

**SOCIETY OF DESIGN THINKING
PROFESSIONALS
NEWSLETTER**



Volume 2: Issue 6

For more information, reach out to us at info@sntp.co.uk

<https://www.sntp.co.uk/>

FOUNDER'S SPEAK

“In the convergence of Design Thinking and ancient Indian wisdom lies the power to innovate with empathy, adaptability, and timeless insight.”



Over the past 15 years, we've frequently encountered the creative problem-solving approach known as "Design Thinking," which has become widely adopted by companies seeking to address complex business challenges and introduce fresh innovations into their systems.

From corporate boardrooms to government offices, there is a growing acknowledgment of its potential to revolutionize problem-solving. In India's burgeoning economy, Design Thinking has captured the imagination of industries like IT and manufacturing, offering a new avenue for innovation.

However, in India, methodologies like Design Thinking and their associated theories have deep roots in ancient practices, long predating their modern-day recognition. If we look back to ancient times, our sages and scholars routinely employed these approaches to streamline the intricacies of various concepts through numerous iterations, ultimately innovating final products and delivering solutions to the populace.

The Vedas, known as "Shruti," are a remarkable example of artificial intelligence from time immemorial. Indian epic scriptures and tales from ancient times describe even more potent abilities, skills, and technologies, which foreign intellectuals once dismissed as fanciful and untrue. However, today, the world is in awe of the immense potential, authenticity, and credibility of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS).

When we contemplate the boundless ocean of ancient knowledge, we realize that Design Thinking principles resonate much with IKS.

Stay Tuned!

Dr. Jimmy Jain
Founder
Society of Design Thinking Professionals

Editor's Speak

Almost everyone in India knows about the concept of Pushpaka Vimana – an airplane, celestial weapons, palaces with magical devices, and many more that existed in ancient India, as their grandparents narrate the stories from mythological epics.

The designs from ancient India are not the work of an individual. The work reflects a strong teamwork of experts from various disciplines and skills. Without a cohesive team spirit, aligned thinking, and systematic activities, design of such a caliber would not have been possible. The designs emerged from the purpose and the purpose came from the urge or the empathy, the understanding of the needs of fellow humans and acting upon it. Concluding to the fact that the ancient Indian

Design Thinking was holistic and pragmatic. It encompasses human-centric considerations and any aspect whether psychological, social, economic, or environmental that has the potential to affect human life, as an integral consideration of Design Thinking. The Design Thinking tools derived from ancient India can be integrated by the new age designers in their design process to strengthen ideation to take innovation to a higher level and address various problems that the present world is facing.

Feel free to write to me at afreen@sdtp.co.uk, in case of feedback, input, or if you want us to cover any specific topic.

Afreen Fatima
Content & Community Manager
Society of Design Thinking Professionals



The Roots of Design Thinking in the Ancient Indian Knowledge System (IKS)



Beyond its contemporary applications, Design Thinking has deep roots in ancient philosophies, particularly within the Indian Knowledge System. This perspective emphasizes the holistic nature of problem-solving, which considers the technical aspects and the human experience. Drawing inspiration from ancient Indian wisdom, modern practitioners can augment their understanding of Design Thinking and unlock new avenues for innovation.

Design Thinking: A Catalyst for IKS

Design Thinking represents more than just a problem-solving methodology; it embodies a process of knowledge creation. Rooted in the ancient wisdom of India, which spans millennia of codified human knowledge, Design Thinking offers a fresh perspective on comprehensively understanding and creatively solving problems. This prompts us to explore whether Indian wisdom holds insights that can enrich the Design Thinking process.

We Have Ignited The Spark
of Innovation at -



And many more...

The Roots of Design Thinking in the Ancient Indian Knowledge System (IKS)

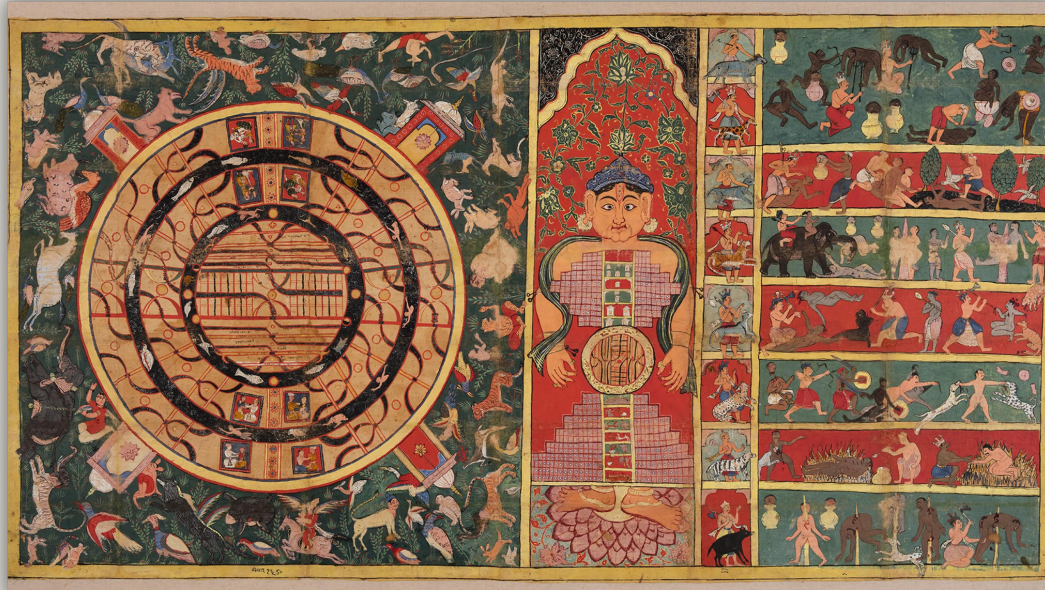


Exploring Pramanas

In ancient Indian texts, the concept of Pramana, meaning "evidence," provides a framework for acquiring knowledge. Among the six accepted Pramanas, Pratyaksha (direct knowledge), Anumana (deduction), and Shabda (knowledge from experts) resonate with contemporary business practices:

- **Pratyaksha:** This entails information obtained through the senses and the mind. Indian thinkers recognized intuitive knowledge acquired beyond sensory perception, akin to what we now understand as intuition. "Intuition is the whisper of the soul," as ancient wisdom suggests.
- **Anumana:** In today's data-driven world, deduction finds relevance, particularly in Big Data analysis. Businesses rely on deductive reasoning to analyze past data and forecast future trends. "Data is the new oil," a modern-day adage reminds us.
- **Shabda:** This underscores the importance of learning from experienced individuals. In Indian philosophy, the role of the guru (teacher) is held in high regard, fostering the development of diverse philosophical schools. "A true teacher enlightens the path of many," an ancient proverb reflects.

Restoring Forgotten Perspectives: Design Thinking Process

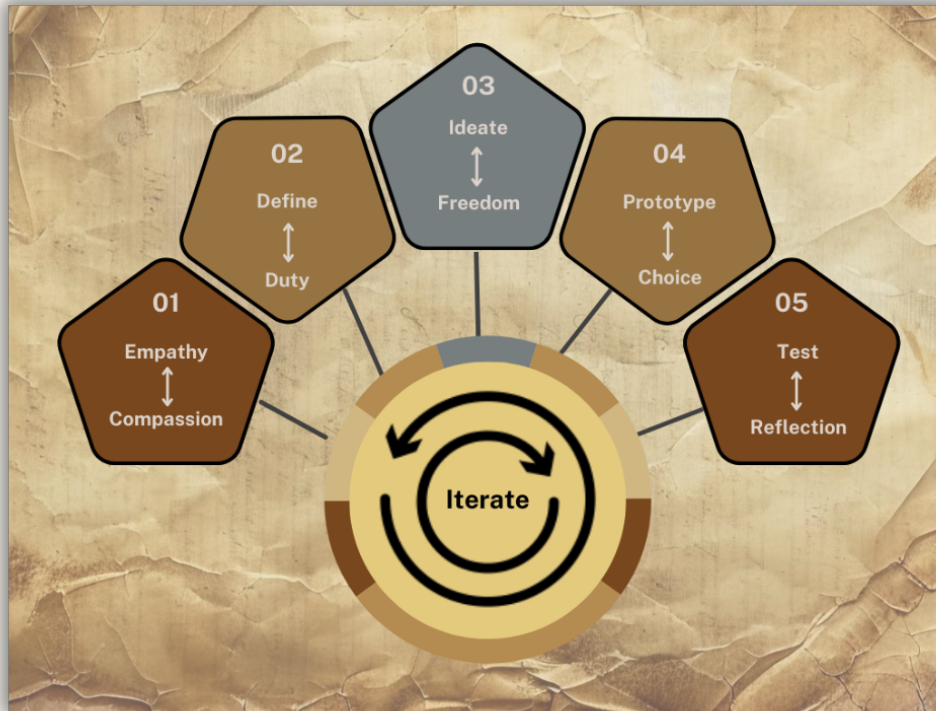


Design Thinking aims to revive perspectives like metaphors, postulates, and absence, which offer alternative ways of understanding reality:

- **Metaphors:** Ubiquitous in all native languages, metaphors serve as powerful tools for eliciting empathy and understanding users' perspectives. "A picture is worth a thousand words," highlighting the effectiveness of visual storytelling.
- **Anupalabdhi:** This provides valuable insights by defining what something is not. In brand development, for example, identifying what a brand stands for and what it does not stand for helps create a distinct identity. "In the absence of clarity, there is chaos," timeless wisdom reminds us.

Design Thinking rekindles ancient wisdom by embracing diverse perspectives such as metaphorical storytelling and discerning absence. These approaches offer profound insights into understanding users' experiences and shaping brand identities. "Diversity is the mother of creativity," echoing the sentiment that diverse perspectives fuel innovation.

Design Thinking and IKS: Resonating Principles



In a symphony of ancient wisdom and modern problem-solving, the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) harmoniously resonates with the principles of Design Thinking. Rooted in time-immemorial philosophies, IKS offers insights that seamlessly align with the innovative and empathetic approaches of Design Thinking. This convergence of traditional wisdom and contemporary methodologies creates a holistic framework for addressing complex challenges and nurturing a society that blends ancient values with cutting-edge solutions.

Empathy - Compassion

Compassion finds its roots in the Indian Knowledge System, notably in Patanjali Yoga Sutra's Samadhi Padasutra 33. Within this ancient wisdom, Maitri (friendship) extends towards those experiencing joy, while Karuna (kindness and compassion) directs empathy towards the distressed. Additionally, Mudita encourages celebratory joy for the virtuous, and Upeksha urges equanimity in the face of wisdom. These principles, articulated by Sage Patanjali, illuminate the significance of compassion in understanding diverse perspectives. Listening with Maitri and Karuna not only aids in objective comprehension but also contributes to a more refined and perfected understanding, echoing the essence of diverse thinking within the Indian Knowledge System.

Design Thinking and IKS: Resonating Principles

Define - Duty

Duty, as expounded in the Indian Knowledge Systems, is shaped by timeless principles articulated in the Yamas and Niyamas from Sage Patanjali's Yoga Sutra. These eternally applicable guidelines navigate individuals through life's different phases, emphasizing duties for seekers, householders, and those in the vanaprastha (retired life). Defined based on inherent characteristics or Gunas, each person's duty is intricately linked to their behavior. The flexibility inherent in the Indian Knowledge System allows for diverse paths, acknowledging the myriad combinations of characteristics present in the world's 8 billion individuals. This uniqueness underscores the adaptability of the system, where the definition of a problem and its solution embraces a spectrum of possibilities.

Ideate - Freedom

The concept of freedom emerges as a catalyst for unbridled ideation, fostering an environment where the constraints of 'me' and 'my idea' dissipate. This liberation from restlessness and ignorance aligns with the core values of growth and sustenance embedded in Indian civilization. IKS emphasizes that true freedom arises when ignorance diminishes, allowing consciousness to express itself freely, unveiling a multitude of perspectives essential for ideation. Within this framework, the scriptures of IKS, known as Smriti, offer the freedom to question, interpret, and comment, encouraging open-mindedness and unconstrained thinking. However, Yogi Patanjali's sutra cautions against hindrances that may impede this freedom, guiding the seekers on the path of ideation within the broader canvas of IKS.

Prototype - Choice

Prototyping, a relatively modern concept, is akin to the ancient Indian Knowledge System's principle of Brahmacharya. In the stage of learning and implementation, individuals face challenges, seek guidance, adapt, and refine their understanding. Similarly, in prototyping, one tests and refines ideas on a manageable scale, gathering feedback and iterating. The Indian Knowledge System offers diverse philosophies (e.g., Advaita and Dvaita), allowing individuals to explore and adopt what aligns with their circumstances and character. Intellectual rigor, vital in both prototyping and philosophical exploration, emphasizes continuous learning and adaptation rather than a pursuit of an unattainable perfection.

Design Thinking and IKS: Resonating Principles

Test - Reflection

"Mananam, or reflection, is integral to personal and societal growth in the Indian Knowledge System, akin to modern testing practices. It involves self-analysis, drawing insights from experiences and feedback from diverse sources, including gurus and society. This iterative process, aligned with principles like Shraavanam and Nididhyasanam, fosters continuous improvement, ensuring alignment with personal and societal goals. Rooted in timeless wisdom, Mananam exemplifies the holistic approach of the Indian Knowledge System, guiding individuals on their path to advancement."

In conclusion, the principles embedded in the Indian Knowledge System offer a comprehensive guide for personal and societal advancement. As we draw parallels between ancient principles and modern concepts, we find resonance in the iterative processes. These principles, rooted in profound teachings such as Patanjali Yoga Sutra, provide a philosophical foundation for Design Thinking, innovation, and personal growth. The acknowledgment of diverse philosophies, the pursuit of intellectual rigor, and the pursuit of continuous learning mirrored in prototyping and philosophical exploration, reflect the adaptability and resilience ingrained in the Indian Knowledge System.

By embracing these principles, we can foster an environment where diverse thoughts flourish, and the free flow of ideas enriches both Design Thinking principles and broader life interactions. The principles of the Indian Knowledge System, with their adaptability and time-tested wisdom, serve to navigate the complexities of the present and evolve towards a harmonious and enlightened future.

Views from Thought Leader - Mr. Pavan Valluri

Design Thinking is not just about solving problems; it's a transformative methodology that ignites creativity and innovation. It empowers us to explore multiple solutions, leading to outcomes that resonate with the diverse needs of stakeholders. It's the art of crafting solutions that are not just functional but delightful, enriching the lives of all those involved."



Pavan is the Vice President of Consulting at CGI, his 24 years of experience in Banking, IT, and Product Management make him a true visionary and change agent. With a passion for creating simple, innovative solutions, Pavan is dedicated to bridging the gap between technology and business outcomes. His relentless pursuit of knowledge and commitment to continuous learning drive his mission to empower stakeholders and drive digital transformation.

Join us for an enlightening discussion exploring the synergy between Design Thinking and the ancient Indian Knowledge System. Pavan delves into the intersection of these two realms, offering insights into how embracing both principles can enrich our personal growth journey. Let's uncover the potential that emerges when creative problem-solving meets the wisdom of ancient Indian culture, guiding us toward holistic well-being and self-discovery.

How did this thought occur to you that the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and Design Thinking are linked?

The thought occurred to me after attending a session by Mr. Arun Jain about Design Thinking in 2018. His explanations intrigued me, prompting deeper study, especially considering my background in comparative religion. As I delved into the Indian Knowledge System, I discovered significant relevance, which piqued my interest further. Eventually, when asked to speak on the topic, my research solidified the connections, making it more interesting.

What are your insights as a Design Thinking Practitioner regarding the parallels drawn between IKS and Design Thinking?

My experience with Design Thinking predates its formal introduction, as we've been employing its principles for about 15 years. The emergence of formal frameworks helped crystallize our existing practices, particularly in empathizing with users and crafting solutions tailored to their needs. This human-centric approach resonates deeply with IKS principles, emphasizing innovation, growth, and creation.

How has your 10-year journey studying IKS been so far?

It's been a brilliant journey that has profoundly transformed me. Over the past decade, I've evolved significantly, becoming more grounded, balanced emotionally, and forward-looking. The feedback I receive from interactions is overwhelmingly positive, reinforcing my belief in personal growth and enjoyment of life in various spheres, including work and family.

How do we bridge the gap in understanding for those unfamiliar with concepts like IKS and its connection to Design Thinking?

Bridging this gap involves demystifying complex concepts like the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) by presenting them in relatable terms without diluting their essence. It requires a shift from traditional modes of imparting knowledge, especially for the current generation, which demands authenticity and comprehensive understanding. Embracing continuous learning and disseminating accurate information are crucial steps toward bridging this gap effectively.

How do we generate interest in people about IKS and Design Thinking?

Generating interest involves highlighting the practical applications and tangible benefits of integrating IKS principles with Design Thinking methodologies. By showcasing how these approaches address complex problems and foster ecosystem growth, we can appeal to individuals' innate curiosity and desire for meaningful impact. Engaging in interactive sessions and recommending accessible resources for further exploration can also nurture interest and encourage deeper learning.

Where can we find the resources to deep dive into the connections between IKS and Design Thinking?

For deeper insights into the Indian Knowledge System, I recommend exploring commentaries by scholars like Shankaracharya and Patanjali Yoga Sutras. Additionally, Swami Vivekananda's lectures, compiled in volumes such as "The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda," offer profound insights that remain relevant today. These resources provide a solid foundation for understanding IKS principles and their connections to broader concepts like Design Thinking.

In addition to that, I am excited to share that I am working on a series in collaboration with Square Sequel Consulting. This series will delve into the parallels between Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and Design Thinking, offering deeper insights into their interconnectedness and relevance to modern-day problem-solving. Stay tuned for a well-researched and studied exploration that intends to connect the timeless wisdom of IKS with the innovative principles of Design Thinking, providing a fresh perspective on addressing contemporary issues.

Design Reimagined



In conclusion, just as the Bhagwat Geeta elucidates the co-existence of the manifested and unmanifested principles in the universe, so too does the realm of design embody this duality. Design, whether in the form of a product, process, service, or strategy, represents the manifested aspect, perceptible by our senses. However, underlying this tangible manifestation is the unmanifested essence of Design Thinking, which guides and shapes the existence of design itself. Drawing parallels from the ancient Indian Knowledge System, we recognize that the co-existence of these two principles is fundamental to understanding and analyzing designs from antiquity. Thus, by delving into the essence of Design Thinking, we uncover the subtle yet profound influence that shapes the landscape of design, both past and present.

The integration of Design Thinking with India's rich knowledge systems offers a unique approach to problem-solving, blending tradition with innovation."

~ *Navi Radjou, Innovation and Leadership Strategist*

"Design Thinking, when combined with insights from India's ancient knowledge systems, presents a powerful framework for sustainable and inclusive development."

~ *Sonam Wangchuk, Engineer and Innovator*

"Indian knowledge systems, with their emphasis on holistic understanding and interconnectedness, complement Design Thinking principles, leading to more culturally relevant and effective solutions."

~ *Anil K. Gupta, Grassroots Innovation Expert*

"Design Thinking enriched by the wisdom of India's traditional knowledge systems has the potential to address complex societal challenges with empathy and creativity."

~ *Raghunath Mashelkar, Scientist and Innovation Leader*