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SYNERGY OF TRADITIONS: THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND HERITAGE KNOWLEDGE OF NORTH EAST INDIA.

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ABSTRACT

The present paper explores the rich cultural heritage of Northeast India through the lens of the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), highlighting the dynamic synergy between regional traditions and broader civilizational frameworks of IKS. Despite its profound historical depth and cultural diversity, the traditional knowledge of Northeast India remains underrepresented in mainstream academic discourse on IKS. This study highlights on both tangible and intangible heritage of Northeast India, encompassing festivals, agricultural practices, textiles and weaving traditions, art and architectural forms such as temples and traditional housing. The central theme of the paper focus on the knowledge systems of Northeast India which are deeply embedded in ecological wisdom, ritual practices, and community-based sustainable practices, reflecting core IKS principles of sustainability, harmony with nature, and holistic living. By integrating Northeast India into the discourse of Indian Knowledge Systems, this paper is a humble attempt to address existing gaps and advocate for a more inclusive and wider understanding of India's knowledge heritage, emphasizing the need for preservation, documentation, and scholarly research.

KEYWORDS: Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), Northeast India, Cultural Heritage, Sustainable Practices, Indigenous Agriculture, festivals, handloom and handicraft, Traditional art and architecture.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The paper has been entirely based on the related available primary and secondary sources. The sources have been carefully examined to establish the validity of the facts. The primary sources include classical Indian texts and traditions which includes Caraka Samhita, Susruta Samhita, Yoga Sutras, Sulba Sutras, Ashtadhyayi, Vastusastra, Arthasastra, Kalika Purana, Yogini Tantra, CheitharolKumbaba, etc. along with inscriptions, archival materials, and indigenous oral knowledge systems of Northeast India, which provide direct evidence of cultural practices and knowledge traditions.

In the areas of secondary sources, Keshab Daimary (2023) highlights the transformation and continuity of ethnic cultures in Northeast India, while Saswati Bordoloi (2024) discusses the conceptual foundations and contemporary relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems. Similarly, P. Das (2012) and A. Dasgupta (2015) examine the role of festivals, and cultural expressions in shaping community identity in the region. These works, along with other ethnographic and interdisciplinary studies, have been critically analysed and comparatively examined to develop a coherent understanding of Indian Knowledge Systems and to identify existing research gaps, particularly the underrepresentation of Northeast India's indigenous knowledge traditions.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in writing the present paper is interdisciplinary, incorporating both historical and anthropological approaches. In the historical method, primary sources have been collected and subjected to scientific and critical examination to establish the authenticity of the data. This includes comparative analysis, analytical study, and evaluation of the credibility of the sources. The social anthropological approach mainly includes observation, participation, and interviews, which help in understanding and presenting an accurate picture of the subject.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) represents a vast and diverse tradition of Knowledge which span over millenia (Mukherjee, 2026, p.1). These knowledge and wisdoms were deeply rooted in ancient classical texts such as the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, and Shastras. These texts together laid the framework and foundation for spiritual, cosmological and philosophical tradition of ancient Indian civilisation which also have its contemporary relevance. In addition to the Vedas, the Vedangas or limbs of the Vedas aids in proper recitation, use and understanding of the Vedas and comprised of Shiksha (phonetics), Kalpa (ritual), Vyakarana (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Chandas (metre), and Jyotisha (astronomy) (Singh, 2009. P. 9). Vedas are today increasingly recognised globally for their comprehensive insights into the field of physics, mathematics, logic, and other areas of knowledges (Subhash, 2005). From these early traditions in ancient Indian there emerged key significant

concepts such as Jnana (knowledge), Vijnana (analytical and systematic inquiry), Jeevan Darshan (philosophy of life). These knowledge tradition and wisdom shaped the mind, body, spirit as interconnected whole. Education system in ancient India was imparted through the Gurukul system with core principles emphasising on holistic and comprehensive development of the individual moral, physical, spiritual, and intellectual well-being rather than just accumulation of facts. At the centre of Indian Knowledge System lies the core philosophical foundation. In ancient India, life of an individual was conceptualised into four goals. These were dharma (moral), artha (material or economic well-being), kama (desire or sensual pleasure), and moksha (salvation) (Singh, 2009; Sharma, 2005, p. 276). These fourfold goals in an individual life structured both personal and social life providing ethical and practical guidance. In ancient Indian society, moksha or liberation from the cycle of birth and death became the core components of philosophical inquiry. This ultimately led to the evolution of six prominent schools of thought. They are Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, and Vedanta (Sharma, 2005; Bordoloi, 2024; Yadav, 2024).

In due course of time, specialised knowledge systems evolved in India; Yoga emerged as a significant physical exercise that combines physical, mental, and spiritual practice that led to the overall wellbeing of the individual (Tiwari, 2023). Ayurveda literally symbolised “the Science of Life” where ‘ayur’ means life and ‘Veda’ means knowledge. Ayurveda as ancient medical health care practice allows for harmony of the body and mind and the understanding of the illness (Prasad, 2002). Astronomy (*Jyotisha*) advanced alongside mathematics; metallurgy achieved sophistication with early iron production; and art and architecture were guided by the principles of *Shilpa Shastra* and *Vastu Shastra* (Bordoloi, 2024, pp.51-55; Singh et.al, 2023). The widespread use of iron technology facilitated agricultural expansion and urban growth, contributing to the emergence of the *Janapadas* and *Mahajanapadas*, particularly powerful states such as Magadha, which played a decisive role in early state formation and political consolidation (Sharma, 2005, p.145). Systems of statecraft and moral code were articulated through *Arthashastra* and *Dharmashastra*, reflecting a structured understanding of administration, economy, ethics, and social responsibility. What makes IKS distinctive is its integrative approach, where science and spirituality, empirical observation and metaphysical reflection, and theory and practice were not viewed as separate domains but as mutually reinforcing dimensions of knowledge.

Recognising its value, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to reintroduce Indian Knowledge Systems into mainstream education by promoting multidisciplinary learning, mother-tongue instruction, value-based education, skill development, and research rooted in Indian epistemological traditions (Mukherjee, 2026, p.7). The establishment of the IKS Division under the Ministry of Education further reflects India’s commitment

to revitalising and integrating its indigenous knowledge traditions to address contemporary challenges such as sustainability, social harmony, and holistic well-being.

India is a land of unparalleled diversity and since ancient times developed diverse knowledge traditions or systems which were deeply rooted in its geographical landscapes. The Indian Knowledge System is vast and diverse cumulative body of knowledge encompassing philosophy, science and technology, art and architecture, dance, music etc which have developed over millennia in the Indian Subcontinent reflecting its rich civilizational memory (Bordoloi, 2024, p.1). In these mosaic of knowledge system, codified and textual traditions comprising of the Vedas, Upavedas, and Shastras of ancient Indian civilization took the centre stage in the mainstream discourse of IKS whereas the significance of the regional knowledge such as oral folklore traditions, indigenous agriculture, festivals and ritual traditions, medicine and healing practices, art and architecture, dance and music which were emanating from peripheral region like Northeast India largely remains under represented or acknowledged (Khan & Sharma, 2024).

Northeast India's cultural heritage is rooted in the core principles of sustainability, interconnectedness, and harmony with natural environment which is also reflected in the holistic worldview of IKS. These heritage knowledge of Northeast India integrates material and spiritual aspects of life of its people. The region is blessed with unique and diverse geographical settings, rich bio-diversity, and also diverse ethnic populations. It is one of most historically and culturally vibrant and unique landscape of the country inhabited since time immemorial by numerous indigenous communities (Daimary, 2023, p.39). These indigenous communities possessed distinct languages, traditions, social and political organisations, and cultural practices. These rich tradition of knowledge were transmitted through oral traditions, ritual practices, and community-based institutions, forming an integral part of the region's cultural heritage.

Despite its rich historical and archaeological past, the cultural heritage and traditional knowledge system of Northeast India had been under represented and underexplored. It has been marginalised in the wider discourse of mainstream IKS. These research gaps signify the need for a holistic approach to the study of Northeast India and its relation to IKS incorporating regions unique heritage traditions. Therefore, the present paper is a humble attempt to study various intangible and tangible heritage of Northeast India which comprised of its festivals, agricultural practices, art and architecture, etc. Situating the knowledge traditions of Northeast India into the wider discourse of IKS, the present paper highlights the synergy of IKS and heritage traditions of NE-India. Further, the present study emphasises the importance of preservation, documentation, and integration of heritage knowledge of NE-India.

In understanding the cultural heritage tradition, tangible heritage denotes monuments, textiles, temples, traditional houses which can be felt physically whereas intangible cultural heritage denotes festivals, performing arts, oral traditions, social customs etc which cannot be felt physically. However, both the dimensions of heritage traditions are deeply interwoven and together they produced what is known as living heritage tradition. These heritage traditions were continuously shaped and transmitted generation by generations. The concept of tradition in the context of Northeast India connotes rich heritage, customs, rituals, festivals, and knowledge systems which had been preserved by different communities of the region (Singh, 2009; Sinha, 2015; Das, 2012; Barua, 2017). Interestingly, the heritage tradition in NE-India not only encompass aesthetic appeal rather it is deeply woven to day-to-day social life of the people. Different aspects of heritage traditions such as festivals, music and dance, and handicrafts acts as significant instruments for establishing and reinforcing community bonds, collective identity and value system transmission across generations (Das, 2012; Dasgupta, 2015; Sharma, 2017).

TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES OF NORTHEAST INDIA

The traditional agricultural practices of Northeastern India were marked by diverse ecological conditions with varying altitudes comprising of plains and hilly regions in all the eight states of the region. Agriculture constitutes the main occupation of the people of Northeast India (NITI Aayog, 2021). In the state of Assam which is also the largest in the region, agricultural practice is predominantly based on wet rice cultivation located in the alluvial plains of the Brahmaputra and the Barak River valleys (Deori, 2025, p.1058). The place has an annual rainfall of approximately 2000-3000 mm. The agricultural practice in Assam comprised of ahu, sali, and boro traditional rice cultivation technique with respect to different seasons in a year (ARIAS, 2022). The cultivation of rice involved different irrigation techniques and also flood mitigation practice as Assam has annual regular flood in the plains. In Assam, the Bodos are an important tribe with rice cultivation forming the core of their economy and livelihood. The Bodos practiced jhum or shifting cultivation like the rest of the Northeastern tribes but they later transitioned themselves to wet rice cultivation which is also a settled agricultural practised. They cultivated large varieties of rice and some of them includes Bawa, Ashu, Sali etc. An important practice among the Bodos is the knowledge of construction of irrigation canals, and embankments to channel the water to the paddy fields. An interesting aspect of the agricultural activity of the Bodos is their association with ritual practices. They offer to the Goddess Mainao before ploughing to yield a good harvest (Brahma, 2019). In Arunachal Pradesh, the traditional agricultural practice predominantly was in the form of Jhum cultivation. It is also known as shifting cultivation and by various names in different countries where its practices are known. In Arunachal Pradesh, these traditional form of cultivation were practised by the Nyishi and the Adi tribes. Apart from this form of agriculture, another form of agriculture which is considered highly sustainable was practiced by the Apatani tribes

of Arunachal Pradesh and it involved paddy with fish cultivation. It is a form of wet rice cultivation (Singh, 2022, p.190) along with aquaculture. These agricultural practices produced high yield without any modern chemical inputs. The Apatanis traditionally used indigenous fishing tools such as *Tajer*, *Takhun*, and *Barju* to catch fish, and they practice rice–fish culture by rearing varieties like common, mirror, leather, and scale carp. Their system is highly organic, using animal waste (cow dung, poultry droppings) and plant residues (straw, husk, weeds, ash, and beer waste) as fertilizers. These inputs enhance soil fertility and provide food for fish, and are applied to the paddy fields during December–January before transplantation (Sikdar, 2014, p. 4). In the state of Nagaland which is a hilly state combines the practice of Jhum or shifting cultivation with that of terrace cultivation (Varekan et al., 2025; Tsopoe et al., 2022). These form of terrace cultivation holds the soil and manage water in the long run thereby reducing the chance of soil erosion. In the state of Manipur with its unique geographical features consisting of both plain and the hills practiced wet rice cultivation in the plains and also shifting cultivation in the hills. Ricecultivation formed the foundation of Manipur’s agrarian system, particularly in the valley, where wet-rice agriculture (lou-uba) was practiced using advanced traditional techniques such as puddling, leveling (ukai-takpa), irrigation control, and seasonal crop management. Different methods of cultivation were followed, including Punghul (dry seed broadcasting), Pamphel (wet seed casting), and Lingthokpa (transplantation), with transplantation introduced in the 17th century significantly enhancing productivity in irrigated fields. Harvesting (louyeiba) involved cutting paddy with traditional tools like thangol (sickle), drying, threshing, and storing in granaries (*kei*) (Begum, 2024). In Meghalaya, the Khasi, Garo and the Jaintia tribes practices Jhum or shifting cultivation along with terrace cultivation or bun which were further supplemented by horticultural practices (Jeeva et al., 2006). Often with agroforestry products major crops includes elder, arecanut, rice, millet, turmeric, and broom grass. In the state of Mizoram, the tribes followed shifting cultivation or Tlang-ram in local dialect (Thianghlima et al., 2025). This traditional agricultural practiceinvolved mixed cropping of different varieties of crops including rice, maize, cucurbits, beans,etc. These practices ensured subsistence diversity.These agricultural practices among the people are closely linked with rituals, festivals (Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut, Pawl Kut), and an animistic worldview, reflecting deep ecological knowledge and cultural integration.In the state of Tripura, settled agricultural practice along with shifting cultivation were known to the different communities (Debbarma, 2026). The cultivation of major crops such as rubber, bamboo, and other horticultural crops was practised in the state. Finally, the state of Sikkim practised organic farming. It is the first state in India that is recognised as a fully organic state. The state agricultural practiced maintains ecological health as well as healthy lifestyle of its people. These agricultural practices of Northeastern states are closely intertwined with festivals and ritual cycles, reinforcing their cultural and ecological significance.

FESTIVALS AND COMMUNITY TRADITIONS OF NORTHEAST INDIA

The term festival is derived from the Latin word *festum* which connotes public joy, merriment and revelry (Halbwachs, 1992). In Northeast India as a whole agricultural practices of different communities were not an isolated phenomenon but were intrinsically linked to social, economic and cultural activities. These linkages reflect that agricultural practices are guided with ecological knowledge, community participation which were also associated with magico-religious rituals. Festivals formed an intangible living cultural heritage of diverse communities of Northeast India connecting the past to the present.

Assam: It is the largest Northeastern Indian State and composed of diverse ethnic population. The state has a rich festival which was associated with agricultural cycles. Among the festival the most significant is the Bihu festival which is celebrated in three phases aligning with the seasonal rhythm of cultivation- Bohag Bihu, Magh Bihu, and Kati Bihu (Ahmed, 2015, pp. 107-108). Similarly, tribal population of Assam also observed different variety of festivals; the Karbis celebrated Rongker festival to mark the coming of new agricultural cycle and well being of its people, among the Bodos the most popular festival is the Biswagumarking the new year and onset of spring and it is observed in mid-April (Nazaree, 2019), among the Mishing tribes Ali Aye Ligang festival is observed with the beginning of sowing activities, the Dimasas celebrate the Busu Dima festival after post-harvest. Together, these festivals illustrate the integration of agriculture, seasonal cycles, and community life as key elements of the region's cultural heritage (Khatoniyar, 2023).

Nagaland: The state of Nagaland is home to 16 major tribes and various sub-tribes. Some of the major tribes are Ao, Angami, Konyak, Sumi, Lotha, Chakhesang, Phom, Chang, Sangtam, etc. All these major tribes possessed different dialects, customs, and cultural traditions. Among the Nagas, the political, social and cultural systems were organised around family, clan, and village institutions. The festive events and celebrations of the Nagas were associated with agricultural cycle marking seasonal transition and community life. The most popular being the Sekrenyi celebrated by the Angami tribe marking a new year and it symbolised renewal and community bonds. The Ao tribe celebrate Moatsu festival after sowing, the Chakhesang and Chang tribes celebrate Sukrenye and Naknyulum as a mark of social exchange, the Konyak celebrate Aoleang festival as marking New Year (Jain et.al, 2019). Today, the Hornbill festival organised every year in Kisama showcase Nagaland diverse heritage traditions and indigenous practices (Phom & Baruah, 2022; Gov of Nagaland, 2019-2020).

Meghalaya: Meghalaya's cultural heritage is reflected in its major community festivals, notably Shad Suk Mynsiem and Nongkrem of the Khasis, Wangala of the Garos, and Behdeinkhlam of the Jaintias (Begum, 2019; Marak & Thirumurugan, 2021). These festivals represent collective traditions expressed through music, dance, and community participation, characterized by vibrant celebrations, elaborate traditional attire adorned with

ornaments, and coordinated performances accompanied by indigenous musical instruments, highlighting the region's rich intangible cultural heritage.

Manipur: The festivals of Manipur reflect the rich cultural diversity of its major communities—the Meiteis, the Nagas and Kuki-Chin-Mizo people each contributing distinct cultural traditions. Among the Meiteis, festivals like Yaoshang, Lai Haraoba, Cheiraoba, Ningol Chakouba, and Kang emphasizes social bonding, ritual performance, and seasonal renewal (Lisam, 2011). In the hill regions, the Nagas celebrate vibrant festivals such as Lui-Ngai-Ni, which marks the beginning of the agricultural cycle and symbolizes unity among different Naga tribes (Ngalengnam, 2015), while the Kuki-Chin-Mizo groups observe Kut as a post-harvest thanksgiving festival characterized by traditional dances, songs, and feasting (Sitlhou, 2018). Together, these festivals illustrate a shared cultural ethos rooted in agriculture, nature worship, kinship, and community participation, forming an essential part of Manipur's living heritage and indigenous knowledge systems.

Mizoram: Festivals in Mizoram are largely community-oriented and closely linked to jhum (shifting cultivation) cycles. Major festivals such as Chapchar Kut (Mizo) and Alphaloni (Chakma) correspond to different stages of cultivation, with Chapchar Kut marking the post-clearing phase and celebrated through vibrant performances like the Cheraw (bamboo dance) and Chai dance (Devi, 2025). These festivals feature traditional musical instruments such as khuang (drum), phenglawng (bamboo flute), darkhuang (cymbals), and tingtang, reflecting rich cultural expression. In addition, broader festivals like Bishu, Christmas, Eid, and Buddha Purnima are also celebrated, highlighting the region's cultural diversity and shared heritage.

Tripura: Tripura exhibits a vibrant and diverse cultural heritage, where multiple tribal communities maintain distinct traditions. Major festivals such as Kharchi, Garia, Khumpui, Biju, and Unakoti Mela, along with widely observed celebrations like Durga Puja, Diwali, and Makar Sankranti, reflect this diversity (Debbarma & Kaipeng, 2022). Agrarian traditions are evident in harvest festivals like Bhangni Mutairenai, Bisucani, and Mamita, celebrated by communities such as the Tripuris, Reangs, and Jamatias. Overall, the state's cultural landscape is marked by religious plurality and strong agrarian roots.

HANDLOOM AND HANDICRAFT TRADITIONS OF NORTHEAST INDIA

In India, the Northeastern region represents one of the most distinctive and vibrant handloom and handicrafts in the country. These crafts traditions were part and parcel of the indigenous communities of the region from time immemorial and deeply woven to their social, cultural, and economic life. In all the states of the region, handloom and handicrafts were an important household-based production system. The core of the workforce being women. In the state of Assam, the traditional production of Muga silk (*Antheraea assamensis*) which is reknown for its

golden hue colour is indigenous to Assam(Rajkhowa, 2026). In addition to this another variety of silk namely Eri and Pat silk are also commonly produced. The handloom product from this raw material produced the Mekhela Chador which is an important traditional attire worn by womenfolk of Assam(Sarma, 2005).

In the state of Manipur, handloom and handicraft are deeply interwoven in the traditional social, cultural and economic life of its people. Handloom practiced is a community driven tradition where the womenfolk played a central role in the production process. Some of the indigenous handloom products of the state comprised of phanek (traditional wrap around dress worn by the women), Moirang Phee, Wangkhei Phee, etc (Singh et.al, 2025). Similarly different tribes of the state also have their unique and characteristic handloom products including shawls such as Haora and kashan among the Tangkhuls. Among the Nagas of Nagaland, each of the distinct tribes including Ao, Angami, and Konyak had produced richly coloured shawls of different pattern and motifs(Yhoshu& Hashmi, 2025) . They are symbol of social status, achievements and affiliation to particular clans. In the same note, the Mizos of Mizoram also produced distinctive shawls such as Puan textiles which reflects the same aesthetics and symbolism(Hnamte, 2020).

The handicraft traditions of Northeast India are equally diverse and varied. The most widely available raw material which are grown abundantly in the region are bamboo and cane. Artisans from different communities in northeast India are talented producers of different kinds of baskets, mats, furniture items, fishing equipments. These crafts items were still in used in different tribal societies and are passed down from earlier generation to the next. In the state of Tripura and Assam, cane furniture was an important craft, similarly in Arunachal Pradesh the Monpa and Adi tribe crafted masks items, wood carvings and thangka style paintings which had its influence for Buddhist tradition.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE HERITAGE IN NORTHEAST INDIA

The art and architectural traditions of Northeast India have incorporated ecological, and spiritual harmony in its design principles. It is closely aligned with the philosophical principles embodied in the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). In Assam the temple architecture has a distinctive feature as compared to the larger Indian temple traditions. The Kamakhya temple complex which is located in the Nilachal hills is one of the important centres of Shakti Peethas in India and also represents a centre of Tantric worship (Singha & Singh, 2022; Tamta& Sharma, 2021). The Kamakhya temple has a semblance with the Nagara style temples which is located in North India. However, there is local innovation in the design of the shikhara above the garbhagriha. This superstructure is beehive shaped which is starkly different from the curvilinear profile of the North Indian temples. Similarly, the Umananda temple complex and Sivadol temple were engineering marvels during the Ahom dynastic reign during

the 17th - 18th century. These temple complexes showcased advanced brick layering techniques, lime mortar construction, and its ability to withstand natural forces such as earthquakes.

In Manipur, the art and architectural heritage symbolise an indigenous tradition, religious syncretism, regional influence from South and Southeast Asia. The region marked a cultural corridor between two great civilisations in the West and also in the East. From its inception as an erstwhile powerful kingdom from 33 AD onwards, the artistic traditions can be seen from its cosmology, mythology, and also ritualistic practices. The figure of Kanglasha which is also the state emblem today, that of the first ruler Pakhangba in its animistic form were appeared in sculptural, and painting traditions. In the field of architecture, early Manipur indigenous tradition used perishable materials such as bamboo, wood, thatch, and reeds. These materials were employed in the construction of the traditional Meitei Yumjao. In the later, medieval period the use of brick and stones were initiated. The most notable and prominent example is the Kangla fort. This sacred landmark is the erstwhile centre of polity and administration of the Manipuri Kingdom. Its architectural layouts featured defensive moats (Thangapat). After the conversion to Hinduism in the early 18th century, Manipur's architectural heritage manifested in the form of temple architectures. Key important temples include the Shree Govindajee temple of Old Palace Kangla, Brindavanchandra temple, Vishnu temple, etc. The temples of Manipur featured domes, arches, mandapas, circumbulatory path or pradakshinapatha, and ornamental railing (Lisam, 2011). It showcased cultural syncretism with the blend of indigenous elements with that of Bengali and Islamic architectural elements. In the hills, the different tribes of Manipur had unique traditional architecture manifested in different housing styles and also in megalithic practices.

Among the tribal states of Northeast India, the Nagas of Nagaland has deep rooted traditional form of architecture. The Morung which is a youth dormitory is a prominent architectural feature of the Nagas(Zeliang, 2024). It is a social space which acts as a centre for education, cultural space, and also a training ground. Symbolic wood carvings, Mithun horns adorn the Morung reflecting tribal knowledge and identity. Apart from these the Nagas of Nagaland, the Khasis, and Jaintias of Meghalaya, were known for the practice of erecting megaliths which a giant monolithic stone as marked of merit and ancestor worship among the tribal population(Mepusangba&Changkiri, 2019; Marak, 2012).

From an IKS standpoint, this tribal architecture exemplifies community-centric knowledge systems, where construction techniques, artistic expression, and spatial organization are collectively owned and transmitted orally. The use of sustainable materials and climate-adaptive design reflects a deep ecological consciousness.

Across the diverse landscape of Northeast India, traditional housing designs showcased a remarkable adaption to local environment. In Assam, the stilt house or Chang Ghar can withstand devastating floods of the Brahmaputra River annually (Choudhury & Chettry, 2023). The house adaptive designs with raised platform, bamboo floors, and other sustainable natural light weight materials provided flexibility and resilience. In Mizoram, the traditional houses were stilted structure which were suited to hilly landscapes and were made of bamboo, timber, and thatch and can tolerate heavy rainfall and earthquake. The houses of the typical Mizo village were organised as commoner house, Chief House, and Zwlbuk which acts as young mens dormitory (Renthlei & Zothanliana, 2024). In Meghalaya, the Khasis and Garos residences incorporates stone, wood and thatch to tolerate highest level of rainfall in the world. In Arunachal Pradesh, different tribal populations including the Adi, Nyishi, Monpa incorporated raised platforms, communal spaces for social gatherings.

The architectural and art motifs reflected on the tribal traditional housing were not transmitted through texts but through a rich oral traditions and experiential knowledge which had been passed down from generation to generations. The core principles of IKS are reflected through folk knowledge (Lokavidya) and indigenous knowledge (Desai Jnana). The Northeastern region and its people that emphasised on sustainable material for housing and practices that are environmentally friendly are highly relevant in contemporary discussion on sustainable architecture.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the cultural heritage of Northeast India represents a dynamic and holistic expression of the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), encompassing both tangible and intangible dimensions such as art, architecture, festivals, agriculture, and traditional crafts. These knowledge traditions are deeply embedded in ecological consciousness, community-based practices, and ritual frameworks, reflecting a worldview grounded in sustainability, interdependence, and harmony with nature. Across the region, diverse ethnic communities have developed distinct yet interconnected cultural systems, transmitted primarily through oral traditions and lived practices. This synthesis of local traditions with broader civilizational frameworks underscores the need to reposition Northeast India within mainstream IKS discourse. A more inclusive and interdisciplinary approach is therefore essential for the documentation, preservation, and critical engagement with these knowledge systems, ensuring their continuity and relevance in addressing contemporary socio-cultural and environmental challenges

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