

Culture and Translation in Odia Society: A Multifaceted Exploration

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Abstract

This paper explores the multifaceted role of translation in shaping the cultural landscape of Odia society. Through an interdisciplinary lens, it examines the interplay between language, literature, rituals, folklore, and globalization, unraveling the nuanced dynamics that influence the transmission, interpretation, and transformation of Odia culture across temporal, spatial, and socio-cultural contexts. The paper highlights the transformative power of translation in bridging linguistic divides, fostering cross-cultural dialogue, and ensuring the continuity of Odisha's rich cultural heritage. It investigates the impact of translation on Odia language and literature, from ancient epics to contemporary works, and how it facilitates the dissemination of cultural knowledge and values to diverse audiences. The paper also explores the role of translation in preserving and adapting Odia rituals and festivals, such as the Ratha Yatra and Durga Puja, in the face of globalization. It delves into the realm of Odia folklore and oral traditions, examining how translation revitalizes and safeguards these narratives, amplifying marginalized voices and reinforcing cultural resilience. Finally, the paper addresses the challenges and opportunities presented by cultural exchange and globalization, emphasizing the importance of translation in navigating the complexities of cultural identity, representation, and power dynamics. Through descriptive narratives, analytical insights, and case studies, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between culture and translation in Odia society, highlighting its significance in shaping a more inclusive and diverse world.

Keywords: Odia culture, translation, heritage, folklore, globalisation.

Introduction

In the gentle embrace of the eastern coast of India, where the azure waves of the Bay of Bengal caress the sun-kissed shores, lies the enchanting state of Odisha. Here, amidst verdant forests, ancient temples, and vibrant villages, a rich cultural tapestry unfolds, woven with threads of tradition, spirituality, and artistic expression. At the heart of this cultural mosaic lies the indomitable spirit of the Odia people, whose resilience, creativity, and reverence for heritage have shaped the contours of Odisha's cultural landscape. As the dawn breaks over the misty horizons of Odisha, the air resonates with the melodious strains of Odissi music, echoing the timeless rhythms of devotion and celebration that have echoed through the ages. From the ancient stone carvings of the Sun Temple in Konark to the colourful processions of the Ratha Yatra in Puri, Odisha's cultural heritage is a testament to the ingenuity and creativity of its people. Here, amidst the lush greenery of the countryside and the bustling markets of its cities,

traditions come alive in vibrant hues, weaving a tapestry of cultural diversity and resilience. Yet, amidst the splendour of its temples and the fervour of its festivals, Odisha's cultural heritage is not merely a relic of the past; it is a living, breathing entity, evolving and adapting with the passage of time. In the villages that dot the rural landscape, ancient folk traditions and oral narratives endure, passed down from generation to generation by storytellers and artisans. In the bustling streets of its cities, contemporary artists and writers draw inspiration from the past, infusing their work with a sense of continuity and innovation. It is within this dynamic interplay of tradition and innovation that the exploration of culture and translation in Odisha takes root. Here, amidst the cacophony of languages, dialects, and artistic expressions, translation emerges as a transformative force, bridging linguistic divides and fostering cross-cultural dialogue. From the ancient texts of Odia literature to the vibrant rituals of its festivals, translation serves as a conduit for the transmission of cultural knowledge and values, ensuring that Odisha's rich heritage continues to resonate with audiences around the world.

Translation enables individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds to access and engage with the rich cultural heritage of Odisha. By translating texts, rituals, and oral traditions from Odia into other languages, this paper facilitates the dissemination of cultural knowledge and promotes a deeper understanding of Odia society among a broader audience. Odisha boasts a diverse cultural heritage, encompassing literature, rituals, folklore, and more. Translation helps to preserve and safeguard this heritage by documenting and transcribing cultural texts and practices into languages that may otherwise be inaccessible to future generations. Through translation, the cultural legacy of Odisha is preserved for posterity, ensuring that it remains a source of inspiration and pride for years to come. Translation fosters intercultural dialogue and exchange by facilitating communication between different linguistic and cultural communities. By translating Odia texts into English and other languages, this paper creates opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue, enabling individuals from diverse backgrounds to share perspectives, exchange ideas, and build mutual understanding. Translation allows for the exploration of cultural identity and the negotiation of cultural boundaries within Odia society. By examining how texts, rituals, and traditions are translated and adapted across linguistic and cultural contexts, this paper sheds light on the complexities of cultural identity formation in Odisha and the ways in which translation shapes perceptions of self and other. Translation promotes diversity and inclusion by amplifying marginalized voices and perspectives within Odia society. By translating texts and oral traditions from marginalized communities, this paper highlights the cultural contributions of all members of Odia society, fostering a more inclusive understanding of cultural heritage and identity. So, translation plays a pivotal role in this paper by facilitating access to cultural knowledge, preserving cultural heritage, promoting intercultural dialogue, exploring cultural identity, and promoting diversity and inclusion within

Odia society. By recognizing the importance of translation in shaping the dynamics of culture

and society, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities of Odia culture and its intersections with the broader world.

In this Paper, we embark on a journey through the multifaceted dimensions of Odia society, delving into the intricate interplay between language, literature, rituals, folklore, and globalization with the transformative process of translation. Through an interdisciplinary lens, we seek to unravel the nuanced dynamics that shape the transmission, interpretation, and transformation of Odia culture across temporal, spatial, and socio-cultural contexts. From the lyrical poetry of medieval poets to the contemporary expressions of modern artists, we explore the ways in which translation mediates the dissemination, adaptation, and reconfiguration of Odisha's cultural narratives, practices, and values. As we traverse the verdant landscapes and vibrant communities of Odisha, may this exploration serve as a testament to the enduring power of culture and translation to forge connections, foster understanding, and celebrate the rich diversity of human expression. Together, let us embark on a journey of discovery, as we unravel the mysteries and marvels of Odisha's cultural heritage, one translation at a time.

Nestled along the sun-kissed shores of the Bay of Bengal, Odisha is a land where azure waves meet ancient temples, verdant forests, and vibrant villages, weaving a cultural tapestry of unparalleled richness. The Odia people, with their resilience, creativity, and reverence for heritage, have crafted a cultural landscape that resonates with tradition and innovation. From the melodious strains of Odissi music to the vibrant processions of the Ratha Yatra in Puri, Odisha's cultural heritage is a testament to human ingenuity. This heritage is not static; it evolves, adapting to modernity while preserving its essence through the voices of storytellers, artisans, and contemporary artists. At the heart of this dynamic cultural interplay lies translation—a transformative force that bridges linguistic divides, fosters cross-cultural dialogue, and ensures the continuity of Odisha's heritage. Translation enables access to Odia literature, rituals, and folklore for diverse audiences, preserving cultural knowledge for posterity. It facilitates intercultural exchange, negotiates cultural identities, and amplifies marginalized voices, promoting diversity and inclusion. This paper explores the multifaceted role of translation in Odia society, examining its impact on language, literature, rituals, folklore, and globalization. Through an interdisciplinary lens, we unravel how translation shapes the transmission, interpretation, and transformation of Odia culture across temporal, spatial, and socio-cultural contexts.

Language and Literature:

In the ethereal realm of Odia language and literature, where the ink flows like sacred rivers and words dance upon the pages like celestial beings, a profound tapestry of creativity, emotion, and cultural resonance unfolds. From the ancient epics of the Mahabharata and Ramayana to

the lyrical verses of medieval poets like Sarala Das and Jayadeva, Odia literature embodies the essence of a civilization that has thrived for millennia amidst the verdant landscapes and timeless traditions of Odisha.

Each word, each syllable in the pages of Odia literature carries with it the weight of centuries of cultural heritage and linguistic evolution. The language itself, with its mellifluous cadences and intricate syntax, serves as a vessel for the expression of the human experience in all its myriad hues. Through the artful strokes of poets and writers, the landscapes of Odisha come alive with vivid imagery, from the verdant paddy fields of the countryside to the majestic spires of the Jagannath temple in Puri, each scene rendered with exquisite detail and poetic grace.

At the heart of Odia literature lies a deep reverence for tradition and a profound connection to the land and its people. Through the verses of poets like Gangadhar Meher and Fakir Mohan Senapati, the struggles and triumphs of rural life find expression in poignant narratives that resonate with readers across generations. Themes of love, loss, and longing reverberate through the pages of Odia literature, reflecting the universal human experience while also celebrating the unique cultural identity of Odisha.

Yet, Odia literature is not confined to the past; it is a living, breathing entity that continues to evolve and adapt to the changing times. In the works of modern writers like Manoj Das and Prativa Ray, the age-old themes of Odia literature are reimagined through contemporary lenses, exploring issues of identity, globalization, and social change with nuance and insight. Through their stories and novels, these writers offer a window into the complexities of Odia society, inviting readers to engage with the rich tapestry of culture and tradition that defines their homeland.

Binapani Mohanty, often revered as the "nightingale of Odisha," stands as a towering figure in the cultural landscape of the region, her contributions spanning literature, music, and social activism. Born in the idyllic village of Bahanaga in Balasore district, Binapani's early life was steeped in the rhythms of rural Odisha, where she imbibed the rich oral traditions and folk melodies that would later inspire her artistic endeavours. As a prolific writer, Binapani Mohanty's literary oeuvre embodies the ethos of Odia culture, capturing the essence of rural life, women's experiences, and societal transformations. Her lyrical poetry, infused with imagery drawn from nature and the human condition, resonates with readers across generations, evoking a sense of nostalgia for simpler times and a deep appreciation for the beauty of everyday life. Through her poems and essays, Binapani articulates the hopes, dreams, and struggles of marginalized communities, giving voice to the voiceless and advocating for social justice and equality. Beyond her literary pursuits, Binapani Mohanty's musical talents brought her widespread acclaim and adoration. With her soulful renditions of Odia folk songs

and devotional hymns, she captivated audiences with her melodious voice and emotive performances. Through her music, Binapani transcended linguistic and cultural barriers, forging connections with listeners from diverse backgrounds and inspiring a renewed appreciation for Odia musical heritage. Yet, perhaps Binapani Mohanty's most enduring legacy lies in her tireless advocacy for women's rights and social reform. As a pioneering feminist and social activist, she challenged entrenched patriarchal norms and championed the cause of gender equality, education, and empowerment. Through her writings, speeches, and grassroots initiatives, Binapani sparked conversations about women's rights and societal change, laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and equitable society. In the annals of Odisha's cultural history, Binapani Mohanty's contributions shine as a beacon of inspiration and hope, her life embodying the transformative power of art, music, and activism. Through her unwavering commitment to social justice and cultural preservation, she leaves behind a legacy that continues to inspire and uplift future generations of Odia's and beyond. As the "nightingale of Odisha" serenades the hearts and minds of all who encounter her work, her spirit of resilience, creativity, and compassion echoes across the ages, reminding us of the enduring power of art to transcend boundaries and transform lives. In the realm of translation, Odia literature finds new avenues for exploration and expression, as translators' endeavour to capture the essence of Odia language and culture for audiences around the world. Each translation is a labour of love, a delicate balancing act that requires sensitivity to linguistic nuances and cultural context. Through the art of translation, the voices of Odia poets and writers resonate with readers far beyond the borders of Odisha, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and appreciation.

The world of Odia language and literature is a luminous tapestry woven with threads of tradition, creativity, and cultural resonance. Through the ages, poets, writers, and translators have enriched this tapestry with their words, their stories, and their insights, ensuring that the rich heritage of Odisha continues to inspire and uplift humanity for generations to come. As we navigate the boundless realms of Odia literature, may we be guided by the wisdom and beauty that illuminate its pages, and may we continue to cherish and celebrate the vibrant legacy of Odia language and culture.

Rituals and Festivals:

Odia rituals and festivals, such as the Ratha Yatra and Durga Puja, are vibrant expressions of identity, blending spirituality and community. Translation bridges these traditions with contemporary realities, ensuring their relevance.

Odia folklore, deeply rooted in the oral traditions of Odisha's diverse communities, serves as a repository of collective memory, encapsulating myths, legends, folk songs, and oral narratives

that define the cultural identity of the Odia people. These traditions, passed down through generations by storytellers, singers, and village elders, embody the spiritual, moral, and social values of Odia society. In an era of rapid globalization, where oral traditions face the risk of erosion, translation emerges as a vital tool for revitalizing and preserving these narratives, ensuring their survival and relevance in a modern, interconnected world. By rendering Odia folklore into other languages and media, translation not only safeguards cultural heritage but also fosters cross-cultural dialogue, amplifies marginalized voices, and reinforces cultural resilience. This section explores the multifaceted role of translation in Odia folklore, examining its impact on preservation, adaptation, and global dissemination through descriptive narratives, analytical insights, and a case study. In the vibrant tapestry of Odisha's cultural landscape, rituals and festivals emerge as kaleidoscopic expressions of devotion, community, and heritage. Against the backdrop of verdant countryside and ancient temples, these sacred traditions unfold like intricate dances, weaving together threads of myth, legend, and collective memory to create a tableau of vibrant colours and rhythmic melodies.

At the heart of Odisha's rituals and festivals lies a deep reverence for the divine, embodied in the myriad forms of gods and goddesses that populate its pantheon. From the resplendent deities of the Jagannath temple in Puri to the fierce goddess Durga, worshipped with fervent devotion during the festival of Durga Puja, Odisha's religious traditions are as diverse as they are ancient. Each ritual, each ceremony is imbued with layers of symbolism and significance, drawing upon millennia of tradition and belief to evoke a sense of awe and wonder in the hearts of devotees.

Yet, Odisha's rituals and festivals are not mere acts of devotion; they are vibrant celebrations of life itself, where communities come together to rejoice, reflect, and renew their bonds of kinship and camaraderie. From the raucous revelry of the Ratha Yatra, where millions throng the streets of Puri to catch a glimpse of Lord Jagannath, to the serene serenades of the Chandan Yatra, where devotees offer sandalwood paste to the deities, Odisha's festivals are a testament to the enduring spirit of celebration that permeates its culture.

In the rural hinterlands of Odisha, rituals and festivals take on a more intimate, yet no less profound, character. Here, amidst the gentle rhythms of agrarian life, rituals are intertwined with the cycles of nature, marking the passage of seasons and the rhythms of life. During the festival of Raja Parba, women celebrate the onset of monsoon with song, dance, and feasting, while farmers offer prayers to the earth goddess for a bountiful harvest during the festival of Nuakhai. These rituals serve as anchors of tradition, grounding communities in the rhythms of nature and the cycles of life.

Yet, amidst the timeless traditions of Odisha's rituals and festivals, winds of change blow,

bringing new challenges and opportunities for adaptation and innovation. In the bustling cities of Odisha, ancient rituals find new expressions in the realms of art, music, and performance, as artists and performers reinterpret age-old traditions for contemporary audiences. From the avant-garde choreography of Odissi dance to the fusion beats of contemporary music, Odisha's cultural heritage continues to evolve and adapt to the changing times.

In the globalized world of the 21st century, Odisha's rituals and festivals serve as bridges between past and present, tradition and modernity, local and global. Through the art of translation and cultural exchange, these sacred traditions find resonance with audiences far beyond the borders of Odisha, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and appreciation. Yet, amidst the dizzying pace of change, the timeless rhythms of Odisha's rituals and festivals remain steadfast, reminding us of the enduring power of tradition to unite, inspire, and uplift humanity.

Folklore and Oral Traditions

Odia folklore encompasses a rich tapestry of stories, songs, and proverbs that reflect the lived experiences of Odisha’s rural and tribal communities. Myths surrounding local deities, such as Maa Taratarini, Maa Mangala, and Lord Jagannath, weave spiritual narratives that connect communities to their sacred landscapes. Folk songs, such as *pala* and *daskathia*, performed during festivals and gatherings, blend music, poetry, and storytelling to convey moral lessons and historical events. Proverbs and riddles, often shared in village courtyards, encapsulate wisdom and humour, reinforcing communal bonds. These oral traditions are not static relics but dynamic expressions of Odia identity, evolving through retellings to reflect contemporary concerns while preserving historical roots.

However, globalization, urbanization, and the dominance of digital media pose challenges to the survival of these oral traditions. Younger generations, increasingly drawn to globalized entertainment, may overlook the cultural significance of folklore. Translation offers a solution by documenting and disseminating these narratives in accessible languages and formats, ensuring their continuity. For instance, translating Odia folk tales into English or Hindi allows diaspora communities and global audiences to engage with Odisha’s cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride and belonging.

In the enchanting realm of Odisha's folklore and oral traditions, where myths intertwine with legends and tales are passed down through generations like precious heirlooms, a vibrant tapestry of imagination, wisdom, and cultural heritage unfolds. Against the backdrop of verdant forests, rolling hills, and sacred rivers, these age-old narratives come alive, weaving together the threads of history, mythology, and collective memory to create a world where the boundaries between the seen and the unseen blur, and the mundane and the magical coexist in harmony.

At the heart of Odisha's folklore lies a deep reverence for nature and the supernatural, embodied in the myriad deities, spirits, and mythical creatures that populate its tales. From the benevolent forest-dwelling spirits known as Pana Devatas to the mischievous water nymphs called Jharapata, Odisha's folklore is teeming with characters both wondrous and mysterious, each with its own role to play in the intricate web of Odia mythology. Through these stories, passed down through generations by storytellers, singers, and performers, the natural world is imbued with a sense of wonder and awe, becoming a realm where the ordinary and the extraordinary intersect.

Yet, Odisha's folklore is not merely a collection of fantastical tales; it is a repository of wisdom, moral lessons, and cultural values that have guided generations of Odia's through the trials and tribulations of life. In stories like "Kansa Vadha" and "Kanchi Abhijan," heroes and heroines grapple with timeless themes of love, honour, and duty, their struggles serving as mirrors to the human condition and illuminating the complexities of human nature. Through these narratives, listeners are not only entertained but also edified, as they glean insights into the intricacies of Odia culture and society.

In the rural villages and tribal communities of Odisha, folklore and oral traditions serve as vital markers of identity and belonging, fostering a sense of community and shared heritage among its inhabitants. Through songs, dances, and rituals passed down through generations, these communities preserve their cultural heritage and affirm their connections to the land and its people. Whether it is the haunting melodies of the Dalkhai dance performed by the women of the Sambalpuri tribe or the rhythmic chants of the Dhunkel song sung by the fishermen of the coastal villages, folklore and oral traditions are woven into the fabric of everyday life, binding communities together in a tapestry of shared experience and collective memory.

Yet, amidst the timeless traditions of Odisha's folklore and oral traditions, winds of change blow, bringing new challenges and opportunities for adaptation and innovation. In the digital age, folk tales find new expressions in the realms of literature, film, and digital media, as artists and creators reimagine age-old stories for contemporary audiences. From graphic novels inspired by Odia myths to animated films that bring to life the adventures of legendary heroes, Odisha's folklore continues to evolve and adapt to the changing times.

The world of Odisha's folklore and oral traditions is a mesmerizing tapestry woven with threads of imagination, wisdom, and cultural heritage. Through the ages, storytellers, singers, and performers have enriched this tapestry with their tales, their songs, and their artistry, ensuring

that the rich heritage of Odisha continues to inspire and captivate generations to come. As we navigate the boundless realms of Odisha's folklore, may we be guided by the wisdom and wonder that animate its stories, and may we continue to cherish and celebrate the vibrant legacy of Odisha's cultural heritage.

Cultural Exchange and Globalisation

In the kaleidoscopic landscape of Odisha, where ancient temples stand as sentinels of time and lush greenery envelops the senses, the winds of globalization whisper tales of change and transformation. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, Odisha finds itself at the crossroads of cultural exchange and globalization, where the currents of tradition and modernity converge in a vibrant tapestry of diversity and innovation.

In the bustling streets of Bhubaneswar, Odisha's capital city, the rhythms of urban life intersect with the melodies of tradition, creating a dynamic fusion of old and new. Here, amidst skyscrapers and shopping malls, the echoes of Odia folk music and dance reverberate through the air, a testament to the resilience of Odisha's cultural heritage in the face of globalizing pressures. Yet, alongside the traditional, a wave of globalization sweeps across the city, bringing with it new ideas, technologies, and ways of life.

As multinational corporations set up shop in Odisha's industrial hubs and tech parks, the boundaries between local and global blur, giving rise to a new cosmopolitanism that transcends linguistic and cultural divides. English, once the language of colonial rule, now serves as the lingua franca of business, education, and media, facilitating communication and collaboration in a globalized world. Yet, amidst the proliferation of global brands and consumer culture, Odisha's cultural identity remains firmly rooted in its rich traditions and values, serving as a beacon of resilience and authenticity amidst the tide of homogenization.

In the realm of arts and entertainment, globalization manifests in myriad forms, shaping the contours of Odisha's cultural landscape in unexpected ways. From the fusion of classical Odissi dance with contemporary choreography to the adaptation of ancient folk tales into modern cinematic masterpieces, the creative industries of Odisha embrace globalization as a source of inspiration and innovation. Yet, even as Odia artists and performers engage with global trends and influences, they remain steadfast in their commitment to preserving and celebrating the unique cultural heritage of their homeland, infusing their work with a sense of pride and authenticity that resonates with audiences around the world.

As Odisha's cultural horizons expand to encompass the global stage, translation emerges as a vital tool for cross-cultural communication and understanding. Whether in the realms of literature, music, or film, translators serve as cultural mediators, bridging the gap between languages and facilitating the exchange of ideas and perspectives. Through the art of translation, the stories and traditions of Odisha find resonance with audiences far beyond its borders, enriching global cultural discourse and fostering mutual appreciation and respect.

Yet, amidst the opportunities afforded by globalization, challenges abound. As Odisha navigates the complexities of cultural exchange and integration, questions of authenticity, representation, and power come to the fore. Who decides which aspects of Odisha's cultural heritage are celebrated and commodified on the global stage? How can Odia artists and creators ensure that their voices are heard and their stories are told authentically in a globalized world? These are the questions that shape the ongoing dialogue between tradition and innovation, continuity and change, in Odisha's cultural landscape.

The intersection of cultural exchange and globalization in Odisha represents a vibrant tapestry of diversity, resilience, and adaptation. As Odia society engages with the world, translation emerges as a powerful tool for navigating the complexities of cultural exchange, fostering dialogue, and preserving the rich heritage of Odisha for future generations. In the midst of a rapidly changing world, Odisha's cultural identity remains a beacon of authenticity and resilience, a testament to the enduring power of tradition in an ever-evolving global landscape.

Conclusion

As the sun sets over the ancient temples and verdant landscapes of Odisha, a profound sense of continuity and transformation pervade the cultural landscape. Through the lens of language, literature, rituals, folklore, and globalization, our journey into the heart of Odia society has revealed a vibrant tapestry of resilience, adaptation, and renewal.

In the realm of language and literature, translation emerges as both a beacon of connectivity and a vessel of cultural transmission. From the eloquent verses of medieval poets to the contemporary prose of modern writers, the art of translation breathes new life into the timeless narratives of Odia literature, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and appreciation. Yet, amidst the nuances of linguistic mediation, translators navigate the delicate balance between fidelity to the original text and adaptation to diverse audiences, ensuring that the essence of Odia culture resonates with readers around the world.

Rituals and festivals stand as pillars of Odia identity, anchoring communities in shared traditions and collective memories. Through the transformative power of translation, these ancient rituals transcend geographical boundaries, resonating with diasporic communities and global audiences. However, as the rhythms of tradition intersect with the currents of modernity, translation becomes a site of negotiation, where the preservation of cultural heritage intersects with the imperative of adaptation to changing times.

Folklore and oral traditions, steeped in the rich tapestry of Odia history and mythology, find new expression through the art of translation. From the mythical tales of gods and heroes to the whimsical adventures of folk heroes, translation breathes life into these timeless narratives, ensuring their preservation for future generations. Yet, in the face of globalization and technological change, translation becomes a tool for cultural revitalization, empowering communities to reclaim their linguistic and cultural heritage in a rapidly changing world. In the globalized landscape of the 21st century, translation emerges as a force for social change

and cultural empowerment. As Odisha engages with the world, translation becomes a bridge that connects diverse cultures, fosters understanding, and challenges hegemonic narratives. Through community-driven initiatives, grassroots movements, and digital platforms, Odia speakers assert their linguistic and cultural identity, shaping the contours of a more inclusive and diverse world. Our exploration of culture and translation in Odia society unveils a tapestry of resilience, adaptation, and renewal. Through the transformative power of translation, Odisha emerges not as a passive recipient of global culture but as an active participant in shaping the contours of a more interconnected, diverse, and vibrant world. As the journey continues, may the spirit of cultural exchange and translation illuminate the path towards a more inclusive and harmonious future for Odia society and beyond.

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