

Indian Knowledge System

— and —

Civic Governance

RECLAIMING WISDOM. STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE.
BUILDING A BETTER TOMORROW.



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PEOPLE-CENTRIC
PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

— Dr. Harshvardhan Singh —

Indian Knowledge System
and
Civic Governance



Indian Knowledge System and Civic Governance



Dr. Harshvardhan Singh



— First Edition —



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Copyright Page

Indian Knowledge System and Civic Governance

Dr. Harshvardhan Singh

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This book is published for educational, academic, research, policy-discussion, and public-awareness purposes. The concepts, interpretations, frameworks, tables, and models presented in this book are intended to support learning, civic reflection, and informed discussion on Indian Knowledge System and civic governance. The book does not claim to provide legal, governmental, administrative, or professional policy advice. Readers are advised to consult official government documents, constitutional texts, legal provisions, policy notifications, and expert sources wherever required.

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This publication is part of an academic and policy-oriented effort to bring Indian Knowledge System into meaningful dialogue with contemporary education, citizenship, governance, public life, civic responsibility, and ethical leadership.

Author Profile

Dr. Harshvardhan Singh is an education researcher, psychometrician, author, and curriculum-evaluation professional working in the areas of Indian Knowledge System, civic education, educational measurement, teacher education, inclusive education, learning assessment, research tool development, and policy-relevant educational research. His academic and professional work focuses on evidence-based educational reform, ethical citizenship, learner diversity, pedagogical improvement, psychometric scale development, constitutional values, and the integration of traditional Indian knowledge with contemporary educational and governance frameworks.

Dr. Singh's work reflects a strong interest in connecting classical Indian ideas with modern public concerns such as civic responsibility, democratic participation, ethical leadership, educational reform, inclusive development, community engagement, and social accountability. His writings often explore how Indian civilisational concepts such as Dharma, Seva, Lokasangraha, Rajadharma, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, and responsible citizenship can inform present-day education, governance, and public life.

Through his books, research tools, educational resources, and policy-oriented writings, Dr. Singh seeks to promote an academic culture that is rooted in Indian intellectual traditions while remaining open to modern evidence, critical inquiry, institutional reform, and democratic dialogue. His work is particularly relevant for students, teachers, teacher educators, researchers, civil society organisations, policy scholars, and readers interested in the relationship between education, citizenship, governance, inclusion, and Indian Knowledge System.

Preface

Indian Knowledge System has often been discussed as a cultural, philosophical, spiritual, or historical inheritance. However, its relevance is not limited to the past. It continues to offer powerful ideas for understanding public life, responsible citizenship, ethical leadership, community participation, social harmony, and governance. This book, *Indian Knowledge System and Civic Governance*, has been written with the purpose of connecting India's civilisational wisdom with the contemporary needs of democratic society.

Civic governance is usually understood in terms of institutions, policies, administrative systems, participation mechanisms, accountability structures, and citizen engagement. These are necessary dimensions of governance. Yet governance cannot be sustained by procedures alone. A democratic society also needs values, duties, moral imagination, shared responsibility, respect for diversity, public reasoning, and commitment to the common good. Indian Knowledge System provides a rich foundation for thinking about these deeper dimensions of public life.

This book argues that civic governance must be understood not merely as a technical process of managing people and institutions, but as an ethical and social process through which citizens, communities, and institutions work together for collective welfare. Ideas such as Dharma, Rajadharma, Seva, Lokasangraha, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, constitutional morality, Fundamental Duties, civic responsibility, family-based value formation, community participation, and national identity are therefore central to the discussion.

The book begins with the meaning and scope of civic governance and then moves toward the relationship between Indian Knowledge System and public life. It examines Fundamental Duties as a moral charter of citizenship and discusses why governance must go beyond policy efficiency. It further highlights education as the foundation of civic responsibility and explains how family, community, and culture contribute to civic character formation. The later chapters examine national identity, responsible behaviour, and the possibility of developing an IKS-based model of civic governance for contemporary India.

The intention of this book is not to romanticise the past or present traditional knowledge as a substitute for modern constitutional governance. Rather, the book seeks to create a meaningful dialogue between Indian civilisational thought and contemporary democratic practice. It recognises that modern India requires constitutional institutions, evidence-based policy, inclusive education, technological capability, social justice, public accountability, and participatory governance. At the same time, it argues that these systems become stronger when they are guided by ethical values, cultural rootedness, community wisdom, and civic responsibility.

This book has been written in an accessible academic style so that it can be useful for students, teachers, teacher educators, civil society workers, public administration learners, educational planners, researchers, and general readers interested in Indian Knowledge System and governance. It may also be useful for courses and discussions related to civic education, constitutional values, public policy, teacher education, value education, Indian Knowledge System, public administration, and social responsibility.

The larger purpose of this work is to encourage readers to think about citizenship not only as a legal identity, but as a lived responsibility. A citizen is not only a receiver of rights and services; a citizen is also a participant in public life, a contributor to community well-being, a protector of shared values, and a moral agent in democracy. Similarly, governance is not only the work of government; it is a collective process shaped by institutions, communities, families, schools, civil society, and citizens themselves.

If this book inspires readers to think more deeply about their duties, their communities, their institutions, and their role in building a just and responsible society, it will have served its purpose.

Dr. Harshvardhan Singh

New Delhi, India | 2026

Acknowledgement

I express my sincere gratitude to all teachers, scholars, students, community workers, public servants, and knowledge traditions that have inspired the writing of this book. The subject of Indian Knowledge System and civic governance is vast, and this work has been shaped by many streams of thought—classical Indian wisdom, constitutional values, civic education, public administration, democratic participation, ethical leadership, and community life.

I acknowledge the contribution of India's intellectual and cultural traditions, which have preserved and transmitted ideas of Dharma, Seva, Lokasangraha, Rajadharma, self-discipline, social harmony, ecological balance, and collective welfare across generations. These ideas continue to provide guidance for public life and responsible citizenship.

I am thankful to the educators and learners who continue to ask how education can move beyond information and become a force for character, citizenship, and social responsibility. Their questions have strengthened the educational foundation of this book.

I also acknowledge the role of civil society organisations, local communities, grassroots workers, and public institutions that continue to demonstrate the importance of participation, accountability, service, and community-based problem-solving in democratic life.

I extend my thanks to **Educators Plus** and **Elite Research Press** for supporting the publication of this work and for encouraging academic writing that connects Indian Knowledge System with contemporary educational and policy concerns.

Finally, I thank the readers of this book. A book on civic governance becomes meaningful only when it enters public discussion, classroom reflection, policy dialogue, and community action. I hope this work contributes in some small way to the larger task of building an informed, responsible, ethical, and participatory citizenry.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Form
AI	Artificial Intelligence
APSA	American Political Science Association
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DPSP	Directive Principles of State Policy
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IKS	Indian Knowledge System
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MUN	Model United Nations
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NEP	National Education Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSS	National Service Scheme
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
RTE	Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education
RTI	Right to Information
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TKDL	Traditional Knowledge Digital Library
ULB	Urban Local Body
UN	United Nations

Methodological Note / Source Note

This book is a conceptual, educational, and policy-oriented work. It is not presented as an empirical research report based on primary data collection. Instead, it develops an interpretive and applied framework for understanding the relationship between Indian Knowledge System, civic governance, public life, constitutional responsibility, ethical leadership, community participation, and citizenship education.

The book draws upon multiple knowledge domains, including Indian Knowledge System, civic education, public administration, constitutional values, democratic participation, ethical governance, family and community studies, national identity, and social responsibility. It attempts to connect classical Indian ideas with contemporary governance concerns in a manner that is accessible to students, teachers, teacher educators, civil society workers, public administration learners, policy scholars, and general readers.

The concepts used in the book, such as Dharma, Rajadharma, Seva, Lokasangraha, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, constitutional morality, Fundamental Duties, civic responsibility, and public accountability, are discussed as educational and civic ideas rather than as narrow legal or religious doctrines. The purpose is to explore their relevance for public life, ethical citizenship, community well-being, and democratic participation.

The tables and frameworks presented in the book are largely explanatory and conceptual in nature. They are intended to organise ideas, compare models, simplify complex relationships, and support classroom or policy discussion. Unless otherwise stated, tables and conceptual models may be treated as the author's own analytical organisation of the subject matter.

The discussion of Indian Knowledge System in this book does not claim that traditional knowledge should replace modern science, constitutional governance, legal procedures, public policy, or evidence-based administration. Rather, the book argues for a dialogic and integrative approach in which Indian civilisational wisdom, community knowledge, constitutional morality, contemporary research, democratic institutions, and modern policy tools can work together for responsible governance and social well-being.

Where the book refers to classical Indian concepts, constitutional provisions, national policies, educational reforms, public programmes, or historical examples, readers are encouraged to consult original texts, official documents, policy reports, legal sources, and scholarly studies for deeper understanding. A detailed reference list should be included at the end of the book before final publication.

This book should therefore be read as an academic and policy-reflective contribution to the discussion on how Indian Knowledge System can inform civic governance, responsible citizenship, ethical leadership, education, community participation, and public life in contemporary India.

Glossary of Key Terms

Active Citizenship

Active citizenship refers to the informed, responsible, and participatory role of citizens in public life. It includes voting, community service, public discussion, civic awareness, volunteering, social responsibility, and holding institutions accountable.

Civic Character

Civic character refers to the values and habits that make a person responsible in public life. These include honesty, cooperation, respect for diversity, discipline, empathy, justice, service, and commitment to the common good.

Civic Education

Civic education is the process of preparing learners to understand their rights, duties, constitutional values, democratic institutions, public responsibilities, and role in society. It may take place through schools, families, communities, media, and direct participation.

Civic Governance

Civic governance is a participatory approach to governance in which citizens, communities, civil society, institutions, and government work together for public welfare. It emphasises participation, accountability, transparency, responsibility, and the common good.

Civic Participation

Civic participation means the involvement of citizens in public affairs. It includes voting, attending public meetings, joining community organisations, participating in Gram Sabha or local bodies, volunteering, advocacy, and giving feedback on policies.

Civic Responsibility

Civic responsibility refers to the duties and ethical obligations of citizens toward society, the Constitution, public institutions, environment, public property, fellow citizens, and the nation.

Civil Society

Civil society refers to the space between the state, market, and family where citizens organise themselves for public causes. It includes NGOs, community groups, professional associations, voluntary organisations, social movements, and citizen platforms.

Common Good

The common good refers to the welfare of all members of society, especially conditions that allow people and communities to live with dignity, justice, security, opportunity, and mutual respect.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is the process through which people participate in identifying problems, discussing solutions, shaping decisions, implementing programmes, and monitoring outcomes that affect their lives.

Constitutional Morality

Constitutional morality refers to respect for the values, principles, procedures, and ethical spirit of the Constitution. It includes commitment to justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, dignity, rule of law, and democratic responsibility.

Democratic Participation

Democratic participation means the active involvement of citizens in democratic processes such as elections, public deliberation, policy consultation, local governance, civic dialogue, and community action.

Dharma

Dharma is a central Indian concept referring to duty, moral order, responsibility, righteousness, and ethical conduct. In civic life, it may be understood as responsible action toward oneself, society, nature, and public institutions.

Digital Civic Engagement

Digital civic engagement refers to the use of online platforms, mobile applications, social media, and digital tools for citizen participation, public feedback, transparency, service delivery, and community mobilisation.

Fundamental Duties

Fundamental Duties are constitutional duties of citizens listed in Article 51A of the Constitution of India. They remind citizens of their moral and civic responsibilities toward the nation, Constitution, environment, public property, scientific temper, and social harmony.

Governance

Governance refers to the process through which decisions are made, implemented, monitored, and evaluated in society. It includes government institutions, administrative systems, public participation, accountability, and policy processes.

Gram Sabha

Gram Sabha is a village-level body consisting of registered voters in a village or group of villages. It is an important institution for local democracy, participation, accountability, and decentralised governance.

Indian Knowledge System

Indian Knowledge System refers to the diverse intellectual, philosophical, scientific, artistic, ecological, educational, ethical, and practical knowledge traditions developed in India over centuries. It includes both classical textual traditions and community-based knowledge practices.

Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous knowledge refers to local, community-based, and traditional knowledge developed through long experience with land, environment, culture, health, agriculture, social life, and resource management.

Lokasangraha

Lokasangraha refers to the idea of welfare, order, and upliftment of the world or society. In governance, it may be understood as action performed for collective welfare and social harmony.

National Identity

National identity refers to the shared sense of belonging, responsibility, history, culture, constitutional values, and collective purpose that connects citizens to the nation.

Participatory Governance

Participatory governance is a model in which citizens and communities are actively involved in decision-making, policy design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Panchayati Raj Institutions

Panchayati Raj Institutions are local self-government bodies in rural India. They include Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, and Zila Parishad, and are important for decentralised democracy.

Public Accountability

Public accountability means that government officials, institutions, and public bodies are answerable to citizens for their decisions, actions, use of resources, and outcomes.

Public Administration

Public administration refers to the organisation and implementation of government policies, programmes, services, and administrative systems.

Public Good

Public good refers to goods, services, values, or conditions that benefit society collectively, such as clean environment, public health, education, peace, justice, and social trust.

Rajadharma

Rajadharma refers to the ethical duty of rulers or public authorities to govern justly, protect people, promote welfare, maintain order, and act in accordance with moral responsibility.

Responsible Behaviour

Responsible behaviour means acting with awareness of consequences, respect for others, concern for society, commitment to duties, and willingness to contribute to the common good.

Right to Information

Right to Information refers to the legal right of citizens to access information from public authorities. It strengthens transparency, accountability, and citizen oversight.

Seva

Seva means selfless service. In civic life, it refers to service performed for the welfare of others, community development, public good, and social harmony.

Social Capital

Social capital refers to the trust, cooperation, networks, relationships, and shared norms that enable people and communities to work together effectively.

Sustainable Governance

Sustainable governance refers to governance that balances present needs with long-term social, environmental, cultural, and economic well-being.

Transparency

Transparency means openness in decision-making, information sharing, public processes, and institutional functioning. It allows citizens to understand and evaluate governance.

Urban Local Bodies

Urban Local Bodies are institutions of local self-government in urban areas, such as Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, and Nagar Panchayats.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam means “the world is one family.” It expresses a civilisational idea of universal belonging, mutual respect, interdependence, and global responsibility.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism refers to unpaid or self-motivated service performed for the benefit of individuals, communities, society, or public causes.



Indian Knowledge System and Civic Governance explores how India's civilisational wisdom can inform contemporary citizenship, ethical governance, civic responsibility, public accountability, community participation, and democratic public life.

The book connects Indian Knowledge System with key ideas such as Dharma, Rajadharma, Seva, Lokasangraha, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Fundamental Duties, constitutional morality, family and community-based character formation, national identity, responsible behaviour, and participatory governance. It argues that governance is not only about policy efficiency, administrative systems, and institutional procedures, but also about values, duties, social trust, ethical leadership, and citizen participation.

Written in an accessible academic style, the book moves from the meaning and scope of civic governance to the role of Indian Knowledge System in public life. It examines Fundamental Duties as a moral charter of citizenship, discusses why governance must go beyond technical efficiency, explains education as the foundation of civic responsibility, and highlights the role of family, community, and national identity in shaping responsible citizens. The final chapter presents an IKS-based model of civic governance that integrates local knowledge, sustainability, technology, community wisdom, and democratic participation.

This book is useful for students, teachers, teacher educators, researchers, civil society workers, public administration learners, policy scholars, and readers interested in Indian Knowledge System, citizenship education, governance, value education, constitutional responsibility, and public life.

At its core, the book invites readers to see citizenship not only as a legal status, but as a lived responsibility. It reminds us that a strong democracy depends not only on institutions, but also on informed, ethical, participatory, and responsible citizens.



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