

UNDERSTANDING TIME, SELF, AND RESPONSIBILITY: LIFE SKILLS THROUGH INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

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Received: 29/12/2025

Accepted: 28/02/2026

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, life skills education has emerged as a central concern within global educational discourse, responding to increasing stress, disengagement, and ethical uncertainty among learners. While contemporary frameworks emphasise competencies such as time management, adaptability, motivation, and leadership, they often remain externally driven, outcome-oriented, and detached from the inner dimensions of human development. This paper argues that such approaches, though functionally useful, are insufficient for nurturing sustained self-regulation, emotional balance, and ethical responsibility. Drawing upon Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), the study proposes an alternative conceptual framework for understanding life skills as capacities for conscious living rather than merely employability-oriented attributes. Anchored in classical philosophical, pedagogical, and cultural traditions, the paper foregrounds the interrelated dimensions of time, self, and responsibility as foundational to holistic education. It adopts a conceptual-experiential approach and is organised around four thematic domains: Time Management, Adaptability, Self-Motivation, and Responsibility/Leadership. These domains are informed by sources such as the *Bhagavad Gita*, Ayurvedic principles of daily discipline, yogic notions of balance, narrative traditions from Indian epics, and the Gurukula educational ethos. Rather than prescribing instructional techniques, the paper analyses how these concepts function as interpretive lenses that help learners understand their relationship with time, change, effort, and social obligation. It argues that integrating IKS into life skills education enables the cultivation of inner regulation, resilience, and ethical awareness—capacities that are increasingly vital in rapidly changing educational and social contexts. By situating life skills within culturally grounded yet globally relevant perspectives, the study contributes to ongoing debates on holistic education and offers a theoretically informed model aligned with contemporary educational reforms.

KEYWORDS: Indian Knowledge Systems; Life Skills Education; Self-Regulation; Time Consciousness; Adaptability; Ethical Responsibility; Holistic Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Education in the twenty-first century is increasingly shaped by paradoxical conditions. On the one hand, students today have unprecedented access to information, technological tools, and structured learning environments. On the other, educational institutions across the world report rising levels of anxiety, lack of sustained motivation, difficulty in managing time, and uncertainty regarding personal and social responsibility among learners. Academic achievement, frequently measured through grades, performance indicators, and employability outcomes, does not necessarily translate into emotional balance, ethical clarity, or a sense of purpose. This widening gap between educational success and lived well-being has brought renewed attention to the role of life skills education.

Life skills have been widely promoted as essential competencies that enable individuals to navigate personal, academic, and professional challenges. International frameworks often identify skills such as adaptability, communication, leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving as crucial for success in dynamic environments. However, these skills are frequently conceptualised in instrumental terms, emphasising efficiency, productivity, and external performance. While such orientations may enhance functional competence, they tend to treat skills as techniques to be applied rather than capacities rooted in self-awareness and ethical judgement. As a result, learners may become adept at meeting external expectations while remaining internally fragmented or directionless.

This limitation points to a deeper pedagogical concern: the relative neglect of inner regulation in contemporary education. Skills related to time management, adaptability, and motivation are often taught without sufficient attention to how individuals experience time, respond to change, or sustain effort meaningfully. Responsibility, likewise, is frequently framed as compliance with institutional norms rather than as an internally guided ethical commitment. Without addressing these inner dimensions, life skills education risks becoming superficial, promoting adjustment rather than self-understanding.

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) offer a distinctive and time-tested perspective that responds directly to this challenge. Rooted in philosophical inquiry, lived practice, and cultural transmission, IKS approaches education as a process of self-cultivation rather than mere information acquisition. Learning, within this tradition, is expected to shape

character, discernment, and responsibility alongside intellectual development. This vision is encapsulated in the classical assertion "*Sa vidyāyāvīmuktaye*"—education is that which leads to liberation (*Vishnu Purāna* 1.19.41). Knowledge, therefore, is meaningful insofar as it enables inner freedom, ethical clarity, and conscious action.

Historically, Indian educational traditions such as the Gurukula system integrated learning with disciplined daily routines, reflective practices, and social responsibility. Education was not confined to classrooms or assessments but was embedded in everyday life. Concepts such as *kāla* (time), *tapas* (disciplined effort), *śamatva* (equanimity), and *dharma* (responsibility) were not treated as abstract philosophical ideas; rather, they functioned as guiding principles for living. Learners were encouraged to observe their relationship with time, regulate emotions, cultivate perseverance, and act responsibly within their social contexts.

When interpreted pedagogically, these concepts offer valuable insights for contemporary life skills education. They shift attention from external control to inner regulation, from outcome obsession to process awareness, and from compliance-based responsibility to ethical self-direction. Such a shift is particularly relevant in educational environments characterised by rapid change, competitive pressure, and increasing uncertainty. Students are not merely required to perform efficiently; they are expected to continuously adapt, remain motivated, and assume responsibility for both personal success and collective well-being.

This paper builds on these insights and proposes an Indian Knowledge Systems-based framework for life skills education, organised around four interrelated conceptual domains: Time Management, Adaptability, Self-Motivation, and Responsibility/Leadership. These domains are not presented as discrete instructional units or skill checklists. Instead, they are analysed as conceptual lenses that help learners reflect on how they inhabit time, respond to change, sustain effort, and engage ethically with others. The underlying assumption is that life skills become meaningful and sustainable only when grounded in self-awareness and inner discipline.

The central argument of the paper is that life skills education informed by Indian Knowledge Systems enables a deeper form of self-regulation, moving beyond externally driven models toward education for conscious, balanced, and responsible living. By foregrounding the inner dimensions of learning, this approach contributes to broader discussions on

holistic education and culturally responsive pedagogy. The sections that follow situate this framework within the philosophical foundations of Indian Knowledge Systems and examine each thematic domain in detail, drawing connections between classical ideas, pedagogical design, and contemporary classroom contexts.

2. INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR LIFE SKILLS

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) represent a civilisational understanding of knowledge that integrates intellectual inquiry with ethical conduct, emotional balance, and social responsibility. Unlike modern educational paradigms that often compartmentalise learning into discrete disciplines and measurable outcomes, IKS approaches education as a holistic process oriented toward self-cultivation and meaningful participation in social life. Knowledge, within this framework, is not valued solely for its instrumental utility but for its capacity to shape judgement, character, and responsibility.

A defining feature of Indian Knowledge Systems is the emphasis on inner regulation rather than external control. Classical Indian thought consistently locates responsibility for growth within the individual, encouraging learners to cultivate awareness, restraint, and discernment. Concepts such as *niyama* (self-discipline), *viveka* (discriminative wisdom), and *dharma* (ethical responsibility) function as internal guides for conduct, enabling individuals to navigate complex situations thoughtfully. This orientation offers an important corrective to contemporary life skills models that prioritise behavioural outcomes without sufficiently addressing the inner processes that sustain them.

The *Bhagavad Gita* articulates this principle with particular clarity by situating agency within the self. It asserts, "Let a person lift oneself by oneself; let one not degrade oneself. The self alone is the friend of the self, and the self alone is the enemy of the self" (6.5). This formulation underscores a central IKS insight: self-regulation is both the means and the outcome of learning. Education, therefore, is expected to cultivate the capacity for reflective self-governance rather than dependence on external surveillance or reward structures.

Time occupies a central position within Indian philosophical thought and provides a key conceptual anchor for life skills education. The concept of *kāla* is understood not merely as chronological measurement but as a formative force that shapes human awareness, action, and

responsibility. Indian texts frequently remind individuals of the transient nature of circumstances and the ethical implications of how time is inhabited. The *Mahābhārata* observes that "Time cooks all beings; time destroys them" (Śānti Parva 25.8), highlighting time as an active presence that demands conscious engagement. When translated into educational contexts, this understanding reframes time management as attentiveness and alignment rather than mechanical efficiency.

Equally significant is the IKS emphasis on balance and emotional steadiness, articulated through the concept of *samatva*, or equanimity. Rather than encouraging emotional suppression or withdrawal, equanimity enables individuals to remain composed amidst success and failure, certainty and change. The *Bhagavad Gita* defines this balance as integral to disciplined living, stating, "Evenness of mind is called yoga" (2.48). From a pedagogical perspective, this insight suggests that adaptability and resilience are rooted in inner steadiness rather than constant adjustment to external demands.

Indian Knowledge Systems also offer a distinctive understanding of motivation grounded in conscious effort (*prayatna*) and disciplined striving (*tapas*). Classical texts consistently emphasise that sustained effort, guided by awareness, is central to personal growth. The *Manusmṛti* reinforces this view by asserting, "Success depends on effort; fate is merely a word" (7.205). This emphasis challenges contemporary educational practices that rely heavily on extrinsic motivation, proposing instead a model of learning sustained by inner resolve and commitment to purpose.

The concept of self (*ātman*) further deepens this motivational framework. Indian philosophical traditions encourage learners to understand their dispositions, capacities, and responsibilities through self-reflection. Motivation, in this sense, arises from alignment between one's inner orientation and chosen actions rather than from external validation. This view positions learning as an ongoing process of self-cultivation, sustained by clarity and ethical intention.

Responsibility within Indian Knowledge Systems extends beyond personal development into the social sphere. Concepts such as *svadharma* and *kartavya* articulate responsibility as context-sensitive and ethically grounded action. Rather than prescribing uniform duties, these ideas emphasise discernment and accountability to one's circumstances.

The *Bhagavad Gita* cautions against abandoning one's contextual responsibilities in pursuit of

externally defined ideals, observing that *“It is better to perform one’s own duty imperfectly than another’s duty perfectly”* (3.35). This perspective reframes responsibility as an internal ethical commitment rather than mere compliance with external norms.

Leadership, viewed through the IKS lens, is inseparable from service (*seva*) and moral accountability. Indian narrative traditions consistently portray leadership as a responsibility toward collective well-being rather than an assertion of authority. The *Panchatantra* encapsulates this ideal by asserting that *“The happiness of the people is the happiness of the king”* (Mitra-bheda). Such narratives provide alternative leadership models that prioritise humility, restraint, and care—qualities often overlooked in contemporary leadership training.

Taken together, these conceptual foundations position Indian Knowledge Systems as a coherent and comprehensive framework for life skills education. Rather than adding isolated skills to existing curricula, IKS invites a reorientation of educational purpose toward inner regulation, ethical awareness, and reflective engagement with life. By grounding time management, adaptability, motivation, and responsibility in enduring philosophical insights, this framework offers a culturally rooted yet globally relevant approach to holistic education.

The following sections examine how these principles are operationalized through specific thematic domains, beginning with an exploration of time as conscious living.

3. UNDERSTANDING TIME AS CONSCIOUS LIVING

In contemporary educational discourse, time management is commonly framed as a technical competence concerned with efficiency, scheduling, and task completion. Students are encouraged to plan their activities meticulously, meet deadlines, and maximise productivity. While such strategies may yield short-term gains, they often fail to address the deeper experiential relationship individuals have with time. Many learners continue to experience anxiety, fragmentation of attention, and a persistent sense of insufficiency despite mastering organisational techniques. Indian Knowledge Systems offer an alternative perspective by reframing time not merely as a resource to be controlled, but as a lived experience that shapes awareness, priorities, and ethical choices.

The Indian philosophical concept of *kāla* provides a foundational lens for understanding time as both formative and transformative. Time is not viewed as neutral or external to human action; rather, it

actively conditions experience and decision-making. Classical texts repeatedly draw attention to the impermanent nature of circumstances and the responsibility that arises from this awareness. The *Mahābhārata* encapsulates this insight when it observes that *“Time cooks all beings; time destroys them”* (Śānti Parva 25.8). This formulation underscores the ethical dimension of time, suggesting that how one inhabits time is inseparable from how one lives.

When applied to educational contexts, this understanding invites a shift from mechanical scheduling to conscious engagement with daily activities. Time management, from an IKS perspective, involves attentiveness to rhythm, intention, and balance rather than constant acceleration. Learners are encouraged to reflect on how they distribute attention, how routines influence mental clarity, and how priorities align with values. Such reflection fosters a sense of agency that goes beyond efficiency, enabling students to experience time as meaningful rather than oppressive.

Ayurvedic traditions further illuminate this approach through the concept of *dinacharya*, or disciplined daily routine. Unlike rigid timetables imposed solely for productivity, *dinacharya* emphasises harmony between bodily rhythms, mental states, and environmental conditions. The *Charaka Saṃhitā* notes that *“He who follows proper daily routine attains long life free from disease”* (Sūtrasthāna 5.98), linking disciplined engagement with time to well-being and balance. In pedagogical settings, this insight encourages learners to observe the effects of sleep patterns, study habits, and restorative pauses on concentration and emotional stability.

Narrative traditions from Indian epics also contribute to an ethical understanding of time consciousness. Characters are frequently tested not by speed or immediate success, but by their responses to delay, uncertainty, and prolonged effort. Moments of waiting, exile, or gradual preparation are portrayed as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles to be eliminated. Such narratives provide accessible frameworks for students to reflect on experiences of procrastination, impatience, and overcommitment. They invite learners to consider whether difficulties with time stem from poor planning alone or from deeper tensions between intention and action.

Within classroom contexts, an IKS-informed approach to time consciousness encourages pedagogical practices that emphasise reflective

pauses, mindful transitions between tasks, and periodic self-evaluation. Rather than measuring success solely by output, students are guided to assess whether their use of time supports clarity, balance, and responsibility. Activities such as journaling, value-based prioritisation, and reflective discussions help learners recognise patterns of distraction and overextension, fostering self-regulation grounded in awareness.

This reconceptualization of time also addresses a significant source of student stress. When time is perceived as an adversary—constantly scarce and demanding—learners are more likely to experience anxiety and disengagement. By contrast, viewing time as a formative companion encourages steadiness and presence. The emphasis shifts from doing more to doing consciously, from racing against deadlines to inhabiting moments with intention.

Understanding time as conscious living thus becomes a foundational life skill within the IKS framework. It prepares students not only to manage academic demands but also to develop a sustainable relationship with work, rest, and reflection. This grounded relationship with time naturally supports adaptability, as individuals who are attentive and balanced are better equipped to respond thoughtfully to change. The following section examines adaptability through this lens, exploring how Indian Knowledge Systems conceptualise change not as disruption, but as an integral aspect of life requiring inner equilibrium.

4. ADAPTABILITY AS INNER EQUILIBRIUM

Adaptability has become a defining requirement in contemporary educational and professional environments. Learners are repeatedly advised to remain flexible, acquire new skills, and respond swiftly to changing circumstances. While such responsiveness is often presented as essential for success, an uncritical emphasis on constant adjustment can produce emotional fatigue and a fragmented sense of self. Indian Knowledge Systems offer a more sustainable understanding of adaptability by situating it within inner equilibrium rather than perpetual motion.

Central to this perspective is the concept of *samatva*, commonly translated as equanimity or balance. In Indian philosophical traditions, *samatva* refers to the capacity to remain steady amidst success and failure, certainty and disruption. Rather than encouraging detachment or passivity, equanimity enables thoughtful engagement with change. The *Bhagavad Gita* articulates this principle

with clarity when it states, “*He who is the same in pleasure and pain, steady, and balanced, is fit for liberation*” (2.15). Adaptability, from this standpoint, is grounded in emotional steadiness and awareness rather than reactive compliance.

Indian narrative traditions further illuminate this understanding by portraying moments of change as ethical tests rather than mere challenges to be overcome. Characters in the epics encounter exile, loss, and uncertainty, yet their responses are guided by discernment rather than haste. Such narratives suggest that meaningful adaptability involves recognising the nature of change and responding with clarity, not simply adjusting behaviour to external demands. For learners, these stories provide reflective resources for examining how they respond to academic pressure, shifting expectations, or unforeseen setbacks.

Within educational contexts, this IKS-informed conception of adaptability encourages students to attend to their inner responses to change. Rather than equating adaptability with immediate action, learners are guided to practise mindful pauses, emotional awareness, and reflective decision-making. This approach aligns adaptability with self-knowledge, suggesting that the ability to change effectively arises from understanding one’s patterns of reaction. Such awareness reduces impulsivity and supports thoughtful engagement with new situations.

The *Bhagavad Gita* further reinforces this orientation by defining balance as integral to disciplined living. It observes that “*Evenness of mind is called yoga*” (2.48), indicating that steadiness is not a by-product of adaptation but its foundation. From a pedagogical perspective, this insight reframes adaptability as a cultivated disposition rather than a survival strategy. Students learn that flexibility does not require constant self-reinvention, but rather the capacity to remain anchored amidst uncertainty.

Indian Knowledge Systems also emphasise the impermanent nature of worldly conditions, encouraging acceptance of change as an inherent aspect of life. When learners internalise this perspective, change becomes less threatening and adaptability emerges as a natural response rather than an exhausting demand. This orientation fosters resilience by grounding flexibility in awareness and acceptance rather than fear of failure or obsolescence.

In classroom practice, adaptability as inner equilibrium can be nurtured through reflective discussions, narrative engagement, and experiential activities that invite students to examine their

responses to change. Rather than rewarding speed or constant availability, educators can emphasise thoughtful participation, emotional regulation, and ethical judgement. Such practices help learners develop confidence in their ability to navigate uncertainty without sacrificing coherence or well-being.

Positioning adaptability as inner equilibrium has significant implications for life skills education. It challenges dominant models that equate adaptability with relentless adjustment and instead proposes a framework grounded in balance, reflection, and ethical clarity. Students trained in this manner are better equipped to engage with change sustainably, preserving psychological stability while remaining responsive to evolving circumstances.

This understanding of adaptability naturally leads to questions of motivation. Sustained engagement with learning and life requires more than flexibility; it demands inner resolve and purposeful effort. The following section explores self-motivation through the lens of Indian Knowledge Systems, examining how concepts such as *prayatna* and *tapas* reframe motivation as an internally anchored capacity rather than a response to external incentives.

5. SELF-MOTIVATION AS INNER RESOLVE

In many contemporary educational settings, motivation is treated as a variable that must be externally stimulated through grades, rewards, deadlines, and performance metrics. While such mechanisms may encourage short-term compliance, they often fail to sustain meaningful engagement over time. Students frequently experience cycles of enthusiasm followed by fatigue or disengagement, suggesting that external incentives alone cannot account for enduring commitment to learning. Indian Knowledge Systems offer a more enduring understanding of motivation by locating its source within the individual, grounded in inner resolve, conscious effort, and ethical intention.

A central concept in this framework is *prayatna*, or purposeful effort. Indian philosophical traditions consistently emphasise that growth arises through conscious striving rather than passive expectation. Effort is not viewed as burdensome exertion imposed from outside, but as a meaningful expression of agency. The *Manusmṛti* articulates this clearly when it asserts, “*Success depends on effort; fate is merely a word*” (7.205). This assertion shifts responsibility for learning away from circumstance and toward deliberate engagement, reinforcing the idea that motivation is cultivated rather than bestowed.

Closely related to *prayatna* is the concept of *tapas*, often translated as disciplined effort or constructive striving. Unlike notions of motivation that rely on constant stimulation or competition, *tapas* refers to sustained engagement guided by awareness and restraint. It does not imply coercive self-denial, but rather a willingness to remain committed even when progress is gradual or recognition is absent. From an educational perspective, *tapas* offers a valuable counterpoint to performance-driven cultures that equate motivation with immediate results.

The *Bhagavad Gita* reinforces this orientation by reframing disciplined action itself as a form of skill. It observes, “*Yoga is skill in action*” (2.50), suggesting that motivation lies not in outcome fixation but in the quality of engagement with action. Learning, therefore, becomes meaningful when students attend to how they act rather than solely to what they achieve. This perspective encourages learners to value consistency, attentiveness, and ethical intention as indicators of progress.

Indian Knowledge Systems further connect motivation to self-understanding through the concept of *ātman*. Self-knowledge is considered essential for sustained effort, as individuals are encouraged to recognise their dispositions, strengths, and limitations. Motivation arises when actions are aligned with personal capacities and responsibilities, rather than imposed by external expectations. Classroom practices that invite students to reflect on their reasons for pursuing particular goals help foster this alignment, enabling motivation to emerge organically.

Within educational contexts, an IKS-informed approach to self-motivation emphasises reflective practices over external pressure. Journaling, guided self-assessment, and value-based goal setting encourage learners to examine sources of resistance and aspiration. Rather than prescribing uniform standards of success, educators support students in articulating meaningful intentions and recognising effort as intrinsically valuable. This orientation reduces dependency on rewards while strengthening self-regulation.

Understanding motivation as inner resolve also addresses the growing concern of academic burnout. When motivation is driven primarily by competition or fear of failure, sustained engagement becomes difficult to maintain. By contrast, grounding motivation in awareness and purpose enables learners to engage steadily without constant emotional fluctuation. Effort is experienced not as compulsion, but as commitment aligned with personal and ethical values.

This conception of self-motivation complements the preceding discussions on time consciousness and adaptability. Together, these dimensions cultivate a learner who is attentive to time, balanced in the face of change, and committed to purposeful effort. Such inner discipline naturally extends beyond personal development into the social sphere, where responsibility and leadership emerge as ethical expressions of self-regulation. The following section explores this extension by examining responsibility and leadership through the lens of Indian Knowledge Systems.

6. RESPONSIBILITY AND LEADERSHIP AS ETHICAL EXTENSION OF THE SELF

Within Indian Knowledge Systems, responsibility and leadership are understood not as externally imposed roles or positions, but as ethical extensions of inner discipline. Unlike contemporary frameworks that often associate leadership with authority, influence, or managerial competence, IKS situates leadership within self-regulation, discernment, and service. Responsibility, in this view, emerges organically from self-awareness and sustained ethical commitment.

A central concept informing this perspective is *svadharma*, which refers to one's contextual responsibility shaped by personal capacities, social roles, and situational demands. Rather than prescribing universal duties, *svadharma* emphasises discernment and accountability to one's specific circumstances. The *Bhagavad Gita* underscores this principle by observing, "It is better to perform one's own duty imperfectly than another's duty perfectly" (3.35). This insight reframes responsibility as an internally guided ethical stance rather than compliance with externally defined standards.

Closely related is the notion of *kartavya*, or duty performed with integrity regardless of recognition or reward. Indian philosophical traditions repeatedly stress the importance of right action even in the absence of immediate outcomes. Responsibility, therefore, is not contingent upon surveillance or evaluation, but grounded in self-regulation and moral clarity. In educational contexts, this understanding encourages learners to view responsibility as a sustained commitment rather than a response to institutional pressure.

Leadership, within IKS, is inseparable from *seva*, or service. Narrative traditions consistently portray effective leadership as an expression of care, restraint, and accountability toward collective well-being. The *Panchatantra* encapsulates this ethical orientation by asserting, "The happiness of the people is the happiness of the king" (Mitra-bheda). Authority is

thus justified not by power, but by responsibility toward others.

Pedagogically, this framework encourages students to recognise leadership as an everyday ethical practice rather than a specialised skill reserved for a few. Classroom discussions, collaborative activities, and reflective exercises help learners examine how inner discipline—cultivated through time consciousness, adaptability, and motivation—naturally extends into responsible action. Leadership emerges as attentiveness to impact, willingness to serve, and commitment to fairness.

By positioning responsibility and leadership as ethical extensions of the self, Indian Knowledge Systems align personal development with social well-being. This synthesis reinforces the idea that education attains its fullest purpose when inner regulation and ethical action are integrated.

7. DISCUSSION: REFRAMING LIFE SKILLS THROUGH INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

The preceding sections have examined life skills education through four interrelated conceptual domains grounded in Indian Knowledge Systems: time consciousness, adaptability, self-motivation, and responsibility. Together, these domains foreground inner regulation as the foundation of meaningful and sustainable skill development. This discussion situates these insights within broader educational debates and articulates the conceptual contribution of the study.

Mainstream life skills frameworks often prioritise adaptability, efficiency, and resilience as responses to rapidly changing socio-economic conditions. While these capacities are necessary, they are frequently framed in instrumental terms, encouraging learners to continually optimise themselves in response to external demands. Such models risk reducing education to a process of adjustment rather than self-understanding. The IKS-based framework presented in this paper offers an alternative by emphasising steadiness, ethical clarity, and reflective engagement with change.

A key contribution of this approach lies in its reconceptualisation of self-regulation. Time is understood as a lived experience rather than a resource to be controlled; adaptability is framed as equanimity rather than constant reaction; motivation is grounded in inner resolve rather than external reward; and responsibility is positioned as ethical commitment rather than compliance. This shift from external performance to internal orientation has significant pedagogical implications.

From a broader scholarly perspective, the framework proposed in this paper aligns with and extends contemporary discussions on holistic and capability-oriented education. The emphasis on inner regulation and ethical agency parallels the capabilities approach articulated by Nussbaum, which foregrounds human flourishing beyond economic productivity. Likewise, Dewey's insistence on education as lived experience finds resonance in the IKS emphasis on conscious engagement with time and action. However, while much of the existing literature conceptualises self-regulation and well-being through psychological or policy-driven models, Indian Knowledge Systems offer a philosophically integrated account in which self-discipline, responsibility, and social obligation are inseparable. This integration constitutes a distinctive contribution of the present study, positioning IKS not merely as cultural heritage but as a theoretically robust resource for rethinking life skills education in contemporary contexts.

By integrating Indian Knowledge Systems, the paper also challenges the assumed universality of dominant Western skill-based paradigms. Rather than rejecting contemporary frameworks, it complements them by offering culturally rooted concepts that address universal human concerns—uncertainty, effort, responsibility, and ethical action. Importantly, these concepts are presented not as prescriptive doctrines, but as interpretive lenses adaptable across contexts.

As a conceptual study, the paper does not claim immediate instructional efficacy. Its purpose is to provide a coherent philosophical foundation upon which empirical research and pedagogical experimentation may be built. Future studies may explore how IKS-informed life skills education influences student well-being, ethical decision-

making, and long-term engagement with learning. Nevertheless, the framework articulated here offers a valuable contribution to discussions on holistic education and culturally responsive pedagogy.

8. CONCLUSION

This paper has argued for reorienting life skills education through Indian Knowledge Systems, emphasizing inner regulation as the foundation for meaningful and sustainable skill development. By examining time management, adaptability, self-motivation, and responsibility as interconnected dimensions of conscious living, the study moves beyond outcome-driven models and highlights a holistic approach where self-awareness, ethical clarity, and social responsibility are central. Concepts such as *kāla*, *samatva*, *prayatna*, and *svadharma* serve as practical guides, enabling learners to interpret experiences thoughtfully and approach learning as self-cultivation rather than mere performance. Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems into life skills education transcends tradition; it represents deliberate engagement with enduring principles that address contemporary challenges. By fostering inner discipline and responsibility, this approach positions education as a catalyst for developing ethically grounded, self-aware, and socially responsible individuals.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors gratefully acknowledge that the funding for this publication was provided by the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA), under the Multi-Disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU) Grant sanctioned to Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.

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