



DiscourseZ

The Zillennials' Discourse

An Annual Students' Periodical of the
Department of English, Duliayan College

6th Issue: 2025-2026



VIRASAT

**Insight into
Indian Knowledge System**

Editors:

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Message from the Principal- Duliajan College

It gives me immense pleasure and pride to note the publication of the sixth issue of *DiscourseZ*, the annual students' periodical of the Department of English, Duliajan College, titled *Virasat: Insight into Indian Knowledge System*. This edition is a meaningful academic initiative that seeks to draw attention to India's rich intellectual, cultural and traditional heritage while encouraging young minds to engage with it through critical and contemporary perspectives.

The word *Virasat* signifies our inheritance knowledge, values, traditions and cultural practices passed down through generations. India possesses a remarkable and diverse intellectual heritage encompassing philosophy, literature, linguistics, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, agriculture, architecture, arts, ethics and environmental wisdom. The Indian Knowledge System is therefore not merely a collection of ancient texts and practices, it represents a holistic understanding of life, society, nature and the relationship between human beings and their surroundings.

The theme of this issue assumes particular significance in the context of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the importance of Indian knowledge traditions in education. Revisiting our intellectual heritage enables students to understand its historical significance and explore its relevance to contemporary challenges. The contributors to this volume have engaged with diverse dimensions of Indian knowledge, ranging from indigenous oral traditions and literature to classical philosophies and local cultural practices. Their efforts demonstrate that our heritage can provide valuable insights while also stimulating fresh academic inquiry.

Education, in its true sense, is an active dialogue between history, culture, knowledge and innovation. A students' journal provides an important platform for such dialogue. Through writing, research and reflection, students learn to observe, question, analyse and communicate their ideas. *DiscourseZ* has consistently served as an intellectual and creative space where students can develop these abilities, and this sixth issue further strengthens that tradition.

At the same time, appreciation of our heritage should be accompanied by an informed, critical and scholarly approach. We should neither reject our past nor accept everything from it without examination. The enduring value of tradition lies in understanding it objectively, identifying its relevant principles and exploring how they can contribute to present-day needs. Tradition and modernity need not be viewed as opposites; they can complement each other in the pursuit of knowledge, creativity and human progress.

I sincerely commend the Department of English for providing students with this valuable academic platform. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the editorial team, faculty members and above all, the student contributors whose creativity, curiosity and dedication have brought this volume to life. I hope *DiscourseZ* inspires readers to look towards their roots with greater understanding while remaining open to new ideas and perspectives. May *DiscourseZ* continue to flourish as a platform for intellectual inquiry, creative expression and meaningful academic engagement and may this edition inspire our students to become thoughtful researchers, creative writers and responsible custodians of India's rich intellectual and cultural heritage.

Dr. Lok Bikash Gogoi
Principal,
Duliajan College, Duliajan

Message from the Head of the Department of English

It gives me immense pride and joy to extend my warmest congratulations to the editorial team, contributors, and the entire student community of the Department of English, Duliajan College, on the publication of the 6th edition of our annual journal, *DiscourseZ*. Over the years, this journal has grown from a humble academic platform into a vibrant space that reflects the intellectual rigor, creativity, and critical voice of our department.

This year's edition, titled *Virasat: Insight into Indian Knowledge System*, comes at a crucial moment in our contemporary academic discourse. The Persian word Virasat translates to "heritage"—an inheritance of wisdom, cultural richness, philosophical inquiry, and indigenous scientific traditions nurtured across millennia.

For students of English literature and the humanities, exploring the Indian Knowledge System is both a privilege and a responsibility. While the study of English opens windows to world literature and critical theory, grounding ourselves in Virasat ensures we read the world through a confident, decolonized, and rooted lens. An enquiry into the Indian intellectual tradition also encourages creative, multi-disciplinary scholarship beyond narrow academic boundaries, thus fostering holistic understanding for the 21st century context.

I commend the editorial board and our student writers for taking up such a meaningful theme and engaging with it with originality, depth, and academic flair. May this edition of *DiscourseZ* spark curiosity, provoke constructive debate, and inspire our learners to discover the rich intellectual legacies that shape our collective consciousness.

I wish the editorial team grand success for this edition and hope *DiscourseZ* continues to thrive as a beacon of critical thought and literary excellence in the years ahead.

Jyoti Singh Pathak
Associate Professor, Duliajan College

Editorial

Virasat: Insight into Indian Knowledge System

The sixth issue of *DiscourseZ: The Zillennials' Discourse* marks a significant milestone in the academic journey of the Department as it turns its attention to one of the richest intellectual traditions in human history- the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). Aptly titled *Virasat: Insight into Indian Knowledge System*, this volume is both a celebration of India's enduring intellectual heritage and an invitation to a new generation of scholars to engage critically with its diverse knowledge traditions. The Persian word *Virasat*, meaning "heritage" or "legacy," encapsulates the spirit of this issue, reminding us that knowledge is not merely inherited but continuously interpreted, enriched, and transmitted across generations.

In an age characterized by rapid technological advancement, globalization and unprecedented access to information, there is a growing realization that sustainable progress requires a harmonious dialogue between tradition and innovation. The Indian Knowledge System represents an expansive and interconnected body of wisdom developed over millennia across disciplines such as philosophy, literature, linguistics, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, architecture, ecology, ethics, governance, performing arts, education and spirituality. Rather than existing as isolated fields of inquiry, these disciplines collectively embody a holistic worldview that recognizes the interconnectedness of humanity, nature, and the cosmos. Such a perspective offers valuable insights into many of the contemporary challenges confronting the world today.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has further emphasized the importance of integrating Indian Knowledge Systems into higher education, encouraging students and educators alike to rediscover indigenous intellectual traditions while engaging with them through modern academic frameworks. This renewed emphasis is not an exercise in nostalgia but an opportunity to cultivate critical inquiry, interdisciplinary thinking, and cultural awareness. As students increasingly navigate complex global realities, understanding India's intellectual heritage equips them with broader perspectives and a deeper appreciation of the diverse ways in which knowledge has been produced, preserved, and disseminated.

The primary objective of this issue is to provide a scholarly platform where students can explore these knowledge traditions through original research and critical reflection. Every article included in this volume represents the curiosity, dedication and academic enthusiasm of our student contributors. Their writings examine various dimensions of Indian Knowledge Systems—from classical literature and philosophy to indigenous scientific traditions, environmental ethics, educational thought, folk practices, cultural memory, language, and artistic expressions. While diverse in subject matter, these contributions share a common purpose: to understand the relevance of traditional knowledge within contemporary contexts.

Publishing research at the undergraduate level is an empowering academic experience. It introduces students to the ethics of research, the discipline of scholarly writing, and the importance of evidence-based inquiry. More importantly, it nurtures confidence by allowing young researchers to contribute meaningfully to ongoing intellectual conversations. It is therefore a matter of immense pride that *DiscourseZ* continues to provide students with an ISBN publication, enabling them to experience the process of academic publishing at an early stage of their educational journey. Such initiatives not only strengthen research culture within the institution but also encourage students to pursue higher studies and lifelong scholarly engagement.

This issue also reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the Indian Knowledge System itself. The articles demonstrate that knowledge cannot be confined within rigid disciplinary boundaries. Whether examining ancient texts through literary criticism, exploring indigenous ecological practices through environmental studies, or analysing philosophical concepts through contemporary theoretical frameworks, our contributors exemplify the interdisciplinary spirit that lies at the heart of both modern academia and traditional Indian scholarship. Such dialogues between the past and the present enrich our understanding of knowledge as a dynamic and evolving process.

The editorial team firmly believes that engaging with Indian Knowledge Systems should not be understood as uncritical acceptance of inherited traditions. Instead, it calls for rigorous scholarship, contextual interpretation, and thoughtful dialogue. Every intellectual tradition gains vitality when it is subjected to critical examination, comparative analysis, and contemporary application. The contributions in this volume reflect precisely this spirit of inquiry, encouraging readers to appreciate the richness of India's knowledge heritage while also examining its continuing relevance through scholarly investigation.

As readers engage with the pages of *Virasat: Insight into Indian Knowledge System*, we hope they are acquainted with valuable information and get inspired to explore further, question deeper and sustain India's remarkable intellectual traditions. We also hope that the sixth issue of *DiscourseZ* will serve as a valuable academic resource for students, educators and researchers interested in Indian Knowledge Systems. May this volume stand as a testament to the enduring pursuit of knowledge, the spirit of inquiry, and the collective commitment of our academic community towards preserving and advancing our shared *Virasat*.

Regards
Editorial Team
DiscourseZ
6th Issue: 2025-2026

EDITORIAL BOARD :: *DiscourseZ* 2026



From Left: Mr. Gaurab Sengupta (Assistant Professor), Ms. Pinky Sharma Saikia (Assistant Professor), Ms. Jyoti Singh Pathak (Associate Professor and Head), Ms. Rajashree Boruah (Assistant Professor)

Editorial

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Regards
Editorial Team
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Obituary

Mr. Purnakanta Hazarika
Founding Principal: Duliajan College
(30-09-1932 to 17-12-2025)



**“So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.”**

-Sonnet 18: William Shakespeare

The Silent Crusader

Ms. Jyoti Singh Pathak
Associate Professor and Head,
Department of English
Duliajan College

There is a timeless truth captured in the words of the historian Henry Adams: **“A teacher effects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”** In the landscape of rural Upper Assam, where the green canopy of tea gardens meets the rich, churning oilfields of Duliajan, this eternity has a name. It is etched permanently into the collective memory of the region.

On August 1, 1969, when Duliajan College first opened its doors, it did so with just a handful of students and a fierce, uncompromising dream. At the center of that dream stood its founder principal, Late Purnakanta Hazarika—affectionately known to those closest as, "Baapa." He was a visionary who looked at a region rich in natural resources but starved of higher education and decided that the children of farmers, laborers, and rural families deserved a bridge to the modern world.

The story of the man who would transform the educational landscape of Duliajan began in the verdant heart of the region's tea country. Born in the Hilikha Tea Estate near Doomdoo, Purnakanta Hazarika grew up intimately acquainted with the realities, struggles, and character of rural Upper Assam. Raised in a loving and grounded home by his parents, Late Dhaneswar Hazarika and Late Tuleswari Hazarika, "Baapa" grew up alongside a close-knit family of one brother and three sisters. Spending his formative years within a tea estate community shaped his deep empathy for working class families and planted the early seeds of a lifelong commitment to social upliftment.

A true visionary does not arrive at a grand purpose through abstract academic theory ; he arrives at it through lived experience. Growing up in a time when pursuing higher education required breaking through immense geographical, financial, and logistical barriers, he knew firsthand the quiet heartbreak of rural isolation. Where many saw a permanent educational vacuum, he envisioned a thriving sanctuary of intellect.

Determined to change the status quo, he began to dream of a future where a rural student would not have to abandon home, family or roots just to earn a degree. Driven by this conviction, he initiated discussions with like-minded individuals and higher officials of Oil India Limited to establish a Degree College at Duliajan. Purnakanta Hazarika, who was then serving as a Teacher at Naharkatiya Higher Secondary School was consensually entrusted to lead this monumental project.

However, turning a grand vision into a physical reality required navigating an arduous path. In the late 1960s, establishing a college in a semi-rural pocket of Assam was an exercise in pure grit. The founder principal faced a dual battle: wrestling with bureaucratic systems to secure government compliances and raising an institution out of nothing. Securing official recognition, balancing university regulations, and chasing infrastructure approvals required endless journeys, meticulous paperwork, and an extraordinary level of patience.

Yet, his most profound challenge lay in community mobilization. In a region where families relied heavily on agricultural labor or local trades, convincing parents of the long-term, transformative power of higher education was an uphill task. Undeterred, he walked from village to village, meeting elders, tea garden workers, and local farmers. Gathering people in public spaces, he listened to their scepticism and answered with unyielding conviction. Step by step, he mobilized the local population, teaching them that building a college was not an act of luxury, but an act of survival and self-determination. The community slowly answered the call—contributing what little resources, labor, and faith they had to clear the land and erect the first modest classrooms.

Those who knew Late Purnakanta Hazarika recognised another dimension of his personality—his deep spiritual grounding. His close association with Sri Sri Auniati Satra of Majuli, one of the foremost institutions of Assam's Neo-Vaishnavite tradition, profoundly influenced his outlook on life and service. The teachings of Srimanta Sankardeva and the Neo-Vaishnavite philosophy emphasise humility, compassion, equality, and a devotion to humanity. These ideals were beautifully reflected in the way he lived. For 'Baapa', education was never merely a profession; it was **seva**—selfless service. The desire to establish an institution of higher learning was entirely free of personal ambition, driven purely by a deep sense of responsibility towards society. He believed that true success lies not in what one accumulates, but in what one leaves behind for future generations. In many ways, Duliajan College became his sacred offering to the people of Upper Assam.

Today, Duliajan College has grown from its humble beginnings into a premier multi-stream institution serving thousands across Arts, Science, and Commerce faculties. For more than five decades, the institution has enabled generations of students from rural Upper Assam to pursue higher education close to home. For many families, it provided the very first opportunity to send a son or daughter to college without unbearable financial hardship. The institution has produced teachers, doctors, engineers, administrators, scientists, entrepreneurs, artists, and countless responsible citizens whose contributions continue to enrich Assam and the nation. Many of these students were first-generation learners. Their success transformed not only individual lives but entire families and communities, serving as living proof of one man's belief that education has the power to change destiny.

The ripple effect of this education crusader's vision continues to spread across generations, reminding us that the influence of a great teacher extends far beyond the classroom.

History, however, often risks forgetting the quiet architects who laid the foundations of our society. The profound socioeconomic stability that the industrial belt of Duliajan enjoys today is due in no small part to the educated, resilient workforce this institution has produced over the decades. Though Purnakanta Hazarika is widely respected and his vast contributions have been gratefully acknowledged by local associations and grassroots organizations, his monumental impact demands a legacy that stretches far beyond localized praise.

As Assam continues to celebrate excellence in education and nation-building, it is both fitting and necessary that the extraordinary contribution of Late Purnakanta Hazarika receives wider public recognition. It would be a befitting tribute if Oil India Limited (OIL)—an institution whose history is deeply intertwined with the growth and development of Duliajan—and the Government of Assam formally recognise his unparalleled contribution to society. Such an honour would not merely celebrate an individual; it would acknowledge the transformative power of visionary leadership, community participation, and selfless service.

Honoring the boy from Hilikha Tea Estate who dedicated his life to illuminating Upper Assam is a debt of gratitude the region must finally and formally pay.

As published in *Jugodrashta*

Zubeen Garg
(18-11-1972 to 19-09-2025)



Zubeen Garg is one of the most influential and beloved cultural icons of Assam,

celebrated for his extraordinary contributions as a singer, composer, musician, lyricist, and filmmaker. With a career spanning several decades, he has played a remarkable role in shaping the contemporary Assamese musical landscape. His distinctive voice, versatile musical style, and deep connection with Assamese culture have earned him a special place in the hearts of people across generations.

Among his numerous musical contributions, “Mayabini” remains particularly significant. The song reflects Zubeen Garg’s remarkable ability to combine melody, emotion, and Assamese cultural sensibilities. Its enduring popularity has made it more than a musical composition; it has become part of the collective cultural memory of Assam. Through *Mayabini* and many other songs, Zubeen has demonstrated how music can articulate the emotional experiences, aspirations, and cultural consciousness of a people.

Zubeen Garg’s contribution, however, extends far beyond popular music. He has consistently engaged with Assamese identity, language, landscape, and social realities through his artistic work. At the same time, his involvement with music beyond Assam, including his work in the Indian film industry, has brought wider recognition to his immense musical talent. His ability to move between regional and national platforms while retaining a strong connection with his Assamese roots makes him a distinctive figure in Indian popular culture.

For Assam, Zubeen Garg represents more than a celebrated musician. He embodies a powerful cultural presence whose songs have accompanied the joys, struggles, memories, and aspirations of generations. His music has helped reaffirm the vitality of Assamese language and culture in a rapidly changing world. In this sense, Zubeen Garg is not merely a voice of Assam; he has become one of the voices through which Assam expresses itself.

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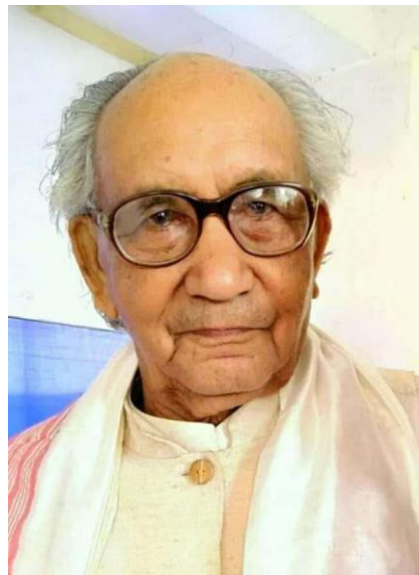
FACE TO FACE

FACE TO FACE

With Padmashree Rebakanta Mahanta, Satradhikar, Master Craftsman: Sri Sri Khatpar Satra, Hahchara (Sangeet Natak Academy Award) Sivasagar, Assam

1: How do you perceive the reflection of Assamese cultural and spiritual identity through ‘Mukha Xilpa’ in today’s modern world?

- A very significant question has been asked; first of all, Thank You. When we speak of ‘Mukha Xilpa’ (Mask Art), we can define it as two sides of the same coin within the Assamese cultural and spiritual spheres. Although mask-making is a recognized cultural art form in the vast cultural landscape of Assam, it was Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev who created a priceless tradition through *Chihna Yatra* and *Bhaona* (traditional plays). With the great objective of sowing the seeds of religious education among the simple, common masses, he used easily available natural elements to create these masks. This attracted the minds of people toward religious teachings and contributed a unique, legendary component to the Assamese cultural treasury. The ongoing trend of discussion, promotion, display, and preservation of these cultural assets has touched the masses. Similarly, the spiritual essence reflected through these works will continue to flow into the future through the medium of Assamese *Mukha Xilpa*.



2: What do you think is the underlying philosophical or spiritual meaning of mask-making in the Satriya tradition?

- In the Satriya tradition, mask-making is not merely a craftsmanship or a decorative item; it embodies a profound spiritual and philosophical significance. Through these masks, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev primarily aimed to plant the seeds of religious education and the ideas of Neo-Vaishnavism among the common masses. By combining the concepts of Bhakti (devotion) and God through the medium of Bhaona (traditional drama), he used masks as an innovative technique to realize the philosophy of devotion and spiritual education. The success of religious education was determined by this method. In Sankardev's philosophy, to impart the highest spiritual education regarding the victory of truth and righteousness over falsehood and unrighteousness, he utilized masks representing various forms of Gods, deities, and demons. This allowed the audience to easily connect with the mythological stories and internalize the seeds of moral teaching. In a literal sense, a mask is an external covering. To make the deep truths of Maya (illusion) and Truth comprehensible to the common people, Sankardev used masks in the Bhaona culture. These masks help people visually distinguish between true and false characters, effectively removing the veil of ignorance or Maya and delivering a message of harmony along with religious and moral education.

3: While presenting the art of mask making to a modern audience, how can its traditional uniqueness be preserved?

- In modern society, to present mask making according to the tastes of a modern audience, one must respect the teachings and instructions of ancestors and predecessors. I believe it is a moral duty to showcase this tradition within its spiritual and cultural background without distorting or losing its essence. Although modern science and mechanical arts have been integrated, it is especially important for artisans to take responsibility for maintaining the uniqueness of traditional masks made from easily available natural materials.

4: What is the greatest challenge in passing down the knowledge of traditional mask making to the next generation?

- In a society influenced by consumerist thinking, there is a growing interest in earning easy money. Consequently, a mentality has emerged where people prefer quick, superficial practice over deep, tireless study and commitment to original art and culture. As a result, while passing on the knowledge of traditional mask making to the new generation, more importance is often given to financial aspects rather than spiritual ones. In this context, it seems like the idea of losing the uniqueness of the masks is becoming more prevalent.

5: Do you think commercialization and extensive recognition help in traditional craft conservation or weaken its core essence?

- Today, masks are no longer just spiritual or devotional assets. They have gained recognition as recreational items, decorative pieces, and gifts. This shift has helped artisans become self-reliant, which is undoubtedly a positive sign. However, I believe that if artisans completely abandon the traditional skills, spiritual touch, and mythological essence of mask-making, it will weaken the core spirit of this art.

6: How does the use of bamboo, clay, and natural colors connect traditional crafts with environmental conservation and sustainability?

- Since these masks are made using easily available natural elements, traditional mask-making has naturally carried a connection to environmental protection and sustainability.

7: What role can traditional arts and mask-making play in highlighting contemporary social or cultural issues?

- I do not think there is any complexity or lack of relevance in this regard.

8: What kind of change have you noticed in the self-confidence and interest of the local society towards this industry after receiving national recognition?

- Every person with national consciousness remains inherently inclined toward the progress of their own ethnic culture, education, and all other aspects. Even if mask-

making receives national recognition, the idea that the local society's self-confidence or interest in this art will increase does not naturally arise. This is because those who have an interest in and love for this craft will already possess the self-confidence that this art should be taken to a global level through its practice, promotion, exhibition, and preservation. However, the granting of recognition certainly encourages the artist and makes them more committed. When an artist or craftsman receives recognition, others feel inspired and may come forward to practice various art forms. This is exactly what has been happening in reality. Due to reasons such as the ever-flowing stream of emotions, national consciousness, an enthusiastic and committed mindset, honors, and inspiration, a vast field of work for mask-making remains visible in an undecaying and eternal form within Assamese society today. It will remain well-preserved in the coming future as well.

9: What is your message to the very few people who love traditional art but hesitate to take it up as a profession?

- Throughout my lifelong dedication to art, I have encountered individuals of diverse mindsets and varying tastes. I have also faced many bitter-sweet incidents. I have found many students of art. During their training, we can determine whose hands will stabilize and sustain this art form, and we can bring a new momentum to this art field. Similarly, a student who possesses dedication, self-confidence, and a faithful attitude toward their work can also become a source of courage and inspiration for us.

Recently, it is believed that some research-based decisions of the National Education Policy 2020 will provide inspiration to those who love art and are interested in it, as mentioned in the question. According to the guidelines of the education policy, encouraging technical education will greatly benefit people like us who are starting out. It will seamlessly integrate culture with education, making the younger generation more interested in art and culture, and guiding them toward self-reliance.

Interview Conducted By: Students of BA 6th Semester, Department of English, Duliajan College

