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Westernization of Indian culture: A Study of Chhattisgarh

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Abstract

One thing should be always kept in mind that the western world is looking towards India for its honesty and its rich Cultural heritage for which we should be proud about. But we are looking towards western countries. This is largely due to globalization that adopted by India during the 1990s. The nation can be called as a westernized nation also. But the serious concern here is though the nation is westernized the culture is also westernized with the nation.

Keywords: Westernization, Indian, Culture, information, Chhattisgarh, international, developing, country.

Introduction

Recently we are living in the age of information. The information collection, processing, storing and dissemination are prime functions in the present society. Those countries rich in information are regarded as developed countries and those who are less informed are categorized under the nomenclature of underdeveloped or developing countries. The present culture is also called as LPG culture, i.e. culture of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization. Though India is a developing country it can be regarded as the advanced country among the developing nations. India's technological advancement is at par with the international standard. We can say that, India is growing as a powerful nation internationally and working hand in hand with the western countries. We have to discuss the present status of Indian culture and should come to conclusion whether westernization is a boon or a bane for our country, India. If we go back to the history of India, our nation was a multi-cultural nation from the Aryan period when the Dravidians were either drove away by the Aryans or perished due to natural calamities. During the 3rd century B.C. with the Indian invasion of Alexander the Great, India adopted the Greek culture. Further, Indian culture got mixed again and again with the invasion of the Arabians, Chengiz Khan, and the Mughals and eventual with the colonization of the Portuguese, French, British and the Dutch converting India into a multi-cultural society. The Indian culture is always threatened from outside and always comes out with a mixed culture though upholding the original culture and sub-culture. The present situation seems equivalent to the past but with the emergence of the sophisticated and modern mass media the culture seems really threatened from the outside particularly from the American culture. The situation is so threatening, that the present status is called as cultural imperialism. Presently, India is regarded as a multi-cultural society similar to that of U.S.A. Canada and France. In these nations, the cultural trends are always dynamic though the cultural ethos remains same. Indian Culture, which is one of the oldest and richest cultures, is now a days posing a serious threat as western culture is establishing it's our strong base in India and slowly and gradually wiping the Indian culture. It had already made its presence in Metros and now slowly heading towards other parts of the country. Westernization has greatly affected our traditions, customs, family and our respect and love for others. The concept of joint families system is so fast decreasing that everyone wants to remain aloof from others. Nobody now bother about others and only care about themselves, which is totally contradictory to our Indian culture which easless used to teach us to be a part of each other's joys and sorrows to celebrate the happy moments together and share the grief together too. Slowly, all our values for which India has the pride is vanishing

and western culture is taking its place. People are blindly following the western culture without knowing its serious consequences.

Cultural Imperialism in India

Cultural imperialism is the practice of promoting, distinguishing, separating, or artificially injecting the culture of one society into another. It is usually the case that the former belongs to a large, economically or militarily powerful nation and the latter belongs to a smaller, less important one. Cultural imperialism' can take the form of an active, formal policy or a general attitude. The term is usually used in a pejorative sense, usually in conjunction with a call to reject foreign influence. Cultural imperialism can refer to either the forced acculturation of a subject population, or to the voluntary embracing of a foreign culture by individuals who do so of their own free will. Since these are two very different referents, the validity of the term has been called into question. The term cultural imperialism is understood differently in particular discourses. The cultural imperialism is otherwise called as media imperialism also because in the modern days culture is generally adopted by the people after media shows the external culture. Particularly with the emergence of television the cultural adoption is increased as the global media is dominated by the Americans (media barons of U.S.A.) Today the most effective use of cultural imperialism is through films, clothing brands, food, books and many other daily life items. It is mainly executed by the USA with Hollywood films (especially film like (Rambo), popular brands like Converse, Nike, Abercrombie & Fitch, which many teenagers around the world wear and are affected, and also documentaries (like History Channel which promotes American military and technology). Successful multicultural societies, be they nations, federations, or other conglomerations of closely interrelated states, discern those aspects of culture that do not threaten union, stability, or prosperity (such as food, holidays, rituals, and music) and allow them to flourish. But they counteract or eradicate the more subversive elements of culture (exclusionary aspects of religion, language, and political/ideological beliefs). History shows that, bridging cultural gaps successfully and serving as home to diverse peoples, requires certain social structures, laws, and institutions that transcend culture. Furthermore, the history of a number of ongoing experiments in multiculturalism, such as in the European Union, India, South Africa, Canada and the United States, suggests that workable, if not perfected, integrative models exist. Each is built on the idea that tolerance is crucial to social well-being, and each at times has been threatened by both intolerance and a heightened emphasis on cultural distinctions. The greater public good warrants eliminating those cultural characteristics that promote conflict or prevent harmony, even as less-divisive, more personally observed cultural distinctions are celebrated and preserved.

Westernization of Indian Culture

The India culture presently presumes to be completely westernized. The media scenario, particularly the cable television is completely westernized. With the emergence of international media conglomerates of U.S.A. which acquired the global media poses a threaten to the Indian media. The prominent American barons like Time- Warner, Disney World, American Online (AOL), Sky TV (Rupert Murdoch

of STAR TV fame) and other media conglomerates spreads a web on the sky in India. They promote the culture of U.S. A. which shows less good things like academics development and research in western countries, development programs etc., but shows other things like violence, sex, reality shows, divorces, extra-marital affairs which may be common to them but uncommon for us. The youth gets excited with the new concepts and try to test it. Materialism from the west has overpowered spiritualism of the east. Tradition too, is losing its footage and becoming a shadow in the recess. It is being branded as obsolete and unproductive. Modern Indian has failed to realize that culture and tradition is the identity of a race on this globe. Culture is the gamut of ideas and norms of a society acquired over ages. Even our ancient scriptures have emphasized the importance of culture. In fact, we Indians are known for our multicolored and vivid culture which breathes in the rock-cut temples, in the pulsating festivals, in the warm hospitality of hearts and in our religions. The cultural invasion will not only make us forget our identity, but will make us ROBOTS in this age of machines. Young people are using new media technology, including cell phones, personal data assistants, and the Internet, to communicate with others in the United States and throughout the world.

New communication avenues, such as text messaging, chat rooms, and social networking websites (e.g., whatsapp and Facebook), have allowed youth to easily develop relationships, some with people they have never met in person. This can be regarded as a great merit of westernization of culture. Because through these sites, anybody can know other's culture and can follow the positive aspects of the concerned culture. On the other hand, it may prove dangerous as this may lead to cultural degradation too. New technology has many potential benefits for youth. It allows young people to communicate with family and friends on a regular basis. New technology also provides opportunities to make rewarding social connections for those teens and pre-teens that have difficulty developing friendships in traditional social settings or because of limited contact with same-aged peers. In addition, regular Internet access allows young people to quickly increase their knowledge on a wide variety of topics. However, the recent explosion in technology does not come without possible risks. Youth can use electronic media to embarrass, harass or threaten their peers. Increasing number of teens and pre-teens are becoming victims of this new form of violence. Although many different terms-such as cyber bullying, Internet harassment, and Internet bullying-have been used to describe this type of violence and electronic aggression is the term that most accurately captures all types of violence that occur electronically. Like, traditional forms of youth violence, electronic aggression is associated with emotional distress and conduct problems at school. Westernization has given rise to nuclear families. Marriages are fast breaking and our tolerance and patience has given the answer. The most affected are, our new blooms, which have sprouted and they find themselves stressed and isolated in this new atmosphere as there is no one to take care of them when they are left behind. They will not get the care and love of their grandparents and they find themselves in crutches where some others shall take care of them. It is very unfortunate that the new sprouts remain untouched and cut off from our moral values and sanskaras. In today's scenario where both husband and wife are working there is no one at home to

look after them to imbibe the sanskaras in them as our elders who gives these sanskaras to their grandchildren are not with them anymore. In to many cases, it is not deliberate but in majority of case the children prefers to remain away from their parents which is very unfortunate. Contradictory to it Parents feel proud in giving the western Sanskaras to their children. Children now days are brought up in this western atmosphere. They are thus kept, miles away from our Indian culture. There is no harm in giving the knowledge of other cultures and traditions as Indians have made their presence in every part of the world but it is very necessary that we should have knowledge of our own culture and traditions too. We should take care that our new sprouts are well versed with Indian culture and its values and it is the responsibility of parents to inherit the same for them. This it is very necessary that the parents should also be well versed with Indian culture and traditions. There's no harm in taking good things from western world but this does not mean that we should completely adopt it and pretend to be western and misrepresent our own identity. It is understandable that India is growing in every field and there is necessity of knowing all the cultures and their traditions. To some extent it is fine, but we should not pretend that we dislike the Indian values and like only the western culture.

The Chhattisgarhi Culture

The state of Chhattisgarh was formed in November 2000 which was separated from the erstwhile Madhya Pradesh. Chhattisgarh is regarded as a backward state mainly dominated by the tribal population. The state is rich in culture filled with flora and fauna. The people are friends of the jungle here. The state is landlocked surrounded by Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odessa, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The state is unique for its rich culture, rich tradition and resourceful heritage. The state is rich in paddy cultivation so it is called the "Rice Bowl of India". It is also rich in its natural resources being the leading producer of coal, iron ore and mica. It is also rich in water resources with a number of leading rivers called the lifeline of the state. The important aspect of the state is that, the people devote the Satnami cult and the Satnami Gurus are Gods in the state. The traditional culture in the state is primarily inspired by the Satnami cult. Organising music and dance programmes in each occasion is the uniqueness of the state. There are around 40 varieties of tribes scattered throughout the province. Chhattisgarhi is the main language of the state, though Hindi is also spoken by larger number of people. The main tribes are Gond, Uranv, Kanver, Kamar, Baiga, Halba, Korva, Pando, Birhi, Binjhar and many schedule tribes celebrates dance, music, marriage and other cultural festival in Chhattisgarh. Chhattisgarhi specially celebrates Navakhani, Ganga Dushhara, Sarhul Chherka, Dushara, Dipawali, Karma, Kartika and Hareli. Chhattisgarh has its own dance styles, cuisine, music and traditional folk songs in which sohar song, bihav song and Pathoni songs are very famous. Sohar songs are related to child birth whereas, Bihav songs are related to marriage celebration. The main parts of Bihav songs are Chulmati, Telmati, Maymouri, Nahdouri, Parghani, Bhadoni and other songs related to Bhanver, Dowery and Vidai songs, Pathoni songs are related to gouna (departure of bride to bridegroom home). Seasonal Chhattisgarhi folk songs are Fag (Basant Geet), Baramasi (12 months), and Sawnahi (in rainy seasons). Festival's related to Chhattisgarhi folk songs are Cher-Chera songs (in welcome

of new crops, child songs), Dohe of Rout Nacha (Dipawali) and Sua songs (Dipawali). Regional folk songs are Goura songs (worship Shivji and Parvati in Dipawali), Mata Seva songs, Janvara songs, Bhojali songs, Dhankul songs and songs of Nagpanchami. Loriya and playing songs of child are Loriya, Fugdi, Kau-Mau, Chau-Mau, Khuduwa (Kakdi), Dandi Pouha. Karma songs, Danda songs and Dewar songs are most popular of entertainment songs in Chhattisgarh. Chhattisgarh's most famous and popular folk plays are Chandaini-Gonda, Sonha-Bihan, Lorik-Chanda, Kari, Hareli and Gammatiha. Rahas is a modern folk play of Chhattisgarh. Chhattisgarh has its own dance styles, cuisine, and music. "Raut Nacha" (The folk dance of cowherds), Panthi and Soowa dance styles are very popular in the region too. The people of this region are very fond of colors. The dresses they wear are all colourful. Women too, wear sarees with Kardhani. In rural areas, women wear mala made of one rupee coins though, this has gone out of trend these days. The people of this region are also known for creating humour out of language. Comic plays are very popular and are worth watching. The people also have a great tendency towards adopting new trends and life styles. Chhattisgarh thus, is multicultural, for people from all over the world have come and settled in this region. Chhattisgarh's people are also known for their simplicity, kind heartedness and adaptability and this is the actual culture of this region.

Chhattisgarh and Westernisation

The state of Chhattisgarh is generally rural oriented. The urbanization is less as the state is only a decade old. If we analyses the impact of westernization on the Chhattisgarhi culture, we can find that the impact is negligible. The life style of the people is not affected by the outsiders. However, the urban areas are more or less affected by the impact of westernization. Raipur, the capital of the state is growing to become a metropolitan city. The city of Raipur, Bilaspur and their peripherals are slightly affected by the westernization. It is needless to say, that media plays an important role in bringing in social and cultural change. The mass media, particularly the television plays an important role in cultural integration. It is needless to say that the television programs have also affected the lifestyle of the Chhattisgarhi people. All the channels coming through the different sources like Cable, DTH and similar sources are available to the people though the percentage of users is less. Apart from the national channels, the local cable channels operating in Raipur and Bilaspur are also prominent in the state. This includes the Sadhana Channel, CCN channel, Grand Channel etc. The national channels also have their regional extensions operating in Chhattisgarh. These include the IBC 24, E-TV Chhattisgarh, Zee TV 24-Ghante Chhattisgarh, Sahara MPCG etc. All these channels show different cultures to the Chhattisgarhi people which leads to the cultural integration in the state. The prominent Hindi newspapers published from the state are Dainik Bhaskar, Haribhoomi, Nai Duniya, Nav Bharat, Jansatta People's Samachar, Raj Express, Deshbandhu and others. The first four of the above are largest circulated dailies in the state. Radio is also operative in the state covering almost 80 percent of the population. Apart from the All India Radio, private FM channels (My FM) are also operative in Raipur and Bilaspur. As the literacy rate is 66 per cent in the state, radio plays an important role in the developmental aspects of the state. Regarding cultural integration, television plays an important

role in the state, though the impact sometimes seems to be negative. In the conclusion, it can be said that Chhattisgarh is not influenced by the westernization of culture. The traditional media still holds the grip in the state surpassing mainstream media.

Role of Media

The media should work as the gatekeeper of the society. It should set the agenda for the people as what to follow and what not to follow regarding the other's cultural value. Further, there should be a media mechanism to work as a censor to the cable channels which promote westernization of culture. The proper media mechanism will enable to filter the contents useful for the society and reject the contents which are harmful. Media should also try to disseminate information regarding the positive and negative aspects of the concerned culture. It should also try to uphold the present culture though adopting the positive aspects of the external culture.

Conclusion

It is shocking to see that, Indians are forgetting their culture and western people are looking towards India for obtaining salvation. They are coming here for seeking the true peace, which is totally messing over there. India has earned a good name in the field of Yoga and meditation too, where our gurus are giving teachings to western countries, how to relax them and how to keep them away from disease where as in India, it is contradictory to it. People are only seeing money as necessity and for the same they do anything, which is very shocking. It is very unfortunate, that today's generation has very little knowledge and is hardly aware about their culture, traditions and their roots. This is not their mistake, but the fault of their parents who as not enlighten their children about their roots and about their rich cultural heritage. No doubt, the western culture is versatile and has taught to be self-independent but this does not mean that we should forget our own culture and blindly follow the western. Since India, has a tradition to take good things from others but this does not mean that we will completely forget our values. We should feel proud that we are Indian and we have such a rich cultural heritage which is very rare and should carry this forward and inherit the same to our new blooms that are going to be our future. Thus we can conclude here with a view that the future will tell whether the westernization of Indian culture shall be a boon or a bane for our Indians.

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