
**Indigenous Knowledge in Contemporary School Education: Curriculum Reform under NEP
2020 and NCF-SE 2023**

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Abstract:

The growing recognition of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) has prompted educational systems across the world to reconsider the relationship between formal schooling and community-based knowledge traditions. In India, this shift is reflected in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE 2023), both of which advocate culturally rooted, context-sensitive, and experiential learning. This study critically examines the extent to which indigenous knowledge is represented within the contemporary school curriculum and explores teachers' and students' perceptions regarding its educational significance. Employing a mixed-method research design, the study integrates curriculum analysis with questionnaire-based responses collected from middle-school teachers and students in Wardha district, Maharashtra. The analysis indicates that recent curricular reforms have substantially expanded the visibility of Indian Knowledge Systems through local culture, environmental education, experiential learning, multilingualism, and community engagement. Teachers generally perceive indigenous knowledge as an effective means of enhancing learners' cultural identity, environmental awareness, and contextual understanding, while students demonstrate favourable attitudes towards learning rooted in local traditions and lived experiences. Nevertheless, the study identifies persistent challenges, including inadequate teacher preparation, limited pedagogical resources, uneven representation of regional and tribal knowledge traditions, and difficulties in translating policy aspirations into classroom practice. The paper argues that indigenous knowledge should be recognised not merely as supplementary cultural content but as a legitimate epistemological resource capable of strengthening educational relevance, promoting epistemic plurality, and advancing the decolonisation of school education. It concludes that meaningful integration of indigenous knowledge requires sustained curricular support, teacher capacity-building, community participation, and assessment reforms that value experiential and contextual learning.

Keywords: *Indigenous Knowledge, School Curriculum, National Education Policy 2020, Indian Knowledge Systems, NCF-SE 2023.*

Introduction

Education is not merely a mechanism for transmitting information; it is a social institution through which societies preserve cultural memory, shape collective identities, and prepare future generations to engage with changing realities. Consequently, the school curriculum performs a critical role in determining what constitutes legitimate knowledge and whose experiences are represented within formal education. Contemporary curriculum studies therefore increasingly interrogate the epistemological foundations of schooling by asking a fundamental question: *What kinds of knowledge deserve institutional recognition?*

For much of the colonial period, formal education in India privileged Western epistemological traditions while systematically marginalising indigenous systems of knowledge that had evolved through centuries of interaction between communities and their ecological, cultural, and social environments. This epistemic imbalance gradually disconnected school education from local realities, reducing the visibility of community knowledge, traditional ecological practices, oral traditions, and culturally embedded modes of learning. As a consequence, generations of learners often encountered curricula that reflected universalised knowledge frameworks while paying comparatively limited attention to the intellectual resources embedded within their own communities.

During the past two decades, however, educational discourse has undergone a significant transformation. International organisations such as UNESCO have consistently emphasised the importance of indigenous knowledge for sustainable development, environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and inclusive education. Simultaneously, decolonial scholarship has challenged the long-standing hierarchy that positions Western scientific traditions as the exclusive source of valid knowledge. Increasingly, scholars argue that indigenous knowledge represents an equally legitimate way of understanding the world, grounded in lived experience, collective memory, intergenerational learning, and close engagement with local environments.

Within the Indian context, this intellectual shift finds explicit expression in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which seeks to reconnect education with India's civilisational heritage while simultaneously preparing learners for participation in a global knowledge society. Rather than treating Indian Knowledge Systems as isolated historical content, the policy advocates culturally rooted education, multilingualism, experiential learning, local knowledge integration, and stronger school-community relationships. These principles are further elaborated in the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE 2023), which encourages contextualised learning

experiences that draw upon local histories, cultural practices, environmental knowledge, and community resources.

Despite these policy developments, important questions remain regarding the actual representation of indigenous knowledge within school curricula and the extent to which these policy aspirations are reflected in classroom practice. Policy documents alone cannot transform educational processes unless they are accompanied by meaningful curricular integration, adequate teacher preparation, appropriate pedagogical resources, and supportive institutional environments. Furthermore, while the discourse surrounding Indian Knowledge Systems has expanded considerably, relatively few empirical studies have examined how teachers and students perceive the integration of indigenous knowledge within contemporary school education.

Against this backdrop, the present study critically analyses the representation of indigenous knowledge within the middle-school curriculum in the context of NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023. By combining curriculum analysis with evidence drawn from teachers' and students' perspectives, the study seeks to evaluate both the opportunities and the practical challenges associated with embedding indigenous knowledge in formal schooling. Rather than viewing indigenous knowledge as an addition to an otherwise unchanged curriculum, the paper argues that its meaningful integration requires an epistemological reorientation capable of making education more culturally responsive, socially relevant, environmentally sustainable, and educationally inclusive.

Conceptualising Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) refers to the cumulative body of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and practices developed by communities through sustained interaction with their social, cultural, and ecological environments. Unlike knowledge generated primarily through formal scientific institutions, indigenous knowledge emerges from lived experience, collective memory, intergenerational transmission, and continuous adaptation to local conditions. It is therefore dynamic rather than static, evolving in response to changing environmental and social contexts while retaining its cultural foundations.

Scholars have conceptualised indigenous knowledge from complementary perspectives. Warren (1991) describes it as location-specific knowledge that informs decision-making in agriculture, natural resource management, healthcare, and community life. Dei (2000) regards it as a socially constructed knowledge system rooted in cultural experience and everyday practice, while Battiste (2002) argues that it constitutes a distinct epistemology with its own principles of validation, transmission, and application. Collectively, these perspectives challenge the long-standing assumption that modern scientific knowledge alone represents legitimate or universal knowledge.

Within the Indian context, indigenous knowledge encompasses a remarkably diverse intellectual tradition. It includes traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous agricultural practices, water conservation systems, Ayurveda and folk medicine, local governance mechanisms, artisanal skills, oral traditions, performing arts, indigenous architecture, and philosophical traditions that have evolved across diverse linguistic and cultural communities. These knowledge systems have historically contributed not only to livelihood practices but also to ethical reasoning, environmental stewardship, social cohesion, and community resilience.

An important characteristic of indigenous knowledge is its holistic orientation. Rather than separating human beings from nature or dividing knowledge into rigid disciplinary categories, it views learning as an interconnected process linking individuals, society, culture, and the natural environment. Knowledge is acquired through observation, participation, apprenticeship, dialogue, and collective experience. Consequently, learning extends beyond formal classrooms into homes, communities, occupations, festivals, rituals, and everyday social interactions. Such an approach resonates strongly with contemporary educational theories that emphasise experiential learning, contextual understanding, and learner-centred pedagogy.

The increasing scholarly interest in indigenous knowledge is also closely associated with the global movement towards educational decolonisation. Colonial education systems frequently privileged Western epistemological frameworks while marginalising local knowledge traditions as informal or pre-scientific. This hierarchy not only diminished the educational value of indigenous practices but also weakened the relationship between schooling and learners' socio-cultural contexts. Decolonial scholars therefore argue that recognising indigenous knowledge is not merely a matter of cultural preservation; it represents an effort to democratise knowledge by acknowledging the coexistence of multiple ways of knowing.

This perspective has significant implications for curriculum development. Integrating indigenous knowledge should not be understood as adding isolated lessons on folklore, traditional practices, or cultural heritage. Instead, it requires rethinking the epistemological foundations of the curriculum so that local knowledge systems are treated as meaningful sources of inquiry, critical reflection, and problem-solving. Such an approach enables learners to connect academic concepts with their lived realities while simultaneously appreciating the diversity of knowledge traditions that shape contemporary society.

The National Education Policy (2020) reflects this broader understanding by advocating education that is rooted in India's cultural and intellectual traditions while remaining open to scientific inquiry and global engagement. Accordingly, indigenous knowledge is presented not as an alternative to modern knowledge but as an essential component of a pluralistic educational framework capable of

fostering contextual understanding, cultural confidence, environmental responsibility, and sustainable development.

Theoretical Perspectives, Review of Literature and Research Gap

The growing interest in Indigenous Knowledge (IK) reflects a broader shift in educational thought from viewing knowledge as universal and value-neutral to recognising its social, cultural, and historical foundations. Contemporary educational research increasingly acknowledges that meaningful learning is shaped not only by disciplinary knowledge but also by learners' cultural experiences, community practices, and local environments. This intellectual transition provides the theoretical basis for integrating indigenous knowledge into school education.

Constructivist learning theory offers one of the principal foundations for this perspective. Constructivist scholars argue that learners actively construct knowledge by relating new experiences to their existing cognitive and cultural frameworks. Learning therefore becomes more meaningful when curricular content is connected to learners' lived realities rather than presented as abstract information. Indigenous knowledge naturally supports this process because it emerges from familiar social and environmental contexts, enabling learners to bridge classroom concepts with everyday experiences.

Closely related is the perspective of culturally relevant education, which emphasises that curriculum should reflect learners' linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds. Educational experiences that acknowledge local identities not only improve learner engagement but also promote educational inclusion and cultural self-confidence. In multilingual and culturally diverse societies such as India, this perspective assumes particular importance because it recognises diversity as an educational resource rather than a challenge.

Experiential learning provides another important theoretical foundation. Indigenous knowledge systems are traditionally transmitted through observation, participation, apprenticeship, and collective practice rather than through abstract instruction alone. Such modes of learning correspond closely with contemporary pedagogical approaches that advocate project-based learning, field experiences, community participation, and reflective inquiry. Consequently, integrating indigenous knowledge strengthens the movement towards learner-centred and activity-based education promoted by recent curriculum reforms.

A fourth perspective emerges from decolonial scholarship, which questions the historical dominance of Western epistemological traditions within formal education. Decolonial thinkers argue that colonial education frequently established hierarchies of knowledge by presenting indigenous traditions as informal, unscientific, or culturally peripheral. From this perspective, recognising indigenous knowledge is not simply an act of cultural preservation but an effort to democratise

knowledge by acknowledging multiple epistemological traditions. Educational decolonisation therefore requires schools to move beyond symbolic recognition of local culture towards meaningful engagement with diverse knowledge systems.

These theoretical perspectives have significantly influenced international educational discourse. Warren (1991) was among the earliest scholars to demonstrate the developmental significance of indigenous knowledge, particularly in agriculture, environmental management, and rural development. His work established that community-based knowledge represents a valuable intellectual resource rather than merely traditional practice. Subsequently, Dei (2000) argued that indigenous knowledge provides an alternative epistemological framework capable of enhancing educational relevance by connecting learning with local social realities. Battiste (2002) further expanded this discussion by emphasising that indigenous knowledge should be recognised as an autonomous system of knowledge possessing its own principles of validation, transmission, and application.

International policy discourse has similarly strengthened the case for integrating indigenous knowledge into education. UNESCO has consistently highlighted the contribution of indigenous knowledge to sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, cultural diversity, and inclusive education. These initiatives recognise that many contemporary global challenges—including climate change, ecological degradation, and sustainable resource management—require educational approaches that value local knowledge alongside scientific understanding.

Within India, renewed scholarly attention to indigenous knowledge has gained momentum following the introduction of the National Education Policy (2020). The policy represents a significant departure from earlier curriculum paradigms by advocating education rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems, multilingual learning, local contexts, and experiential pedagogy. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023) extends this vision by encouraging the integration of local histories, community practices, environmental awareness, and culturally responsive teaching across curricular areas. Recent academic discussions generally regard these policy initiatives as important steps towards restoring the relationship between formal education and India's intellectual and cultural traditions.

Despite this expanding body of scholarship, significant gaps remain in the existing literature. Much of the available research is conceptual or policy-oriented, focusing on the philosophical importance of indigenous knowledge or analysing the broad objectives of NEP 2020. Comparatively fewer studies have investigated how indigenous knowledge is represented within actual school curricula or how teachers and students experience its integration in everyday educational practice. Similarly, empirical evidence concerning the implementation of policy recommendations at the middle-school

level remains limited, particularly in relation to curriculum transaction, pedagogical challenges, and learner engagement. Another notable limitation is the relatively modest attention given to regional and tribal knowledge traditions, which often remain underrepresented despite the broader emphasis on Indian Knowledge Systems.

The present study addresses these gaps by combining curriculum analysis with empirical evidence drawn from teachers and students. Rather than examining policy documents alone, it explores how the principles of indigenous knowledge are reflected in curriculum content, perceived by teachers, and experienced by learners. In doing so, the study contributes to ongoing debates concerning curriculum reform, educational relevance, and the decolonisation of school education by providing evidence that connects educational policy with classroom realities.

Objectives and Methodology

The present study was undertaken to critically examine the integration of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) within the contemporary school curriculum in the context of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE 2023). Specifically, it sought to analyse the extent to which indigenous knowledge, local traditions, community practices, and Indian Knowledge Systems are represented in the curriculum for middle-school learners. The study also explored teachers' perceptions regarding the educational relevance of indigenous knowledge, assessed students' awareness and experiences of learning through indigenous contexts, and identified the opportunities and challenges associated with translating policy aspirations into classroom practice. Based on these objectives, the study aimed to generate recommendations for strengthening the meaningful integration of indigenous knowledge into school education.

To achieve these objectives, the study adopted a **mixed-method research design**, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The qualitative component focused on document and curriculum analysis, while the quantitative component examined the perceptions of teachers and students through structured questionnaires. The integration of these approaches enabled the study to triangulate evidence from policy documents, curricular content, and stakeholder perspectives, thereby enhancing the credibility and interpretative depth of the findings.

The empirical investigation was conducted among middle schools in **Wardha district of Maharashtra**, covering students from **Classes VI to VIII**. A purposive sample comprising **20 teachers and 20 students** was selected to capture perspectives from both curriculum practitioners and learners. Teachers were included because of their central role in curriculum transaction and classroom implementation, whereas students provided insights into how indigenous knowledge is experienced and interpreted within everyday learning processes.

Data were collected using four complementary sources: (i) a curriculum analysis framework for examining the representation of indigenous knowledge in the prescribed curriculum, (ii) a structured questionnaire administered to teachers, (iii) a structured questionnaire administered to students, and (iv) document analysis of **NEP 2020** and **NCF-SE 2023** to identify the policy principles guiding the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems within school education. Employing multiple sources of evidence facilitated cross-validation of findings and enabled the study to compare policy intentions with curricular representation and classroom perceptions.

The collected data were analysed through complementary quantitative and qualitative techniques. Descriptive analysis was employed to summarise the responses of teachers and students, whereas interpretative analysis was used to examine recurring themes emerging from curriculum documents and policy texts. Rather than treating numerical responses in isolation, the analysis integrated statistical trends with qualitative interpretation to provide a holistic understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with embedding indigenous knowledge in school education. This analytical approach allowed the study to move beyond simple description and critically evaluate the relationship between educational policy, curriculum design, and classroom practice.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of curriculum documents, together with the responses obtained from teachers and students, indicates that contemporary school education in India is gradually moving towards a more culturally grounded understanding of knowledge. The provisions of **NEP 2020** and **NCF-SE 2023** have created a favourable policy environment for incorporating Indigenous Knowledge (IK) within school education. However, the findings also demonstrate that meaningful integration depends not only on policy recognition but equally on curriculum design, teacher preparedness, institutional support, and pedagogical practice.

Indigenous Knowledge as an Emerging Curricular Orientation

Curriculum analysis revealed that Indigenous Knowledge has assumed greater prominence in the contemporary curriculum than in earlier curricular frameworks. Rather than presenting knowledge exclusively through disciplinary boundaries, the curriculum increasingly encourages learners to understand concepts through local environments, cultural practices, historical experiences, and community participation. Themes related to Indian Knowledge Systems, environmental sustainability, ethical values, multilingualism, and experiential learning are integrated across several curricular areas, reflecting an effort to reconnect formal education with India's diverse cultural traditions.

A particularly significant development is the curriculum's emphasis on experiential learning. Activities such as field visits, project work, observation of local ecosystems, interaction with community members, and exploration of traditional occupations provide opportunities for learners to connect classroom knowledge with lived experiences. This pedagogical orientation closely aligns with indigenous traditions of learning, where knowledge is acquired through participation, observation, dialogue, and practical engagement rather than through passive transmission. In this respect, recent curricular reforms represent a shift from content-centred instruction towards contextual and experience-based learning.

The curriculum also promotes environmental responsibility by incorporating indigenous conservation practices, local ecological knowledge, biodiversity, and sustainable resource management. Such integration demonstrates that Indigenous Knowledge is not merely a cultural inheritance but also a valuable resource for addressing contemporary environmental challenges. This finding is consistent with international educational discourse, which increasingly recognises indigenous ecological knowledge as an important component of Education for Sustainable Development.

Despite these encouraging developments, curriculum analysis suggests that the representation of Indigenous Knowledge remains uneven. While broader narratives of Indian civilisation and cultural heritage receive considerable attention, region-specific, tribal, and community-based knowledge traditions are comparatively less visible. Consequently, the curriculum often presents Indigenous Knowledge in generalised terms rather than reflecting the rich diversity of local knowledge systems that exist across different regions of the country. This imbalance indicates that the transition towards epistemic plurality is still incomplete.

Teachers' Perspectives on Indigenous Knowledge Integration

The responses obtained from teachers reveal broad acceptance of Indigenous Knowledge as an important educational resource. Most participants considered its inclusion beneficial for enhancing conceptual understanding, cultural identity, environmental awareness, and learner engagement. Teachers observed that students showed greater interest when classroom discussions incorporated local examples, community practices, traditional occupations, and familiar cultural contexts. Such observations reinforce the pedagogical argument that learning becomes more meaningful when new knowledge is related to learners' existing experiences and socio-cultural backgrounds.

Teachers also acknowledged that **NEP 2020** has significantly increased awareness regarding Indian Knowledge Systems within school education. Many regarded the policy as an important step towards restoring the cultural relevance of education and correcting the historical neglect of indigenous traditions within formal curricula. Their responses suggest that recent policy reforms have initiated

an important shift in educational thinking by encouraging schools to recognise knowledge embedded within local communities.

However, the study equally reveals that teachers face several practical constraints while implementing these policy objectives. Respondents consistently highlighted the scarcity of authentic teaching-learning materials, inadequate documentation of local knowledge traditions, limited opportunities for professional development, and insufficient pedagogical guidance for integrating Indigenous Knowledge with prescribed subject content. Time constraints within an already crowded curriculum further restrict teachers' ability to undertake community-based learning activities. Some participants also expressed uncertainty regarding assessment practices, observing that conventional examinations often privilege factual recall over contextual understanding and experiential learning.

These findings indicate that curriculum reform alone cannot ensure successful implementation. Teachers require systematic capacity-building programmes, access to locally relevant educational resources, and greater curricular flexibility to translate policy intentions into effective classroom practices. Without such institutional support, Indigenous Knowledge risks remaining a policy aspiration rather than becoming an integral component of everyday teaching.

Students' Experiences and Educational Relevance

Students' responses broadly complement the perceptions expressed by teachers. Most learners viewed Indigenous Knowledge positively and considered learning about local traditions, environmental practices, cultural heritage, and community life both interesting and educationally meaningful. They reported that examples drawn from their immediate surroundings made classroom concepts easier to understand and helped establish stronger connections between school learning and everyday life.

An important finding concerns the relationship between school and community learning. Many students indicated that they discussed classroom activities with family members and frequently exchanged information relating to local customs, agricultural practices, festivals, medicinal plants, or environmental traditions. This suggests that Indigenous Knowledge facilitates a reciprocal relationship between formal education and community life, enabling learning to extend beyond the classroom while simultaneously strengthening intergenerational knowledge transmission.

Nevertheless, the findings also point towards inconsistencies in implementation. Although students appreciated the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge, many reported limited opportunities to participate directly in activities related to local arts, crafts, music, oral traditions, or interactions with community knowledge holders. Such responses suggest that while curricular documents increasingly acknowledge Indigenous Knowledge, the depth of learners' actual engagement varies considerably across schools.

Implications for Curriculum Reform

Taken together, the findings suggest that Indigenous Knowledge is gradually moving from the margins towards the mainstream of school education. Recent policy reforms have undoubtedly expanded its curricular visibility and strengthened its educational legitimacy. Yet, meaningful integration requires a shift beyond symbolic inclusion towards sustained pedagogical practice. Indigenous Knowledge should function not merely as supplementary cultural content but as an epistemological resource that enriches scientific inquiry, promotes contextual understanding, and encourages learners to appreciate multiple ways of knowing.

The study therefore supports contemporary arguments for educational decolonisation by demonstrating that culturally responsive curricula can enhance learner engagement without compromising academic rigour. At the same time, it cautions against treating Indigenous Knowledge as a uniform or monolithic tradition. India's linguistic, ecological, and cultural diversity demands curricular approaches that acknowledge regional specificity and encourage schools to engage with the knowledge traditions of their own communities. Only then can the broader objectives of **NEP 2020**—namely culturally rooted, inclusive, and context-sensitive education—be realised in practice.

Educational Implications and Conclusion

The findings of the present study have important implications for curriculum policy, teacher education, and classroom practice. Although **NEP 2020** and **NCF-SE 2023** have established a strong policy foundation for integrating Indigenous Knowledge (IK) into school education, the effectiveness of these reforms ultimately depends on how they are interpreted and implemented within schools. The study demonstrates that meaningful inclusion of indigenous knowledge requires a shift from viewing it as supplementary cultural content to recognising it as a legitimate source of knowledge capable of enriching teaching, learning, and educational inquiry.

One of the foremost implications concerns **curriculum development**. Indigenous Knowledge should be integrated systematically across subject areas rather than being confined to isolated lessons or thematic units. Curriculum planners need to move beyond symbolic references to Indian Knowledge Systems and incorporate region-specific examples, local histories, ecological practices, community innovations, and traditional occupations that reflect the diversity of India's cultural landscape. Such an approach would enable learners to connect academic concepts with their immediate social and environmental contexts while fostering respect for multiple knowledge traditions.

The findings also underline the central role of **teachers** in translating curriculum policy into meaningful classroom experiences. Positive teacher attitudes towards Indigenous Knowledge indicate considerable potential for implementation; however, enthusiasm alone cannot compensate for the

absence of pedagogical support. Teacher education programmes and in-service professional development should therefore equip teachers with the knowledge, resources, and pedagogical strategies required to integrate community-based learning, local case studies, field experiences, and interdisciplinary approaches into regular classroom practice. Strengthening teachers' capacity in these areas would help bridge the gap between policy intent and educational practice.

A further implication relates to **school-community partnerships**. Indigenous Knowledge is embedded within communities and cannot be fully understood through textbooks alone. Schools should therefore establish sustained collaborations with local artisans, farmers, craftspersons, traditional healers, environmental practitioners, and community elders. Such partnerships would not only enrich classroom learning but also strengthen the relationship between formal education and community life, creating opportunities for experiential learning and intergenerational knowledge exchange.

The study additionally points to the need for **context-sensitive educational resources**. The preparation of multilingual teaching-learning materials, regional resource repositories, digital archives, and locally documented case studies would support teachers in incorporating Indigenous Knowledge more effectively. Equally important is the reform of assessment practices. Conventional examinations primarily reward factual recall, whereas the educational value of Indigenous Knowledge lies in observation, application, critical reflection, problem-solving, and community engagement. Assessment strategies should therefore evaluate learners' ability to interpret local contexts, apply knowledge to real-life situations, and engage constructively with their social and ecological environments.

Beyond these practical considerations, the findings contribute to a broader debate on **educational decolonisation**. The study suggests that recognising Indigenous Knowledge is not an attempt to replace scientific knowledge or romanticise tradition. Rather, it seeks to create a more inclusive epistemological framework in which diverse knowledge systems coexist and complement one another. Such an approach strengthens educational relevance by enabling learners to appreciate both local wisdom and contemporary scientific inquiry. In this sense, Indigenous Knowledge should be understood as an intellectual resource that promotes critical thinking, cultural confidence, ecological responsibility, and democratic respect for knowledge diversity.

The study nevertheless has certain limitations. It is based on a relatively small sample of teachers and students drawn from middle schools in a single district of Maharashtra. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalised to all educational contexts in India. Future research may extend this work by undertaking comparative studies across states, school boards, and socio-cultural settings, while also examining classroom practices through observation, interviews, and longitudinal research designs.

Greater attention should also be devoted to documenting regional, tribal, and community-specific knowledge traditions, many of which remain underrepresented in existing curricular materials.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that contemporary educational reforms have created significant opportunities for restoring the relationship between formal schooling and Indigenous Knowledge. The curriculum increasingly acknowledges the educational value of local culture, experiential learning, environmental sustainability, and Indian Knowledge Systems, while teachers and students generally perceive such initiatives positively. At the same time, successful implementation demands sustained institutional support, curriculum contextualisation, teacher preparedness, resource development, and meaningful community participation. The future of Indigenous Knowledge in school education therefore lies not in its symbolic inclusion but in its integration as a living, dynamic, and intellectually credible component of the curriculum. Such an approach has the potential to make education more culturally responsive, socially relevant, environmentally sustainable, and epistemologically inclusive, thereby contributing to the broader vision of educational transformation envisaged in NEP 2020.

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