



PRESS RELEASE

IIT Mandi organizes workshop on Indian Knowledge System and Mental Health

The Institute aims to set up an academic program on Indian Knowledge System and mental health that can benefit society. The general goal is to formalize the Indian Knowledge System as a scientific discipline.

Mandi, 28th March 2022: The Indian Institute of Technology Mandi aims to provide students, academia, and practitioners with insights on empirical research pertaining to the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and mental health. Towards this goal, the Institute organized a three-day workshop on 'Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and Mental Health' between 25th and 27th March 2022 in partnership with IIT Mandi iHub and HCI Foundation. The workshop was sponsored by the State Bank of India, Netweb Technologies, and Hospimedical.

With the advent of leading artificial intelligence and human-computer interaction, the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) education highlights the importance and benefits of this system for the body, the mind, and the consciousness. The workshop covered talks and brainstorming on graduate curricula based on IKS, as well as different research topics related to it.

Addressing the inaugural event, Chief Guest Shri. K Sanjay Murthy, Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India, said, "The transformation of traditional knowledge forms into science is the need of the hour. It is essential that these knowledge systems be standardised in terms of their utility and consumption by the general population without creating any hype or unverified claims. I am glad that IIT Mandi has taken this step to formalize Indian Knowledge Systems as a scientific discipline. Mental health is also subjected to a great deal of social stigma in India, with youth and seniors alike suffering from various mental disorders. It is important that this subject be dealt with within the Indian Knowledge Systems within a holistic framework for its acceptance among Indians."

Using bio-signals such as electroencephalograms (EEGs), brain imaging, as well as virtual reality-based immersive neuron-feedback, the programme envisioned at IIT Mandi seeks scientific innovations aimed at addressing mental health with the Indian Knowledge System. This will allow both IKS and mental health challenges to benefit from a scientific approach.

Highlighting the importance of the workshop, Professor Laxmidhar Behera, Director, IIT Mandi, emphasized that the very foundation of the Indian Knowledge System was built on the hypothesis that matter in its elementary (subtle) form is cognitive and thus cognitive emotion and behavior are not emergent properties of any complex molecular combinations.

Welcoming those present at the workshop, Prof. Behera said, "Is the



mind simply the brain in action, or a more fundamental object than any fundamental object known within empiric science? Even the Nobel laureate Christof Koch has changed his stance from the former to the latter. Understanding cognition qua cognition is not only a very fundamental question within science but also has the ability to change the discourse of natural science and associated technology in complementing harmonious and sustainable existence.”

Professor Behera went on to highlight how recent studies on IKS such as yoga, meditation, music, Sanskrit, and other forms of performing arts also demonstrate the therapeutic values they bring to human psychic nature in terms of cognitive enhancement, stress relief, alleviation of depression, and so forth. “Biological signals such as electroencephalogram (EEG) and functional brain images along with the virtual reality-based neuro-feedback approaches have ushered a new age of scientific innovations where many claims of IKS can be verified and standardized for effective consumption by the general populace”, **he added.**

Underlining the importance of this approach, Prof. Laxmidhar Behera, said, “Mental health is becoming an issue for everyone like a pandemic due to a lack of proper scientific understanding of the holistic nature of body, brain, and mind. This workshop is a platform where experts will deliberate on all issues related to IKS and its relevance to mental health. IIT Mandi has taken the initiative to start an academic program on IKS and Mental Health. A proper deliberation will help this program to get the right direction. There will be a brainstorming panel discussion on course curriculum as well as a similar discussion on enumerating relevant research agendas useful for society at large. I welcome everyone for joining in these very important deliberations that may set new standards for an inclusive paradigm for science and technology.”

The workshop participants included academia, industry, researchers, experts, and practitioners of the Indian Knowledge System. Workshop participants focused on issues related to IKS and mental health through expert presentations, poster sessions, panel discussions, and brainstorming sessions.

While giving the welcome speech, Dr. Varun Dutt, Associate Professor, School of Computing and Electrical Engineering, IIT Mandi, said, “In a world driven by cutting-edge artificial intelligence and human-computer interaction, the Indian knowledge system (IKS) education may first seem to be an urban legend. However, recent research reveals the importance and benefits of IKS for the human body, mental health, and wellbeing. In fact, IKS has deep roots that are grounded in Indian history, philosophy, society, arts, languages, science and technology, and life sciences.”

Speaking about the objectives of the workshop, the Guest of Honor, Padma Shri Acharya Nagendra, said, “Firstly, I would like to congratulate IIT Mandi for organizing such an event which has brought together experts from all around the world to share their knowledge about the Indian Knowledge System. With mental health becoming a major concern globally, it is imperative we go back to our Indian Knowledge System and find solutions that can help us lead better lives.”



Expert from IIT Bombay, IIT Kharagpur, California Institute of Technology, IIT Delhi, IIT (BHU) AIIMS New Delhi, AIIMS Rishikesh, INMAS DRDO, University of Groningen, Patanjali Research Foundation, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Creative Movement Therapy Association of India, Maharishi Markandeshwar University, SIVAS Health Research Institute, Secunderabad, US Department of Veterans Affairs, USA, Loyola Marymount University, Texas University, Being AI, and Breathing Minds participated in this workshop.

Topics discussed in the workshop were related to curriculum formation on Indian Knowledge System, yoga and meditation for promotion and Mental Health, art forms endorsing mental health, and ayurveda, psychology and mental health along with various brainstorming sessions that remained the highlight of the event. A roadmap has been chalked out through rigorous brainstorming to establish this unique program on Indian Knowledge System and Mental Health (IKSMH).

Dr. Arnav Bhavsar, Associate Professor, School of Computing & Electrical Engineering, IIT Mandi, proposed the vote of thanks at the function.

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About [IIT Mandi](#)

IIT Mandi has four Academic Schools and three major Research Centers. The Schools are: School of Computing and Electrical Engineering, School of Basic Sciences, School of Engineering, and School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Centers are: Advanced Materials Research Centre (AMRC; set up with an investment of Rs. 60 crores), Centre for Design and Fabrication of Electrical Devices (C4DFED; has Rs. 50 crores worth of fabrication tools), and BioX Centre (has acquired research equipment worth Rs. 15 crores).

The unique, project-oriented B.Tech. curriculum is centred around its 4-year long Design and Innovation stream. From August 2019, IIT Mandi started 3 new and unique B. Tech. programmes in Data Science and Engineering, Engineering Physics, and Dual Degree in Bioengineering. Since the inception of the Institute, IIT Mandi faculty have been involved in over 275 Research and Development (R&D) projects worth more than Rs. 120 crore.

IIT Mandi set up the IIT Mandi iHub and HCI Foundation (iHub; a section-8 company) on its campus at Kamand with significant funding of INR 110 crores from the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India. The iHub is planned to fuel research and technology development, skill development, startup and innovation, and collaborations in the HCI and allied AI/ML areas in India. IIT Mandi is the only second-generation IIT to be featured at rank no. 7 in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements of the Innovation Cell, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

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