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REFLECTION OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM IN SOME OF THE SELECTED INDIAN ENGLISH NOVELS

Dr. Pramod Machhindra Nil

Department of English, Kohinoor Arts, Commerce and Science College, Khultabad, Dist. Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, MS, India

Abstract

This research paper examines the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and its profound reflection within selected Indian English novels, spanning a tradition of nearly a century. By analyzing works from authors like Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan, Githa Hariharan, and Amitav Ghosh, the study explores how ancient cultural values, folk traditions, and mythology converge with modern literary forms. The analysis highlights the use of oral storytelling in Kanthapura, spiritual transformation in The Guide, and the integration of Puranic myths in The Thousand Faces of Night. Furthermore, it investigates the human-nature interactions and local legends depicted in The Hungry Tide. These narratives act as living forms of memory, serving as moral guides and expressions of communal identity. The study also aligns these literary reflections with the National Education Policy 2020, which emphasizes the integration of IKS into the modern academic framework. Ultimately, the research demonstrates how modernization has created a complex yet beneficial synthesis of ancient wisdom and contemporary developments. This synthesis enriches India's intellectual environment while maintaining a dialogue between cultural authenticity and global innovation.

Keywords
Indian Knowledge System, IKS, Folk Tradition, Cultural Heritage, Mythology, etc.

Full Article

The present research paper focuses on Indian knowledge system and its reflection in Indian English novels. The present paper studies some of the Indian novel writers in English and their novels in brief. Indian English novel has a tradition of around hundred years so far. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao to Shashi Tharoor, Amitabh Ghosh, Githa Hariharan, Gita Mehta, Chetan Bhagat and there are many others who have focused on Indian tradition, customs, mythology, oral tales, songs, folk tradition in their respective novels. The present research paper studies selected novels like *Raja Rao's Kanthapura* (1938), R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* (1958), Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) and Amitav Ghosh *The Hungry Tide* (2004).

The Government of India has introduced National Education Policy 2020. Accordingly it has been accepted by State Governments and affiliated Universities across the nation. As per the National Education Policy (2020) the focus is on Indian knowledge system (IKS). As I said from the beginning Indian English novels till this date many writers have focused on Indian customs and traditions in their respective novels.

Indian English fiction has long served as a site where ancient cultural values and modern literary forms converge. A distinctive feature that enriches many of these works is the use of folk traditions. These include oral storytelling, regional myths, religious customs, proverbs, songs, and rituals passed down across generations. In Indian culture, folk traditions are living forms of memory, often functioning as moral guides, vehicles of resistance, and expressions of communal

identity. Writers who adopt these traditions in their fiction do more than add cultural flavour which they create layered narratives that reflect the soul of a people rooted in their land and history (International Journal of Research-2).

The present research paper first of all focuses on Raja Rao's famous novel *Kanthapura.* Raja Rao shows the influence of Gandhian philosophy on Kanthapura village and the way the people of that village took part in Indian freedom struggle. Raja Rao has used traditional spirituality and story-telling technique in *Kanthapura*. The story of the novel is narrated by an old woman Achakka. The central character of the novel is Moorthy who is a young Brahmin and he introduced Gandhian philosophy to the people of Kanthapura village. Achakka used the method of oral story telling tradition of South India. In this novel Mahatma Gandhi has been portrayed as an avatar of Lord Shiva who has come down to destroy Demons (British Rule).

R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* is a famous novel of its time. The events of this novel take place in Malgudi, a fictional town in South India. Raju is the protagonist of the novel. He plays the role of a tour guide. He is corrupt person and his nickname is railway Raju. He falls in love with a beautiful woman, her name is Rosie. Raju and rosie becomes very close but later on Raju involved in a forgery case and sentenced to jail. After coming back from prison there is a significant change in Raju. There is a spiritual transformation of Raju from a tourist to a saint. He goes in a village named Mangal and the villagers misunderstood him a wise man like Sadhu. Hindu concept of Grihastha, Sannyasa and Guru-shishhya tradition are depicted in this novel. The temple which is shown in Mangal village is situated in Malgudi town represents both tradition and modernity. Finally the novel shows Indian values, sacrifice for others, and one's spiritual duty.

The next novel that shows ancient Indian knowledge through myth and cultural is Githa Hariharan's *Thousands Faces of Night*. It depicts the story of women of three generations. It is a feminist novel. Devi, her mother Sita, and their caretaker Mayamma. These women play a main role in this novel. Devi who is the protagonist of the novel returns from America to India. She has a lovely marriage with Mahesh but she fails in it. Githa Hariharan uses some stories from Mahabharata and Purana to show women sacrifice. The novel is beautifully blended with folklore myth and personal memory to reflect the complexity of female existence.

Amitav Ghosh is a famous Indian novel writer in English. His famous novel *The Hungry Tide* shows cultural practices like Bengali language, tradition, daily rituals of fishing and survival. In this novel Piya Roy is the central character. She is an American marine biologist. She comes to India at Sundarbans to study endangered Irrawaddy dolphins. Translator Kanai and local fisherman Fokir also play significant roles in this novel. The central spiritual God of local inhabitants is the legend of Bon Bibi who is the Lady of the Forest and her brother Shah Jongli, who protected the islanders from the demon-king Dokkhin Rai (tigers). It provides a moral framework that dictates human-nature interaction, advocating for a balance that avoids greed. The Sundarbans is portrayed as its own cultural, spiritual, and social geography where the boundaries between human and animal, or faith and reality, are blurred. The knowledge is passed down through generations via stories, songs, and daily practices.

In this way the present research paper discusses Indian novel writers in brief and some novels like Raja Rao's *Kanthapura,* R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* and Githa Hariharan's *Thousands Faces of Night* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* in short. These novelists have beautifully shown Indian tradition, custom and culture in their novels.

Indian knowledge system modernization has resulted in a synthesis of ancient knowledge and new developments. It has made education more accessible, sparked technological innovation, and encouraged international cooperation. As a result, India's intellectual environment has become more varied and dynamic. Nonetheless, difficulties in upholding cultural authenticity, resolving inequalities, and adjusting to quick changes continue. All things considered, modernization has

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