

Relevance of translation

(Special reference to *Anubadar Katha* by Krishna Kanta Handique)

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Abstract:

Krishna Kanta Handique is a helmsman of modern Assamese language who has contributed to the granary of Assamese literature with writings and criticism on Western language and literature. He has also done a great amount of translation from Sanskrit and other European languages. Krishna Kanta Handique analyses various issues and aspects of literature in his original writings. *Anubadar Katha* by Krishna Kanta Handique is an essay associated to the issues of translation. In this article, he has analysed the role of translation to make a language and literature enrich with certain instances. He also talks about the relevance of translation in Assamese literature too. The objective of the paper is to analyse relevance of translation discussed by Krishna Kanta Handique in his *Anubadar Katha*

Key words: Assamese literature, Krishna Kanta Handique, relevance, translation.

Introduction

Krishna Kanta Handique was one of the most renowned figures of modern Assamese literature whose contribution to Assamese literature is immense. He is a helmsman of Assamese language and literature with the knowledge of thirteen languages including Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, Russian, Italian, Spanish, Pali etc. Apart from the translation of ancient epical writings such as *Yashastilak*, *Naishadh-Charita*, Krishna Kanta Handique has enriched the literary field with his critical writings. Moreover, he has also contributed to the granary of Assamese literature with poems, paintings, philosophy, children literature, biographical writings and criticism on Western language and literature. Among the creation of Krishna Kanta Handique, his translation of *Yashastilak*, *Naishadh-Charita* and *Setubandha* are remarkable. The first two of the mentioned works have been translated from Sanskrit and the rest one is from Prakrit. A glance of his high intellect is to be found in his writings.

Krishna Kanta Handique analyses various issues and aspects of literature in his original writings. Poetry, play, song, language and literature of the renowned Western writers along with Indian painting, philosophy, samkhya were some of the subject matters that have been included in range of Handique's writings. *Anubadar Katha* by Krishna Kanta Handique is an important essay associated to literature. He has analysed the role of translation to make a language and literature enrich with certain instances. The present paper aims at the discussion on the necessity of translation in Assamese literature that has been critically discussed by Krishna Kanta Handique in his article *Anubadar Katha*.

Scope

Relevance of translation in Assamese literature that has been reflected in the article *Anubadar Katha* by Krishna Kanta Handique is the main concern of the study. The scope of the study is confined to the main article.

Objective

Translation is an important genre of literature. It helps the reader to taste the literature of the world. Translation enriches a language and literature by transmitting various trends which might be absent in the particular literature. Regarding the necessity of translation, Krishna Kanta Handique has written a precious article. Having discussed the contribution of translation in the uprising of various languages of the world with examples, Handique discusses the need of translation in Assamese literature too. The main objective of the paper is to analyse the aspects that have been pointed by Krishna Kanta Handique regarding the translation in Assamese literature.

Methodology

It is a library research. Analytical method has been used in the research.

The article *Anubadar Katha* is the primary resource of the paper.

Content analysis

In literature translation means the changing of the medium of writing or feeling from one language to another. Translation is important in a multi-lingual society and it also helps people to read the literature of different languages. French novelist N Luiba Jarmen opined regarding the translation as the best contribution to be endeavoured in literature is the

translating the great creations from one to another language. The influence of translation can be seen since the ancient in both Eastern and Western literature.

As the various Western ancient religious scripts such as different versions of Bible in Western languages, *Veda*, *Purana*, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana etc have also been translated into various Indian languages. A particular language can be enriched by translating the great works of different languages. Moreover, it is said that translation increases the possibilities of the expressions and flexibilities of the language. It can also contribute to the language to express the novelty regarding thoughts, imaginations etc. Apart from the clearing the ways of creative use of the language, translation might help to create a new genre in literature.

In spite of the important contribution of translation to the growth of a particular language, many people opined against the acceptance of the translation. According to them, there are differences between the languages. They do not match in feeling, expression, and culture. As human expression and thought vary according to the environment and circumstances, therefore, it turns tough on the part of the translator to make a balance. Claiming the translation as an impossible task, Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega Gasset opined that the technique of a writer create hurdle to the translator, because, sometimes the words written by the writer might convey some specific meaning. Moreover, every language has its own style which is different from other. A particular language evolved through certain landscape, therefore, the meaning of the synonyms of two languages claimed by dictionary might not be same. Although, there are opposite opinions regarding the acceptance of translation, it has been contributing to the enrichment of literature.

Krishna Kanta Handique has written a precious article on the role of translation in the growth of literature in Assam. The article *Anubadar Katha* is one of the most valuables of Krishna Kanta Handique's repository and it has a significance place in Assamese literature.

The article *Anubadar Katha* written in 1920 was a reactionary to the president's speech delivered by Kaliram Medhi in the 3rd conference of Assam Sahitya Sabha, where Krishna Kanta Handique forwards his argument in favour of translation. Having mentioned various languages and literatures of the world, Handique minutely discusses the aid of translation to them. The context of the necessity of translation in the article is significant. Handique has brought the examples of Czech, Hungary, Serbia, Japan etc whose literature had been enriched by the translation. He also discusses some of the basic questions

elaborately such as the context of language degeneration caused by translation, need of addition and subtraction, language of translated poems etc.

In the beginning of the article, Krishna Kanta Handique offers the examples of the reviving of Czech literature from a moribund state through translation. Although, Czech literature was once rich, it turned pathetically pale as the result of the Austrian administration. But suddenly it raised in the early part of 19th century through translation that lying ebb for last two hundred years. In this uprising of Czech Republic, professor Jungmann, professor Kollar, professor Safarik and professor Palacky played a pivotal role. Among the numerous translations done by Jungmann, Paradise Lost was major one. He started his literary career as translator. On the other hand, another one named Hong has also translated from various languages such German Russian to Czech and thus contributed in the reestablishment of the language. In the second half of the 19th century, Jaroslav Vrchicky has offered major contribution to the language by writing more than two hundred and fifty books out of which ninety were translation of various prose, plays, and poetry. Those translations enabled the Czech literature to revive after a long moribund.

Similarly Hungarian literature was also rich in the 9th century but and it turned weak in the first part of the 18th century. Hungarian literature got its previous richness which was caused by various translations from French and English along with its original literature. Translation played a significant role in the reestablishment of the national literature of Hungary. Apart from literature, other valuable, historical books and the creations of the foreign writers had also been translated.

Same circumstance can be observed in Serbian literature too. Serbian literature had been struggling since 13th century. It was at the hand of Dositez Obradovic that Serbia got its own glittering back. He had a grasp in several languages such as English, Italian etc which made him possible to translate folktales, scriptures, proverbs etc from the above languages to Serbian with his own note. It imparted a new dimension to the literature of Serbia. It was followed by the translation of the books like Robinson Crusoe, Paradise Lost along with the writings of various legends such Darwin, Hackles, Buckles etc. Even the writings of Hungarian writers, whose literature was established through translation, had been translated to the Serbian language. **Bishop Uselini** offered his contribution to the language by translating Dante's Divine Comedy.

Japan is another example who climbed up the ladder of literature leaning against translation. It was the Dutch that entered into Japan first and the books associated to medical science were translated to Japanese from them. The influence of the translation was to an extent that Japanese scholar **Dr Okaita** declared the new birth of Japan on 4th March in 1717. Although, the Japanese government opposed the continuance of the translation from foreign literature in the beginning, initiative was taken by the government to form a committee to appoint translator. Thus, physics, chemistry, medical science entered into the Japanese language through European languages which influenced the entire Japan. Moreover, translation of European languages and literatures brought a change to the whole Japan even to the political scenario. Apart from the translation of Spenser, Buckle, Mill, another important to be added to the list was the translation of the English dictionary under the sponsorship of the government itself. The first translation of poetry published in 1882 and it was for the fact, the year was marked as the birth of new Japanese literature. Prior to that, medical science, physics, chemistry, philosophies, political science were predominant. Translation of the creative writing such as play, poem, novel, short stories took place from 1882 which added another chapter in Japanese literature. The field of Japanese literature turned bright with the embracement of foreign writings. The Japanese got the privilege to taste the writings of the renowned writers across the globe and realised that translated literature are more interesting than their own.

Like Japan, Roman and Latin had also translated various books from Greek. It was because of the quantity, Latin literature is considered to be indebted to Greek.

Apart from the examples of the modern literature, Handique also mentions the ancient literature. In this respect, he opines that Chinese literature consists of the most amalgamation of translations. It was between the 1st and 13th century, numerous Sanskrit and Pali books associated to Buddhism had been translated to Chinese that resulting the establishment of a huge collection of religious literature. Later on, the books fulfilled the necessity of the original works when the originals of Sanskrit and Pali were extinct. The tourists from China like Huang Sang, **Ishiu**, Fa-hien who visited to India, had translated various Sanskrit and Pali texts to their mother tongue with utmost effort. Huang Sang involved in translation with a great preparation. He returned to home in 646 and in the last 19 years, he translated 74 books to Chinese from various languages.

Apart from the issues of acceptance of translation, Handique also discusses the influence of translation on the mother tongue and the original language of the translated one. It has already been mentioned that the article *Anubadar Katha* was written as reaction to the speech delivered by Kaliram Medhi. Medhi said that although, he discusses about translation, it does not indicate his partiality to translation. On our part it is better to avoid translation for the sake of the play, poetry and novel. In this regard, Handique refuted Medhi's claims by mentioning the Japanese translation of the same. Even Japanese literature was endowed by the translation of the writers like Shakespeare and Victor Hugo. In 1953, about 50 novels from the Western writers such Dumas, Daudet, George Eliot had been translated to Japanese literature. Regarding the influence Japanese literature, Professor **Inazo Nitobe** opined that European tradition was not imitated directly, but it opened the resources of the mind to create.

In the context of the influence of translation, Handique opined that although, the pride of the original literature of a language does not rely on the translation, it can play a forward moving role. He offers the example of Russia that translation of various books and French dictionary along with more than 600 foreign novels took place only because of the movement of translation initiated by Queen Catherine. Of course, those translations do not exhibit the pride of Russia but they helped in shaping the foundation of the literature and also created a class of reader.

Regarding the methodology of translation, Handique warns to be careful while translating factual and educational pieces, because such kind of writings must be free from error and misinterpretation and translator must also verify the reliability of the source of the data. Sometimes, translation is necessary for the knowledge and education because translation of some texts might not be possible or available in all languages. Instances can be mentioned of Latin book **Saturnalia** which has three versions in French but not a single in English. No option left for the reader apart from reading the French versions. Therefore, the necessity of translation cannot be overlooked. So far as the negative impact of translation is concerned, Handique clarify that one can contribute to the improvement of own language by a minute, studious and sensuous translation because in order to be aboriginal practically and effectively, one must go through the prominent and untainted traits of the foreign.

Conclusion

While discussing the literature of Czech, Hungary, Japan, Serbia, Krishna Kanta Handique opines that these languages faced the same circumstances as faced by the Assamese literature. But the translation from foreign language not only helps in shaping the particular language and literature, but also contributes to illuminate the name in the world by re-establishing the language. It is the translation that helped Czech and Hungary in the uprising of their literature. Translation can play a significant role to form the foundation of a language without underrating the original literature. Various subjects, cultures, data turn accessible through translation. Even, Sanskrit translation made Assamese medieval literature enrich. Therefore, the relevance and necessity of translation in literature is immense. Handique wrote the article on translation keeping views on the future of Assamese literature.

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