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Translation in English Literature and the Indian Knowledge System

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Abstract

Translation has been instrumental in influencing English literature as a global literary landscape and in conveying various cultural and intellectual traditions across different languages. Within the context of India, translation has been crucial for the preservation, interpretation, and distribution of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS)—an extensive collection of philosophical, spiritual, scientific, ethical, and aesthetic wisdom developed over thousands of years.

Indigenous Indian writings in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, and a multitude of regional and tribal languages have primarily entered English literature through the process of translation. This paper explores the significance of translation in English literature, with a particular focus on the Indian Knowledge System. It also highlights the importance of IKS by examining its historical evolution, theoretical issues, cultural significance, and current relevance.

Key words: Translation, IKS, English literature, Relevance, Role

Introduction

Translation has been highly instrumental in not only making English literature a globally recognized literary field but also in the transmission of various cultural and intellectual traditions beyond language barriers. In the Indian context, translation has served as the core for the continuity, understanding, and sharing of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), a rich store of philosophical, spiritual, scientific, ethical, and aesthetic wisdom accumulated over thousands of years.

Native Indian literature penned in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, and many regional and tribal languages have been introduced into English literature mainly through the medium of translation. Hence, Indian knowledge has

been able to make the world its audience and at the same time have an impact on the evolution of Indian English literature.

The tripartite relationship of translation, English literature, and IKS is intricate and has evolved over time with the influences of colonialism, missionary scholarship, orientalist studies, and postcolonial intellectual movements. Although the initial translations were mostly reflective of Western prejudices, the subsequent translations by Indian scholars and writers have been oriented at giving back the indigenous points of view and cultural authenticity.

This paper discusses role played by translation in English literature and its connection with the Indian Knowledge System. Moreover, this paper highlights the importance of IKS through an exploration of its historical evolution, theory involved, cultural implications, and recent pertinence.

Review of Literature

During the period the first scholarly engagement, with translation in the context began with Orientalist scholars such as William Jones. William Jones translated Sanskrit texts like Shakuntala and William Jones helped bring literature to Europe. The translation mattered. Translation has sparked interest, in philosophy and Indian aesthetics. Critics emphasize that translation often forced texts into ideas. Some even point to the fact that translation reduced the uniqueness of texts.

Postcolonial scholars such, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak point out the politics of translation. Power relations shape how the native knowledge is shown. Spivak says translation is an act that goes beyond just matching words. Spivak says translation asks us to be open to the difference of the culture. Homi Bhabha calls translation a space, for culture talk. Homi Bhabha says translation makes the meanings always be rethought and hence, translation always matters.

A.K. Ramanujan, Raja Rao and Rabindranath Tagore have played roles in the translation literature, in fact they themselves have translated several texts into English. Ramanujan as a translator has privileged culture and context in the translations he had done. He had always posited that all oral literature and poetical texts should be very carefully translated from one language to another. Raja Rao said that English should be Indianized to convey philosophy. Raja Rao argued that the language must take on shape to carry ideas. The work of A.K. Ramanujan, Raja Rao and Rabindranath Tagore shows how translation can be a bridge, between cultures and how the choice of language can shape the way ideas travel across borders. The recent research on Indian Knowledge Systems informs that colonial frameworks can be dismantled and that translation acts as a decolonizing weapon to authenticate a text. Translation thus, relies not just on linguistic ideals and concepts but also a safe

construct of the cultural and intellectual academia which retraces global understanding of the greatness of Indian knowledge.

Methodology

This paper is a qualitative one and it is analytical in nature. It is based on literary criticism, translation studies, and postcolonial theory. The primary sources are Indian texts translated into English and English literary works inspired by IKS. Secondary sources, on the other hand, are critical essays, journal articles, and scholars' writings on translation and indigenous knowledge systems. The research focuses on major themes, that is to say, how translation works: as a channel for spreading knowledge a cultural link between India and the West a place for power, negotiation, and resistance Through the analysis of changes over time and discussions of the concepts, the paper desires to offer a thorough knowledge of the role of translation in English literature and the Indian Knowledge System.

Translation and the Transmission of Indian Knowledge

Ancient writings like the Vedas Upanishads Bhagavad Gita Ramayana Mahabharata Arthashastra and Natya Shastra as well as local literary traditions like Sangam and Bhakti poetry form the basis of the Indian Knowledge System. By translating these works into English, the Indian philosophical and moral ideas have been made accessible to readers worldwide transcending geographical and linguistic boundaries.

Many people these days are casually using the terms dharma, karma, moksha, rasa, and yoga mainly because they have been translated into English. You come across them a lot now, in books, psychology lessons, even talks about the environment or culture. The concepts have leapt out of their origins into various fields, including literature, philosophy, and spirituality.

Translations Under Colonialism and Their Flaws

During the colonial period, translation was a major instrument through which the colonizers maintained both political and intellectual supremacy. In order to understand and subsequently control the Indian society, English administrators and missionaries translated Indian literature. A large number of literary works were thus saved through such efforts; however, this very practice also accounted for the distortions and simplistic renderings.

Colonial translators frequently separated works of literature from their oral traditions, ceremonial usages, and metaphysical frameworks. At times, indigenous knowledge was portrayed as static, mysterious, or less developed in comparison to Western rationality. Hence, the Indian Knowledge System was, for the most part, Dancing Under Eurocentric Lenses.

Postcolonial Translation and Cultural Reclamation

Postcolonial translation efforts marked a shift closer to cultural reclamation and authenticity. Indian translators and writers sought to represent indigenous voices in a greater way faithfully whilst acknowledging the restrictions of English as a colonial language. Writers which include R. K. Narayan, Amitav Ghosh, and Arundhati Roy comprise translated myths, folk narratives, and philosophical thoughts into English fiction, growing a hybrid literary space. Translation in this section becomes an act of resistance and self-announcement. by way of translating indigenous texts on their personal terms, Indian pupils' top any Western dominance in know-how manufacturing and assert the relevance of IKS in modern-day worldwide discourse.

Translation and the enrichment of English Literature

Translation has enriched English literature alluding by the way of introducing alternative narrative systems, themes, and aesthetics. Indian storytelling traditions, cyclic notions of time, mythic creativeness, and moral complexity provide contrasts to linear Western narratives. English literature, through translation, becomes greater pluralistic and inclusive.

The Indian knowhow (IKS) represents a widespread and included frame of know-how encompassing philosophy, technology, literature, remedy, and spirituality, much of that is now handy through English translations. Texts just like the Vedas and Upanishads, translated by way of pupils including Max Muller and S. Radhakrishnan, who discovered metaphysical principles which included Brahman (closing truth) and Atman (self).

Great epics, which include the Ramayana (translated R. K. Narayan) and the Mahabharata (translated C. Rajagopalachari) communicate moral questions, social norms, and dharma standards via the story. Then again, scientific and realistic understanding is disclosed inside the works of Charaka Samhita (Ayurveda), Artha Shastra via Kautilya (statecraft and economics), and Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which all testify to India's methodical processes for fitness, governance, and self-realization.

These writings, therefore, contain the Indian understanding machine that integrates the fabric, moral, and nonsecular elements of life right into a constant and harmonious worldview. In addition, translation has also enabled English literature to respond to ecological expertise, community ethics, and non-secular humanism that are deeply rooted in Indian traditions and are, to a point, eco-friendly and socially aware regions.

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Indian works in English Translation – The Global Way

Indian literature in English translation is an excellent medium that bridges the space between the United States' classical historical past and the current, revealing a treasure of historical and medieval works. Most of the earliest Indian epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, initially written in Sanskrit, were translated into English by college students, C. Rajagopalachari, and Ramesh Menon. Subsequently these big epics were made accessible to the readers all over the world.

These remarkable epics talk about the trendy thoughts of obligation (dharma), and additionally, they present kinship and energy through multilayered recollections and philosophical dialogues. Besides, a classical Sanskrit play like Kalidasa's *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, which was translated by way of William Jones and later translators, allowed Western audiences to revel in Indian aesthetics, poetic imagery, and the idea of *rasa* (emotional essence), which had an effect on the new literary traditions.

Modern-day Indian literature as a whole has made a sizeable effect at the readers the world over, specifically through English translation. Rabindranath Tagore's Bengali pieces, specifically *Gitanjali*, which was translated by the writer himself, fantastically integrate spirituality, humanism, and poetic splendour, and it became one of the reasons the Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded to the poet in 1913. Munshi Prem Chand's Hindi/Urdu short stories and novels, among others, paint with realism and empathy the rural lifestyle, and social problems like the oppression of peasants and the peasants' struggles. These translations, on the other hand, retain the local voices and, alternatively, they cope with the ordinary problems like poverty, dignity, and ethical conflict, which makes it feasible for the non-Indian readers to narrate India's social realities first in the course of the colonial and later in the postcolonial period.

Cutting-edge works from India in translation also serve to deliver out the linguistic and thematic plurality inside the authentic nearby Indian languages. Mahasweta Devi's *Bengali Memories*, that have been translated with the aid of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in the booklet *Imaginary Maps*, are, by and large deal with the tribal groups dwelling on the margins of societies and how they monitor via these memories - the mechanisms that tribal peoples are subjected to, in addition to their strategies of resistance. Girish Karnad's Kannada language performances like *Tughlaq* and *Hayavadana* had been translated into English, and they depict historical and mythical events in a way that reflects the political and mental problems of present times. These translated portions taken as a whole reflect that Indian literature, through the ages in different languages, have applied narratives as a vehicle to question

identity, look for identity, and act as a mirror to the changing cultural and ethical milieu of the Indian subcontinent.

Role and Importance of Such Translations

Translations of Indian literary works into English are a vital gateway that opens the country's remarkable and polyglot literary heritage to the arena's readers. India is a land of masses of languages and dialects, so without translation, the wonderful majority of massive literary works could stay available only to the oral tradition of these languages or specific geographic regions. Via English translations, people everywhere on the globe can learn about Indian culture, traditions, non-secular thoughts, literature, and recognize its social issues, thereby promoting intercultural harmony and interplay. Besides, translations play a vital position within the protection of classical and local literature through constantly introducing them to the academic global and standard public; consequently, literary treasures stay unforgotten and handy. Luckily, the ones translated are remembered due to the fact that they offer a louder voice to the unprivileged and particularly cultural viewpoints.

Some of the primary issues, collectively with caste oppression, ladies' subjugation, colonial domination, and tribal rebellion, became recognized on the global stage and get scholarly critique through the converted portions of literature. These globally prominent consequences within the development of comparative literature studies place Indian literature in the region of world literature. Moreover, translations offer an impetus to creators, directors, and intellectuals throughout the globe, thereby facilitating cultural interplay and mutual agreement; at the same time, they enhance India's literary footprint in the global area.

Conclusion

Translation is at the heart of the relationship between English literature and the Indian knowledge system. it really works as a essential automobile facilitating renovation, delivery, or even re, interpretation of local knowledge, spanning both time and region. In reality, it is through translations that age, vintage Indian scriptures in areas like philosophy, literature, natural sciences, and spirituality have long gone past their local languages and cultures to become a part of a global intellectual history. yet, the colonial era noticed many such translations turning into gear in propagating unequal energy relations and orientalist stereotypes, consequently Europeanizing or converting Indian knowledge structures to a fixed of Western standards and standards. despite the fact that, via those translation channels, Indian literature reached the arena which in flip facilitated the development of latest scholarly discussions and interpretations.

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The translation practices at some stage in the postcolonial and contemporary era has progressively shifted recognition in the direction of their efforts in amplifying the voices of the natives and attributing return of the highbrow and cultural dignity to the Indian understanding of traditions. In recent times, translators and students positioned greater emphasis on cultural context, conceptual constancy, and moral commitment as a way of their resistance against the sooner attitudes of domesticating or exoticizing Indian texts. therefore, English literature has become a truly global and multicultural area that, among other things, consists of multiple epistemologies, narrative genres, and philosophical frameworks. Besides, translated Indian texts are well recognized in international literature and comparative literature, thus contributing to the creation of a greater inclusive literary canon that reflects diverse approaches of understanding and deciphering human stories.

Through the very act of translation, the Indian knowledge system (IKS) becomes, initially, more visible and is able to benefit a positive, renewed relevance within international academic, literary, and interdisciplinary discourse. Philosophy, ethics, governance, medicine, and spirituality are some of the Indian ancient know-hows regain and retain knowledge; the English translations of such texts have enabled the know-how from India to be introduced into modern debates on sustainability, health, management, and social duty. From what has been stated, translation is going beyond being only a technical or linguistic act; it is able to be taken into consideration a deeply cultural and ethical duty. It determines the quantity to which know-how is shared, understood, and valued, thereby making sure that neither the intellectual traditions are simply the history of the past nor that they wander away in translation, but that they nevertheless continue to have a meaningful improvement in an international characterised through growing interconnectedness.

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