



The Role of Translation Studies in Promoting Indian Knowledge Systems under the National Education Policy 2020

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Abstract:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the revitalization and global dissemination of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) by integrating India's rich intellectual, philosophical, scientific, and cultural traditions into contemporary education. Translation Studies plays a pivotal role in this process by facilitating the transfer of classical and regional knowledge across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Through the translation of texts from Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Persian, Tamil, and other Indian languages into modern Indian and international languages, translation enhances accessibility, inclusivity, and interdisciplinary learning. It also promotes multilingualism, preserves indigenous knowledge, and fosters cross-cultural understanding in line with the objectives of NEP 2020. Furthermore, translation serves as a bridge between traditional wisdom and modern academic discourse, enabling wider national and global engagement with India's knowledge heritage. Thus, Translation Studies emerges as a strategic tool for preserving, disseminating, and recontextualizing Indian Knowledge Systems in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, Indian Knowledge Systems, Translation Studies, Multilingualism, Indigenous Knowledge, Cultural Heritage, Knowledge Dissemination.

1.1 Introduction

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) represent one of the world's oldest and most comprehensive repositories of intellectual traditions, encompassing philosophy, science, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, linguistics, architecture, governance, ethics, literature, aesthetics, environmental knowledge, and spirituality. These systems are deeply rooted in India's civilizational heritage and have evolved through centuries of scholarly inquiry, oral traditions, textual documentation, and pedagogical practices. Unlike narrowly defined disciplinary frameworks, Indian Knowledge Systems embody a holistic worldview that integrates material, intellectual, ethical, ecological, and spiritual dimensions of human existence. The Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, epics, Buddhist and



Jain canonical literature, Arthashastra, Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, works on Nyaya, Mimamsa, Vedanta, Yoga, and numerous regional literary traditions collectively constitute a vast corpus of knowledge that has influenced not only the Indian subcontinent but also several civilizations across Asia and beyond. Contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes that these knowledge traditions are not merely historical artefacts but dynamic intellectual resources capable of contributing to modern discussions on sustainability, healthcare, education, governance, conflict resolution, ethics, and scientific inquiry (National Education Policy 2020).

The renewed academic interest in Indian Knowledge Systems has been significantly strengthened by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which advocates the integration of India's rich intellectual heritage into all levels of education. The policy recognizes that India's traditional knowledge has often remained marginalized within formal educational structures due to colonial educational legacies, linguistic barriers, and the limited accessibility of classical texts. Consequently, it emphasizes the need to recover, reinterpret, and disseminate indigenous knowledge through multilingual educational practices, interdisciplinary research, and institutional reforms. The recognition of Indian Knowledge Systems within the policy framework marks a significant shift from viewing traditional knowledge as merely historical or cultural to acknowledging it as a living body of knowledge capable of informing contemporary educational, scientific, and social development (Ministry of Education).

A defining characteristic of Indian Knowledge Systems is their multilingual foundation. Knowledge in India has historically been produced, preserved, and transmitted through a remarkable diversity of languages, including Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tamil, Persian, Arabic, Kannada, Telugu, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Kashmiri, and several other regional languages. Each linguistic tradition has contributed uniquely to the development of specialized branches of knowledge, resulting in an extraordinarily diverse intellectual landscape. While this multilingual richness constitutes one of India's greatest strengths, it simultaneously presents a significant challenge for contemporary learners and researchers who may not possess proficiency in multiple classical or regional languages. Consequently, vast repositories of valuable knowledge remain inaccessible to wider audiences, thereby limiting their academic, educational, and societal impact. Translation, therefore, becomes not merely a linguistic exercise but an indispensable intellectual bridge connecting historical knowledge traditions with contemporary learners.

Translation Studies has evolved into a sophisticated interdisciplinary field that investigates the theories, principles, processes, methodologies, and socio-cultural implications of translation. Earlier conceptions regarded translation primarily as the transfer of words or sentences from one language to another while maintaining semantic equivalence. However, modern Translation Studies has expanded considerably beyond linguistic substitution to encompass cultural interpretation, ideological negotiation, discourse analysis, cognitive processes, audience reception, and intercultural communication. Influential scholars have demonstrated that translation is fundamentally an act of cultural mediation rather than mechanical linguistic conversion, requiring translators to negotiate complex relationships between languages,



historical contexts, cultural values, and systems of knowledge (Bassnett; Venuti). As Translation Studies has matured into an independent academic discipline, its relevance has extended to literature, education, philosophy, anthropology, history, law, medicine, digital humanities, and public policy.

The evolution of Translation Studies reflects changing understandings of language and communication in an increasingly interconnected world. Classical theories emphasized fidelity to the source text, whereas contemporary approaches acknowledge that translation involves interpretation, adaptation, contextualization, and reconstruction of meaning. Dynamic equivalence, functionalist approaches, Skopos theory, cultural translation, postcolonial translation, and decolonial perspectives have collectively broadened the discipline by recognizing the translator's active role in negotiating cultural identities and knowledge systems. Within the Indian context, translation possesses an exceptionally long history. Ancient scholars translated Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese and Tibetan, while Jain literature circulated through Prakrit and regional languages. During the medieval period, Persian translations of Sanskrit works under imperial patronage facilitated intercultural dialogue, and the Bhakti movement employed vernacular translations to democratize religious and philosophical knowledge. These historical examples demonstrate that translation has consistently functioned as an instrument of intellectual exchange, social inclusion, and civilizational dialogue rather than simply a linguistic technique.

The relationship between language, culture, and knowledge transmission forms the conceptual foundation of both Translation Studies and Indian Knowledge Systems. Language serves not merely as a medium of communication but also as a repository of collective memory, cultural identity, philosophical concepts, scientific terminology, and indigenous worldviews. Every language embodies unique epistemological structures through which communities perceive, interpret, and organize reality. Consequently, the transmission of knowledge inevitably involves cultural meanings embedded within linguistic expressions. Indian philosophical traditions, for instance, contain concepts such as *Dharma*, *Karma*, *Moksha*, *Ahimsa*, *Rta*, *Pramana*, *Atman*, and *Brahman*, whose meanings cannot be fully captured through direct lexical equivalence. These concepts represent complex philosophical systems developed through centuries of intellectual discourse and require culturally sensitive translation capable of preserving both semantic accuracy and conceptual depth (Pollock).

The relationship between language and culture assumes particular significance in multilingual societies such as India, where linguistic diversity represents both an invaluable cultural resource and an educational challenge. Educational accessibility depends substantially upon learners' ability to engage with knowledge in languages they understand. Translation therefore contributes not only to linguistic accessibility but also to educational equity, cultural preservation, and democratic participation. By enabling students to access classical texts alongside contemporary scholarship, translation encourages inclusive learning environments that respect linguistic plurality without sacrificing academic rigor. Furthermore, the translation of regional knowledge



traditions into national and international languages promotes broader scholarly engagement, thereby enriching global intellectual discourse with perspectives originating from Indian civilizational experiences.

The National Education Policy 2020 places unprecedented emphasis on multilingualism, mother tongue-based education, cultural rootedness, and the revitalization of Indian Knowledge Systems. One of its central objectives is to create an education system that is globally competitive while remaining deeply connected to India's linguistic and cultural heritage. Rather than treating traditional knowledge and modern scientific inquiry as mutually exclusive, the policy advocates their meaningful integration through interdisciplinary curricula, research initiatives, and institutional innovation. It encourages higher educational institutions to incorporate Indian languages, classical literature, indigenous sciences, traditional arts, and local knowledge into mainstream education, thereby promoting holistic learning and national intellectual self-confidence (National Education Policy 2020).

NEP 2020 also envisions India emerging as a global knowledge leader by promoting interdisciplinary research rooted in indigenous intellectual traditions. Achieving this vision requires systematic translation of classical manuscripts, philosophical treatises, scientific texts, literary works, legal documents, and regional knowledge archives into contemporary Indian and foreign languages. Such translation initiatives not only preserve fragile textual heritage but also enable comparative scholarship, international collaboration, and cross-cultural academic engagement. As universities increasingly pursue global partnerships, translated knowledge resources become indispensable for introducing Indian intellectual traditions to international scholars, researchers, and students who may otherwise remain unable to engage with these primary sources.

Translation assumes particular importance in preserving India's intellectual traditions because many foundational texts remain confined to classical languages or exist only in manuscript collections with limited accessibility. Thousands of manuscripts preserved in libraries, monasteries, temples, archives, and private collections contain valuable knowledge related to medicine, astronomy, metallurgy, agriculture, ecology, architecture, linguistics, mathematics, music, governance, jurisprudence, and philosophy. Without systematic translation, a substantial portion of this intellectual heritage risks remaining inaccessible to contemporary researchers and future generations. Translation therefore functions as both a preservation strategy and a knowledge dissemination mechanism, ensuring that historical wisdom remains relevant within evolving educational and research environments.

Beyond preservation, translation enables reinterpretation and renewed scholarly engagement with traditional knowledge. Contemporary translators frequently accompany translated texts with critical introductions, annotations, commentaries, glossaries, and contextual analyses that facilitate deeper understanding among modern readers. Such scholarly translations encourage interdisciplinary dialogue by connecting historical knowledge with present-day debates concerning sustainable development, ethical leadership, environmental conservation, public



health, artificial intelligence, education, and cultural studies. Consequently, translation becomes an active process of knowledge production rather than passive reproduction, continually generating new interpretations and expanding the relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems in contemporary academic discourse.

Within this context, the present study addresses the growing need to examine Translation Studies as a strategic academic discipline for advancing the objectives of the National Education Policy 2020 and promoting Indian Knowledge Systems. Although existing scholarship has independently examined translation theory, multilingual education, and Indian Knowledge Systems, relatively limited research has systematically explored the convergence of these three domains within the policy framework established by NEP 2020. This gap assumes increasing significance as educational institutions seek effective strategies for integrating indigenous knowledge into curricula while simultaneously promoting multilingual education and international academic engagement. The present study therefore investigates how Translation Studies contributes to preserving, interpreting, disseminating, and globalizing Indian Knowledge Systems through educational, cultural, and institutional initiatives envisioned under NEP 2020. By analyzing the theoretical foundations of translation alongside contemporary educational policies, the study seeks to demonstrate that translation is not merely a linguistic practice but a transformative intellectual process that connects India's civilizational knowledge with present and future generations in an increasingly interconnected world.

1.2 Translation Studies and Indian Knowledge Systems: A Theoretical and Historical Perspective

Translation has long been recognized as one of the most influential instruments for the dissemination of knowledge, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the establishment of dialogue among civilizations. Within the framework of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), translation performs a far more significant role than that of a linguistic operation; it serves as an epistemological bridge connecting diverse intellectual traditions across languages, regions, and historical periods. Indian civilization has always been characterized by remarkable linguistic plurality, where multiple languages coexisted, interacted, and enriched one another through continuous processes of adaptation, interpretation, and translation. Consequently, the history of Translation Studies in India cannot be separated from the history of knowledge production itself. The transmission of philosophical doctrines, religious ideas, scientific discoveries, literary works, and ethical values has consistently depended upon multilingual communication, making translation an indispensable component of India's intellectual development (Bassnett).

Western approaches to Translation Studies have undergone substantial transformation over centuries. Classical thinkers such as Cicero and Saint Jerome primarily emphasized the balance between literal and sense-for-sense translation. During the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, translators sought greater stylistic elegance while preserving the authority of original texts. The twentieth century witnessed the emergence of structural linguistics, leading scholars such as Eugene Nida to develop the concept of dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes the



communicative effect of translated texts rather than strict lexical correspondence (Nida). Hans J. Vermeer's Skopos Theory further shifted attention toward the purpose or function of translation, arguing that translation strategies should be determined by the intended audience and communicative objectives rather than rigid fidelity to the source text (Vermeer). Contemporary Translation Studies has incorporated postcolonial, feminist, cultural, and decolonial perspectives, recognizing translation as an instrument capable of challenging intellectual hierarchies and promoting marginalized knowledge systems.

While Western theories provide valuable analytical frameworks, the Indian tradition possesses its own distinctive philosophy of translation rooted in centuries of multilingual interaction and interpretative scholarship. Translation in India has historically been embedded within broader practices of commentary (*bhashya*), exposition (*vyakhya*), adaptation (*rupantar*), paraphrasing (*anuvada*), and reinterpretation (*tika*). Rather than pursuing exact linguistic equivalence, Indian scholars often sought conceptual continuity while adapting texts to diverse linguistic, philosophical, and cultural contexts. The Sanskrit term *anuvada* itself suggests repetition, explanation, or restatement rather than mechanical duplication, indicating that translation was traditionally regarded as an interpretative process involving intellectual engagement with the original text. This approach reflects the broader epistemological orientation of Indian philosophical traditions, where knowledge is continuously interpreted, debated, and transmitted across generations.

Ancient India developed one of the world's most sophisticated traditions of multilingual scholarship. Sanskrit functioned as the principal language of philosophy, theology, grammar, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, aesthetics, and political thought for many centuries. However, scholarly activity was never confined exclusively to Sanskrit. Buddhist scholars composed extensive philosophical and monastic literature in Pali, while Jain intellectual traditions flourished through Prakrit and Ardhamagadhi. Simultaneously, Tamil emerged as a major classical language possessing an independent literary and philosophical tradition of extraordinary richness. The coexistence of these linguistic traditions necessitated continuous translation, commentary, and adaptation, thereby facilitating intellectual exchange across religious communities and geographical regions (Pollock).

The medieval period further strengthened India's translation traditions through sustained intercultural interactions. Under several regional kingdoms and imperial courts, Sanskrit works were translated into Persian, while Persian literary and scientific texts entered Indian intellectual life through reciprocal translation. During the Mughal period, Emperor Akbar established translation bureaux dedicated to rendering Sanskrit classics into Persian in order to promote mutual understanding among diverse religious communities. Significant works such as the *Mahabharata* (*Razmnama*), *Ramayana*, *Yoga Vasistha*, and various Upanishads were translated under royal patronage, thereby introducing Indian philosophical concepts to Persian-speaking scholars and subsequently influencing European Orientalist scholarship through later translations. These initiatives illustrate how translation functioned not merely as literary activity



but also as an instrument of cultural diplomacy, political integration, and intellectual dialogue (Truschke).

The Bhakti movement represents another remarkable chapter in India's translation history. Saints and poets across different regions translated, adapted, and reinterpreted Sanskrit philosophical and devotional traditions into vernacular languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Assamese, Punjabi, and Odia. Rather than producing literal translations, these scholars transformed complex theological concepts into accessible poetic forms that ordinary people could understand and internalize. Tulsidas's *Ramcharitmanas*, Jnaneshwar's *Jnaneshwari*, Eknath's commentaries, and numerous vernacular renderings of the *Bhagavad Gita* exemplify this democratization of knowledge through translation. These works illustrate that translation in India has historically promoted educational inclusion by making philosophical and ethical teachings available beyond elite scholarly circles. The multilingual foundations of Indian Knowledge Systems are evident in the extraordinary contributions of Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Persian, Tamil, and several other classical languages. Sanskrit occupies a central position due to its extensive corpus covering diverse branches of knowledge, including Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedanta, Mimamsa, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, grammar, poetics, astronomy, mathematics, architecture, metallurgy, governance, and environmental thought. Pali preserves the canonical literature of Theravada Buddhism and offers profound insights into ethics, psychology, meditation, social philosophy, and educational practices. Prakrit literature documents Jain philosophy, ethics, cosmology, linguistics, and literary aesthetics while also preserving valuable evidence regarding social and cultural history. Persian translations enriched India's intellectual landscape by facilitating interactions among Islamic, Indic, and Central Asian traditions, whereas Tamil literature contributed independently to philosophy, ethics, grammar, aesthetics, medicine, and devotional thought through works such as the *Tolkappiyam*, *Tirukkural*, and Sangam literature. Collectively, these classical languages demonstrate that Indian Knowledge Systems evolved through sustained multilingual engagement rather than through a single linguistic tradition.

1.3 National Education Policy 2020 and the Promotion of Indian Knowledge Systems through Translation

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative shift in the Indian education system by recognizing language as the foundation of learning, cultural identity, and knowledge creation. Unlike previous educational frameworks that largely prioritized a limited number of languages in formal education, NEP 2020 advocates a multilingual and multidisciplinary approach that seeks to reconnect learners with India's rich linguistic and intellectual heritage. Central to this vision is the revitalization of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), which encompass diverse traditions of philosophy, science, medicine, mathematics, literature, governance, art, ecology, and spirituality developed over several millennia. The policy recognizes that a significant portion of this knowledge remains inaccessible to students and researchers because it is preserved in classical and regional languages unfamiliar to many contemporary learners.



Consequently, translation emerges as one of the most effective instruments for bridging linguistic divides and democratizing access to India's civilizational knowledge. Rather than viewing translation merely as a linguistic activity, NEP 2020 positions it as an essential educational strategy for preserving, disseminating, and revitalizing Indian intellectual traditions while promoting national integration and global academic engagement (National Education Policy 2020).

A defining feature of NEP 2020 is its commitment to multilingual education. The policy emphasizes that children learn most effectively in their mother tongue or home language during the foundational years of education, thereby strengthening conceptual understanding and cognitive development. Simultaneously, it encourages multilingual competence by promoting Indian languages alongside international languages, recognizing linguistic diversity as an educational asset rather than a barrier. This vision aligns closely with India's historical tradition of multilingual scholarship, where knowledge circulated across Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Persian, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Bengali, Marathi, and numerous other languages through continuous processes of translation, commentary, and interpretation. By encouraging education through multiple languages, NEP 2020 seeks to ensure that learners remain connected with their linguistic heritage while acquiring the skills necessary for participation in contemporary global knowledge systems. Translation therefore assumes a central role in enabling communication across linguistic communities and ensuring that educational resources become available to diverse groups of learners irrespective of their linguistic backgrounds (Mohanty).

One of the most significant institutional initiatives proposed under NEP 2020 is the establishment of the Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI). The Institute is envisioned as a national centre of excellence dedicated to advancing translation education, professional training, research, interpretation, terminology development, and multilingual resource creation. The proposed institution reflects the policy's recognition that effective translation requires specialized expertise extending beyond bilingual proficiency. Translators engaged with Indian Knowledge Systems must possess interdisciplinary competence encompassing language, philosophy, history, science, literature, culture, and subject-specific knowledge. The Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation is therefore expected to develop professional standards, promote translation research, train skilled translators and interpreters, facilitate collaborations among universities and research institutions, and support the translation of classical as well as contemporary knowledge resources. By institutionalizing translation education, NEP 2020 seeks to strengthen the intellectual infrastructure necessary for preserving India's multilingual knowledge heritage while enhancing its global visibility.

Translation occupies an increasingly important position within higher education and curriculum development under NEP 2020. The policy encourages universities to integrate Indian Knowledge Systems across disciplines while promoting interdisciplinary teaching and research. Such integration requires the availability of reliable translations of classical philosophical treatises, literary works, scientific manuscripts, historical documents, legal texts, and technical literature



into languages understood by students and faculty members. Translation thereby enables the incorporation of Indian intellectual traditions into contemporary curricula without restricting access to learners proficient only in classical languages. Furthermore, multilingual educational resources encourage comparative scholarship by allowing students to examine original concepts alongside modern interpretations and international perspectives. This pedagogical approach strengthens critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and academic inclusivity while expanding opportunities for research rooted in indigenous knowledge traditions. Translation thus becomes an indispensable curricular resource supporting both disciplinary specialization and interdisciplinary inquiry.

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed translation practices and expanded opportunities for preserving and disseminating Indian Knowledge Systems. Digital libraries, manuscript digitization projects, online lexical databases, multilingual corpora, terminology repositories, and electronic publishing platforms have substantially increased access to historical texts that were previously confined to archives and specialized institutions. Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Translation (MT), Optical Character Recognition (OCR), Natural Language Processing (NLP), and corpus-based translation tools have further accelerated the translation of educational resources across multiple languages. These technologies enable the digitization and preliminary translation of vast collections of manuscripts, thereby assisting scholars in identifying, organizing, and analyzing textual materials more efficiently. Although AI-assisted translation has made remarkable progress, particularly through neural machine translation systems, it remains insufficient for accurately translating philosophical, literary, scientific, and spiritual texts characterized by cultural complexity and semantic subtlety. Human expertise continues to be indispensable for interpreting culturally embedded concepts, contextual meanings, historical references, metaphorical expressions, and specialized terminology that cannot be adequately captured through automated systems alone (Venuti).

Translation also plays a critical role in achieving the educational equity and accessibility envisioned by NEP 2020. Linguistic diversity has often created barriers preventing students from accessing high-quality educational resources, particularly in rural and marginalized communities where English-medium materials remain difficult to utilize effectively. By translating textbooks, reference works, research articles, and digital learning resources into Indian languages, educational institutions can reduce disparities in learning opportunities and promote more inclusive participation in higher education. Translation further supports learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds by enabling them to engage with complex academic concepts through familiar languages while gradually developing multilingual competence. Such accessibility contributes directly to social justice, educational inclusion, and national development by ensuring that knowledge is not restricted to specific linguistic groups but becomes available to all learners regardless of regional or socio-economic circumstances (Mohanty).

The practical significance of translation in promoting Indian Knowledge Systems is evident from numerous successful translations of classical Indian texts that have achieved national and



international recognition. The *Bhagavad Gita*, translated into hundreds of languages, has introduced Indian philosophical concepts such as *Dharma*, *Karma*, and *Yoga* to global audiences while stimulating interdisciplinary research in ethics, leadership, psychology, and comparative philosophy. Similarly, translations of the *Upanishads* have profoundly influenced modern philosophy, religious studies, and cross-cultural intellectual discourse. The *Arthashastra* of Kautilya has gained renewed relevance in political science, economics, strategic studies, and public administration through scholarly translations accompanied by critical commentaries. Medical treatises such as the *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita* have become accessible to contemporary researchers investigating traditional healthcare systems, medical ethics, pharmacology, and integrative medicine. Literary classics including the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Tirukkural*, *Panchatantra*, and Buddhist canonical texts translated from Sanskrit and Pali into numerous Indian and foreign languages further demonstrate how translation has facilitated intercultural dialogue while preserving the philosophical and ethical foundations of Indian civilization. These examples illustrate that translation is not simply a means of linguistic communication but a transformative process through which Indian Knowledge Systems continue to inspire scholarship, education, and cultural understanding across diverse societies.

In this context, NEP 2020 recognizes translation as a strategic instrument for realizing its broader objectives of multilingual education, educational equity, cultural preservation, academic excellence, and global knowledge exchange. By strengthening translation institutions, encouraging multilingual curriculum development, leveraging digital technologies, and promoting systematic translation of India's intellectual heritage, the policy creates a robust framework for revitalizing Indian Knowledge Systems in the twenty-first century. Translation thus emerges not only as a linguistic discipline but also as a foundational pillar for building an inclusive, knowledge-based, and culturally rooted education system capable of connecting India's civilizational wisdom with contemporary national priorities and global academic discourse.

1.4 Challenges, Opportunities, and Future Prospects

The promotion of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) through translation under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 presents immense opportunities for educational transformation, cultural preservation, and global knowledge exchange. However, the realization of these objectives requires addressing several linguistic, institutional, technological, and policy-related challenges that continue to hinder the systematic translation of India's intellectual heritage. While translation has historically served as a bridge between diverse linguistic communities, the unprecedented scale envisioned by NEP 2020 necessitates coordinated efforts involving universities, research institutions, translators, policymakers, digital technology experts, and international academic organizations. The future success of Indian Knowledge Systems depends not merely on translating texts into different languages but on ensuring that such translations preserve conceptual authenticity, scholarly accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and academic credibility.



One of the foremost challenges arises from India's extraordinary linguistic diversity. The Constitution of India recognizes twenty-two scheduled languages, while hundreds of regional languages, dialects, and tribal languages continue to flourish across the country. This linguistic plurality represents one of India's greatest cultural strengths, yet it also complicates the translation of educational materials and knowledge texts. Indian Knowledge Systems have historically developed through numerous linguistic traditions, including Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tamil, Persian, Kannada, Telugu, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Malayalam, Odia, and several others. Many concepts embedded within these languages possess profound philosophical, cultural, and historical meanings that cannot be conveyed through direct lexical substitution. Consequently, translators frequently encounter difficulties in balancing linguistic accessibility with conceptual precision. Excessive simplification may distort the original meaning, whereas overly literal translation may render texts inaccessible to contemporary readers. Maintaining translation quality across multiple languages therefore remains one of the most significant challenges in implementing multilingual educational policies envisioned under NEP 2020 (Bassnett).

Another critical challenge concerns the shortage of professionally trained translators capable of working with Indian Knowledge Systems. Effective translation requires far more than bilingual competence; it demands deep understanding of language, history, philosophy, culture, literary traditions, and specialized subject knowledge. Translating texts related to Ayurveda, Vedanta, Buddhist philosophy, classical logic, ancient mathematics, jurisprudence, or literary aesthetics requires translators who possess interdisciplinary expertise alongside advanced linguistic proficiency. Unfortunately, India continues to experience a shortage of professionals trained in both translation methodologies and traditional knowledge systems. Many existing translations have been undertaken either by language experts lacking subject specialization or by subject specialists possessing limited translation training, resulting in inconsistencies in quality and interpretation. The establishment of the Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation proposed under NEP 2020 represents a significant step toward addressing this gap; however, sustained investment in translator education, certification programmes, research fellowships, and interdisciplinary training remains essential for developing a robust national translation ecosystem (National Education Policy 2020).

The preservation and accessibility of manuscripts constitute another major area requiring urgent attention. India possesses one of the world's largest collections of handwritten manuscripts preserved in temples, monasteries, libraries, museums, archives, universities, and private collections. These manuscripts document centuries of intellectual achievements across medicine, philosophy, astronomy, agriculture, architecture, governance, literature, music, and environmental knowledge. A substantial proportion of these valuable resources remains unpublished, untranslated, or physically vulnerable due to deterioration caused by climate, inadequate preservation facilities, and limited conservation expertise. Although several governmental and academic initiatives have begun digitizing manuscript collections, enormous



quantities of material remain inaccessible to scholars and students. Digital preservation must therefore be integrated with systematic cataloguing, transcription, critical editing, translation, annotation, and open scholarly access. Merely preserving manuscripts in digital form is insufficient unless their contents become comprehensible through high-quality translations accompanied by contextual explanations and scholarly commentaries.

Translation initiatives involving classical knowledge also raise important copyright, intellectual property, and ethical considerations. While many ancient texts exist within the public domain, modern editions, commentaries, annotations, critical translations, and digital databases often remain protected by copyright laws. Furthermore, indigenous knowledge preserved within local communities, tribal traditions, oral narratives, medicinal practices, and cultural rituals requires careful ethical consideration before translation and dissemination. Inappropriate commercial exploitation, cultural misrepresentation, or unauthorized appropriation of traditional knowledge may undermine the interests of knowledge-holding communities. Translators therefore bear ethical responsibilities extending beyond linguistic accuracy. They must ensure respectful representation of cultural traditions, acknowledge original knowledge sources, maintain scholarly transparency, and avoid interpretative distortions driven by ideological or commercial motivations. Ethical translation practices become particularly important when indigenous knowledge enters international academic and commercial domains, where questions concerning intellectual property rights and equitable benefit-sharing assume increasing significance.

Rapid developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) have created both opportunities and challenges for translation. Neural Machine Translation (NMT), Natural Language Processing (NLP), Optical Character Recognition (OCR), speech recognition systems, multilingual language models, and corpus-based translation software have significantly improved the efficiency of translating large volumes of textual material. These technologies are particularly valuable for digitizing manuscripts, generating preliminary translations, identifying textual patterns, and supporting multilingual terminology management. However, AI-assisted translation continues to encounter substantial limitations when dealing with Indian Knowledge Systems. Philosophical discourse, poetic expression, ritual symbolism, metaphorical language, historical references, and culturally embedded concepts frequently require contextual interpretation beyond the capabilities of automated systems. Machine-generated translations often fail to capture semantic nuance, philosophical depth, and cultural resonance essential for accurately interpreting classical Indian texts. Consequently, AI should be regarded as a complementary technological resource rather than a substitute for human translators. Hybrid translation models integrating computational efficiency with expert human evaluation offer the most promising approach for future translation projects involving complex intellectual traditions (Venuti).

International collaborations constitute another important avenue for advancing translation initiatives. Universities, research institutes, manuscript libraries, language academies, digital humanities centres, UNESCO, and international cultural organizations can collaborate on multilingual translation projects, digital archives, terminology development, faculty exchange



programmes, and joint research initiatives. Such partnerships would not only improve translation quality through interdisciplinary expertise but also enhance the international visibility of Indian scholarship. Collaborative translation projects involving scholars from linguistics, philosophy, history, computer science, medicine, literary studies, and artificial intelligence can generate innovative methodologies combining traditional philological scholarship with contemporary digital technologies. Policy support at both national and international levels will therefore be essential for sustaining long-term institutional cooperation and expanding the global reach of Indian Knowledge Systems.

The successful implementation of NEP 2020 requires several strategic recommendations for universities, policymakers, and translators. Universities should establish interdisciplinary centres dedicated to Translation Studies and Indian Knowledge Systems, offering specialized academic programmes that combine language training with subject expertise. Research funding should prioritize the translation of classical manuscripts, regional knowledge traditions, and interdisciplinary educational resources while encouraging collaborative projects involving scholars from multiple disciplines. Policymakers should strengthen institutions such as the Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation, expand support for the National Translation Mission, and develop comprehensive digital repositories providing open access to multilingual educational resources. Standardized terminology databases, quality assurance mechanisms, translator certification systems, and ethical guidelines should also be developed to ensure academic consistency and cultural authenticity. Translators themselves must adopt interdisciplinary approaches, combining linguistic competence with deep understanding of philosophy, history, science, culture, and pedagogy while utilizing AI-assisted technologies responsibly without compromising scholarly integrity.

1.5 Conclusion

The present study examined the role of Translation Studies in promoting Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) within the framework of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The analysis demonstrates that translation is not merely a linguistic exercise but a multidimensional academic discipline that facilitates the preservation, interpretation, dissemination, and globalization of India's rich intellectual heritage. Indian Knowledge Systems, developed over thousands of years through diverse philosophical, scientific, literary, medical, artistic, and spiritual traditions, constitute an invaluable repository of knowledge with continuing relevance for contemporary education and society. However, much of this knowledge remains inaccessible to wider audiences because it is preserved in classical and regional languages. Translation therefore functions as a crucial bridge that connects historical wisdom with present-day learners, researchers, and policymakers.

One of the major findings of this study is that the objectives of NEP 2020 are closely aligned with the principles of Translation Studies. The policy recognizes multilingualism as a national strength and advocates the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems into mainstream education through language-inclusive pedagogical practices. The emphasis on mother tongue-based education, the



translation of educational resources into Indian languages, and the establishment of institutional mechanisms such as the Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) collectively reflect the policy's commitment to democratizing knowledge. These initiatives indicate that translation occupies a strategic position in realizing the educational vision of NEP 2020 by ensuring that learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds can access high-quality academic resources while remaining connected to India's cultural and intellectual traditions.

The study further reveals that Translation Studies contributes significantly to educational transformation by promoting inclusivity, interdisciplinary learning, and academic accessibility. Translation enables students to engage with foundational texts in philosophy, literature, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, governance, and ethics without requiring prior mastery of classical languages. It also encourages comparative scholarship by creating opportunities for dialogue between indigenous knowledge traditions and contemporary academic disciplines. In this manner, translation supports holistic education, critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and lifelong learning, all of which constitute important objectives of the National Education Policy 2020.

The implications of this study extend beyond educational policy to broader areas of research and cultural development. For higher education institutions, the findings highlight the necessity of integrating Translation Studies with Indian Knowledge Systems through interdisciplinary curricula, specialized research centres, collaborative translation projects, and multilingual academic publications. For researchers, the study emphasizes the importance of producing critical translations accompanied by annotations, glossaries, and contextual analyses that preserve conceptual authenticity while enhancing accessibility. For cultural institutions and policymakers, the findings reinforce the need to preserve manuscript heritage, support digital repositories, and encourage national and international collaborations for the dissemination of India's intellectual traditions.

Future research may expand upon the present study by examining discipline-specific translation practices within Ayurveda, Yoga, Indian philosophy, legal traditions, environmental knowledge, mathematics, astronomy, and classical literature. Comparative investigations of translation methodologies across different Indian languages, empirical studies on multilingual learning outcomes under NEP 2020, and analyses of AI-assisted translation tools for classical Indian texts would further enrich the emerging scholarship in this field. Research may also explore the contribution of regional language translations in strengthening community-based knowledge preservation and promoting inclusive educational development.

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