Cover Page

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KNOWLEDGE IN MOTION: CONTINUITY, RUPTURE, DISPERSAL, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF REVIVAL

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Abstract

This paper examines the long historical trajectory of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) through the interconnected processes of continuity, rupture, dispersal, and the emerging possibility of revival. It argues that while ancient India produced sophisticated advances in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, linguistics, philosophy, and spiritual disciplines, these achievements were gradually narrowed by linguistic exclusivity, caste-based restrictions, the fragility of oral transmission, and a declining culture of scientific openness. As internal constraints limited innovation, significant strands of IKS travelled outward into Persian, Arabic, and later European intellectual worlds, where they were preserved, adapted, and transformed. Colonial rediscoveries revealed how deeply India had become detached from parts of its own intellectual heritage, even as modern educational institutions created new opportunities for broader participation. The paper concludes that a meaningful revival remains a possibility rather than a completed achievement and depends on rebuilding the intellectual conditions that once sustained creative inquiry–openness, methodological rigor, inclusiveness, and institutional support. In this sense, IKS survives not only as a historical legacy but also as a dynamic potential shaped by contemporary choices.

I. Introduction

The seventh-century Syrian scholar-monk Severus Sebokht praised Indian knowledge, especially its methods of calculation and astronomy. Writing in 662 AD, he stated that Hindus had made great discoveries in astronomy and had developed a system of calculation using nine symbols that "cannot be adequately praised in words."[1] Modern historians have collected ample evidence that ancient India's achievements in mathematics and astronomy were known far beyond the subcontinent. Today historians largely agree that ancient India's achievements in many branches of knowledge, including mathematics and astronomy, were known far beyond the subcontinent. This dissemination of knowledge demonstrates that knowledge is like a seed. It sprouts in intellectually fertile soil, is replanted, bears fruit, and then the seeds of that fruit travel to other places, where they can take new forms. Studies of intellectual history reveal that Indian knowledge systems (IKS), which were deeply rooted in the subcontinent, were not static. They evolved and spread over time and space.

This is true of IKS, which flourished in many fields such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, linguistics, metallurgy, philosophy, and spiritual practices like yoga. However, today, on the question of the historical discovery and significance of Indian knowledge systems (IKS), Indian scholars are divided into two broad camps. The first group sees a tragic journey from "we had it" to "it's lost" arguing that colonial policies deliberately dismantled indigenous institutions and imposed a different kind of education system, leading to a kind of amnesia about their heritage and civilization. The second view, while acknowledging the richness of pre-modern IKS, emphasizes the internal causes of its subsequent stagnation and decline. A rigid and caste-based education system, an excessive emphasis on tradition and spiritual authority, a lack of empirical inquiry and experimentation, and a general reluctance to critically re-examine or disseminate indigenous knowledge. These scholars warn that romantic tales of a "lost golden age" can themselves become ideological

[1] Severus Sebokht, *cf.* A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India*, London, 1954. Sebokht's quote is opening quote in this book.

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tools that hinder serious, evidence-based research.[2] This study asks three interconnected questions - how IKS flourished over the past centuries; what internal limitations and external pressures weakened it; and how fragments of Indian knowledge spread and later resurfaced in different intellectual spaces. By tracking this journey, it aims to show that IKS remains a living legacy, shaped by language, power, caste boundaries, modes of interaction, and institutions, and that its recovery today must be based on clarity and openness rather than nostalgia.

Despite the historical fact that learning in ancient India often occurred through the guru-shishya tradition, opportunities for acquiring knowledge were limited for Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, and Shudras and women were generally excluded. The descriptions of such restrictions and obstacles in the *Manusmriti* and other texts confirm this.[3] Thus, knowledge was developed, but its scope was limited, restricting its widespread dissemination in society. But despite such limitations, classical IKS developed and achieved remarkable success through interactions between various schools of astronomy, mathematics, grammar, Ayurveda, and philosophy. Scholars such as Aryabhata, Varahamihira, and Bhaskara II performed precise astronomical calculations, and Ayurvedic practices developed through observation and commentary. Yoga often transcended religious boundaries, being practiced by Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and even some Sufi mystics in medieval India. While in the 17th century, in the north, Dara Shukoh was translating the Upanishads and writing Majma-ul-Bahrain to show the unity of Vedanta, Yoga and Sufism, another equally brilliant series of Indian knowledge systems was taking place on the Malabar coast. Between 1678 and 1693, the Dutch governor Hendrik van Rheede, acting not as a conqueror but as a respectful collaborator, worked with the local Ezhava physician Itti Achuden and three Konkani Brahmin Ayurvedic experts to produce the twelve-volume Hortus Malabaricus. Each plant was recorded with its Malayalam, Sanskrit, and Arabic-Malayalam names, its precise medicinal uses were drawn directly from the living oral and written traditions, and the descriptions were verified and signed by the Indian physicians themselves.[4] Just as Dara brought Sanskrit knowledge into Persian for wider dissemination, the Hortus team translated Kerala's botanical and medical knowledge into Latin, both projects driven by the same ancient Indian spirit that knowledge must transcend languages and communities to survive. It was the 17th century, and work in various intellectual fields still appeared to be based on the old Indian tradition.

II. Causes of Decline: Strengths Turning into Fragilities

It is a strange but true paradox that the decline of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) did not occur suddenly due to external forces alone. Rather, it also happened gradually because of the very characteristics that had once made IKS so robust and enduring. The same qualities that initially gave it remarkable depth, precision, and continuity later became impediments. They made it difficult to translate knowledge, share it widely, or update it in accordance with changing times. Like a tall tree deeply rooted in rigid soil, IKS grew tall, but when circumstances changed, it lacked the broad base

[2] Amit Chaudhary, "Indian Knowledge Systems: From Possession to Absence - Memory, Loss, and the Question of Continuity", *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, Vol. 13, No. 12(1), 2024, pp. 182-186 See for we "had but lost" debate on IKS and its achievements.

[3] *Manusmriti*, trans. Georg Buhler, *The Laws of Manu*, Vol. 25 of *Sacred Books of the East*, Oxford, 1886, pp. 401, 142, 427. Various chapters show the rules that who could study or be taught Vedic learning etc.

[4] Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, New Delhi, 1983, pp. 126-132; Supriya Gandhi, *The Emperor Who Never Was: Dara Shukoh in Mughal India*, Harvard, 2020, pp. 178-192 for Dara Shukoh's comparative work and inter-tradition dialogue, and K. S. Manilal (ed. & trans.), *Hortus Malabaricus*, 12 vols., Thiruvananthapuram, 2003-2017; also "Hortus Malabaricus: A Unique 17th Century Botanical Treatise on Indian Medicinal Plants", *Current Science*, 2017, vol. 112(7), pp. 1525-1533 for the botanical work by Dutch governor Hendrik van Rheede.

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necessary for adaptation. An analysis of a few examples related to the language of knowledge and its modes of dissemination points to the unintended consequences of this decline.

First, consider language and translation. Sanskrit evolved into a sophisticated scientific language and became established as the sole repository of diverse knowledge. However, this sophistication and completeness led to an unintended rigidity in linguistic rules. As A.L. Basham points out, the authoritative codification of the language prevented its natural simplification and wider dissemination. Consequently, because this medium of knowledge – the Sanskrit language –remained confined to a small social circle.[5] Simultaneously, the lack of widespread translation and dissemination of manuscripts was another reason. To understand the significance of this, India can be compared to medieval Europe and the Islamic world. We know that in 8th-13th century Arabia, knowledge and science flourished rapidly. Why? Because texts from languages including Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, and Persian were translated into Arabic on a massive scale. Baghdad's Bayt al-Hikma (House of Wisdom) was the centre of this, functioning as a large government library, translation bureau, and research academy. The availability of these translations made it possible to institutionalize learning and experimentation.

The story in Europe was different. Like Sanskrit in India, Latin was the primary language of scholars. However, European learning was never confined solely to Latin. From the beginning, it was a multilingual tradition. Scholars constantly worked with Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew sources through translations and thus knowledge could not confine to monasteries. It entered university curricula and spread through copied manuscripts.[6] Then, in the 15th century, the movable-type printing press changed everything. It made books much cheaper and more readily available. Most importantly, it allowed scholars to write and share new ideas not only in Latin but increasingly in vernacular languages like English, French, and German. This widespread, inexpensive dissemination of knowledge in people's own languages was crucial for the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution[7] in medieval Europe and still tradition continued.

In India, there was no such large-scale translation of Sanskrit works into common regional languages. The way Maharshi Swami Dayanand translated and commented on the *Rigveda* in his *Rigveda Bhashya*, from Vedic Sanskrit to Hindi, is a good example of translation and discourse in regional languages and made the Vedas accessible for the first time to people who did not know Sanskrit.[8] All this means that Europe's progress was not due to having a single homogeneous society and a single language. It was because anyone trained in Latin could access essential texts since it was not solely preserved orally.

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[5] A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1986, p. 391 and A.B. Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama in Its Origin, Development, Theory and Practice*, Oxford University Press, 1924, pp. 72-75,85-88,336. The clear social stratification evident in Kalidasa's Gupta-era plays, where kings and Brahmins speak Sanskrit while women and commoners speak Prakrit, suggests that Sanskrit had become a tool of elite power rather than a means of intellectual democratization.

[6] Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, 2004. pp. 15-42, and Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (ed.), *A History of the University in Europe*, Vol. I: *Universities in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 220-235, 320-345. Both discuss respectively how European intellectuals operated within multiple language communities and how Aristotelian and Arabic scientific texts formed the core of the trivium and quadrivium in medieval universities.

[7] Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*, London, 1976, pp. 248-290; Francoise Waquet, *Latin, or the Empire of a Sign: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, London, 2001, pp. 85-124 discuss the shift from Latin to vernacular languages in printed works.

[8] Kenneth W. Jones. *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-Century Punjab*, California, 1976. he explains that Swami Dayananda's use of Hindi, new interpretations challenged the traditional Brahmanical monopoly.

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Another weakness was in the caste-based Gurukul system. This model fostered depth but not scale. Learning was a hereditary privilege, guarded by those who claimed authority over the scriptures. It became a system where the tradition of debate was strong, but this debate took place within defined boundaries; curiosity that went beyond these boundaries was discouraged.[9] On the other hand, the oral repository of knowledge and its limited dissemination undoubtedly preserved its continuity, but this very method later became a cause for the weakening of the knowledge tradition. This system safeguarded knowledge as a unique form of wealth that could not be stolen, for it resided solely in the guru's memory and was granted only to those of eligible caste. Thus, transmission was tightly regulated by the teacher's discretion and the student's social pedigree.[10] Alberuni sheds some light on this approach. In the eleventh century, while praising ancient Indian knowledge, he observed that the "scholars of the Hindu people" were hesitant to share knowledge outside their caste and with foreigners. He said that "their pride prevented them," and lamented that "later generations" had "mixed pearls with shells," and for him, this amounted to a disregard for the rules of scientific inquiry.[11] This critical assessment suggests that while talent persisted – albeit limited.

Further on, this pattern continued into the colonial period. When European Orientalists searched for manuscripts and their local experts in 19th-century Bengal, they found them primarily among the Brahmin caste, and only a select few pundits collaborated with the Europeans; many refused. They denied European investigators access to the texts because they considered knowledge their hereditary privilege.[12] The first printed Indian book appeared in Tamil in 1578 AD, nearly two centuries before the earliest known Sanskrit printing around 1778 AD. Long before the controversy over the "greased cartridges" of 1857, during the 1830 – 40, the fear of "animal fat in the ink" was the given cause from printing even Sanskrit grammar books, let alone religious texts. Even many orthodox Brahmins would not touch paper or read printed books on religious grounds.[13] Clearly, without continuous writing, translation, and printing, many practical and regional traditions remained fragile. Another consequence was the growing gap between text and practice. This was not the disappearance of knowledge, but in its deliberate restriction, which excluded large social groups – especially lower castes and non-Brahmins – from higher learning until modern institutions gradually broadened participation. Artisans, doctors, metalworkers, and sailors continuously innovated, but their practical knowledge rarely influenced the traditional texts when religious authority dominated the intellectual sphere.[14]

A knowledge system that keeps new learners out will, in the end, also block fresh ideas and new directions of exploration. Yet growing knowledge always needs those new voices and questions. Without them, even the richest

[9] Romila Thapar, "The Image of the Barbarian in Early India" reprinted in *Cultural Pasts: Essays in Early Indian History*, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 157-158.

[10] Jean Russell, *The Loss of Knowledge: Orality, Literacy and the Disruption of Memory in India, 1750-1900*, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 145-148. Discussions on vulnerability of oral traditions when institutions decline.

[11] Alberuni, *Alberuni's India*, trans. Edward Sachau, 1910, Vol. I, pp. 22-25. See for praises of Indian science and knowledge and some early critique of guarded scholarly culture.

[12] Cristina Pecchia, "Scholarly Personae in Colonial South Asia: Cultural Brokers and their Antagonists" in *Medieval Worlds*, no. 20, 2024, pp. 126-145.

[13] A.K. Priolkar, *The Printing Press in India: Its Beginnings and Early Development*, Bombay, 1958, pp. 9, 53 the first moving type book was *Thambiran Vanakkam* in Tamil, beginning of Devanagari font for Sanskrit in 1778-79 first at Serampore, Bengal; pp. 34-35 Bhagavad-Gita was printed on 'wooden' press at Miraj in 1805; pp. 128-129 for Brahman's apprehension about ink and not touching paper books.

[14] Sheldon Pollock, "The Theory of Practice and the Practice of Theory in Indian Intellectual History", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1985, vol. 105(3), pp. 515-516.

Cover Page

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tradition slowly stops moving forward. The structures that had preserved precision had also narrowed participation. Knowledge did not vanish; it cracked and dispersed – ready to survive elsewhere.

III. Dispersal and Transformation of Indian Knowledge Traditions

A prime example of this diffusion is the global journey of Indian mathematics and astronomy. In the great translation centres of Baghdad, Indian astronomy and mathematics entered a multicultural scientific world that was ready to compare, adapt, and innovate. The Indian numerals and decimal system, which had been praised by Severus Sebokht in the seventh century, spread westward through Islamic scholars. When Indian numerals reached Europe via Arabic channels, they transformed European commerce and calculation. In this sense, the seeds of Indian mathematics bore their best fruit not at home, but abroad, in contexts over which India itself had no control. This process was also evident in astronomy. Al-Khwarizmi and later Islamic astronomers combined Greek, Persian, and Indian elements to refine planetary models. But in India, astronomical traditions became more reliant on inherited rules than on fresh observation.[15] Transmission outward led to innovation; confinement inward led to stagnation. Ayurveda followed a similar pattern. Its written tradition became increasingly conservative, based on memorized verses rather than empirical updates. But at the beginning of the modern period, European scholars and botanists documented Indian plant knowledge, reframing it through European classification frameworks. Hendrik van Rheede's *Hortus Malabaricus* (17th century) preserved a vast collection of botanical knowledge that might otherwise have remained inaccessible.[16] Ironically, while local scholars were supposedly protecting their manuscripts by concealing them, European institutions were cataloguing them, printing them, and disseminating them worldwide.

In this context, the history of scripts and languages becomes crucial. India's classical knowledge relied not only on Sanskrit but also on regional languages like Prakrit and Pali, which at one time disseminated philosophical, medical, and administrative ideas to a very broad social base. However, over the centuries, these languages lost their literary prominence, their manuscripts deteriorated, and their scripts were forgotten. The most striking case is that of Ashoka's inscriptions. Written in regional Prakrit and carved across the subcontinent, they remained unread for nearly two thousand years because Brahmi had disappeared from public memory. When James Prinsep deciphered Brahmi in the 1830s, it was not a revival but a rediscovery. India heard its own ancient voice through a foreign scholar.[17] His achievement revealed how deeply linguistic decline had separated Indians from large parts of their intellectual heritage. Knowledge had not vanished; it had simply slipped out of reach.

This rediscovery also exposed the social limits of knowledge transmission. For centuries, Brahmi and Prakrit fell outside elite scholarly interest and were rarely preserved within classical or religious traditions. Their disappearance meant that major inscriptions linked to political and moral history became inaccessible to most people. When colonial epigraphists revived these scripts, knowledge moved from hereditary custodians into museums, printed editions and public translations.

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[15] David Pingree, *Indian Astronomy in the Medieval Period*, Calcutta, 1979, pp. 45-50 his astronomical tables were based directly on Indian *Siddhanta* astronomy. See also, George Saliba, *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance*, Cambridge, 2007, pp. 73-85, 131-145 for Islamic models synthesised Greek, Indian, and Persian elements.

[16] K. S. Manilal, (ed. and trans.), *Hortus Malabaricus*, 12 vols., Thiruvananthapuram, 2003-2017 and "Hortus Malabaricus: A Unique 17th Century Botanical Treatise on Indian Medicinal Plants", *Current Science*, 112, no. 7, 2017, pp. 1525-1533.

[17] James Prinsep, *Essays on Indian Antiquities, Historic, Numismatic and Palaeographic*, London, 1838, pp. 5-15. See also Richard Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Other Indo-Aryan Languages*, Oxford, 1998, pp. 86-93 for loss of Brahmi literacy and the subsequent rediscovery.

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Yet these gains also highlighted long-standing internal constraints. Many traditional scholars refused to share manuscripts or participate in cataloguing projects, preferring to keep texts within family lineages. Their reluctance echoed the intellectual insularity that al-Biruni had observed centuries earlier, when he noted that access to higher knowledge was often guarded and withheld from outsiders.[18] Knowledge thus continued to move outward more easily than it moved across caste boundaries within India. Knowledge survived because it moved.

IV. Revival and Reconstitution in the Modern Period

Yet dispersal was not merely a loss; it also created new pathways for survival. As Indian texts were translated into English, German and French, they entered global academic debates. IKS documented and reinterpreted by modern scholars, reached to new audiences. Swami Vivekananda's visit to USA 1893 and return became a moment of national self-confidence. It suggested that Indian knowledge, long dismissed under colonial rule, could re-enter global conversations with dignity.[19] These journeys often simplified or altered Indian traditions, yet they ensured their visibility in a rapidly globalizing world. The paradox of the early modern and colonial period is that the more knowledge was guarded within India – restricted by caste, confined to manuscripts, and locked in forgotten scripts – the more freely it circulated abroad, where it found new intellectual soil. Through this outward movement and later colonial rediscovery, many fragments returned in transformed ways, laying the groundwork for the twentieth-century revival.

The modern revival of Indian knowledge systems is not a completed reality but an evolving possibility. What we see today are only the initial stages of recovery–stages shaped by rediscovery, reinterpretation, and global interest, rather than a full restoration of intellectual vitality. Fragments of ancient knowledge resurfaced through colonial scholarship, Orientalist philology, missionary printing, museum catalogues, and early scientific institutions; yet these reflected the visibility of the past, not the revival of a living tradition. Colonial philology played a significant but limited role in this process. European Scholars like Max Muller, James Prinsep and many other edited, translated, and printed Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit texts, making them visible again to the modern world, but visibility alone was not renewal. These works were largely intended for European academic audiences and colonial administrators.[20] While the texts were recovered, the guru-shishya traditions, debating assemblies, and institutional ecosystems that could have breathed new life into them had already been severely weakened or destroyed. Integrating these texts into modern educational systems posed a profound challenge – not as relics, but as resources for thinking, questioning, and generating new knowledge.

[18] Alberuni, *Alberuni's India*, trans. Edward Sachau, 1910, Vol. I, pp. 22-25; Cristina Pecchia, "Scholarly Personae in Colonial South Asia: Cultural Brokers and their Antagonists," *Medieval Worlds*, no. 20, 2024, pp. 126-45 observations are based on her studies on 19th-century Bengal.

[19] Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1947, pp. xxxiii-xli; Ruth Harris, *Guru to the World: The Life and Legacy of Vivekananda*, Cambridge, 2022; Christopher Isherwood, *Vivekananda: A Biography*, New York, 1965 for Western reception; Amiya P. Sen, *Swami Vivekananda*, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 56-73, for Indian responses and nationalist interpretations.

[20] Max Muller, *India: What Can It Teach Us*, London, 1883, pp. 7-18. Especially the lecture "On the Truthful Character of the Hindus", where Muller stresses the need to study Sanskrit texts scientifically; Sheldon Pollock, "The Death of Sanskrit", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 43, no. 2, 2001, pp. 392-426, and pp. 410-415 on the paradox of colonial recovery without institutional renewal.

Cover Page

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The creation of modern educational institutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries opened new possibilities for the revival of Indian Knowledge Systems by bringing classical learning to groups long excluded from it.[21] Universities enabled people outside the upper castes–including women, lower-caste scholars, and non-specialists–to study Sanskrit literature, Ayurvedic theory, philosophical treatises, and astronomical texts. This democratization weakened older barriers, yet institutional access alone did not amount to revival. For revival to occur, inherited traditions needed to be approached with critical reasoning, methodological rigor, and openness to innovation. Ayurvedic education expanded into regulated university systems; Yoga, reinterpreted by modern teachers such as Vivekananda and later Krishnamacharya, became a global discipline.[22] Sanskrit re-entered public life through philology, digital archives, and cultural movements. These developments revitalized important fragments of IKS, but they did not restore the integrated system that once linked theory, practice, and debate. They reveal how selected elements can flourish while substantial portions of the tradition remain dormant or insufficiently transformed.[23]

The modern revival also gained momentum from global scientific interest. The Jantar Mantar 5 observatories built by Jai Singh II during 1724 to 1737, are evidence that he was bringing together the best elements of European, Persian, and Indian systems to revive the Indian astronomical tradition. This is a fine example of knowledge "returning in new forms."[24] And this work was being done at a time when the colonial power was establishing its roots in India. This shows that the production of knowledge had not completely ceased, but rather, it represented a final and significant attempt at indigenous modernity. Indian contributions to mathematics, linguistics, philosophy, and physics re-entered international debate, and the recognition of Satyendra Nath Bose's work in quantum theory – commemorated in 1946 when the term "Boson" was coined – symbolized India's intellectual reappearance on the world scientific stage.[25] Rising interest in holistic medicine, environmental science, and meditation created further openings for classical Indian ideas, though often through reinterpretations shaped by modern concerns. For these reasons, revival today must be seen as a process still in formation rather than a completed achievement. Sustained renewal requires commitments opposite to those that once produced decline: openness to diverse learners, translation into accessible languages, research-oriented institutions, and the willingness to confront exclusionary structures that restricted participation in the past. Only through such conditions can India cultivate an intellectual landscape in which its ancient knowledge traditions grow again–not as relics of a lost age, but as active resources for contemporary inquiry.

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[21] Dharampal, *The Beautiful Tree: Indigenous Indian Education in the Eighteenth Century*, reprint Goa, 2000, pp. 1-84 and Appendices. Bengal/Punjab reports showing widespread village schools with significant participation from Shudra and lower-caste students in elementary education, often forming most of the enrolment while acknowledging restrictions on advanced Vedic/Sanskrit learning.

[22] K. Ramachandra Rao, *Ayurveda: Its Philosophy and Practice,* Bangalore, 1962, pp. 38-45 shows during the colonial period, the education and practice of Ayurveda was deliberately weakened and traditional *Vaidya* families were economically and socially marginalized. see also V. Sujatha, "Social Science Perspectives on Traditional Medicine in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 45, no. 18, 2010, pp. 36-43, 38-40 highlights both the expansion of Ayurvedic education and the persistent gap between classical theory and contemporary clinical research.

[23] Swami Vivekananda, *Raja Yoga*, New York, 1896, Preface, pp. vii-xiii; N. E. Sjoman, *The Yoga Tradition of the Mysore Palace*, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 1-25, 63-78. Mark Singleton, *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice*, Oxford, 2010, pp. 3-18, 81-124 and Elizabeth De Michelis, *A History of Modern Yoga: Patanjali and Western Esotericism*, Continuum, 2004, pp. 178-207.

[24] S. R. Sarma, *Jantar Mantar: The Astronomical Observatories of Jai Singh*, Varanasi, 2018.

[25] Deepak Kumar, *Science and the Raj: 1857-1905*, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 180-185. By research of Bose in physics he broke the colonial mindset, and this naming convention elevated India from being a consumer of knowledge to achieving a new international status as a producer of knowledge.

Cover Page

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V. Conclusion

The long journey of Indian Knowledge Systems reveals patterns far more complex than simple tales of past glory or sudden decline. IKS flourished through remarkable advances in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, linguistics, philosophy, and spiritual disciplines. Numerous foreign observers–such as the 7th-century Syrian monk Severus Sebokht, the 11th-century Central Asian scholar Al-Biruni, and the 17th-century Dutch governor Hendrik van Reede–testified to their sophistication. Yet this brilliance was gradually weakened by the very structures that once sustained it: linguistic exclusivity, caste-based access, the erosion of scientific rigor, the fragility of oral transmission, and an intellectual culture increasingly closed to dialogue. The decline, therefore, was not a sudden collapse but a slow contraction of participation and inquiry. At the same time, decline did not mean disappearance. In the Middle Ages, Indian knowledge was preserved, adapted, and transformed in Persian, Arabic, and later European intellectual worlds. Colonial rediscoveries in the modern period further revealed how deeply India had become disconnected from parts of its own intellectual heritage. As internal conditions limited innovation, the fruits and seeds of IKS continued to travel outward; this dispersion, in many ways, ensured its survival. Yet the modern revival is best understood as a possibility, not a complete achievement. Revival requires more than rediscovery or global enthusiasm; it requires rebuilding the intellectual conditions that once allowed knowledge to flourish–openness, methodological rigor, inclusiveness, and institutional support.

If the past teaches anything, it is that knowledge declines when it becomes exclusive and isolated, and it flourishes when it is shared and questioned. This is how knowledge evolves. The challenge for contemporary India is therefore not to imitate the past but to learn from its failures and revive its strengths. Revival is possible only if historical mistakes are consciously avoided: confining learning to narrow social or linguistic groups, resisting translation and dialogue, and hesitating to engage with new forms of knowledge. To rebuild IKS as a living tradition, India must create environments where classical thought can interact with modern science, where ancient texts are accessible to all in their own languages, and where questioning is valued more than uncritical reverence. In this sense, the future of Indian Knowledge Systems is not predetermined; it depends on intellectual choices–openness, inclusiveness, and critical thinking. Only then can the dormant seeds of Indian knowledge once again find fertile ground, not as relics of the past, but as dynamic resources for the world of today.