

The textbook's implicit but uneven inclusion of IKS elements—such as kinship values, environmental wisdom, and community practices—supports **Paulo Freire's (1970)** notion of culturally relevant pedagogy, which posits that learners engage more effectively when education resonates with their lived experiences. This is further supported by **Sujata Patel (2016)**, who advocates for curricula that validate children's cultural contexts, thereby enhancing identity formation and community connectedness.

However, as **Anand Prakash (2019)** points out in his critique of mainstream education, the textbook's failure to explicitly recognize and frame Indian Knowledge Systems as coherent, distinct epistemologies reflects a common lacuna in contemporary curricula. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which strongly advocates the revival and mainstreaming of IKS, stresses the importance of making students aware of indigenous scientific and philosophical traditions by name (Ministry of Education, 2020). The absence of explicit references to concepts such as *Panchatatva*, Ayurveda, or traditional environmental ethics potentially undermines students' ability to appreciate the intellectual rigor and cultural significance of these systems.

The somewhat homogenized cultural narrative found in the textbook echoes concerns raised by **Sanjay Srivastava (2011)** and **Meera Nanda (2003)** about the erasure of regional and tribal diversities in educational materials. Incorporating India's pluralistic heritage—including regional languages, oral traditions, and folk literature—can enhance intercultural respect and help preserve endangered cultural expressions, as emphasized by UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Furthermore, the limited inclusion of India's traditional scientific knowledge reflects a missed opportunity to showcase India's historical contributions to mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and environmental management, as highlighted in the works of **D.P. Chattopadhyaya (1996)** and **Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (1977)**. Introducing such knowledge early on can inspire learners by linking contemporary science to indigenous intellectual achievements, helping to balance the often Eurocentric science curriculum.

The ethical and philosophical values intrinsic to IKS—such as *Dharma* (duty), *Ahimsa* (non-violence), and harmony with nature—though hinted at, remain underexplored in the textbook. This echoes **J.P. Das (2009)** and **A.K. Ramanujan's (1991)** calls for education that integrates moral and emotional dimensions rooted in Indian philosophy to foster holistic development beyond mere cognitive skills.

Moreover, the textbook's underutilization of oral traditions and participatory learning methods, which are foundational to the transmission of IKS, corresponds with **Vandana Shiva's (2010)** advocacy for experiential and community-based learning models. Such methods engage learners actively and connect them emotionally and socially to the knowledge, transforming education from rote learning into lived wisdom.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest the urgent need for a more intentional, systematic, and pluralistic integration of Indian Knowledge Systems in early educational content. As emphasized by the NEP 2020 and scholars like **Kapila Vatsyayan** and **Rukmini Bhaya Nair**, this integration requires collaborative efforts among curriculum designers, educators, and cultural experts to create materials that are pedagogically sound, culturally resonant, and inclusive of India's diverse epistemologies. This will nurture a generation of learners who are not only academically proficient but also deeply connected to their cultural roots and ethical responsibilities as global citizens.

## 5.1 FINDINGS

The qualitative content analysis of the NCERT Class 3 textbook *Our Wondrous World* through the lens of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) reveals a nuanced yet partial incorporation of India's rich cultural, ecological, and philosophical heritage. The study finds that while the textbook successfully introduces young learners to fundamental concepts related to their families, communities, environment, and resources, the integration of IKS is often implicit and uneven across its four units.

In **Unit 1 – Our Families and Communities**, the textbook effectively presents elements of kinship, oral traditions, and local customs, fostering awareness of social bonds and community values central to Indian life. Stories, dialogues, and illustrations emphasize respect for elders, collective celebrations, and cooperation, mirroring the traditional joint family system and community cohesion intrinsic to Indian society. This unit successfully embeds cultural values such as hospitality, shared responsibility, and moral conduct, encouraging children to appreciate and preserve their heritage. However, the representation largely reflects a generalized Indian cultural frame without sufficient attention to the vast diversity of social practices across regions and indigenous communities.

Moving to **Unit 2 – Life Around Us**, the textbook demonstrates an understanding of indigenous ecological wisdom by focusing on the natural environment, local flora and fauna, and the importance of coexistence with nature. Traditional classification of plants and animals based on observable characteristics subtly mirrors indigenous taxonomy, reinforcing children's connection with their immediate environment. The unit promotes an observational and experiential learning approach aligned with IKS pedagogy. Nonetheless, explicit references to indigenous ecological knowledge systems, such as those found in tribal or rural communities, are minimal, limiting the exposure to India's pluralistic environmental traditions.

In **Unit 3 – Gifts of Nature**, the textbook resonates with the Indian philosophical concept of *Panchatatva*—the five basic elements (earth, water, fire, air, and space)—through its emphasis on natural resources and conservation. It introduces concepts of water harvesting and the cyclical nature of seasons, reflecting

traditional Indian practices of sustainable resource use and reverence for nature. This unit encourages children to adopt responsible attitudes toward environmental stewardship. Yet, the treatment of these concepts remains at a descriptive level without connecting deeply to the spiritual or ritualistic dimensions often embedded in Indian environmental ethics.

The analysis of **Unit 4 – Things Around Us** reveals a focus on sustainable living, traditional resource use, and recycling through folk wisdom. Visuals and activities promote ideas of reuse, minimal waste, and reliance on local materials, echoing indigenous practices of frugality and ecological harmony. Folklore and stories embedded in this unit foster environmental awareness and practical life skills. Despite this, the textbook does not fully exploit the potential of folklore and traditional crafts as pedagogical tools to instill IKS values systematically.

Across all units, the textbook employs visuals, activities, and stories that contribute to cultural familiarity and reinforce Indian values. Illustrations depict traditional clothing, festivals, and rural lifestyles, supporting identity formation and cultural continuity. Activities invite children to learn from elders, observe nature closely, and engage in community-oriented tasks, reflecting the oral transmission and experiential learning central to IKS. Stories emphasize ethical lessons aligned with Indian philosophical traditions, nurturing holistic development beyond academic knowledge.

However, several significant gaps emerge from the analysis. The textbook lacks explicit IKS terminology and does not foreground indigenous knowledge systems as distinct epistemologies. This reduces opportunities for students to consciously recognize and value their cultural heritage as an intellectual and scientific resource. Furthermore, the representation of India's diverse indigenous and regional knowledge traditions is limited, resulting in a somewhat homogenized cultural narrative that does not fully honor India's pluralism.

Traditional Indian scientific knowledge in areas such as astronomy, mathematics, Ayurveda, and natural philosophy remains underrepresented, missing a critical chance to integrate ancient Indian scientific achievements into early education. Ethical and philosophical dimensions intrinsic to IKS, such as *Dharma*, *Ahimsa*, and the spiritual relationship with nature, are hinted at but not explicitly explored or connected to daily life in ways accessible to young learners.

Moreover, the textbook underutilizes oral traditions, folk songs, proverbs, and local languages that could enrich the learning experience and strengthen linguistic and cultural pride. Environmental wisdom is presented mainly in practical or scientific terms, with minimal inclusion of its cultural and sacred significance prevalent in Indian traditions.

In summary, *Our Wondrous World* provides an introductory platform that touches on many aspects of Indian Knowledge Systems but falls short of delivering a comprehensive, explicitly framed, and pluralistic IKS-based education. The textbook's implicit integration of IKS principles lays a foundation that can be strengthened through intentional curriculum design, richer inclusion of regional and tribal knowledge, explicit recognition of traditional sciences, and deeper engagement with Indian ethical and philosophical perspectives. Addressing these gaps will better align the textbook with the goals of the National Education Policy 2020 and help cultivate culturally rooted, environmentally conscious, and philosophically informed learners from an early age.