

Literary Resistance and Cultural Survival: Reflections on Endangered Languages in Northeast India

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Abstract

The endangered languages of Northeast India serve as vital spheres of cultural identity, traditional knowledge, and community resilience amidst rapid globalisation rather than merely functioning as linguistic entities. This study examines how Indian English Literature, particularly the works of regional authors from Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Manipur, reflect the issue of language extinction and the struggle to preserve oral traditions. This study demonstrates that literary works function as archives and forms of resistance, utilising sociolinguistics and decolonial theory. The study asserts that literature becomes a powerful discourse by articulating the trauma of language loss and the need for fostering rejuvenation through performance, recollection, and storytelling. This article emphasises the urgent necessity for inclusive literary criticism that advocates linguistic preservation, as many of these languages remain unrecorded or under-represented in the mainstream academia. It underscores the active role of literary works in the cultural preservation of endangered language communities and their reflective nature.

Keywords: Endangered languages, Northeast India, cultural survival, Indian English literature, oral tradition, decolonial theory

Introduction

The linguistic environment of Northeast India is among the most diversified and active in the world. The region hosts around 220 languages spoken by more than 400 indigenous people, presenting a dynamic tapestry of oral traditions, storytelling cultures, and spiritual vocabularies sculpted by millennia of inter-ethnic exchanges and socio-cultural development. In the light of swift globalisation, standardised educational practices, urban migration, and the marginalisation of indigenous knowledge systems, numerous languages are currently endangered or nearing extinction (UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, 2021).

The Northeast's language decline represents not only linguistic attrition but also

the erosion of cultural identity, intergenerational knowledge, and indigenous perspectives. With the extinction of languages, distinctive perspectives on environment, kinship, memory, and spiritual traditions also vanish. In this setting, literature, specifically Indian English Literature authored by regional writers, serves as a potent vehicle for resistance and cultural resurgence. It undertakes an archival role, safeguarding fading oral traditions, while concurrently acting as a sociopolitical critique of colonial, national, and neoliberal forces that marginalise indigenous voices (Crystal 76).

This study examines how Indian English Literature from the Northeast both reflects and counters the phenomenon of language endangerment. This study specifically analyses the literary contributions of Mamang Dai (Arunachal Pradesh), Temsüla Ao and Easterine Kire (Nagaland), as well as Robin S. Ngangom and Ratan Thiyam (Manipur). The authors employ creative forms--poetry, fiction, and drama -- to commemorate their linguistic legacy and examine the epistemological trauma perpetrated by colonialism, missionisation, and the postcolonial state.

In recent years, an increasing volume of scholarship has begun to establish literature as a crucial domain of cultural survivance -- a concept proposed by Gerald Vizenor to denote the ongoing existence of indigenous cultures despite historical trauma (Vizenor 1). In Northeast India, where languages are frequently unwritten and marginalised in mainstream education and publication, English fulfils a contradictory role. Although it utilises the coloniser's language, it asserts agency by transforming into a site of testimony resistance. Writers frequently engage in code-switching, integrate untranslated native terminology, and replicate oral rhythms and metaphors, thus undermining the linguistic supremacy of English and affirming the existence of indigenous knowledge systems.

Mamang Dai's poetry, for instance, is profoundly influenced by the mythology and oral traditions of the Adi people. In works like *The Voice of the Mountain*, Dai amalgamates nature, soul, and language into a cohesive literary voice that surpasses Western dichotomies of tradition and modernity. Her poetic persona frequently serves as a medium bridging the visible and the invisible, the articulated and the inarticulate, reflecting the Adi notion of storytelling as both a ritual and a form of resistance (Dai 56).

Easterine Kire, a trailblazer in chronicling Naga oral traditions, has observed that her efforts aim to preserve the voices of elders and sustain the Naga ethos through written expression. Her novels, including *When the River Sleeps* and *A Respectable Woman*, reinterpret indigenous belief systems and linguistic practices within the frameworks of Christianisation and military conflict. Kire has stated in interviews that English, although not her native language, serves as a conduit to a global audience; yet, her primary motivation is to establish a "written tradition for a people who have always lived by the spoken word" (Kire 89).

This study employs decolonial theory and sociolinguistics to examine how literary

works represent the trauma linked to language loss. Decolonial thinkers like Walter Mignolo and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o advocate for a disconnection from colonial epistemologies and a reversion to indigenous knowledge systems. In the context of Northeast India, this entails not merely documenting vanished languages but also integrating their structures and ideologies into literary forms. Authors from the region are becoming increasingly cognisant of this necessity and deliberately integrate the aesthetics, ethics, and oral traditions of their cultures into English storytelling.

This study cautions against idealising literary creativity as a substitute for proactive language preservation efforts. Numerous languages highlighted in these works are either undocumented or inadequately represented in scholarly discourse. It is important to underscore the necessity of inclusive literary criticism that recognises endangered languages and acknowledges the dual role of literature as a cultural artefact and a political tool. Tamsüla Ao contends in her essay "Writing Orality" that "when the spoken word is denied legitimacy, the identity it upholds begins to erode" (Ao 43).

Thus, literature acts not only as an artistic expression but also as a performative tool for cultural memory, serving to commemorate, resist, and revive. Authors from Northeast India demonstrate that language goes beyond communication; it acts as a vital link to identity and survival through the interweaving of memory, myth, and linguistic elements.

This paper is an attempt to examine specific literary texts from the region using sociolinguistic, decolonial, and cultural studies perspectives. This analysis will help explore how these writings address the crisis of endangered languages and present innovative storytelling methods that connect oral traditions with written forms, as well as ancestral narratives in modern contexts. The objective is to highlight literature as a pivotal arena for language resistance and cultural survival in one of the most linguistically threatened areas of South Asia.

Indigenous Identity, Linguistic Erosion, and Decolonial Theory

Language serves not merely as a communication tool; it encapsulates worldviews, ecological insights, social conventions, and spiritual wisdom. The extinction of a language results in the obliteration of entire epistemologies. Dr. Usham Rojio, a Manipuri linguist, notes that "when a language dies, a certain knowledge system" is irrevocably gone. The loss is particularly severe in Northeast India, where traditional ecological practices, clan lineages, medical knowledge, performance traditions, and ritual beliefs are intricately linked to endangered languages such as Tai Khamti, Hrangkhoh, and Mishing (UNESCO Atlas, 2021).

Decolonial scholars like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o and Walter Mignolo contend that language decolonisation, achieved through mother-tongue education and epistemic reconfiguration, is essential for combating cultural obliteration. In the Northeast, state- and missionary-imposed education in Assamese, Hindi, or English has

diminished the significance of indigenous languages, resulting in youths' disconnection from their ancestral tongues. Temsüla Ao, a writer and researcher from the Ao-Naga community, argues that thinking of all Northeast people as having one "Northeastern identity" hides the variety of languages they speak; challenging this false idea is a way to fight against colonial influences (Ao 57).

Social linguists have highlighted the role of mother-tongue education in fostering cognitive and cultural continuity. By rejecting such recommendations, the system maintains a monolingual hierarchy that favours dominant languages to the detriment of indigenous ones. Labelling this order as unjust is a political intervention that resonates with decolonial ideology, necessitating a re-evaluation of linguistic justice.

Indian English Literature as Archival Discourse

In the lack of a solid written past in numerous local languages, Indian English Literature by authors from the Northeast has emerged as an archival lifeline. This section emphasises four pivotal individuals whose contributions exemplify these interventions. Temsüla Ao's contributions encompass both ethnography and literature. A Fulbright Fellow acquainted with Native American oral traditions, she dedicated more than ten years to gathering Ao myths, folktales, ceremonies, and laws, resulting in her 1999 publication, *Ao-Naga Oral Tradition* (Wright 2022). Her English short stories, such as *These Hills Called Home* (2005), integrate orality in both form and diction. In her essay "Writing as Affirmation", Temsüla Ao openly rejects categorising Northeast writers as "other" and revitalises indigenous languages by incorporating untranslated phrases and dramatic pauses -- stylistic methods that embody orality on the English page.

Temsüla Ao notably reinterprets biblical narratives via a Naga lens. By reinterpreting Creation, the Fall, or Exodus within a Naga cosmology, she contests the Christian historiography established during colonial and missionary periods. Her retellings employ English to contest the authority of the myths that contributed to the marginalisation of Naga identities.

Mamang Dai: Land-Knowledge, and Ecological Memory

Mamang Dai's works, including *Terrestrial Wisdom and Environmental Remembrance*, explore themes of ecological wisdom and environmental remembrance. Mamang Dai, an Adi poet-novelist from Arunachal Pradesh, constructs a literary landscape in English imbued with Adi ecological narratives. *In River Poems* (2004) and *The Balm of Time* (2008), themes including the mountain spirit, forest kin, and ancestral rivers construct a perspective that emphasises ecocentric memory and indigenous psychology.

Dai's work breaks down the old ideas that separate people from nature by expressing in English a deep connection between them that reflects Adi beliefs, trees are like family, water is a way of communicating, and mountains hold the memories of ancestors. This literary incorporation of landscape knowledge in

English documents what cannot yet be inscribed in Adi script while affirming Adi ontology within global literature.

Easterine Kire and the Composition of Oral Naga Narratives

Easterine Kire, a pioneering Naga novelist, asserts, "I believed it was essential to establish written Naga literature." We have many oral narratives, but when oral traditions deteriorate, they run the risk of irreversible loss. Beginning with her 1982 poetry collection *Kelhoukevira*, the first Naga English poetry volume, Kire utilises modern genres to preserve oral tradition. She has translated more than 200 Naga oral poems into English and written seminal novels such as *A Naga Village Remembered* (2003) and *When the River Sleeps* (2014).

Scholarly agreement (e.g., The Hindu, 2019) affirms that Kire's work is motivated by the imperative to safeguard vanishing oral traditions and the perspectives of elders before they disappear. Her narratives not only document ancestral ethos; they explicitly address the silencing during the conflict era. In "War and the Silencing of Naga Narratives", Kire observes, "The folktale lost its setting during the war years... The old keepers of the stories are dying out." This testimonial foundation situates her literary work as a form of archive activism.

Anungla Zoe Longkumer's *The Many That I Am*

Anungla Zoe Longkumer, offspring of Temsüla Ao, curated *The Many That I Am* (2019), an anthology that elevates Naga women's voices via narratives, poetry, and lyrics. This anthology examines how women's identities have engaged with tattoo traditions, Christian conversion, warfare, and linguistic marginalisation, affirming a multiplicity of selves ("many that I am"). Longkumer's preface and interviews underscore a purposeful archive intent: the anthology serves as a repository of female memory, chronicling both personal and community experiences of everyday life and suffering. It contests patriarchal literary narratives and reconstructs a feminist archive of Naga oral traditions, serving as a text of resistance.

These writers employ Indian English not as a remnant of colonialism but as a means of cultural affirmation, a domain where multilingual authenticity, decolonial aesthetics, and archival urgency intersect. They intentionally disrupt the colonial linguistic hierarchy: English changes from a suppressive force into a resonant framework, conveying the rhythms and significance of endangered languages in wider discursive realms.

This literature study asserts that Indian English literary output from Northeast India is not a result of assimilation; rather, it is a political intervention -- an act of resistance, recollection, and rebirth. It undermines monolingual frameworks and reasserts the page as a locus of indigenous epistemic resilience.

An examination of chosen literary figures from Northeast India uncovers a shared theme: Indian English Literature, when utilised by native authors, serves as a

medium for cultural preservation and resistance. Temsüla Ao, via her ethnographic research and literary creations, recovers and reinterprets the Ao Naga oral traditions, opposing the simplification of Northeast identity into a singular entity and contesting the marginalisation of her community's language heritage. Her intentional incorporation of untranslated indigenous terms and oral rhythms into English works disrupts language hierarchies and affirms cultural independence. Mamang Dai, via her poetry and prose, utilises the ecological knowledge and mythical awareness of the Adi culture. By incorporating Adi cosmology, rituals, and environmental ethics into English writing, she posits an indigenous ecological perspective that challenges Western dichotomies of nature and civilisation.

Easterine Kire assumes the position of literary archivist by chronicling Naga folktales, elder testimonials, and ceremonial narratives in English. Her literature chronicles the spiritual and social realities of the Naga people while simultaneously confronting the anguish of suppressed histories amid political turmoil and militarisation. Ultimately, Anungla Zoe Longkumer's collection, *The Many That I Am*, revitalises female oral traditions and lived experiences, offering a forum for many manifestations of Naga womanhood. Her work curates individual and communal memory, converting literature into a feminist archive that opposes both linguistic and patriarchal obliteration. Collectively, these authors demonstrate how we can reclaim English, once a colonial imposition, as a vehicle for literary resistance and cultural preservation. Their works maintain the nuances of endangered languages through thematic and structural tributes while challenging prevailing narratives, ensuring that the marginalised voices of Northeast India remain integral to the global literary discourse.

Nagaland: Archival Resistance via Oral Tradition and Feminist Pluralism

Easterine Kire (b. 1959, Kohima) has independently established written literature to support oral cultures under decline in Nagaland. Owing to the fragility of oral memory, she recollects, "I continued writing because I believed it was essential to establish written Naga literature." (Kire 23) Many oral narratives are on the verge of extinction and will eventually disappear. Her books, stories, and translations preserve older voices, communal folk wisdom, and ceremonial narratives passed down through generations, although diminishing under contemporary pressures.

In *When the River Sleeps* (2014), the tribal protagonist Vilie draws on ancestral teachings from the Age-Group House -- a traditional institution -- to gain the spiritual insight needed to confront the were-tiger and help rejuvenate his community. Kire employs this narrative technique to emphasise the significance of traditional oral narratives that preserve moral and spiritual balance. The text consistently emphasises that "the struggle is not against flesh and blood, but spiritual powers ...," (Kire 45) indicating the enduring significance of orally given wisdom.

Further, tales such as "Spirit Nights" dramatise Naga spiritual cosmologies, and illustrate the interaction of human, animal, ancestral, and cosmic realms. Kire's

style is intentionally understated --"ordinary words with extraordinary meaning"--reflecting the rhythm and communal essence of oral storytelling. This stylistic attention ensures that written English reflects spoken forms, not as a mere relic, but as a vibrant, evolving tradition.

Decades of armed violence and relocation have harmed oral storytelling. Folklore "lost its context" as settlements were deserted in forests during conflict, and storytellers, who are the guardians of oral history, were muted by violence. Kire resurrects these suppressed traditions in written form. Her 2019 nonfiction work, *Walking the Roadless Road*, meticulously documents the testimonies of elders, safeguarding communal histories that have been marginalised, obliterated, or misrepresented by external forces.

The Many That I Am, edited by Anungla Zoe Longkumer (daughter of Temsüla Ao) and released in 2019, is the inaugural anthology focusing on Naga women's voices --encompassing narratives, poetry, and melodies that explore themes of conversion, colonisation, trauma, and survival. The anthology's title suggests complex identities that challenge solitary notions of Naga women (Kire 57).

Longkumer deliberately constructs a feminist archive, chronicling historically marginalised experiences. In interviews, she elucidates that women's oral traditions were being obscured by patriarchal colonial and postcolonial literary narratives. The anthology salvages such knowledge from obscurity, reinstating its significance in cultural memory (Kire 84).

This diverse anthology embodies resistance via multiplicity. It disrupts colonial and patriarchal knowledge systems by accommodating vernacular subjectivities and diverse identities, facilitated through English yet rooted in indigenous epistemologies. *The Many That I Am* illustrates literary survivance, a reconfiguration of identity and community rooted in oral tradition and memory.

In Nagaland, where warfare, Christianization, and migration have damaged oral heritage, literature has emerged as the primary archive. Kire transposes oral traditions into written form through her fiction and nonfictional works, and maintains their spiritual and community essence. Longkumer amplifies women's narratives, creating a feminist archive of communal memory. Both tactics demonstrate that Indian English literature, when employed by native authors, serves as a decolonial instrument: safeguarding languages and memory, contesting exclusion, and guaranteeing cultural survival.

Arunachal Pradesh—Mamang Dai and the Adi Ecological Literary Archives

Mamang Dai (b. 1957), a journalist-turned-poet, novelist, and activist from the Adi tribes, uses English to document and articulate indigenous Adi cosmologies that are increasingly endangered. Shodh Kosh states that her poetry embodies a profound sense of locality, cultural identity, and environmental activism, grounded in the Adi perspective of "harmony between humanity and the environment."

In collections such as *Midsummer Survival Lyrics* (2014), Dai clearly references the Adi spiritual system, Donyi-Polo, which regards all entities such as human, animal, plant, and elemental as sacred relatives. Critics contend that this perspective recontextualises human-nature relationships through a profound ecological ethic grounded in indigenous spirituality. Significant poetry depicts the symbolism of reciprocity, wherein rivers and mountains embody living entities endowed with memory, spirit, and agency.

In works like "River Poems" and "Small Towns and the River", Dai utilises oral-mnemonic strategies to express Adi bioregional identity. For example, "linking the seasons, coding the trailing mist/in silent messages across the vast landscape"(Dai 12) emphasises an oral tradition wherein ecological knowledge is imparted through pattern, rhythm, and metaphor. According to *Poetry International*, the landscape in her work is "dense with sacred memory"(87); however, scripts are mourned while soldiers traverse the valleys, the Adi "race of fireflies bargaining with the night" endures.

Priyanka Sarmah discerns an "indigenist turn" in Dai's poetry, wherein she employs English—a colonial medium—to reclaim Adi histories and ontologies while subverting hegemonic literary stereotypes. In ecofeminist interpretations (Navarro-Tejero 104), Dai's poems "Tapu" and "An Obscure Place" amalgamate forest mythology and aspects of gendered preservation, underscoring feminine contributions to the maintenance of cultural memory.

Mamang Dai's literature serves as a cultural necessity rather than only an artistic expression. Rooted in Adi's affinity with the land, her poetry constructs memory architecture that connects seasonal cycles, ancestral melodies, and ecological principles inside the English language. Her indigenist perspective demonstrates decolonial empathy; English serves as a medium for Adi's memory instead of a colonial constraint. Dai transforms rivers into ancestral relatives and mountains into spiritual communicators, documenting endangered oral spiritualities in written form, thus preserving Adi's natural wisdom in literature despite the threats posed by social disruptions.

Manipur: Rongmei Resistance and Meitei Renaissance through Literature

The Rongmei tribe of Manipur, albeit lesser-known in mainstream literature, has a profound oral heritage encompassing folktales, songs, and ceremonies, many of which persist without a formal written script. Community initiatives, exemplified by the Rongmei Folklore Society, are currently documenting, translating, and re-narrating these oral treasures in English as part of a wider literary renaissance. These endeavours serve as archives of resistance, particularly for therapeutic lyrics and gendered ritual laments linked to agricultural cycles and spiritual ceremonies.

While Meitei (Manipuri) is comparatively well-established, its literary articulation in English facilitates the bridging of cultural and linguistic differences. Organisations like the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad and academics like Dr. Usham

Rojio underscore the need for cross-lingual education. Rojio and his colleagues contend in their writings advocating for mother-tongue education and community publishing because "when a language dies ... a certain knowledge system is lost" (Rojio, cited in *Scholarship* 147). Their documentation illustrates that performance-orientated Meitei drama in English frequently integrates traditional aspects like Lai Haraoba dance and ancient mythopoetic components, so effectively countering cultural erasure through translingual dramaturgy.

Manipur has seen significant turmoil characterised by ethnic strife, insurgency, and militarisation, which have interrupted cultural traditions. Modern Meitei poets such as Robin S. Ngangom and activist-theatre practitioners like Ratan Thiyam employ multilingual compositions (Manipuri-English) to revive cultural memories and contest militarised narratives. Ngangom's poem "Letter to a Child Never Born" integrates English and Meitei idioms to examine dislocated cultural identities. Thiyam's piece, "Chinglon Chingrok," revitalises old Lai Haraoba ceremonies, showcasing the endurance of performances and narrative traditions adapted to modern recombinant contexts.

The use of performance-based literature—a literary genre focused on ritual, oral chant, and movement—constitutes a fundamental strategy in Meitei resistance. Theatre practitioners assert that narratives extend beyond paper; they manifest through physical performances on stage, transmitting decolonial memory and challenging the supremacy of written language. These theatrical activities gained particular significance during periods of war, providing venues for the continuity of collective memory, indigenous knowledge, and resistance.

Literature as Resistance and Performance

The performative nature of literature, especially with the incorporation of orality into written English, serves as a tactic for opposing linguistic and cultural uniformity. Ao's intentional incorporation of untranslated Ao Naga terminology, variations in pace, and call-and-response formats mimics oral performance, despite the limitations of the short English narrative. Easterine Kire's literature similarly evokes the ancient ethics of Naga storytelling, in which moral education and the transmission of memory are communal endeavours, thereby framing her English-language narratives as literary rituals. The performance aspect is especially important in oral cultures, where literature serves as a replacement for fading ceremonial storytelling and healing practices.

Furthermore, theatrical and literary creations from Manipur illustrate that resistance transcends the written word. Ratan Thiyam's theatrical compositions employ indigenous choreography, costumes, and holy chants, converting stage performance into a political act that challenges linguistic marginalisation by expressing vibrant oral traditions. This aligns with Diana Taylor's differentiation between the archive (texts, papers, and recordings) and the repertoire (embodied memory and performance). Literature serves a dual purpose: it preserves the repertory while concurrently facilitating its revival (Taylor 73).

Consequently, the literary output in English by Northeast authors serves not as a renunciation of indigeneity but as a method of preserving it through hybrid textual and performative modalities. Consequently, literature serves as a means to safeguard endangered cultural systems and establish novel pathways for linguistic preservation.

Literature's function in expressing collective trauma and deconstructing epistemic violence is important to a decolonial interpretation of Northeast Indian Literature. Language extinction in the region is not a natural occurrence; it stems from colonial linguistic hierarchy, postcolonial nation-building, missionary initiatives, and contemporary educational systems that favour "national" languages over indigenous languages. Authors in English from these areas react by deliberately "writing back" --a method of decolonial resistance that utilises the coloniser's language to reclaim suppressed knowledge systems.

Easterine Kire's writings offer a compelling perspective on the expression of suffering through decolonial narratives. Her novel, *Walking the Roadless Road*, uses oral accounts from war-affected Naga elders to challenge the suppression enforced by both colonial and nationalist discourses. These testimonies, upon translation into English, contest prevailing historiographies and provide alternative viewpoints rooted in indigenous experience. Decolonial thinker Walter Dignolo contends that decolonial philosophy must "delink" from the logic of coloniality and prioritise epistemologies at the periphery (Dignolo 124). Kire's narratives exemplify this disconnection by prioritising memory, orality, and spirituality over factual evidence and governmental documentation.

Mamang Dai's ecological poetry also embodies trauma not alone from military war but from epistemic rupture, wherein land is no longer regarded as kin and rivers are devoid of voices. Her poetry laments the rupture of holy connections between individuals and their environment, connections once sustained by Adi cosmology but now undermined by developmentalist dogma and ecological deterioration. Her poetry coincides with decolonial eco-poetics, positing that the obliteration of language results in the annihilation of relational knowledge with the environment.

The fragmented form, stillness, and repetition in the poetry of Robin S. Ngangom and other Manipuri poets indicate trauma-informed poetics, wherein literature facilitates processing and resistance to the psychological violence of cultural marginalisation. In these poems, silence serves as both an indication of tyranny and a rhetorical strategy of defiance: what remains unspoken resonates more profoundly than what is said.

In conclusion, literary works from Northeast India serve as active interventions in decolonial healing and resistance rather than just portrayals of suffering. They reconceptualise trauma not as a conclusion but as an idea for regaining language, memory, and identity. Although independent authors and community publishers have made significant progress in preserving endangered languages via literature, these initiatives necessitate institutional support. A key finding of this study is that

the preservation of Northeast India's linguistic and literary history cannot depend exclusively on artistic initiatives; it requires backing from educational policy, scholarly acknowledgement, and financial frameworks.

The omission of indigenous languages from educational curricula poses a substantial risk at the policy level. Notwithstanding constitutional mandates for mother-tongue education in India (Article 350A), the majority of students in the Northeast get instruction in Hindi, English, or regionally predominant languages (e.g., Assamese or Bengali), hence exacerbating language erosion. Institutions such as North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) and Nagaland University, as well as literary organisations like Sahitya Akademi, have initiated sponsorship for translations, anthologies, and oral archives; nevertheless, these efforts are inadequately funded and insufficiently promoted.

There is an imperative to incorporate Northeast Indian Literature into the curricula of mainstream English and comparative literature within the literary academy. Such texts are frequently classified as "regional" or "marginal", so reinforcing the marginalisation that these authors oppose. Developing inclusive curricula and facilitating doctoral research on indigenous literature might redirect scholarly focus and affirm literary survival as a viable academic endeavour.

Moreover, community publishing platforms—such as Zubaan Books (focused on women's literature), Pen Thrill (Sikkim), and historical societies—are crucial in elevating local narratives. They offer alternate publication options for authors from and concerning endangered language communities. Nonetheless, these venues frequently operate without ongoing governmental backing or international recognition.

Ultimately, digital archiving and performance-orientated education, including storytelling festivals, school theatre, and multilingual literary workshops, provide creative methods for preserving endangered languages. Institutions must transition from passive surveillance to active engagement in the documentation, instruction, and celebration of linguistic variety.

Conclusion

This analysis illustrates that Indian English Writing from Northeast India serves a twofold purpose: it counters cultural erasure by integrating endangered oral traditions into global literary forms and expresses the trauma of historical and persistent marginalisation through decolonial frameworks. Authors such as Temsüla Ao, Mamang Dai, Easterine Kire, and Robin S. Ngangom convert English into an instrument of cultural preservation rather than assimilation. Their creations warrant acknowledgement not alone for their artistic merit but also for their socio-political significance.

Nevertheless, literature cannot bear the responsibility of preservation independently. Educational, administrative, and literary institutions must intervene aggressively to sustain and foster language and cultural resilience. By

implementing inclusive legislation, promoting bilingual education, and investing in institutions, literature can be preserved as a vibrant embodiment of endangered cultures, serving as a dynamic force of resistance and renewal.

This study investigates the role of Indian English Literature from Northeast India as a vibrant locus of cultural resistance, archive recovery, and decolonial expression amidst linguistic endangerment. The literary contributions of Temsüla Ao, Mamang Dai, Easterine Kire, Anungla Zoe Longkumer, and certain Manipuri writers and performers illustrate that writing transcends mere memory preservation; it enacts memory, revitalises orality, and recuperates threatened epistemologies. These literary voices act as guardians of communal identity, ecological insight, ritual knowledge, and linguistic authenticity.

The study emphasises that literature serves as both a durable archive and a performance arena, encapsulating the repertoire of oral cultures in written form. It demonstrates that English, previously a means of colonial obliteration, is being reappropriated by indigenous authors as a medium for survival and rebirth. These authors not only contest colonial and nationalist discourses that have traditionally marginalised their communities, but they also forge new avenues for cultural continuity and indigenous agency.

The preservation of endangered languages and their associated cultural realms cannot depend exclusively on writers and artists. Institutional inertia, policy indifference, and insufficient educational assistance continue to jeopardise language diversity in the region. Without active participation from academic, governmental, and community-based institutions, literary initiatives are likely to remain symbolic rather than systemic.

Planned and continuous institutional measures must bolster literary initiatives to ensure the cultural preservation of endangered languages in Northeast India. The primary necessity is the incorporation of indigenous literature into conventional academic curricula at both primary and tertiary educational institutions. Incorporating works by authors such as Temsüla Ao, Mamang Dai, and Easterine Kire into English and comparative literature curricula will affirm indigenous perspectives and enhance scholarly acknowledgement of oral literary traditions. The promotion of mother-tongue education in early schooling is equally essential, as stipulated by Article 350A of the Indian Constitution. Classroom instruction should prioritise local languages to help young learners retain their fluency, identity, and connection to ancestral knowledge systems.

Moreover, there is an imperative necessity to create and sustain literary and oral archives that document and conserve folk narratives, songs, and ritual texts. These archives may exist in digital or physical formats and should entail collaborative efforts among universities, cultural institutions, and local custodians of information. Simultaneously, assistance for community publishing efforts and regional literary workshops will enable local authors, storytellers, and youth to persist in writing and performing in their original languages. Resources should be

designated for indigenous language publications, anthologies, and storytelling festivals that facilitate intergenerational literary transmission.

Further, performance-based education—encompassing school and college plays, musical competitions, and storytelling forums should be promoted as an educational instrument that revitalises oral traditions and enhances language retention. These embodied kinds of information are essential in cultures where storytelling has traditionally taken place beyond the written realm. There is an urgent necessity to cultivate multilingual methodologies in literary criticism. Scholars and critics should interpret Indian English writings not as separate from their language origins but as vibrant manifestations of multilingual awareness. Implementing frameworks that recognise indigenous syntactic rhythms, symbols, and cultural allusions can facilitate the decolonisation of literary interpretations and enhance comprehension of endangered cultural systems.

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