

Indigenous Knowledge as a Bridge Between Cultural Roots, Development, and Environmental Care

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Abstract: *The word 'Indigenous' quintessentially means 'Native' or 'Endemic'. However, an appropriate definition of "Indigenous knowledge" can be elucidated as the specific skills, practices, and technologies associated with ecological resource management and human and animal health, reflecting a unique life experience and cultural harmony with ecosystem services in a particular region. It originates from people's perceptions and experiences of the environment, developed through continuous observation and interpretation". As per the definition it is quite evident that every region works with some kind of ethos and belief that is deeply rooted in beliefs. Regarding preservation and conservation of nature, indigenous knowledge plays a pivotal part. It is solely this knowledge that binds one generation to another by passing on the knowledge one professes and practices. This article primarily discusses the importance of indigenous knowledge, and its role in boosting development and safeguarding environment. Besides, helping people look back at their roots and re-establishing the belief and eventually leading to a better understand of ones' culture, region and tradition.*

Keywords: Indigenous knowledge; Indigenous practices; Culture; Environment, Sustainability.

1. Introduction

The word 'Indigenous' quintessentially means 'Native' or 'Endemic'. However, an appropriate definition of "Indigenous knowledge" can be elucidated as the specific skills, practices, and technologies associated with ecological resource management and human and animal health, reflecting a unique life experience and cultural harmony with ecosystem services in a particular region. It originates from people's perceptions and experiences of the environment, developed through continuous observation and interpretation". As per the definition it is quite evident that every region works with some kind of ethos and belief that is deeply rooted in beliefs. Regarding preservation and conservation of nature, indigenous knowledge plays a pivotal part. It is solely this knowledge that binds one generation to another by passing on the knowledge one professes and practices. According to (Battiste, 2005) indigenous knowledge is an extensive and valuable knowledge system that is adaptable, a dynamic system based on skills, abilities, and problem-solving techniques that change over time depending on environmental conditions. Its importance is unfathomable. Especially, in recent times, where many people are trying to retrieve the lost and almost forgotten practices that helped people to live in more organic way. However, tremendous endeavour is being undertaken to dig into the past and fetch the forgotten practices that are believed to show new dimension in a healthy living. Carefully handing over the ideas from one generation to the other exhibits respect for knowledge, regards for our ancestors and urge to co-exist contentedly. Therefore, indigenous knowledge acts a bridge to our ancestral roots; it shows a way for more sustainable life and living; helps amalgamate science, technology and old yet reliable and valid indigenous ideas and practices; helps in culture preservation and acts a powerful tool in providing resilience to the changing times by resisting and cautioning the ill effects of modernity (if found to produce malefic effects). And largely, helps in maintaining the ethical and

moral framework and yardsticks in fostering a healthy and sensible environment.

Indigenous knowledge and environment

Indigenous knowledge is extremely important for sustainability. Local regional beliefs and practices enforce indigenous practices that ultimately help preserve environmental fundamentals. Especially, Indigenous communities produce local expertise through an organized process and thence pass it from one generation to another through cultural rituals (Senanayake, 2006). Possey (1995) also observed that indigenous knowledge provided a huge ground for development in natural resource management, agriculture, forest and game management. Inter change of views and techniques for sustainable development could be aggravated through the exchange of knowledge that lies indigenously with the local people. As viewed by Melchias (2001), "Indigenous knowledge on its part refers to what indigenous people know and do, and what they have known and done for generations – practices that evolved through trial and error and proved flexible enough to cope with change". Possey (1995) also observed that indigenous knowledge provided an enormous ground for looking after natural resources. In fact, the sharing and interchange of ideas of indigenous practices help in sustainable development. In this world, that is majorly governed by synthetic and artificial procedures of production, indigenous ideas help us get back to most organic and natural way of living. Various approaches in disaster management owes hugely to indigenous ideas. Various geographically identified regions on this globe have divulged the reality of power of the local people with the local practices, such practices have been miraculous in treating disease, climatic hazards. One such glaring instance was mentioned in the work of (Dhungana et al., 2016) where, he mentioned about the traditional practices of the Shaman (Jhagri). These people practiced connecting the human-spiritual lifeworld. This empowered indigenous community's healing processes produced resilience and helped in undertaking disaster risks effectively.

Indigenous knowledge and culture preservation

Indigenous knowledge system is studied so that cultural preservation and various cultural legacies can be done. Cultural preservation is of utmost importance because it contains invaluable ideas and practices that help mankind to persevere and persist. Cultural legacy connects past with the future. Indigenous knowledge helps to carry forward the heritage and relics that helps human beings to re-use them for their benefits. An observation put forward by Naheed, S., & Shooshtarian, S. (2022) posited that culture helped communities to stay bound. the interrelatedness and interconnectedness in not possible without the sharing of culture. In fact, urban sustainability and cultural heritage are always in well bonded. For any community to advance, its need a firm base on which it can rely and construct- inevitably indigenous plays the most dominant instrument. Indigenous knowledge, nation and sustainable development is always a triad relation. Indigenous knowledge encompasses social dimensions like its economic, political, civil and many other facets of a society. The integrated approach of implementing indigenous knowledge in various aspects of social development is the most intelligent way to sustain. Since, most of the social practices are inseparable elements of any culture, the endeavour to preserve and restore and practice the same is of paramount importance. It is through the conduction of culture that indigenous knowledge can survive. The soul of any society is its culture that outlasts generations. Indigenous knowledge is the essence of the cultural soul.

2. Conclusion and Reflection

No society in the path of development and evolvement has faced impediment due to the implementation of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is required for healthy sustenance. The basic ideas that help people to live life in the most natural way is to adhere to the ideas that have outstayed decades. Protection and promotion of indigenous knowledge have become a prime concern because it is helping in preserving cultural diversity; environmental challenges; local ecosystem welfare. As observed by K.X. Ennocent (2023), "Indigenous knowledge can offer unique insights into the natural world and provide valuable solutions to environmental challenges. Traditional practices passed down through generations, often have deep-rooted connections to the land and a profound understanding of its intricacies". The researcher also asserted the blend of indigenous knowledge with scientific advancement would help in better management of resources. Both ecological and cultural aspects of society could be well preserved through a holistic approach fostered by indigenous knowledge application. Even though globalisation encourages interchange of ideas, interference of various technologies and execution of certain unsubstantiated practices have led to the depletion of indigenous knowledge, however, the deliberate attempt to revive the indigenous idea have started making differences. People are now taking resort to old, tested ideas that had helped man conduct a holistic living in the most harmless ways.

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