

RESEARCH ARTICLE**Petals of the Past: Embracing Folklore and Tradition**

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Article Received: 28/07/2024; Article Accepted: 26/08/2024; Published Online: 28/08/2024

Abstract:

A society's cultural identity is woven together by its traditions and folklore. They shape the present and future while serving as a window into the past because they are rooted in the collective experiences, beliefs, and practices of a community. This article explores the role that tradition and folklore play in maintaining cultural legacy, promoting social cohesiveness, and providing a feeling of community. Furthermore, it delves into their function in enabling the transfer of knowledge across generations, advocating for cultural diversity and inclusiveness, and acting as a means of resistance and adaptability in the face of societal obstacles. Furthermore, customs and folklore are dynamic forces that change over time, keeping the core elements of cultural identity while adjusting to new situations. They act as psychological and emotional pillars, giving solace in unpredictable or turbulent times. They serve as rich reservoirs of moral and spiritual knowledge that influence worldviews and ethical frameworks for future generations. Furthermore, folklore is intimately linked to environmentally and economically sustainable practices that are transmitted through customary knowledge. It also has an impact on artistic expression, serving as a source of inspiration for music, literature, art, and rituals that encapsulate a community's spirit. In the age of globalization, efforts to conserve and revive these traditions are essential to guaranteeing the survival of cultural diversity and identity for coming generations. By delving into these aspects, this article highlights the timeless significance of folklore and tradition in enhancing the human experience and promoting a more profound comprehension of cultural heritage.

Keywords: Folklore, Tradition, Cultural Heritage, Social Cohesion, Belonging, Intergenerational Knowledge Transmission, Cultural Diversity, Inclusivity, Resistance, Resilience.

Introduction:

Folklore and tradition encapsulate the essence of a culture, embodying its values, customs, rituals, and oral narratives passed down through generations. They are the living repositories of a community's collective memory, reflecting its unique identity and worldview. In an era of rapid globalization and cultural homogenization, the preservation of folklore and tradition becomes paramount in safeguarding cultural diversity and fostering a sense of cultural pride and continuity. Folklore and tradition form the very essence of Indian culture, representing a mosaic of diverse beliefs, customs, and practices that have evolved over millennia. From the ancient epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata to the colorful festivals like Diwali and Holi, India's folklore and tradition reflect the depth and complexity of its cultural heritage. In this article, we

Explore the significance of Indian folklore and tradition in preserving cultural identity, fostering social cohesion, and nurturing a sense of belonging. Kerala, often referred to as "God's Own Country," boasts a

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unique blend of folklore and tradition that is deeply ingrained in its social fabric. From the enchanting tales of mythical creatures to the vibrant rituals of its festivals, Kerala's folklore and tradition offer a fascinating glimpse into the state's cultural heritage.

The Significance of Folklore:

In India, folklore encompasses a vast array of myths, legends, and folktales that have been passed down through oral tradition for generations. One notable example is the story of the Ramayana, which recounts the epic journey of Lord Rama to rescue his wife Sita from the demon king Ravana. This timeless tale not only entertains but also imparts moral lessons on duty, righteousness, and the triumph of good over evil. Kerala's folklore is replete with captivating stories of gods, goddesses, and legendary heroes that have been passed down through generations. One such example is the legend of Kayamkulam Kochunni, a Robin Hood-like figure known for his Robin Hood-like acts of stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. Kochunni's tales not only entertain but also serve as a symbol of resistance against oppression and injustice. Additionally, Kerala is home to a rich tradition of Theyyam, a vibrant ritualistic dance form where performers embody divine beings and ancestral spirits. Through intricate costumes, elaborate makeup, and rhythmic movements, Theyyam transports spectators into a realm where mythology comes to life, fostering a deep sense of awe and reverence.

Similarly, the Panchatantra, a collection of animal fables, teaches valuable life lessons through the adventures of cunning animals and wise sages. These stories serve as moral guideposts, shaping the ethical framework of Indian society.

The Role of Tradition:

Indian traditions are deeply rooted in religious practices, rituals, and ceremonies that have been observed for centuries. One such tradition is the celebration of Diwali, the festival of lights, which symbolizes the victory of light over darkness and good over evil. During Diwali, families come together to light lamps, exchange gifts, and partake in festive meals, fostering a sense of unity and togetherness. Kerala's traditions are deeply intertwined with its agrarian roots, as evidenced by the rituals associated with the harvest festival of Onam. During Onam, Keralites decorate their homes with intricate flower carpets, participate in snake boat races, and indulge in sumptuous feasts featuring traditional dishes like avial and payasam. These traditions not only celebrate the bounty of nature but also reinforce familial bonds and community spirit.

Another cherished tradition in Kerala is Kathakali, a classical dance-drama that combines intricate footwork, expressive gestures, and elaborate costumes to enact stories from Hindu mythology. Kathakali performances, with their mesmerizing blend of music, dance, and drama, serve as a cultural anchor that connects Kerala's past with its present. Holi, the festival of colors, marks the arrival of spring and the triumph of love and joy; during Holi, people gather to

Throw colored powders and water at each other, breaking down social barriers and promoting camaraderie.

Preserving Cultural Heritage:

India's cultural heritage is intricately woven into its folklore and tradition, preserving ancient knowledge and practices for future generations. The practice of yoga, for example, has its roots in ancient Indian texts such as the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Today, yoga has become a global phenomenon, attracting millions of practitioners worldwide who seek physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Kerala's folklore and tradition are instrumental in preserving the state's rich cultural heritage for future generations. The art of Kalaripayattu

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an ancient martial art form indigenous to Kerala, is a testament to the state's tradition of physical and mental discipline. Through rigorous training and practice, practitioners of Kalaripayattu keep centuries-old techniques and philosophies alive. Kerala's folk songs, known as "Oppana" and "Thiruvathira Pattu," narrate tales of love, longing, and devotion, providing a glimpse into the everyday lives of its people. These songs, often accompanied by traditional percussion instruments like chenda and mridangam, serve as a reminder of Kerala's cultural diversity and resilience.

Similarly, classical Indian dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Odissi are steeped in tradition, drawing inspiration from ancient texts and temple sculptures. These dance forms not only preserve cultural heritage but also serve as expressions of devotion and artistic expression.

Fostering Social Cohesion:

Indian folklore and tradition play a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and harmony among diverse communities. The celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr by Muslims, for example, is marked by prayers, feasting, and charity, bringing together people from different backgrounds to celebrate the end of Ramadan. Kerala's folklore and tradition play a pivotal role in fostering social cohesion and communal harmony. The annual Thrissur Pooram festival, known as the "festival of festivals," brings together people of different faiths and communities to witness a spectacular display of elephants, fireworks, and traditional music. Through shared experiences and festivities, Thrissur Pooram promotes mutual respect and understanding among diverse groups. The tradition of "Kavu Theendal," where communities come together to clean and beautify sacred groves, reinforces the bond between humans and nature while promoting environmental stewardship. These traditions highlight Kerala's commitment to inclusive development and sustainable living.

Likewise, the harvest festival of Pongal in South India is a time for farmers to express gratitude to the sun god and celebrate the bounty of nature. Communities come together to cook traditional dishes, exchange greetings, and participate in cultural performances, strengthening bonds and solidarity.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Indian folklore and tradition are invaluable assets that enrich the cultural tapestry of the nation. By preserving ancient myths, rituals, and practices, India ensures that its cultural heritage remains vibrant and relevant in the modern world. Moreover, these traditions serve as bridges that connect people across generations and communities, fostering a sense of unity and belonging. As India continues to embrace its rich cultural legacy, it reinforces its identity as a land of diversity, tolerance, and resilience. In a rapidly changing world, the preservation and celebration of folklore and tradition are vital for maintaining cultural diversity, promoting social cohesion, and nurturing a sense of belonging. By valuing and safeguarding these cultural assets, societies can ensure that future generations inherit a rich tapestry of stories, customs, and rituals that connect them to their collective past and inspire them to shape a vibrant and inclusive future. As stewards of our cultural heritage, let us cherish and uphold the timeless legacy of folklore and tradition for generations to come.

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