

Holistic and Inclusive Education: An IKS–SDG Framework for Sustainable Futures in Haryana

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Abstract

This survey research examines the convergence of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in shaping holistic and inclusive education in Haryana. Despite notable progress in gender parity and gross enrollment ratios, the state confronts persistent disparities in learning outcomes, foundational literacy, and equitable access for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and marginalized communities. This paper develops and analyzes an integrated IKS–SDG framework with four research objectives: assessing the current state of holistic and inclusive education in Haryana, examining the implementation of NEP 2020 provisions and IKS integration, identifying challenges confronting marginalized student groups, and evaluating the alignment of educational reforms with SDG 4 targets. The findings reveal a dual reality in Haryana's education landscape—significant policy innovations such as the Holistic Progress Card (HPC) and Super-100 programme coexist with implementation gaps including teacher shortages, infrastructural deficits, and persistent social inequalities. The paper contributes a practical framework for policymakers and educators seeking to leverage indigenous knowledge traditions alongside global sustainability commitments to advance educational equity and holistic development.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, NEP 2020, SDG 4, Holistic Education, Inclusive Education, Haryana

1. Introduction

The global education landscape is undergoing a transformative shift from narrowly defined academic achievement toward more expansive conceptions of learning that embrace holistic development, cultural rootedness, and inclusive access. This paradigm shift finds expression in three interconnected frameworks: the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which commits nations to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"; India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which articulates a vision of education that is holistic, multidisciplinary, and anchored in Indian cultural traditions;

and the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), which represents a diverse body of indigenous knowledge encompassing science, philosophy, technology, arts, and more, developed over millennia in India.

NEP 2020 identifies IKS as a foundational element for educational transformation. The policy has acknowledged the deep history of old and everlasting Indian wisdom and philosophy as a guiding base. NEP 2020 aims to integrate IKS with contemporary knowledge to address current and future challenges. The IKS comprises Jnan, Vignan, and Jeevan Darshan that have evolved out of experience, observation, experimentation, and rigorous analysis, with the objective of drawing from India's past to solve current and emerging challenges. Concurrently, the policy emphasizes holistic development through the Panchkosha model, which focuses on five key dimensions: physical, mental, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional development.

The state of Haryana presents a compelling case study for examining the IKS–SDG framework in practice. The state exhibits contradictory educational indicators: its Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education stands at 34.8%, with female GER (39.1%) surpassing male GER (31.2%)—a rare achievement nationwide. Girls consistently outperform boys in board examinations, achieving pass percentages of 94.06% in Class 10 and 89.41% in Class 12, compared to 91.07% and 81.86% for boys respectively. Yet beneath these aggregate figures lie stark realities: significant inter-district disparities, with Jind topping and Nuh trailing in Class 12 results; students from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continue to lag behind in learning outcomes; and 450 government schools across the state have fewer than 10 students, while 1,066 schools operate with a single teacher managing all responsibilities.

This survey research addresses the following overarching question: *How can the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems within NEP 2020's holistic and inclusive education framework accelerate progress toward SDG 4 targets in Haryana, and what are the implementation challenges and opportunities?*

2. Research Objectives

Based on the identified research gaps and the unique educational context of Haryana, the following research objectives guide this survey:

Objective No.	Research Objective
RO1	To assess the current state of holistic and inclusive education in Haryana, including enrollment patterns, learning outcomes, and gender parity indicators across different demographic groups
RO2	To examine the implementation status of NEP 2020 provisions in Haryana, with specific focus on the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and holistic pedagogical approaches
RO3	To identify the key challenges and barriers confronting marginalized student groups—including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, girls, transgender individuals, and economically disadvantaged communities—in accessing equitable and quality education
RO4	To evaluate the alignment of Haryana's educational reforms and initiatives with SDG 4 targets and to propose an integrated IKS–SDG framework for advancing sustainable and inclusive educational development

3. Methodology

This study employs a **descriptive survey research design** utilizing secondary data sources. The methodology comprises systematic review and thematic analysis of:

- **Policy Documents:** National Education Policy 2020, NEP 2020 implementation guidelines, Haryana State Education Department notifications and circulars, and related legislative frameworks including the Right to Education Act 2009 and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019.
- **Statistical Reports:** UDISE+ (Unified District Information System for Education Plus) data, PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan reports, UNESCO SDG 4 Scorecard 2025, and National Indicator Framework (NIF) Progress Reports.
- **Academic Literature:** Peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and institutional research on IKS integration, holistic education, and SDG 4 implementation.
- **Media and Institutional Sources:** News reports from verified sources documenting Haryana-specific educational initiatives such as the Holistic Progress Card (HPC), Super-100 programme, and Model Playschools.

Limitations: The study relies exclusively on secondary data, which may contain inherent reporting biases and time lags. Primary data collection through stakeholder interviews or surveys

is beyond the scope of this research. Additionally, the IKS–SDG framework proposed herein is conceptual and requires empirical validation through future research.

4. Findings and Analysis

The findings are organized according to the four research objectives, with each objective supported by a corresponding analytical table.

4.1 RO1: Current State of Holistic and Inclusive Education in Haryana

Haryana's educational landscape reveals a complex picture of significant achievements alongside persistent challenges. The state has made remarkable strides in expanding access to education and achieving gender parity in enrollment and academic performance.

Table 1: Key Education Indicators in Haryana (2024–2025)

Indicator	Value	Source/Year
Higher Education GER (Overall)	34.8%	Magzter, 2025
Higher Education GER (Female)	39.1%	Magzter, 2025
Higher Education GER (Male)	31.2%	Magzter, 2025
Class 10 Pass Percentage (Overall)	92.49%	HBSE, 2025
Class 10 Pass Percentage (Girls)	94.06%	HBSE, 2025
Class 10 Pass Percentage (Boys)	91.07%	HBSE, 2025
Class 12 Pass Percentage (Girls)	89.41%	HBSE, 2025
Class 12 Pass Percentage (Boys)	81.86%	HBSE, 2025
Government School Class 12 Pass Rate	86.98%	HBSE, 2025
Private School Class 12 Pass Rate	84.67%	HBSE, 2025

Analysis: The data reveals several noteworthy patterns. First, Haryana has achieved reverse gender disparity in higher education enrollment, with female GER exceeding male GER by approximately 8 percentage points—an exceptional outcome in the Indian context. Second, girls consistently outperform boys across both secondary and senior secondary board examinations, a trend that holds across school types. Third, government schools have marginally outperformed private schools in Class 12 examinations, challenging prevailing assumptions about public education quality.

However, aggregate figures mask substantial internal variations. Jind district tops the state in Class 12 results while Nuh district trails significantly, reflecting deep-rooted regional disparities. The PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan indicates that children from historically marginalized Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities continue to lag behind their peers in learning

outcomes. Furthermore, the state exhibits a higher concentration of single-gender secondary schools in rural and small-town areas, a pattern shared with other northern states including Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.

4.2 RO2: Implementation of NEP 2020 and IKS Integration in Haryana

Haryana has emerged as an early adopter of several NEP 2020 provisions, particularly those related to holistic assessment and foundational learning.

Table 2: NEP 2020 and IKS Implementation Initiatives in Haryana

Initiative	Description	Implementation Status	Alignment with NEP/IKS
Holistic Progress Card (HPC)	Child-centric document tracking health, emotional development, critical learning outcomes, and social interactions	Introduced March 2025	Panchkosha model of holistic development
Model Playschools	Early childhood care and education under Playway Schools initiative	59 inaugurated March 2024	Foundational stage (5+3+3+4 structure)
Smart Classrooms (Sampark Programme)	Technology-integrated learning in government primary schools	6,600+ primary schools covered; 35-40% increase in learning outcomes	Technology-integrated education
Sanskriti Model Schools	Sports and skills centres in Gurugram for vocational education	Announced April 2025	Vocational education integration
IKS Teacher Training	UGC-Ministry of Education face-to-face training for 1,000 teachers	July–October 2023; Haryana among first states	IKS curriculum integration
Bharat Boudh IKS Books	IKS book series inaugurated at SJHIFM, Panchkula	December 2025	IKS in higher education
IKS Student Competitions	Working models on traditional astronomy and agriculture science	Announced October 2025	Experiential IKS learning
CHEERAG Scheme	Financial relief and admission assistance for classes 4–12	Operational 2024–25	Equity and inclusion

Analysis: The implementation landscape reveals a **multi-pronged approach** to NEP 2020 adoption in Haryana. The Holistic Progress Card (HPC) represents a paradigm shift from examination-centric to competency-based, learner-centric evaluation practices. The HPC tracks student proficiency across multiple domains, moving beyond traditional examination systems to adopt meaningful, holistic assessments. As a senior education department official noted, "The HPC is a child-centric document that tracks a student's proficiency across multiple areas, including health status, emotional development, critical learning outcomes, and social interactions".

The Sampark programme's smart classroom initiative has demonstrated measurable impact, with learning outcomes and micro-competencies among primary school students increasing by 35 to 40 per cent. The Model Playschools initiative aligns with NEP 2020's foundational stage

emphasis, equipping early childhood centres with enhanced learning materials and pre-school education kits.

Regarding IKS integration, Haryana was among the first states to participate in the UGC-Ministry of Education teacher training programme, which offered IKS courses across three streams: Engineering, Science and Technology, and Humanities and Social Sciences. The Bharat Boudh IKS book series inauguration at SJHIFM, Panchkula, signals institutional commitment to strengthening IKS in higher education. The IKS division of the Union education ministry has also launched student competitions focusing on traditional astronomy and agriculture science, promoting experiential engagement with indigenous knowledge.

However, implementation remains uneven. Reports indicate that government schools in Haryana, like those in other states, struggle with patchy implementation of NEP 2020, including challenges in transitioning to the new 5+3+3+4 structure. IKS integration at the school level remains in nascent stages, with the policy envisioning "an engaging course on Indian Knowledge Systems" as an elective in secondary school rather than a fully integrated curricular component.

4.3 RO3: Challenges Confronting Marginalized Student Groups

Despite notable progress in aggregate indicators, marginalized communities in Haryana continue to face significant barriers to equitable educational participation and achievement.

Table 3: Key Challenges Facing Marginalized Student Groups in Haryana

Marginalized Group	Key Challenges	Evidence/Indicators	Policy/Programme Response
Scheduled Castes (SC)	Limited digital access; learning loss; higher dropout rates	SC students lag in PARAKH survey; limited access to digital devices during COVID-19	RTE 25% reservation in private schools; CHEERAG scheme
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	Educational disadvantage; lower learning outcomes	ST students lag in PARAKH survey; persistent performance gaps	RTE provisions; targeted interventions
Girls in Rural Areas	Patriarchal norms; safety concerns; early marriage pressures; geographic barriers	Higher single-gender school density in rural areas; dropout concerns	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya; Super-100 programme for girls
Transgender Individuals	Institutional discrimination; lack of recognition; social exclusion	HHRC orders on school recognition; denial of recognition for transgender-founded school	HHRC intervention; Transgender Persons Act 2019 implementation
Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)	Financial barriers; limited access to quality coaching; digital divide	450 schools with <10 students; 1,066 single-teacher schools	Super-100 programme; fee exemptions; RTE 25% quota
Minority Communities	Educational backwardness; socio-economic marginalization	Nuh district trailing in academic outcomes	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya coverage

Analysis: The challenges confronting marginalized groups in Haryana are multifaceted and intersectional. **Scheduled Caste students** faced significant barriers during the COVID-19 pandemic, including limited access to digital devices and poor digital infrastructure, which exacerbated pre-existing educational vulnerabilities and contributed to increased dropout rates and substantial learning losses. The PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan confirms that SC and ST students continue to lag behind their peers, pointing to ongoing educational disadvantages for historically marginalized groups.

Girls' education in Haryana presents a paradoxical picture. While female students outperform males in examinations and demonstrate higher higher education GER, deeply entrenched patriarchal norms continue to affect educational access and retention, particularly in rural areas. Research indicates that poverty, entrenched and pervasive patriarchy, geographical remoteness, and access-related issues combine to adversely impact girls' education. The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya scheme serves girls predominantly from SC, ST, OBC, and minority communities in educationally backward blocks, indicating the persistent need for targeted interventions.

Transgender inclusion in Haryana's education system has gained visibility through the Haryana Human Rights Commission's intervention. The HHRC took cognizance of a complaint alleging denial of recognition to a school founded by a transgender person for underprivileged children, stating that such denial raised concerns about the right to education. The Commission emphasized that the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 explicitly prohibits discrimination against transgender persons in education, employment, occupation, healthcare, and other areas. In April 2025, the HHRC issued a landmark order promoting equality and inclusion in the education sector, supporting the transgender educator's effort to secure school recognition.

Economically weaker sections face structural barriers including under-resourced schools and limited access to quality educational opportunities. The presence of 450 government schools with fewer than 10 students and 1,066 schools with a single teacher underscores the crisis in rural and remote educational infrastructure.

4.4 RO4: Alignment with SDG 4 and Proposed IKS–SDG Framework

The fourth objective evaluates the alignment between Haryana's educational initiatives and SDG 4 targets, culminating in a proposed integrated framework.

Table 4: Alignment of Haryana Initiatives with SDG 4 Targets

SDG 4 Target	Target Description	Relevant Initiative(s) Haryana	Alignment Assessment
4.1	Free, equitable, and quality primary/secondary education	RTE 25% reservation; CHEERAG scheme; Model Playschools	Partial alignment —access improved, quality concerns persist
4.2	Quality early childhood development	Model Playschools (59 inaugurated); Anganwadi strengthening	Moderate alignment —foundational stage emphasis emerging
4.3	Equal access to technical/vocational education	Sanskriti Model Schools; skill centres in Gurugram	Early stage —vocational integration beginning
4.4	Relevant skills for employment	Super-100 programme; vocational education expansion	Moderate alignment —skills focus increasing
4.5	Eliminate gender disparities	Female GER exceeds male GER; girls outperform boys	Strong alignment —gender parity achieved and reversed
4.6	Universal literacy and numeracy	Smart classrooms (35-40% learning outcome improvement)	Partial alignment —foundational learning gaps persist
4.7	Education for sustainable development	IKS integration (sustainability ethos inherent in IKS)	Early stage —IKS-SDG convergence emerging
4.a	Safe and inclusive learning environments	HHRC orders on transgender inclusion; single-gender school concerns	Partial alignment —policy frameworks exist, implementation weak
4.c	Qualified teachers	1,066 single-teacher schools; teacher training programmes	Critical gap —teacher shortage and quality major concern

Sources: Compiled from analysis of Tables 1–3 and SDG 4 indicator framework

Analysis: Haryana demonstrates **strong alignment with SDG Target 4.5** (eliminating gender disparities), as evidenced by female GER exceeding male GER and consistent female outperformance in examinations. **Moderate to partial alignment** exists for targets related to early childhood development (4.2), skills for employment (4.4), and access to technical/vocational education (4.3). **Critical gaps** remain in Target 4.c (qualified teachers), as the existence of 1,066 single-teacher schools indicates severe human resource constraints. Additionally, the 2025 UNESCO SDG 4 scorecard indicates that India remains off-track in upper secondary and tertiary participation, with the 2025 benchmark set at 88% but progress slow and data limited.

The convergence between IKS and SDG 4 represents a significant but under-explored opportunity. Engagement with the Indian Knowledge System allows students to understand the significance of sustainable living practices and motivates them to seek alternatives to urgent societal challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, and social inequity. Research suggests that bridging IKS with SDG-driven educational reforms not only enriches the learning experience but also strengthens the global pursuit of sustainable and holistic development.

Table 5: Proposed IKS–SDG Integrated Framework for Holistic and Inclusive Education in Haryana

Framework Dimension	IKS Component	SDG Alignment	Implementation Strategy for Haryana
Pedagogical Foundation	Panchkosha model (physical, mental, intellectual, spiritual, emotional development)	Targets 4.1, 4.7	Expand Holistic Progress Card to all schools; train teachers in Panchkosha assessment
Curricular Integration	IKS elective courses; indigenous science, mathematics, astronomy, agriculture	Targets 4.3, 4.4, 4.7	Develop Haryana-specific IKS curriculum modules; leverage local traditions and practices
Inclusive Access	Community-based knowledge systems; oral traditions; local language instruction	Targets 4.5, 4.a	Strengthen Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas; expand Super-100 to all districts; implement transgender-inclusive policies
Teacher Development	IKS teacher training programmes; integration of traditional pedagogies	Target 4.c	Scale UGC-IKS teacher training; address single-teacher school crisis through recruitment
Sustainability Ethics	IKS emphasis on harmony with nature; sustainable agriculture; resource conservation	Target 4.7	Integrate IKS sustainability principles into environmental education; promote traditional ecological knowledge
Assessment Reform	Competency-based, holistic evaluation aligned with Indian philosophical traditions	Targets 4.1, 4.6	Full implementation of HPC; reduce examination-centric assessment
Community Engagement	Village-level knowledge transmission; intergenerational learning	Targets 4.1, 4.a	Establish school-community IKS knowledge-sharing platforms; document local knowledge traditions

Source: Author 's compilation based on NEP 2020, IKS framework, and SDG 4 targets

5. Discussion

The findings of this survey research reveal a **dual reality** in Haryana's educational landscape. On one hand, the state has demonstrated remarkable policy responsiveness and innovative implementation of NEP 2020 provisions. The introduction of the Holistic Progress Card, expansion of smart classrooms with documented learning outcome improvements, and the transformative impact of the Super-100 programme—which has enabled 534 students from underprivileged backgrounds to clear competitive examinations including IIT and NEET—exemplify Haryana's commitment to educational reform. The Super-100 programme, launched in 2018, provides free coaching to meritorious students from remote areas of the state, representing a targeted intervention for equity and excellence.

The state's achievement of reverse gender disparity in higher education GER is particularly noteworthy and aligns strongly with SDG Target 4.5. However, this aggregate success should not obscure the persistent challenges facing girls from marginalized communities in rural areas, where patriarchal norms and safety concerns continue to constrain educational participation.

On the other hand, the findings expose **significant implementation gaps and structural weaknesses**. The existence of 1,066 single-teacher schools constitutes a fundamental violation of quality education provisions and directly undermines progress toward SDG Target 4.c. The concentration of educational disadvantage in specific districts, notably Nuh, reflects the intersection of socio-economic marginalization, minority status, and geographical remoteness. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities, with SC students facing limited digital access and substantial learning losses that may have long-term consequences for educational equity.

IKS Integration: Opportunities and Challenges

The integration of Indian Knowledge Systems into Haryana's education framework presents both opportunities and challenges. The IKS is a diverse body of indigenous knowledge that includes areas such as Yoga, Ayurveda, Sanskrit, and classical music and dance, offering rich resources for holistic and culturally rooted education. However, the current approach to IKS integration remains largely **tokenistic and incremental** rather than systemic. At the school level, IKS is positioned as an elective rather than an integrated curricular component. While teacher training programmes have commenced—with Haryana among the first states to participate—the scale of implementation is insufficient to achieve meaningful transformation.

The convergence between IKS and the SDGs offers a particularly promising pathway. Indigenous funds of knowledge are vital to learner-centered education as they draw from the knowledge systems of local communities, emphasizing how people learn, what they must know for survival, and the practices that sustain them. International seminars and research initiatives are increasingly exploring the relationship between Indian knowledge traditions and the Sustainable Development Goals, promoting interdisciplinary dialogue on the application of IKS in education, environment, health, and governance.

Holistic and Inclusive Education: Toward an Integrated Framework

The proposed IKS–SDG framework (Table 5) seeks to operationalize the convergence of these three domains. The Panchkosha model, which emphasizes five dimensions of development, provides a theoretical foundation for holistic education that aligns with both NEP 2020 and SDG Target 4.7 (education for sustainable development). The framework's emphasis on community-based knowledge systems, local language instruction, and intergenerational learning addresses the inclusion imperative central to SDG 4 while grounding educational practice in indigenous traditions.

For Haryana, the implementation strategy should prioritize:

1. **Scaling the Holistic Progress Card** to all schools, accompanied by comprehensive teacher training in holistic assessment methodologies.
2. **Addressing the single-teacher school crisis** through aggressive teacher recruitment and deployment, with priority to educationally backward districts.
3. **Developing Haryana-specific IKS curriculum modules** that leverage the state's rich cultural heritage, including its traditions in agriculture, folk arts, and community practices.
4. **Strengthening targeted interventions** such as the Super-100 programme and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyas, with expanded coverage and enhanced quality.
5. **Institutionalizing transgender-inclusive policies** in alignment with the Transgender Persons Act 2019 and the Haryana Human Rights Commission's directives.
6. **Establishing systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** aligned with the SDG 4 indicator framework to track progress and identify gaps.

6. Conclusion

This survey research has examined the state of holistic and inclusive education in Haryana through the lens of an integrated IKS–SDG framework. The findings reveal a complex educational landscape characterized by significant achievements in gender parity and policy innovation, juxtaposed with persistent challenges in foundational learning, teacher availability, and equitable access for marginalized communities.

The convergence of the Indian Knowledge System, NEP 2020, and the Sustainable Development Goals offers a theoretically robust and practically relevant framework for advancing holistic and inclusive education in Haryana. The state's early adoption of NEP 2020 provisions—including the Holistic Progress Card, Model Playschools, and IKS teacher training—demonstrates policy responsiveness and institutional capacity. However, translating policy intent into systemic transformation requires addressing fundamental implementation gaps: teacher shortages, infrastructural deficits, regional disparities, and the tokenistic rather than integrative approach to IKS.

The proposed IKS–SDG framework contributes a practical tool for policymakers, educators, and researchers seeking to leverage indigenous knowledge traditions alongside global sustainability commitments. Future research should employ primary data collection methods—including stakeholder interviews, classroom observations, and longitudinal studies—to empirically validate the framework and assess its impact on learning outcomes and educational equity. Additionally,

comparative studies across Indian states would illuminate context-specific factors shaping the IKS–SDG convergence in diverse educational settings.

The path toward sustainable futures through holistic and inclusive education requires sustained political commitment, adequate resource allocation, and genuine engagement with indigenous knowledge systems not as ornamental additions but as foundational pillars of educational transformation. Haryana's experience offers both cautionary lessons and promising models for this transformative journey.

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