

Indian Knowledge System and Assamese Folk Literature

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Abstract

In this analytical study, intricate relationships among Indsystem (IKS) along with Assamese folk literature focus on how traditional narratives serve as vessels of indigenous wisdom, cultural values, as well as societal norms. Assamese folk literature filled with rich oral traditional compositions consisting of various genres such as sadhukatha or folk tale, proverbs and lokgeet i.e. folk songs which are reflections of the beliefs, customs as well as ethical background of community. Through this study, an attempt is made to perpetuate as well as embody the Indian Knowledge System which has been wrapped up in Assamese folk literature.

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Introduction

Aims and Objectives

- Examine the Role of Oral Traditions:** Study how Assamese folktales, proverbs, folk songs act as body of indigenous knowledge where, it reflects societal norms, ethical values and environmental consciousness.
- Analyze Cultural Preservation Mechanisms:** Given the Indian knowledge system, examine the use of oral narratives in preserving and transmitting the Assamese cultural heritage of Assamese communities.
- Explore Educational Implications:** Detect potential of integrating indigenous knowledge from Assamese folk literature into contemporary educational curricula for promoting cultural awareness as well as sustainability practices.
- Address Preservation Challenges:** Discuss challenges related to documenting as well as preserving oral traditions in Assam along with proposing strategies for safeguarding these intangible cultural assets.

The study seeks to achieve these objectives in order to leverage the possible contributions towards a better grasp of the symbiotic relationship between the Indian Knowledge System and Assamese folk literature and the relevance of keeping indigenous narratives alive for the continuity of cultural practises and enrichment of education.

Methodology

To perform an analytical study on intersection of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and Assamese folk literature, a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary research methodology is vital. Finally, this methodology follows the steps of this approach:

1. Literature Review

Objective: For establishing a foundational understanding of existing studies on IKS as well as Assamese folk literature.

Approach: You should go through scholarly articles, books and research papers which talk about the Indian Knowledge System and the way it is manifested in Assamese folk traditions. It includes looking at studies on indigenous knowledge, cultural practices and oral traditions.

2. Data Collection

Primary Data

Fieldwork: Ethnographic fieldwork includes the visitation of different communities in Assam and observation and documentation of folk practices, performances as well as rituals.

Interviews: Locate the meanings and the functions of folk narrative by conducting semi-structured interviews with local scholars, practitioner and community elders.

Secondary Data: Archival Research: Assess existing Assamese folktales, songs, as well as manuscripts collections available in cultural institutions, museums, as well as libraries.

3. Content Analysis

Objective: For identifying recurring motifs, themes, as well as knowledge elements within Assamese folk literature which align with the IKS principles.

Approach: Collecting a number of narratives, analyze them for their embedded indigenous knowledge, especially on ethics, social norms, ecological practices, as well as philosophical ideas.

4. Comparative Analysis

Objective: For contextualizing Assamese folk literature within broader spectrum of Indian folk traditions.

Approach: Compare Assamese narratives with folk literature from other Indian regions to identify unique and shared elements of the Indian Knowledge System.

5. Documentation and Preservation

Objective: For addressing challenges related to documenting as well as preserving oral traditions.

Approach: Documentation of both content as well as context (with audio-visual recording tools for capturing performance events along with the narratives) is used. It extends the concept of local archives by collaborating with local communities and creating digital archives that would be accessible for educational as well as research purposes.

6. Educational Integration

Objective: It was used for exploring the potential for incorporating indigenous knowledge into current educational frameworks.

Approach: Further, it would be necessary to create the curriculum material to integrate the study findings in the shape of including the relevance of Assamese folk literature in teaching cultural values, environmental stewardship and ethical reasoning.

7. Ethical Considerations

Objective: To help ensure research takes the community's needs and interests into account and helps the community.

Approach: Contribute to note the contributions, obtain informed consent from participants and make sure study findings are shared with communities in accessible formats.

Through this comprehensive methodology, the study tries to give a good analysis based on how the Indian Knowledge System is integrated with Assamese folk literature and thereby preserved as well as appreciated indigenous cultural heritages. The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and Assamese Folk Literature represent two major pillars of cultural heritage of India and Northeastern region of Assam, providing rich insight into India's historical, philosophical and artistic traditions. The vast, multidimensional knowledge is passed down the generations from past to present; it is in both the IKS and Assamese folk literature which encompasses philosophy, spirituality, arts, folklore and social norms. An analytical study of this nature looks into and points out the underlying relationships between the two; and how Assamese folk literature should specifically be looked into as a separate piece within the broader canvas of Indian knowledge systems. Indian Knowledge System (IKS) Diverse and very old body of knowledge, wisdom and practices crystallised over

thousands of years in the Indian subcontinent are referred to as the Indian Knowledge System. It broadly relates to subjects such as philosophy, science, medicine, art, governance literature, etc and is communicated through both oral and written texts. The IKS reflects India's worldview, which is holistic, integrative and focused on the interconnectedness of all life forms and natural phenomena.

1. Philosophical Traditions

At the heart of the IKS lies Indian philosophy, which offers profound insights into the nature of existence, the universe and the self. Indian philosophical thought is characterized by a deep engagement with metaphysical questions about the nature of reality, the soul (atman), and ultimate liberation (moksha). There are six orthodox (astika) schools of thought: Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta as well as heterodox schools like Buddhism, Jainism and Charvaka. Among these, Vedanta school, based on teachings of the Upanishads, addresses the nature of reality and consciousness. The concepts of Brahman (universal consciousness) and Atman (individual soul) are central to Vedantic thought, reflecting a profound understanding of the nature of existence. These are the two prominent Advaita Vedanta, which was popularised by Adi Shankaracharya, which emphasises that the universe is non dual, and the individual soul and universal consciousness is ultimately one.

2. Scientific and Mathematical Knowledge

It should be noted that the Indian subcontinent has made important contributions in science and mathematics which remain relevant to modern thought. Aryabhata, Brahmagupta and Bhaskara, among other ancient Indian scholars made great contribution in the area of mathematics and Astronomy. Concepts of zero and decimal notation were introduced by Aryabhata in Aryabhatiya which was then adopted in the global world. Brahmagupta's works on algebra moreover they also made valuable contribution to the traditional system of Ayurveda as well as medical science in India. The Sushruta Samhita contained a lot taken up by ancient India concerning the advance of medical practices such as cataract surgery and herbal remedies, among others. According to Ayurveda, health is considered to be the balance between what has been described as body, mind and spirit, and it promotes prevention instead of treatment.

3. Linguistics and Grammar

Indian tradition in linguistics is rich; Panini's Ashtadhyayi being the most important of the works on ancient linguistic analysis. Panini's systematic approach to Sanskrit Grammar was a turning point in this study of language: it extended the framework which is still used today. Consequently, Panini's grammar also has led the way for further studies in semiotics and the structure of language.

4. Governance and Ethics

Works such as Kautilya's Arthashastra which are on statecraft, economics and military strategy, among others, encapsulated Indian knowledge of governance. The Arthashastra is pragmatist in their approach towards governance, stressing the applications of dharma (righteousness), artha (prosperity) as well as kama (desires) in a society in order to bring order to it.

The ethical dilemmas caused by an individual engaged in worldly action are discussed in the Bhagavad Gita, which was part of the Mahabharata. Thus, the Gita helps us to achieve

the balance between philosophy and practical life today. Although Gita provides profound insights in the field of dharma (duty), karma (action) and moksha (liberation) it is a practical book which helps us to integrate philosophy with our practical life. It is in support of selfless action and devotion, a moral and ethical framework.

Assamese Folk Literature

The cultural heritage of Assam is Assamese folk literature; Assam being a state in northeastern India. It demonstrates how Assamese History, Beliefs, Customs as well as Traditions of the community have been generated out of nature, its spirituality and socio-political environment. Folk literature in Assamese includes folk songs, myths and legends, stories along with proverbs which have been continuously passed on from one generation to another by word of mouth. It is deeply imbued with the region's social and religious practices.

1. Folk Songs and Ballads

Folk songs are one of the most important features of Assamese folk literature. Borgeet, Husori, Bihu Geet and other such songs make an integral part of Assamese people's cultural life. The devotional songs in praise of Lord Krishna, known as Borgeet, are composed by saint scholar Sankardeva and are important part of religious practises of the Vaishnavite community in Assam. The meaning of them is very deep, and they are sung in a call-and-response style, sometimes with dance and drama.

The other is Bihu Geet, a well-known form of folk song associated with Bihu festival which marks the arrival of spring and Assamese New Year. Love, harvest, nature and community bonding are the main themes of these songs. The Bihu geet of Assam is a representation of Assamese spirit and the heart and rhythmic movement of social fabric of the region.

2. Myths, Legends and Folktales

Myths, legends and folktales are present in abundance in the folk literature of Assam and they reveal something about the life and belief of the people. Many of these stories have good vs. evil, justice vs. injustice, human vs. supernatural forces elements. Some of the most famous folktales are that of Tejimola, Mritunjay, and The Legend of Dholakalika.

The case of Tejimola, is a story of a girl that is cruelly abused by her stepmother and turned into a flower. In general, these stories are about what need is the lesson of justice, as well as kindness and nature. In essence, Dholakalika tells of themes of heroism, loyalty and the battle between good and evil.

3. Religious Influence and Bhakti Movement

Bhakti Movement, having a stress on devotion to a personal god rather than ritualism in the practice, greatly influenced the Assamese folk literature. The chief architect of religious and literary life of the region was Sankardeva, the chief architect of this Bhakti Movement in Assam whose teaching emphasised devotion to Lord Vishnu and the devotional literature in the form of songs, dramas and hymns continued to be an important part of historical Assamese cultural identity. Ankiya Naat, the short devotional plays and are in the form of folk theatre, religious devotion in Assamese and formed together. But, these plays are performed with the traditional style of Bhaona and are very much an important part of Assamese Vaishnavism, and are still being played.

4. Proverbs, Sayings and Idioms

Proverbs, sayings and idiomatic expressions constitute one of the major aspects of Assamese folk literature. These expressions are also drawn from everyday life and have revealed in them the social norms, wisdom and humour of Assamese people. Such proverbs as "Agar jila, baida bairi" (where there is a will, there is a there a way); or "Baikoran groom, hridoy Thanda" (calm in heart, warm in action) are the expression of the people's wisdom and relationship advice.

Intersections between IKS and Assamese Folk Literature

The Indian Knowledge System and Assamese Folk Literature share several common elements, especially in their emphasis on the integration of spirituality, ethics and nature. Just as folk tales and songs of the Assamese folks reflect the concepts of dharma (righteousness) and moksha (liberation) in IKS, so do the moral lessons taught.

Both systems also attach great importance to the oral traditions as a means of preserving and transmitting knowledge. Many ancient texts of the IKS were passed down in an oral way before they were written, similarly, Assamese folk literature has been maintained by the generation of oral storytellers. Oral traditions have been playing a very important role in the existence of cultural identity and collective memory of Assamese people.

Additionally, the IKS and Assamese folk literature give importance to nature in Assamese folk songs and tales, the natural world is personified and revered, as in the IKS, the natural world is seen as an interconnected whole where human beings play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance and spiritual harmony.

Conclusion

Finally, it provides an analytical study of the Indian Knowledge System and Assamese Folk literature, and it is shown that they have a shared vision of life, holistic, ethical and deeply connected to nature. Folk literature of Assam is a store of cultural, social and spiritual heritage of the Assamese people; here, it is the IKS with its rich contributions to philosophy, science and ethics that gives a broad picture of existence. They have woven together a tapestry of wealth of wisdom that still affects the lives and identity of millions. This is a discussion of the two systems, which is an indicator of the living power of human knowledge, the human culture, the human storytelling, the human civilization.

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