems%20...
8	Department of Studies in Ancient History and Archaeology, Manasagangotri, University of Mysore, Mysuru	1950	Under Graduate & Post Graduate	Indology & Epigraphy	https://uni-mysore.ac.in/english-version/ancient-history-and-archaeology
9	India Foundation for the Arts (IFA), Bengaluru	1995	-	The arts and culture & languages in India	https://indiaifa.org/india-foundation-arts.html

10	Indic Academy, Hyderabad, Telangana	-	Online courses across multiple disciplines, of global indigenous knowledge systems.	Indigenous wisdom i.e. Yoga, Moksha, Bharatiya Languages	https://indica.in/team/
11	Isha Foundation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu,	1992	Conducts different programmes such as Yoga, Bhava Spandana, Guru Pooja etc.	Yoga, Yogi & Mysticism	https://isha.sadhguru.org/in/en
12	Jnana-Pravaha: The Culture & Knowledge Centre, Varanasi	1997	Advance Courses on Epigraphy and Palaeography	Promotes, supports and propagates Indian Culture in its quintessence	https://jnnapravaha.org/
13	Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, Gujarat University	-	-	Ancient Indian manuscripts and artifacts	http://www.lindology.org/
14	Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Vedic University (Pvt. University), Katni, MP	1995	Graduate and post-graduate programs Jyotish, Sthapatya Ved	Ancient history, languages and culture of India	http://www.mmyvv.com/#
15	MIT School of Vedic Sciences, Pune	-	M Sc & Ph D in Vedic Sciences, MA in Sanskrit	Vedic Sciences, Sanskrit	https://mitvedicsciences.edu.in/
16	Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur	1958	-	To promote Rajasthan culture and heritage and to accumulate and maintain the old Rajasthan folk art work and folk literature	https://artandculture.rajasthan.gov.in/content/raj/art-and-culture/rajasthan-oriental-research-institute/en/home.html#
17	Rashtram School of Public Leadership, Rishihood University, Sonapat, Haryana	-	-	Indian Knowledge System, and Sanskrit	https://rishihood.edu.in/rashtram/
18	Sanskrit & Indology Foundation, Bhubaneswar, Orissa	2005	SAMSKRUTAM™ an open-content digital platform with the vision of building a <i>knowledge repository</i> on <i>Sanskrit-and-Indic</i> subject	Spreading Sanskrit in day-to-day life	http://foundation.samskrutam.com/about-sanskrit-and-indology-foundation.ashx
19	School of Indological Studies, Mauritius	-	MA in Sanskrit, Philosophy & Indology	Indian Thought, Ethics and Culture	https://www.mgirt.ac.mu/index.php/school-of-mauritian-and-area-studies-2
20	School of Indology, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, Uttarakhand	-	MA in Sanskrit, Hindu Studies	Yoga, Indian Languages & Culture	https://dsvv.ac.in/schools/
21	School of Indology, Nalanda Open University, Patna	-	MA in History, Certificate Course in Hindu Studies, Islamic Studies, Buddhist, Jain, Christian Studies etc.	Indology	http://nalandaopenuniversity.net.in/school-of-indology/
22	School of Performing Arts and Indic Studies, Reva University, Bengaluru	-	Diploma, BA, MA, Ph D	Performing Arts & Indology	https://www.reva.edu.in/school/school-of-performing-arts-and-indic-studies

23	School of Studies in Sanskrit, Vedic Studies and Jyotirvigyan, Vikram University, Ujjain, MP	-	Ancient Indian History Culture and Archeology, Ved & Jyotirvigyan	Indology	http://vikramuniv.ac.in/index.php/en/jyotirvigyan
24	The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune	1917	Short Term Course on Ved Vidya, Digital Sanskrit Learning	Orientalogy	https://bori.ac.in/about/introduction/
25	The Centre for Indological Studies and Research, under The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark, Kolkata		10 & 5 Months Course on Indology, Vedanta etc.	Indology	https://sriramakrishna.org/the-center-for-indological-studies-and-research/
26	The Centre for Policy Studies, Chennai	1990	-	Civilizational genius of India,	https://cpsindia.org/index.php/about-us
27	The K R Cama Oriental Institute, Mumbai	1916	-	Promoting the study and research in religions, history and culture of the East	http://krcama.org/
28	The Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute (KPJRI), Patna	1950	-	History and Archaeology of Bihar	https://kpjri.res.in/about-us/
29	The Oriental Research Institute, University of Mysore	1891	Masters and Ph. D in Sanskrit	Scripts like Devanagari (Sanskrit), Brahmic (Kannada), Nandinagari (Sanskrit), Grantha, Malayalam, Tigalari, etc.	https://uni-mysore.ac.in/english-version/oriental-research-institute
30	The Oriental Research Institute, Tirupati, AP	1939	M.Phil. and Ph.D. courses in Telugu, Sanskrit, Indian Culture, Philosophy subjects.	Indology	https://svuniversity.edu.in/ori-center
31	The Department of Indology, The French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP), Pondicherry	-	-	The study of Indian civilization notably the ancient texts, history and religion of South India	https://www.ifpindia.org/research/indology/
32	Vedic Vigyan Kendra, BHU, Varanasi, UP	2018	-	Synthesis of Vedic wisdom and modern science.	https://www.bhu.ac.in/Site/UnitHomeTemplate/1_3239_4511_Vedic-Vigyan-Kendra-Home
33	Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute, Hoshiarpur, Punjab	1936	-	To promote ancient, medieval and modern phases of Indian culture	https://vvrinstitute.com/index.html
34	Vishveshvaranand Vishwa Bandhu Institute of Sanskrit and Indological Studies, Hoshiarpur, Punjab	1924	Post Graduate Diploma in Yoga Science, Certificate Course in Manuscriptology & Palaeography	Vedic Researches and Sanskrit Education	https://vvbisis.puchd.ac.in/index.php

Data retrieved from the individual website of each institute/centre up to 28th February 2023

VII. Discussions on Collected Data

Discussion has been done on the basis of collected data. Discussion has been made year wise growth, areas of work and course offered by the institutes and centres engaged in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

7.1 Year wise growth

From the table-1, It is enumerated that the first institutes and centres for IKS is established in the year 1891 (i.e. The Oriental Research Institute, University of Mysore). The first institute devoted to Indological study is founded in the last decade of the 19th Century. The table also shows that The K R Cama Oriental Institute (1916), Mumbai is the 2nd institutes in India working in IKS to promote the study and research in religions, history and culture of the East. Just after one year The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune (1917) is founded to promote on Orientology in India. The table also describes that from the period of 1911-1920, 1921-1930, 1931-1940 there is two (2) institutes & centres established each period respectively. There are three (3) institutes & centres established from the time period of 1941-1950. There is no institutes & centres established from the time period of 1951-1960.

From the time period of 1961-1970, two (2) institutes & centres are established and 1971-1980, 1981-1990, one (1) institutes & centres is established in each period. It also shows that highest no. of institutes & centres is established in the time period 1991-2000 i.e., last decade in the 20th Century. one (1) institutes & centres are established in the time period 2001-2010 whereas two (2) institutes & centres are established in the time period 2011-2020. There is no date available for thirteen (13) institutes & centres whenever data has been checked for individual institution's website. This data may be represented by the following figure:

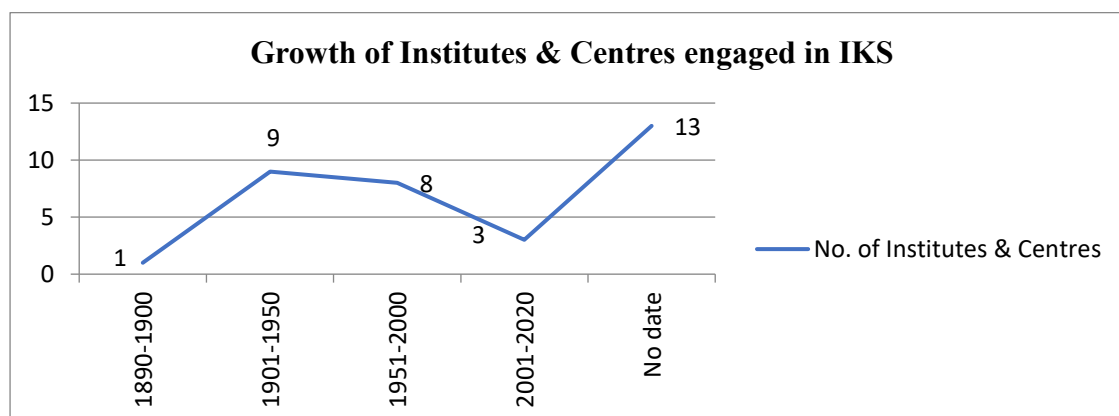


Figure-2 Growth and development of Institutes & Centres engaged in IKS

7.2 Courses offered by the Institutes & Centres

Different types of courses are offered by the studied institutes and centres working in IKS. These courses are short term course (STC), Certificate, Diploma, Advanced, Undergraduate, M.A. & M.Sc., M. Phil. and Ph.D. From the table-1, it is found that six (6) institutes and centres offer STC on Indian history, Indian Knowledge Systems, Ancient Sciences, Ved Vidya, Digital Sanskrit Learning etc. Two (2) institutes and centres offer certificate course in Hindu Studies, Islamic Studies, Buddhist, Jain, Christian Studies, Manuscriptology & Palaeography etc. Diploma course is offered by the three (3) institutes and centres. Advanced and undergraduate course is run by one (1) institute & centre each. M.A. in Vedas & Kautilya, Political Science & Arthashastra, Translation, Indian Logic and Epistemology, Sanskrit Linguistics, Jyotish, ShatapathaVed, Sanskrit, Philosophy, Hindu Studies & Indology courses are offered by the nine institutes & centres whereas M.Sc. in Vedic Sciences and M. Phil in Indian Culture is offered by each institute respectively. Four (4) institutes & centres offer Ph. D. courses in Vedic Sciences, Arts & Indology, Sanskrit, Indian Culture & Philosophy.

7.3 Areas of work by the Institutes & Centres

Eight (8) broad subject areas have been determined from the table-1. These are Archaeology, Indian History and Culture; Indology; Sanskrit languages; Yoga, Moksha, Bharatiya Languages; Vedic Sciences; Rajasthani Culture & Folklore; Orientology and Multidisciplinary. From the table-1, it is also derived that ten (10) institutes and centres are devoted to work on Archaeology, Indian History & Culture and Indology each as subject area. Five (5) institutes and centres are engaged to promote Sanskrit and Sanskrit languages. Three (3) institutes and centres are engaged to promote Yoga, Vedic Sciences and Multidisciplinary as subject area respectively. One (1) institute and centre is engaged in Rajasthani culture and Orientology respectively.

VIII. Findings

It is found that 34 institutes and centres are working on IKS, whenever 1st institutes established in 1891, after near about 100 years four (4) institutes & centres are established to promote the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) to the people and society of India. It is also derived that there are nine (9) institutes & centres established from the time period of 1901-1950 followed by eight (8) institutes & centres established from the time period of 1951-2000 and from 2001-2020, only three (3) institutes & centres are founded.

The study also found that one institute is situated outside India but it is enlisted in website of IKS and working on Indian thought, ethics and culture. Five (5) institutes and centres are situated in Maharashtra followed by Karnataka (4).

It is also derived that Nine (9) institutes and centres offer M.A. courses whereas eight (8) institutes and centres don't offer any type of courses, these institutes protect, preserve & disseminate IKS. The study also found that six (6) institutes and centres offer STC, four (4) institutes and centres offer Ph.D. courses, three (3) institutes and centres offer Diploma, two (2) institutes and centres offer certificate course. Advanced, Undergraduate, M.Sc. and M. Phil. Courses are offered by the each institute and centre.

Major of the institutes are devoted to promote Archaeology, Indian History & Culture and Indology. Remaining institutes are working on Sanskrit, Vedic Sciences, Yoga, Rajasthani culture and Orientology. Two IITs have recently established Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems to conduct interdisciplinary research on various branches of the IKS.

IX. Conclusion

It may be concluded that Indian civilization has always attached great value to knowledge-witness its amazingly large body of intellectual texts, the world's largest collection of manuscripts, and its attested tradition of texts, thinkers and schools in so many domains of knowledge. The knowledge is available in both formal literary sources and informal non-literary sources. In this study, 34 institutes and centres are engaged to promote, preserve and disseminate IKS for further research and social applications. IKS literature shows that a single work can provide simultaneously ideas on three streams seamlessly: Spiritual, Religious, and Material. So, India's knowledge tradition is ancient and uninterrupted like the flow of the holy river Ganga.

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