

## Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems and Social Entrepreneurship: Bridging Tradition with Innovation

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### Abstract

*This paper is a conceptual integration of Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) with social entrepreneurship, where it is positioned ancient Indian Philosophical wisdom as a workable and ethical foundation for today's contemporary social enterprise practice. Today's social entrepreneurship literature mainly comes from Western economic and managerial thinking that gives the most priority to market efficiency, scalability and measurable impact. Such approaches often do not have strong ethical roots or cultural understanding. In this paper this gap is addressed. The study is based on qualitative, conceptual and interpretive methodology to explore traditional Indian philosophical writings, native ethical ideas, and current scholarly studies. Based on key the Indian Knowledge Systems concepts such as Dharma (Moral Duty), Karma (Accountability of action), Seva (Selfless Service), Loksangraph (Welfare of all), Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness) and trusteeship, the paper redefines social entrepreneurship as a practice rooted in tradition while open to innovation. It creates new conceptual models that show how ethical awareness, community centric leadership and ecological balance can be carefully built into the design, management, and innovation of social enterprises. The study helps advance social entrepreneurship theory by presenting a non western way of understanding knowledge that naturally brings together the ethics, sustainability and collective well being. It also strengthens indigenous knowledge studies by reshaping Indian Knowledge Systems as applied, contemporary and scalable framework instead of viewing them only as philosophical or cultural objects. This paper concludes that IKS based social entrepreneurship provides a holistic and sustainable alternative to the market centric models and is important for management education, policy formulation and inclusive development in India as well as globally.*

**Keywords:** Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), Social Entrepreneurship, Dharma, Seva, Lokasangraha, Ethical Leadership, Social Innovation, Sustainable Development

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Study

The present business environment is now immediately transforming and aiming to include social responsibility, ethical governance, and ethical management rather than only financial results. Traditional profit driven approaches, during support to the industrial expansion, have contributed significantly to social inequality, environmental degradation and the social sidelining of vulnerable groups. In response to that now social entrepreneurship has become a most purposeful model combines innovation, operational efficient

and entrepreneurship discipline to address the societal challenges such as poverty, unemployment, gender disparities and environmental stress while maintaining financial sustainability. (Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010). This study explains how these social entrepreneurship as modern practices of current time shows that IKS provides the culturally rooted, ethically grounded and contextually relevant foundations as socially responsible enterprise. So by interpreting Indian Classical wisdom through contemporary entrepreneurial practices, study reveals that historical insights can effectively give sustainable modern solutions for complex social changes.

(Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010; Smith, 2012; Escobar, 2018).

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

2.1 To study the Indigenous Indian Knowledge (ILS) and their relevance to contemporary Social Entrepreneurship.

2.2 To analyze dominant Western models of Social Entrepreneurship and to study their ethical, cultural and contextual limitations particularly in the Indian Socio economic environment.

2.3 To explore the core concepts of IKS as Dharma, Karma, Seva and Loksangraha, Aparigraha and Trusteeship as ethical and operational principles for social enterprise development.

2.4 To develop models that integrates Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems with Social entrepreneurship.

2.5 To reinterpret social entrepreneurship is traditionally rooted also innovation oriented and grounded in ethical consciousness, community welfare and sustainability.

2.6 To establish Indigenous Indian Knowledge System as scalable frameworks, rather than philosophical or cultural constructs in the domain of entrepreneurship and social innovation.

2.7 To assess the implications of IKS based social entrepreneurship for management education, policy formulation and inclusive development in India.

## 3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study establishes Indian Knowledge System is only practical and ethical foundation for contemporary social entrepreneurship. Also it shows a major gap in existing literature over western market centric models and offering them Indigenous, culture rooted and ethical based perspective.

This research contribute in theoretical way by integrating Indian Philosophy such as Dharma, Karma, Seva, Loksangraha and trusteeship into social entrepreneurship models. Also such practices as more embedded with ethics within entrepreneurship practice. Thereby, IKS repositions

Indian Knowledge traditions as practical and adaptable frameworks rather than pure philosophy.

This study is providing significance to social entrepreneurs by providing them important information for sustainable, community centric and mission driven enterprise design. Also this supports NEP 2020 objectives and value based entrepreneurship development.

Overall significance of the study is holistic and sustainable alternative to profit centric entrepreneurship models and contributes for over all development in India and other countries.

## 4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 4.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

The critical review of literature related to Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems and Social Entrepreneurship is to identify the gap and to justify the present study. The literature review examines that evolution of Social Entrepreneurship theory is dominant on western frameworks, indigenous knowledge systems and Indian philosophical contributions to ethics, sustainability and social innovation. By studying various disciplines it reviews that a strong theoretical foundation for integrating Indian Knowledge Systems into social entrepreneurship. (Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010) (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Hiriyanna, 2009; Dasgupta, 2009) (Sen, 1999; Schumacher, 1973; Elkington, 1997) (Smith, 2012; Escobar, 2018)

### 4.2 Evolution of Social Entrepreneurship

The Social Entrepreneurship concept came into academic in late twentieth century, although social oriented enterprise were existing in various types for centuries ago. Early scholarly work has defined social entrepreneurship by distinguishing it from traditional entrepreneurship and non as a non profit activity. Dees (1998). Social entrepreneurs are termed as change agents who were adopting innovative approaches to create social value, following mission driven leadership and accountability to beneficiaries. This defines the central role of innovation and entrepreneurial behavior in addressing social problems. (Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010)

Academic scholars expended the concept to include hybrid organizational forms that combine social objectives with commercial activities. (*Mair and Marti (2006)*) They conceptualized the social entrepreneurship as a process of identifying and exploiting opportunities to create social value by combining resources in new ways. This has given new opportunity, recognition, resource mobilization and innovation with new integration of social enterprises with social and institutional context (*Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010*)

With change is time, research in social entrepreneurship diversified into impact measurement, scaling strategies, social finance and hybrid governance structures. Scholars also studies and concluded that how social enterprises balances social missions with financial sustainability. While review of literature contributed to legal and professionalization of the field, also this study further reinforced a strong reliance on market based logic and managerial frameworks which are derived from main entrepreneurship theories. (*Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010*) (*Sen, 1999; Schumacher, 1973; Elkington, 1997*)

### 4.3 Dominant Western Models of Social Entrepreneurship

Most of the present contemporary social entrepreneurship theories are based on Western Economic thoughts and Western Management practiced. The models derived from these theories and most based on efficient, scalability, innovation and measurable outcomes. Market mechanism are viewed as essential tools for delivering social impact and success is often assessed through quantitative indices as number of beneficiaries, revenue growth and cost efficiency. (*Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010*)

Western models typically emphasize:

- Individual agency and heroic entrepreneurship
- Opportunity recognition driven by market gaps
- Growth and scalability as indicators of success
- External accountability through metrics and reporting

These approaches have facilitated the growth of social enterprises and attracted investment. The focus of scalability leads to standardized solution

by ignoring local cultural contexts. Same way, excessive reliance on performance metrics may encourage short term results at the expense of long term social transformation.

### 4.4 Critiques of Western Social Entrepreneurship Frameworks

Western social entrepreneurship models due to their limited ethical and cultural depth prioritize financial performance over social objectives due to investor pressure or competitive market dynamics. Scholar study proved that when social value creation is subordinated to market logic, the transformative potential of social entrepreneurship is weakened. (*Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010*)

Another critique related to treatment of ethics as external or regulatory concern rather than an intrinsic guiding principle. In many western frameworks, ethics is regarded as compliance mechanisms, governance structures and impacting audits. This approach is different with philosophical traditions that can be viewed as ethical consciousness as integral to decision making and leadership.

Further, these western models mainly assume universality, overlooking indigenous worldview and non western theories of knowledge. And this created the challenges when such models are applied in culturally diverse societies. The lack of spiritual, moral and community centered perspectives limits the ability of western frameworks to address deep rooted social and ecological issue, especially in developing countries (*Smith, 2012; Escobar.2018*)

### 4.5 Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Management and Sustainability

Indigenous Knowledge Systems have gain much more attention in sustainability studies, development economics and environmental governance. *Berkes (2012)* This defines Indigenous Knowledge as cumulative body of knowledge, prices and beliefs developed by various communities through their long term interaction with their existing environment. These systems mostly believe in intergenerational responsibility, collective well-being and harmony in nature. (*Sen,*

1999; Schumacher, 1973; Elkington, 1997) (Smith, 2012; Escobar, 2018)

In Management research and studies, this indigenous knowledge is popularly renowned as source of alternative governance models, ethical frameworks and sustainable practices. However modern management theories which are more focused on efficiency and completion. An indigenous system prioritizes balance, resilience and relational accountability. And these characteristics align with contemporary concerns about sustainable development and ethical leadership. (Sen, 1999; Schumacher, 1973; Elkington, 1997) (Smith, 2012; Escobar, 2018)

However, indigenous knowledge as now considered as peripheral or supplementary rather than foundational. In business education, these indigenous knowledge theories are mostly confined to elective courses or cultural studies rather than being integrated into core theories on entrepreneurship and management. (Smith, 2012; Escobar, 2018)

#### 4.6 Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS): Conceptual Foundations

Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems represent one of the most comprehensive and philosophically rich knowledge traditions in the world. Indian philosophy is not merely speculative or metaphysical; it offers applied wisdom for social organization, governance, and economic life. Central to IKS is the integration of ethics, spirituality, and material activity. (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Hirianna, 2009; Dasgupta, 2009) (Smith, 2012; Escobar, 2018)

Key concepts relevant to social entrepreneurship include: (Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010)

- Dharma: Moral duty and righteous conduct that ensures social order (Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998)
- Karma: Accountability for actions and their long-term consequences (Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998)
- Lokasangraha: Welfare and upliftment of society as a whole (Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998)

- Seva: Selfless service to the society (Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998)
- Aparigraha: Non-possessiveness and restraint in consumption

These principles suggest that economic activity should be for social well being than individual accumulation. In Western frameworks ethics are separated from economics, while IKS integrates moral values for direct decision making process (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Hirianna, 2009; Dasgupta, 2009)

#### 4.7 Indian Philosophical Texts and Applied Wisdom

Indian philosophy suggest rich heritage in ethical leadership and social responsibility. The Vedas emphasize Rta (Cosmic order, Universal Law, moral harmony) that governs both natural and social systems which are uni-important for balance and harmony. However Upanishads focuses on self awareness and inner discipline which suggest that ethical discipline begins with personal transformation.

The Shad – Darshan (Six orthodox Philosophical Schools) teaches systematic approach to logic, ethics and knowledge. Nyay emphasizes rational decision making, while Mimansa emphasizes on duty and disciplined action. The Bhagwat Gita presents the concepts of Selfless work (Nishkama Karma) i.e. detachment from personal gain which aligns with ethosc of social entrepreneurship. (Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010) (Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998)

The Itihas and Puranas depict the ethical and social principles through narratives and stories which emphasize duty, sacrifice and service oriented leadership. These all philosophies collectively provide practical guidance for organizing economic activity in socially responsible ways.

#### 4.8 Indian Thinkers on Ethics, Economy, and Society

Modern Indian thinkers have further discovered the importance of traditional wisdom in contemporary contexts. Mahatma Gandhi's concept of trusteeship redefined owner as a true moral responsibility

towards the society. Swami Vivekananda reinforced service to humanity as the highest form of spirituality practice, he concepts social service and self realization are interconnected.

According to Sri Arobindo, economic activity is a part of humanities evolutionary journey toward higher consciousness which further argues that material progress must be guided by spiritual values. Further studies on this, scholars like SK Chakraborty applied Vedantic principles to Management, he advocated value based leadership and ethical governance.

The many contributions states that Indian Intellectual traditions offers only coherent and applicable frameworks for understanding the entrepreneurship, leadership and social responsibility.

#### **4.9 Comparative Analysis: Western vs IKS-Based Perspectives**

This comparison highlights the philosophical depth and holistic orientation of IKS-based approaches.

The comparison between western and IKS approached highlights holistic and depth orientation toward the IKS approaches.

#### **4.10 Summary of Research Gap**

Lot of interest is identified about Indigenous knowledge and sustainability, and Indian Knowledge Systems remain under presented in social entrepreneurship theory and business education. Existing literature often treats IKS as philosophical or cultural rather than a practical framework for enterprise design and innovation.

##### **Key gaps identified include:**

- Integration of IKS with Social Entrepreneurship theory is limited.
- Absence of IKS-based conceptual models for social enterprises
- Minimal incorporation of Indian philosophical pedagogy in management education
- Overreliance on Western frameworks in entrepreneurship research

These gaps establish the need for the present study, which seeks to bridge Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems and social entrepreneurship in

a systematic and conceptual manner.

## **5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Research Methodology used for this study is conceptual and philosophical nature of the research. The study is not relying on empirical data collection or any other statistical analysis is used. It is based on qualitative, interpretive and theory building approach to explore the importance of Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the field of social entrepreneurship. The methodological design is aligned with the current studies objectives of developing conceptual frameworks and pedagogical models rather than testing hypotheses.

### **5.2 Research Design**

This research is adopting qualitative, conceptual and exploratory research design. The conceptual research design is appropriate when the objective of the research is to develop new theoretical frameworks for to reinterpret existing concepts through alternative theory of knowledge. The present study of social entrepreneurship is studied through the philosophical and ethical foundations of Indian Knowledge Systems.

The exploratory nature of the research allows flexibility in interpretation and integration of diverse philosophies, and does not impose predetermined variables or models. The study brings out the hidden principles that can inform social entrepreneurship theory and practice. This analytical approach helps in meaningful engagement with classical Indian theories, which allows their concepts to be translated into current entrepreneurial theories.

### **5.3 Nature of the Study**

The study is based on theory rather than observation or experiments. These add to academic discussion by presenting original conceptual models that bridge indigenous wisdom and modern entrepreneurship. This approach is reliable and commonly accepted in doctoral level research in all the disciplines as Philosophy, management theory, sustainability studies and indigenous studies.

The main aim of this study is integration of IKS within mainstream entrepreneurship literature. By organizing these philosophical ideas, concepts and converted them into usable models and frameworks. Thus, this research expands the conceptual understanding of social entrepreneurship.

## 5.4 Sources of Data

This secondary data based study that includes:

- Primary Philosophical Texts
- Vedas and Upanishads
- Bhagavad Gita
- Shad-Darshan texts (Nyaya, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, Vedanta, Vaisheshika)
- Classical Commentaries and Interpretations
- Works of S. Radhakrishnan
- Sri Aurobindo
- Swami Vivekananda
- Contemporary Academic Literature
- Peer-reviewed journals on social entrepreneurship and sustainability Books on indigenous knowledge systems and management ethics Policy and Education Documents
- National Education Policy (NEP 2020)
- Indian Knowledge Systems mission reports

The sources provides both strong philosophical foundations and current relevance

## 5.5 Analytical Techniques

The study adopts multiple qualitative methods for analysis to ensure accuracy and clarity in defining research objectives

### 5.5.1 Content Analysis

Classical texts and research literature are studied in a structured way to identify common themes related to ethics, social responsibility, leadership, and sustainability

### 5.5.2 Thematic Analysis

In this present study the philosophical concepts like Dharma, Karma, Seva, Loksangraha and trusteeship are studied deeply and then organized into thematic groups relevant to social entrepreneurship

### 5.5.3 Comparative Interpretation

Here western social entrepreneurship frameworks are compared with IKS based principles to show differences and overall connections in philosophy.

### 5.5.4 Conceptual Model Development

Through detailed analysis, original conceptual models were developed and these both models shows, how IKS principles can inform social enterprise and governance.

## 5.6 Philosophical Hermeneutics as Method

Interpretation of practice and theory plays important role in this research. Indian philosophical texts and theories are interpreted are analyzed based on context, by taking into consideration about their historical, ethical and social aspects, than treating these texts and abstracts. The study serves as a source of practical wisdom pertaining to contemporary organizational challenges.

## 5.7 Validity, Rigor, and Trustworthiness

Conceptual research is conducted with proper rigor

There was alignment between philosophical principles and proposed models

There was cross textual consistency across multiple Indian sources.

In theoretical saturation, where recurring concepts converge into stable frameworks.

By engaging with authoritative texts, the study maintains academic credibility and methodological robustness.

## 5.8 Justification for Non-Empirical Approach

The objective of the study is to construct a foundational theory. Conceptual clarity and philosophical depth are prioritized over generalization. Future research can empirically test the frameworks proposed in this study.

## 6. Analysis and Interpretation

**6.1 Philosophical foundations of indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems** (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Hiriyanna, 2009; Dasgupta, 2009) (Smith, 2012; Escobar, 2018) Indian philosophy presents a holistic worldview where ethics, economics, society and spirituality are linked and inseparable

in nature. Modern economic theories treats, ethics as a constraint factor however IKS positions ethical consciousness as the foundation of all human activity, including enterprise and innovation. The core philosophical principles of Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems are directly relevant to social entrepreneurship.

**6.1.1 Dharma as the Ethical Foundation of Entrepreneurship** (*Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998*) Dharma is the fundamental concept on Indian philosophy, means it is moral duty, righteousness, justice and maintenance of social harmony. In entrepreneurship, Dharma means the economic activity must be aligned with societal well being and harmony.

An enterprise guided by Dharma:

Which given much more importance for ethics over profit maximization.

It balances individual wish, will with collection welfare.

Long term social and environmental consequences.

In perspective challenges the profit is the primary objective of business, however profit is viewed as legitimate when it supports social good.

**6.1.2 Karma as Accountability and Impact Mechanism** (*Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998*) The principle of Karma establishes a direct relationship between action and result. Karma represents internal and long term accountability mechanism.

In social entrepreneurship:

- Decision are evaluated based on their broader impact
- Responsibility extends beyond legal compliance
- Leaders remain conscious of unintended consequences

Karma-based accountability encourages ethical self-regulation and discourages exploitative practices

**6.1.3 Lokasangraha: Welfare of All as Entrepreneurial Objective** (*Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998*) Loksangraha,

is concept constituted in the Bhagvad Gita, this means maintenance and up liftment of soial order, represents a collective vision of progress where individual actions contribute to societal stability and harmony.

In social entrepreneurship, Lokasangraha translates into: (*Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010*)

- Inclusive business models
- Community participation and ownership
- Long-term social transformation

This concept aligns closely with modern ideas of shared value and inclusive growth.

**6.1.4 Seva as the Driving Force of Social Innovation** (*Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998*) Service or selfless service is central Indian ethical thought. In entrepreneurial conext, seva transforms the motivation behind innovation.

Seva-driven entrepreneurship:

- Views beneficiaries as partners, not recipients
- Focuses on empowerment rather than charity
- Builds trust and social legitimacy

By embedding service into the core mission, social enterprises avoid dependency-creating models.

**6.1.5 Aparigraha and Sustainable Enterprise** (*Sen, 1999; Schumacher, 1973; Elkington, 1997*)

Aparigrapha, means a non passiveness, which restraint in accumulation and consumption. The concept of Aparigraha is directly supporting sustainability and responsible use of resources.

Practically, Aparigraha advocates:

- Frugal innovation
- Circular economy models
- Ecological responsibility

This aligns strongly with contemporary sustainability discourse.

**6.1.6 Trusteeship as an Ownership and Governance Model**

Trusteeship is designed by Mahatma Gandhi, this defines ownership as a moral responsibility rather than actual control. Entrepreneurship must be as a

trustee of wealth for the benefit of society.

Trusteeship promotes:

- Stakeholder-oriented governance
- Ethical wealth distribution
- Community trust

This model offers a viable alternative to shareholder-centric capitalism.

**6.1.7 Integrated IKS-Based Social Entrepreneurship Model** (Dees, 1998; Mair & Marti, 2006; Nicholls, 2010) (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Hiriyanna, 2009; Dasgupta, 2009)

**Conceptual Model 1: IKS-Based Social Entrepreneurship Framework**

Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems



Philosophical Values

(Dharma, Karma, Seva, Lokasangraha)



Ethical Entrepreneurial Orientation



Social Enterprise Design



Sustainable and Transformational Social Impact

(Sen, 1999; Schumacher, 1973; Elkington, 1997)

The above model suggest that how ancient philosophical principles systematically guide modern social enterprise development. This model of Indigenous Indian Knowledge System suggests comprehensive ethical and social orientation for sustainable and transformational social impact by integrating Dharma, Karma, Seva, Loksangraha, Aparigraha and Trusteeship. The model suggests holistic alternative to market centric models.

**6.2 Social Innovation through Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems** (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Hiriyanna, 2009; Dasgupta, 2009) (Smith, 2012; Escobar, 2018)

Social innovation has become a main area of attention in contemporary development concludes ideas, processes and organizational models that

solve social problems more efficiently than existing solutions with developing healthy social relationships and transforming institutions. Social innovation literature suggests technological advancement and market driven solutions. Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) offer a new way of understanding innovation, based on ethics, sustainability, and the common good. This explores how Indian philosophical principles provide an indigenous framework for understanding and practicing social innovation. It suggest that IKS based innovation is not driven by alignment with Dhama, service orientation and long term social harmony.

**6.2.1 Conceptual Clarification of Social Innovation**

In Western theories, social innovation is generally termed as innovation of meeting the social needs through entrepreneurship, policy intervention or institutional change. These efforts are typically on measurable outcomes, scalability and cost effectiveness. However these elements are important. Such efforts focus more on external results than internal motivation and ethical intent.

Indian Knowledge Systems, termed innovation as transformative action that is maintaining true balance between individual aspirations, social responsibility and ecological sustainability. Innovation from this angle is legitimate only when it contributes effectively to the moral and social order.

**6.2.2 IKS-Based Mechanisms of Social**

IKS embeds several mechanisms that naturally generate socially responsible innovation.

**Dharma-Centered Innovation** (Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998)

Dharma centered innovations are generally with new ideas and solutions:

- Uphold ethical standards
- Do not harm social or ecological systems
- Serve a meaningful social purpose

Generally, Dharma Centered based innovations are evaluated by efficiency or profitability as well as by its alignment with moral and justice. Such



practices discourages exploitative business practices and promotes responsible entrepreneurship.

**6.2.3 Lokasangraha as the Objective of Innovation**

Lokasangraha, means the ‘Welfare of all beings’, and acts as the ultimate objectives of the social innovation with IKS. This ensures that innovation is Benefiting marginalized and underserved communities

- Promotes inclusive growth
- Strengthens social cohesion

This principle anticipates modern ideas such as bottom-of-the-pyramid entrepreneurship and shared value creation.

**6.2.4 Aparigraha and Frugal Innovation**

Aparigraha means restraint and mindful use of resources. This principle directly supports frugal innovation, and deliver maximum value with minimal resource consumption.

IKS-inspired frugal innovation includes:

- Low-cost, high-impact solutions
- Local resource utilization
- Circular economy practices

India’s globally well known Jugaad Innovations reflect the philosophy, emphasizing simplicity, adaptability and sustainability.

**6.2.5 Seva-Driven Innovation** (*Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998*) Seva the name itself transforms innovation from market opportunity to the service oriented mission. In seva driven innovation

- Beneficiaries are treated as collaborators
- Dignity is preserved
- Empowerment replaces dependency
- This approach ensures long-term impact and social legitimacy.

**6.3 Comparison of Western and IKS-Based Social Innovation Models** (*Radhakrishnan, 1951; Hiriyanna, 2009; Dasgupta, 2009*)

This comparison of Western and IKS Based social Innovation Models shows the depth and

inclusiveness of the IKS approach.

**Illustrative Conceptual Applications of IKS-Based Social Innovation**

**6.3.1 Education Sector**

- Western Approach:
- EdTech models emphasize scalability, digital platforms, and standardized learning.
- IKS-Based Approach:
- Guru–Shishya tradition encourages mentorship
- Emphasis on character formation
- Community-based learning environments

**6.3.2 Healthcare Sector**

Western Approach:

- Curative and profit-oriented healthcare delivery.
- IKS-Based Approach:
- Seva-based healthcare models
- Preventive wellness through Yoga and Ayurveda

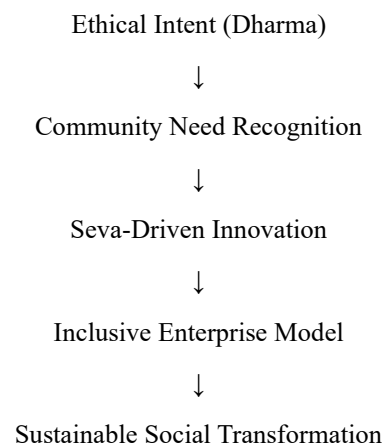
Affordable and accessible care

**6.3.3 Rural Livelihoods**

Western Approach:

- Market integration and income maximization.
- IKS-Based Approach:
- Community ownership
- Trusteeship-based enterprise
- Decentralized production

**6.3.4 Conceptual Model: IKS-Based Social Innovation Logic**





This model establishes that the Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems given a clear, easy to understand and grounded framework for social innovation. By prioritizing all Dharma, Seva, Lokasangraha, Aparigraha and Trusteeship , IKS based innovation ensures sustainability, inclusivity and moral integrity.

**6.4 Social Enterprise Design and Governance through IKS** (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Hiriyan, 2009; Dasgupta, 2009)

Social enterprises are difficult to manage because they need to achieve social goals while remaining financially stable. However, conventional governance models generally depend on external controls, performance metrics and legal compliance. Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems suggests an alternative approach which emphasizes self regulation, ethical leadership and community trust.

This understands how IKS principles can inform social enterprise design, governance structures and leadership practices.

**6.4.1 Enterprise Design Through the IKS Lens** (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Hiriyan, 2009; Dasgupta, 2009)

An IKS-based social enterprise is structured around three foundational elements:

Purpose (Dharma)

Process (Karma)

Outcome (Lokasangraha)

This structure ensures alignment between intent, action, and impact.

**6.4.2 Leadership Consciousness and Ethical Governance**

As per the Indian Philosophy, effective leadership begins with self awareness and ethical consciousness, leaders are supposed to internalize responsibility rather than rely separately on external accountability mechanisms.

Key features include:

- Self-discipline
- Ethical decision-making
- Long-term vision

Such leadership helps prevent deviation from the mission and unethical practices

**6.4.3 Trusteeship-Based Governance**

Trusteeship means taking ownership and control within specified social enterprise. In this enterprise leaders are acting as custodians of all the resources on behalf of society.

The Benefits include:

- Stakeholder inclusivity
- Transparent governance
- Community legitimacy

**6.4.4 Accountability Without Excessive Control**

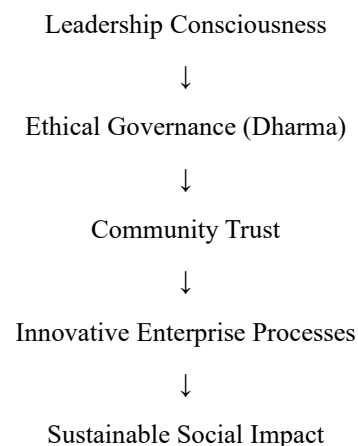
IKS is promoting Karma based accountability, where the leaders remain aware of the long term consequences of their actions. This approach is very good and reduces the dependence on rigid monitoring systems and promotes the ethical resilience.

**6.4.5 Preventing Mission Drift Through Dharma Anchoring** (Gandhi, 1960; Vivekananda, 2006; Aurobindo, 1998)

Mission in the social enterprise is always observed common challenge. The decision making in Dharma ensures:

- Social purpose remains central
- Financial sustainability supports, not replaces,
- Ethical boundaries are maintained

**6.4.6 Conceptual Model: IKS-Based Social Enterprise Architecture** (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Hiriyan, 2009; Dasgupta, 2009)





**6.4.5 Sectoral Design Implications**

- Education Enterprises
- Mentorship-driven models
- Value-based curriculum
- Healthcare Enterprises
- Preventive care emphasis
- Affordable service delivery
- Rural Enterprises
- Community ownership
- Decentralized governance

This suggests that Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems gives a very strong and sustainable framework for designing and governing social enterprise. By observing ethical leadership, trusteeship and community centric governance, IKS based models gives a long term sustainability and social and community recognition.

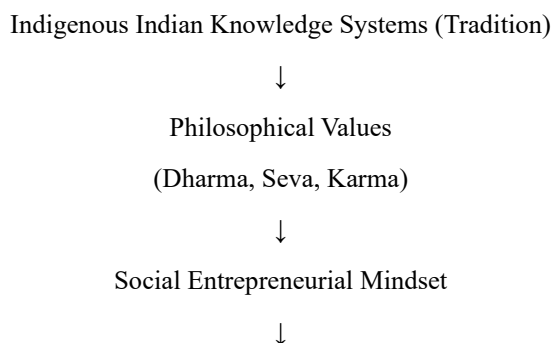
**6.5 Advanced Conceptual Models and Frameworks**

Advanced conceptual models from Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) suggest that how tradition based wisdom could be effectively and systematically transformed into current contemporary social entrepreneurship practices. Generally these models move beyond linear cause effect thinking and offer holistic, integrative framework that is connecting consciousness, ethics, enterprise design and social transformation.

**6.5.1 Model 1: Tradition-to-Transformation Continuum**

The main challenge in the model is that tradition and modernization are both opposite forces. Instead, this conceptualizes them as a part of the continuous evolutionary process.

**Tradition-to-Transformation Model**



Innovative Business Models



Sustainable Social Transformation

Explanation

- Tradition provides ethical and philosophical grounding.
- Values shape entrepreneurial intention.
- Mindset determines innovation orientation.
- Business models operationalize values.
- Transformation ensures long-term societal impact.

This model shows that new ideas can come from tradition, but they may not always bring big change.

**6.5.2 Model 2: IKS-Based Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem** (Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010) (Radhakrishnan, 1951; Hirianna, 2009; Dasgupta, 2009)

This ecosystem model shows that social entrepreneurship works together with awareness, leadership, community, and the environment, not alone.



This model suggests that sustainable impact start with inner ethical awareness, and not merely due to external incentives.

**6.5.3 Model 3: Triple Harmony Framework**

The Triple Harmony Framework is a major original contribution of this study.

This frameworks suggests how Indian Philosophy is integrating personal purpose, social responsibility and ecological balance into a single

entrepreneurial vision.

Significance of the Conceptual Models

The models presented:

- Presents the ways of understanding which are not based on Western thinking.
- Integrate ethics intrinsically into entrepreneurship
- Provide scalable conceptual guidance without cultural dilution
- They can be adapted across sectors and geographies while retaining ethical depth.

## 7: DISCUSSION – THEORETICAL AND ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

**7.1 Contribution to Social Entrepreneurship Theory** (*Dees, 1998; Mair & Martí, 2006; Nicholls, 2010*) The present study indicates that the Western centric models are dominant however the Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems are legitimate and having strong theoretical foundation for social entrepreneurship. Further it expands the entrepreneurship theory beyond market rationality to include ethical consciousness, collective welfare and long term accountability.

### 7.2 Contribution to Indigenous Knowledge Studies

This research reinterprets that Indian Knowledge Systems as pure applied, contemporary and actionable than purely historical and philosophical. IKS can guide enterprise design, innovation strategy and leadership development.

### 7.3 Decolonizing Management and Business Education

 (*Smith, 2012; Escobar, 2018*)

By recognizing IKS in entrepreneurship theory, this study supports the broader efforts to decolonize knowledge. It challenges the higher status is given to the Western frameworks and encourages diverse forms of knowledge throughout worldwide.

### 7.4 Addressing Global Challenges

IKS-based social entrepreneurship provides special solutions to the:

- Climate change through Aparigraha
- Inequality through Lokasangraha

- Ethical leadership crises through Dharma-based governance

Therefore, this framework is also useful outside India as well.

## 7.5 Implications for Education Policy and Practice

 (*Ministry of Education, 2020; AICTE, 2022*)

### 7.5.1 Implications for Business Schools

IKS-Integrated Entrepreneurship Curriculum Framework

- This framework supports NEP 2020 objectives and value-based education.
- 9.2 Pedagogical Innovation
- IKS-based pedagogy emphasizes:
- Experiential learning through Seva
- Reflective assessments
- Community immersion programs

This moves management education beyond skill acquisition to character formation.

### 7.5.2 Policy Implications

Policymakers can:

- Support culturally rooted social enterprises
- Encourage indigenous innovation ecosystems
- Integrate IKS into national entrepreneurship missions

### 7.5.3 Implications for Entrepreneurs

IKS-based entrepreneurs gain:

- Ethical resilience
- Long-term sustainability
- Community trust and legitimacy

## 8. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE SCOPE

### 8.1 Conclusion

From this study it is concluded that Indigenous Indian Knowledge Systems provide a strong, ethical, and long lasting foundation for social entrepreneurship. By bridging ancient wisdom with modern innovation, the research proves that tradition and modernization are not contradictory but complementary factors.

Social entrepreneurship, when rooted in the

principles of Dharma, Seva, Karma, and Lokasangraha, becomes an important way to support the inclusive growth, an ethical leadership, and long-term transformation.

### 8.2 Limitations of the Study

- Conceptual and interpretive in nature
- Absence of empirical validation
- Primary focus on Indian context

Although there are some limitations, but they do not reduce the theoretical contribution and instead set the study's scope.

### 8.3 Scope for Future Research

Future studies may:

- Empirically test IKS-based social enterprise models
- Conduct cross-cultural comparisons with other indigenous systems
- Develop measurable IKS-based impact indicators
- Undertake longitudinal studies of IKS-led enterprises

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