

Embedding Indigenous Wisdom in Teacher Preparation: Nurturing Cultural Vibrancy and Pedagogical Roots

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Abstract:

In alignment with the vision of National Education Policy 2020, which emphasizes the revitalization of India's rich cultural heritage and knowledge traditions, this Study explores the pedagogical significance of embedding indigenous wisdom within pre-service teacher education through integration of Indian Arts in Education. Arts either in visual, performing or digital form has immense potential it has been proven historical fact. The study will emphasized on findings of research conducted by the author with an objective of how imparting experiential learning experiences to prospective teachers and to enriched their horizon of learning about rich Indian cultural heritage was conducted with prospectiveteachers of one of the affiliate B.Ed college with GGSIPU, Delhi. Through base of the research study findings author will described in research conducted need for integration of art integrated learning curriculum and its positive impact of such programmes for embedding Indigenous Wisdom in Teacher Preparation: Celebrating Cultural Vibrancy Rooted in IKS among prospective teachers which made them promotes critical thinking, intercultural dialogue, and respect for diversity while countering the dominance of homogenized knowledge systems. The Sampling technique utilized was purposive random sampling with sample of 100 trainee teachers of final semester.

The study was divided into two phases, in phase I trainee teachers were oriented about Indian cultural through visual and performing forms of arts as a part of Drama and Art in Education practical in the form planned workshops, FDP, Excursions and performances on Indian cultural vibrancy etc. and in phase II, to know the impact of such programmes on cultural awareness and Self-Efficacy for Culturally Responsive Teaching standardized tools were used namely Selfdesigned Cultural Arts Impact Questionnaire for Prospective Teachers and Self- Efficacy for Culturally Responsive Teaching standardized tools developed by Kwadwo K. Siwatu (2007) containing 40 items were implemented. The statistical findings and graphical analysis confirmed the effectiveness of integrating Indian arts and indigenous wisdom within teacher preparation programmes. Therefore, the study strongly advocates restructuring teacher education curricula to include culturally rooted and art-integrated pedagogies as essential components of professional teacher preparation.

Overall, the research concludes that embedding indigenous wisdom in teacher education is not merely a cultural initiative but a pedagogical necessity for nurturing future educators who are culturally conscious, socially inclusive, ethically grounded, and capable of contributing toward holistic and sustainable educational development.

Keywords: Art in Education, IKS, Cultural Vibrancy.

INTRODUCTION

“To know India is to preserve India through education, values, and cultural continuity.” —

A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

Education has always served as a medium for preserving culture, values, traditions, and collective wisdom across generations. The responsibility of preserving indigenous wisdom about culture, spiritual practices and community centered ways of living lies heavily on Indigenous Education System as education has always been deeply intertwined with culture, identity, and the collective wisdom of societies and have preserved valuable knowledge systems through oral traditions, experiential learning, ecological understanding as these forms of wisdom are often transmitted across generations as they embody holistic approaches to life and learning that promote harmony between individuals, society, and nature. Though rapid changes marked by globalization, technological advancement, and cultural homogenization, stressed on increasing need to reconnect education with indigenous roots and cultural contexts.

And for this major resource for any nation is Teacher's who plays a pivotal role in shaping the attitudes, beliefs, and pedagogical orientations of future educators. However, many present teacher preparation programmes continue to be dominated by standardized and westernized approaches that frequently overlook local knowledge systems, traditional pedagogies, and culturally responsive practices. The result of which is disconnection of learners' from cultural realities and indigenous identities. Hence Embedding Indigenous Wisdom within teacher preparation therefore emerges as a meaningful step toward creating culturally grounded, inclusive, and context-sensitive educational environments. The recent education policy NEP 2020 which advocates the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems, experiential learning, multilingualism, value-based education, and holistic development within educational institutions. **Sharma, Mittal, and Zayan** (2023) also examined teacher education reforms under NEP 2020 and argued that the policy attempts to reconnect teacher education with Indian knowledge traditions while balancing global educational discourses.

The policy recognizes that education should not merely transmit information but should also preserve cultural heritage, foster critical consciousness, and nurture learners who are socially responsible and emotionally balanced. In this regard, teacher education institutions are expected to prepare educators who are culturally responsive, reflective, empathetic, and capable of integrating indigenous perspectives into classroom practices.

Indigenous wisdom refers to the accumulated knowledge, practices, values, beliefs, and life skills developed by communities through continuous interaction with their social, cultural, and ecological environments. It encompasses not only intellectual understanding but also ethical, spiritual, emotional, and practical dimensions of living. In the Indian context, indigenous wisdom can be observed in the Gurukul system, folk traditions, tribal knowledge systems, yoga and meditation practices, Ayurveda, storytelling traditions, local crafts, and community-based learning models. These systems have historically emphasized experiential learning, character formation, sustainability, collective responsibility, and harmonious coexistence with nat

It has been rightly said

“गुरुकुल परंपरा केवल ज्ञान देने की व्यवस्था नहीं थी, बल्कि जीवन जीने की कला सिखाने का माध्यम थी।” — भारतीय पारंपरिक शिक्षा दृष्टि

Embedding indigenous wisdom in teacher preparation also contributes to the broader goals of sustainable development and social inclusion. Indigenous pedagogies often promote ecological consciousness, community participation, respect for diversity, and ethical living—values that are increasingly relevant in addressing contemporary global challenges such as environmental degradation, cultural erosion, social inequality, and mental health concerns. Future teachers equipped with indigenous perspectives can create classrooms that value diversity, encourage intercultural dialogue, and connect learning with real-life experiences and local realities.

Moreover, integrating indigenous wisdom into teacher education nurtures cultural vibrancy and pedagogical rootedness among pre-service teachers. It enables them to appreciate the richness of local traditions, develop sensitivity toward diverse learners, and adopt teaching methods that are participatory, experiential, and value-oriented. Such an approach not only strengthens professional competence but also reinforces the role of teachers as custodians of cultural continuity and social transformation.

Despite its significance, the incorporation of indigenous wisdom in teacher preparation faces several challenges, including lack of documentation, marginalization of local knowledge systems, curriculum rigidity, inadequate teacher training, and dominance of western epistemologies. Therefore, there is a pressing need for educational institutions, policymakers, and teacher educators to develop strategies that meaningfully integrate indigenous perspectives within teacher education curricula and pedagogical practices.

Hence it can be said ***“Our rich cultural heritage has helped us maintain our identity through the ages.” — Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam***

This research study seeks to explore the significance of embedding indigenous wisdom in teacher preparation as a means of nurturing cultural vibrancy and strengthening pedagogical roots. It examines the conceptual foundations of indigenous knowledge, its relevance in contemporary education, its alignment with holistic and sustainable educational goals, and practical strategies for integrating indigenous pedagogies within teacher education programmes. By emphasizing culturally responsive and contextually meaningful approaches, the chapter highlights the transformative potential of indigenous wisdom in preparing educators for the needs of diverse and evolving societies.

Review of Related Literature

To move further on the path of exploring about the research it's important to flashback on relevant literature related to it, in the same way in the present study reviewed literature collectively indicates that indigenous wisdom contributes significantly to holistic teacher preparation by fostering cultural awareness, sustainability, inclusivity, ethical understanding, and community participation. However, the literature also reveals certain gaps, including limited empirical studies on practical implementation, inadequate teacher training models for indigenous pedagogy, and insufficient institutional mechanisms for integrating local knowledge systems into mainstream teacher education curricula.

Few of the researches in the relevant area are as follows:

I Culturally responsive Pedagogy

- **Chang and Viesca (2022)** critically reviewed research on preparing teachers for culturally responsive pedagogy and highlighted that teacher preparation programmes often fail to fully address cultural inequities and social justice concerns. Their study emphasized reflective practice, community engagement, and culturally grounded pedagogies as essential for transformative teacher education.

II Research related to Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Teacher Education

- **Rajkumar (2024)** explored the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems into modern teacher education and observed that indigenous practices encourage experiential learning, ecological consciousness, ethical values, and community-oriented teaching. The study further noted that culturally rooted pedagogy strengthens inclusivity and enhances teachers' sensitivity toward diverse learners.

III Indigenous knowledge and School Education

- **Sagarika (2020)** discussed how NEP 2020 encourages the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in disciplines such as mathematics, philosophy, medicine, environmental conservation, agriculture, and arts. The study emphasized that indigenous knowledge helps preserve cultural heritage while promoting contextual and experiential learning among students.

IV Inclusive Teacher Preparation under NEP 2020

- **Sarkar and Yadav (2023)** observed that teacher education programmes must equip teachers to address socio-cultural diversity, equity, and inclusion through adaptive and contextual pedagogies.

V Indigenous Wisdom with Inclusive and Multilingual Education

- **Solano-Campos, Hopkins, and Quaynor (2018)** emphasized linguistically responsive teaching in preservice teacher education and argued that culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms require teachers who understand local cultural realities and communication patterns. Their review suggested that teacher education programmes should include culturally grounded teaching practices to support diverse learners effectively.

To be concluded the present study on *Embedding Indigenous Wisdom in Teacher Preparation: Nurturing Cultural Vibrancy and Pedagogical Roots* seeks to contribute to this emerging field by examining how indigenous knowledge can meaningfully enrich teacher education and strengthen culturally responsive pedagogical practices in contemporary educational contexts.

Objectives of the Study

- To explore the concept and significance of Indigenous Wisdom within the framework of Indian Knowledge Systems in contemporary teacher education.
- To examine the awareness and perceptions of prospective teachers regarding the integration of indigenous knowledge and cultural traditions in classroom practices.
- To identify ways of embedding Indigenous Wisdom in teacher preparation programmes, particularly in B.Ed. curriculum and pedagogical practices.
- To assess the impact of culturally rooted teaching approaches on the development of culturally responsive and socially responsible teachers.
- To suggest strategies for integrating Indigenous Wisdom into teacher education institutions to strengthen culturally relevant pedagogy.

Methodology adopted for the present study

Research Design

The present study adopted a **Mixed-Method Research Design** with a predominantly descriptive and experiential approach to explore the impact of integrating Indian arts and indigenous wisdom within Pre-Service Teacher Education. The study aimed to examine how art-integrated and culturally enriched experiential learning programmes contribute towards enhancing cultural awareness and self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching among prospective teachers. The research was conducted in alignment with the vision of the National Education Policy 2020 and the principles of the Indian Knowledge Systems framework, emphasizing preservation and promotion of India's cultural heritage through teacher education.

Population and Sample

The population of the study comprised prospective teachers enrolled in the B.Ed programme of an affiliated college in East Delhi Zone under Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University.

A sample of **100 trainee teachers** studying in the final semester of the B.Ed programme was selected for the study. The participants were selected using **purposive random sampling technique**, considering their active participation in Drama and Art in Education practical activities and exposure to culturally integrated learning experiences.

Sampling Technique

The study employed a **purposive random sampling technique**. The institution and participants were purposively selected because the trainee teachers were undergoing Art-Integrated Teacher Education practices. Within the selected group, participants were randomly included to ensure representation and minimize selection bias.

Phases of the Study

Phase I: Orientation and Experiential Learning Exposure

In the first phase, trainee teachers were oriented towards Indian cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge traditions through conduction of FDP for one week under the guidance of expertise from different relevant fields with emphasis on inclusion of various **visual, performing, and digital art forms** integrated within the “Drama and Art in Education” practical component of the B.Ed curriculum.

The experiential learning interventions included:

- Workshops on Indian Arts and Cultural Traditions
- Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs) related to Indian Knowledge Systems and Arts integration
- Educational Excursions and Heritage visits
- Cultural performances showcasing Indian cultural vibrancy
- Art-integrated classroom activities
- Creative and reflective participatory learning experiences

Phase II: Assessment of Impact

The second phase focused on assessing the impact of the experiential learning programmes on trainee teachers’:

- Cultural awareness and appreciation of Indian heritage
- Readiness for culturally responsive pedagogy
- Self-efficacy in culturally inclusive teaching practices

For this purpose, the following research tools were administered:

Self-Designed Cultural Arts Impact Questionnaire for Prospective Teachers

A self-constructed questionnaire was developed by the researcher to measure the impact of art-integrated and culturally enriched experiences on trainee teachers’ awareness, attitudes, and engagement with Indian cultural heritage and indigenous wisdom.

The questionnaire included items related to:

- Awareness of Indian cultural traditions
- Appreciation of indigenous knowledge systems
- Interest in art-integrated pedagogy
- Cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness
- Reflective understanding of cultural diversity

Self-Efficacy for Culturally Responsive Teaching Scale

The standardized scale titled **Self-Efficacy for Culturally Responsive Teaching (SECRT)** developed by Kwadwo K. Siwatu (2007) was used to assess the self-efficacy beliefs of trainee teachers regarding culturally responsive teaching practices.

The scale consisted of **40 items** measuring teachers' confidence in:

- Addressing diverse classroom needs
- Using culturally inclusive teaching methods
- Building culturally responsive classroom environments
- Promoting equitable participation among learners

Analysis and Interpretations

The present study was conducted in the context of the transformative vision of the National Education Policy 2020, which advocates the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), cultural heritage, and experiential learning into teacher education. The research aimed to examine the impact of integrating Indian arts and indigenous wisdom into Pre-Service Teacher Education on trainee teachers' cultural awareness and self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching.

The study adopted a purposive random sampling technique and included 100 prospective teachers enrolled in the final semester of the B.Ed programme in an affiliated college of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University. The research was conducted in two phases.

In Phase I, trainee teachers were exposed to experiential and art-integrated learning experiences through workshops, Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs), excursions, drama activities, performances, and cultural presentations rooted in Indian traditions and indigenous artistic practices. These activities enabled prospective teachers to engage actively with India's diverse cultural heritage through visual, performing, and digital arts.

Table 1.1 Schedule of Activities Planned under Phase I

S.No	Theme	Description	Analysis
1	FDP on the topic “Indigenous Wisdom in Modern Classrooms: The role of Indian knowledge Systems”	FDP was organized on the subthemes such as orientation on IKS and NEP 2020, workshop on Indian Painting styles such as Madhubani, Warli, Aipan art etc. zones from Northern to southern Zones of India , showcasing of Regional culture: Celebration of Indian Cultural vibrancy by teacher trainees, live demonstrations by regional artist	The findings indicated that exposure to Indian arts and indigenous cultural practices significantly enhanced the cultural awareness of trainee teachers.Participants demonstrated: • Greater appreciation for Indian traditions, folk arts, regional diversity, and

		on Sikri Art from, Classical Dance- Kathak, excursion to craft museum, Gandhi Darshan Smriti-Art Spectra Exhibition, Workshop on Art Integrated Learning with emphasis on useful products such as Lipan Art rangolis, Tie and Dye technique, Story creatures based on glass colors etc	heritage; • Increased understanding of indigenous knowledge systems and their educational relevance; and • Stronger emotional and intellectual connection with Indian cultural roots. This suggests that art-integrated pedagogical experiences can serve as an effective medium for preserving and transmitting cultural heritage within teacher education programmes. The findings align with the principles of NEP 2020, which emphasizes education rooted in “Indian ethos” while promoting global competencies.
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Phase II

Analysis of Cultural Arts Impact Questionnaire

Table 1.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Variable	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Cultural Awareness	4.28	0.56	High
Appreciation of Indian Arts	4.41	0.49	Very High
Respect for Diversity	4.19	0.61	High
Creative Engagement	4.35	0.52	Very High
Understanding of IKS	4.26	0.58	High

Interpretation

The mean scores above 4.0 indicate that prospective teachers perceived the arts-integrated interventions as highly effective. The comparatively low standard deviation values reflect consistency in participants' responses. The highest mean score was obtained for **Appreciation of Indian Arts (M = 4.41)**, indicating that workshops, performances, and cultural activities significantly enriched trainee teachers' understanding and appreciation of Indian cultural heritage.

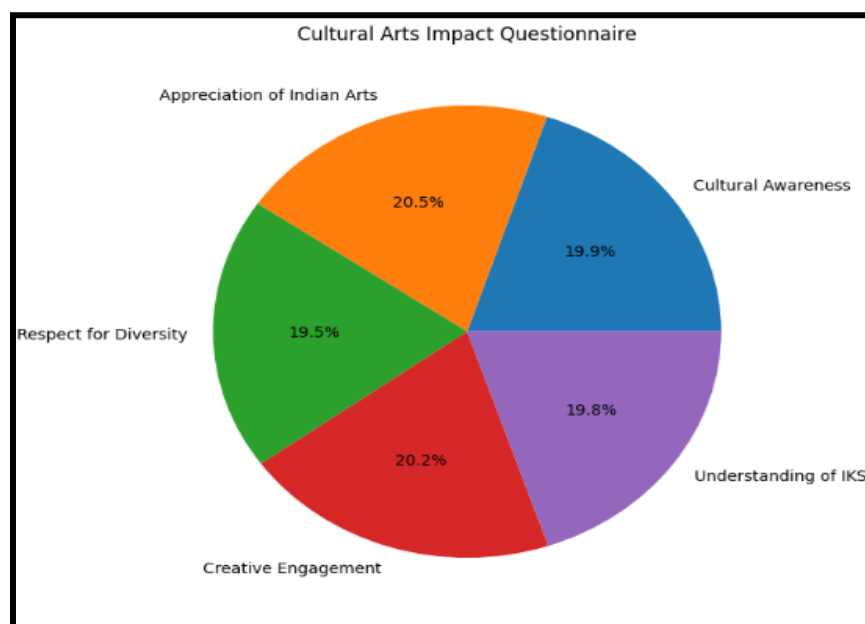


Figure 1.1 Analysis of Cultural Arts Impact Questionnaire

Analysis of Self-Efficacy for Culturally Responsive Teaching Scale (SECR)

Table 1.3 Pre-Test and Post-Test Statistical Analysis

Dimension	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Difference	Interpretation
Cultural Inclusiveness	2.98	4.11	+1.13	Significant Improvement
Classroom Sensitivity	3.04	4.20	+1.16	Significant Improvement
Inclusive Pedagogical Practices	2.91	4.05	+1.14	Significant Improvement
Confidence in Diverse Settings	3.10	4.24	+1.14	Significant Improvement

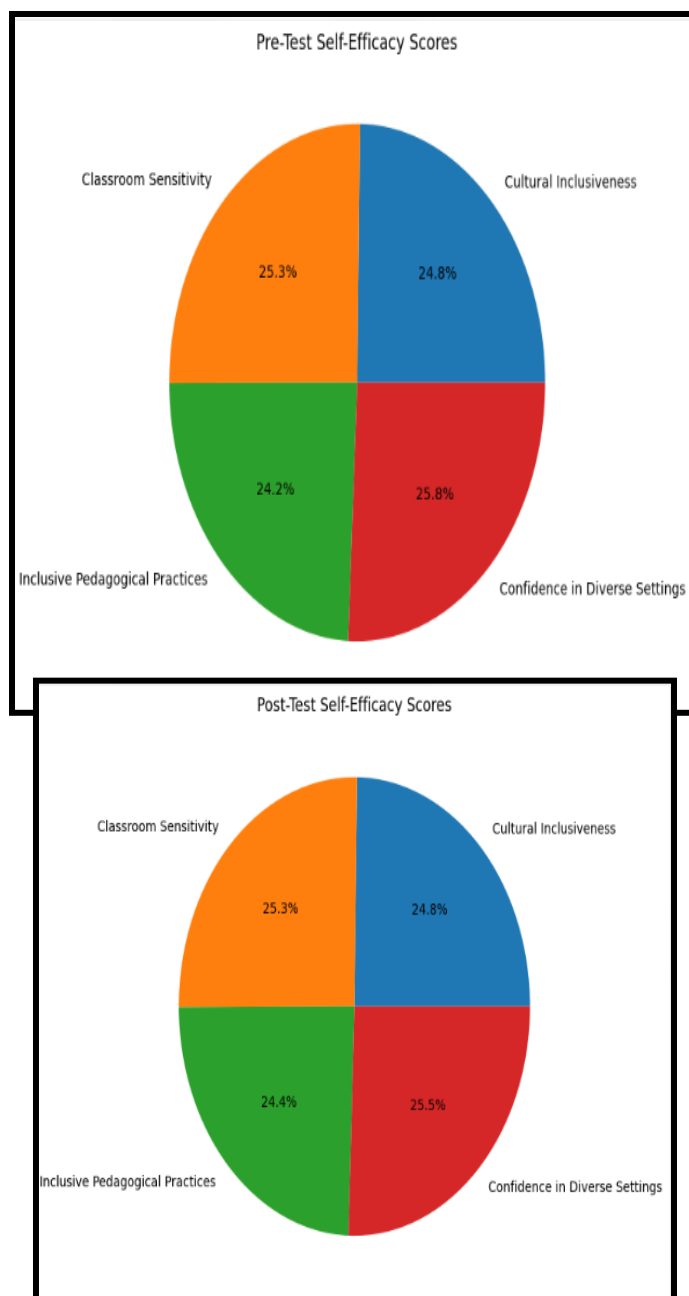


Figure 2. Pre-Test and Post-Test Self-Efficacy Scores

Conclusion on Analysis and Interpretation

The statistical findings strongly support the pedagogical significance of integrating Indian arts and indigenous wisdom into Pre-Service Teacher Education. The intervention:

- Enhanced trainee teachers' cultural consciousness,
- Improved their confidence for culturally responsive teaching,

- Fostered appreciation for Indian cultural heritage, and
- Promoted inclusive and reflective pedagogical practices.

The significant improvement in both questionnaire and self-efficacy scores confirms that art-integrated experiential learning can become an effective strategy for embedding Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) within teacher preparation programmes in alignment with the vision of National Education Policy 2020.

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