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## CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF INDIA: NOW AND THEN

Anjali

Research Scholar of Baba Mastnath University, Rohtak, Haryana

### Abstract

Indian Culture evolution has gone through several periodical changes in the fields of Economy, culture and art, education, social values, rituals, religions, gender equality and so on from the ancient or Vedic era to the media and then to the modern era. This evolution is by the Conflict theory that states the dominance of the stronger over the weaker. Evolution has created both positive and negative impacts on society as it has nourished the way of women empowerment with time but on the other hand, the easy availability of essentials has decreased the moral values of humans which is also harming nature. Still overcoming all challenges the Indian culture today is identified as the “unity in diversity” all over the world.

**Keywords:** Modernization, Imperialism, Globalization, westernization, Evolution

### Introduction

The home of billions of people, India has incredible diversity between geographic regions, religions, languages, ways of speech, social traditions and so on. Respect for elders, religious ethics, educational pride, and family unity have been part of Indian culture since the ancient era. Despite such diversities, Indians are united by their morality, respect and affection towards their motherland which truly justifies the term "Unity in Diversity". It is still a mystery where the civilization started but it is assumed that the root of this culture is Indo-valley civilization. Indian culture began to build its shape according to the Vedic tradition and is highly based upon the concepts mentioned in the four Vedas. According to the Vedas at that time society was matriarchal and with the flow of time established equity among different genders. *Sanskritisation, Westernisation, Modernization, Industrialisation, and Globalisation* are some of the concepts and approaches used to study social changes. These approaches can help people understand the changes that are occurring in villages, tribes, agriculture, industry, and cities, among other places.

## **AIM**

This research aims to find the way Indian culture has been reformed. The research also aims to discuss the evolution of Indian literature and language from past to present.

## **Objectives**

- To identify the concept and the way of evolution Indian Culture has followed from then to now
- To evaluate the impacts of evolution on Indian Culture from then to now
- To recognize the challenges that have been faced by the Indian culture during the time of evolution
- To recommend the future growth of Indian culture, language and literature

## **Research question**

1. What are the ways that have been followed in the evolution of Indian culture with time?
2. What are the challenges that have been faced during the evolution of Indian culture from then to now?

## **Rationale**

There are lots of positive impacts upon society due to the evolution of Indian Culture from the ancient to the modern one but still, there are some issues that are creating unfavorable conditions. One of them is "Injustice with nature". The changes in culture have led to the introduction of several technologies and modifications in the mindset of people. The major impact of upgrading the socioeconomic status of people is urbanization which is causing deforestation. Wildlife is struggling due to the evolution of mankind. Also, this has led to an increase in the level of pollution in the environment.

The religious diversity has also increased and led Hindus to the highest. More than 79% are Hindus, 14% are Muslims, 2.3% are Christians, and 1.7% are Sikhs in India (statista.com, 2022). As a wholesome nature is losing its balance day by day and the ethical values of humans are turning down with time that is also creating clashes between people. Westernization in Indian culture has not only brought structural changes over time but also has progressed the ideological changes in the society. The education system of the country began to change which empowers the

mindset of people. With the enlightenment of education, people can be rebellious against the odd things which provide strong support to the countrymen. The cultural spheres have been broadened through which people accepted modern values. Economic development has been adopted with the help of industrialization which has assisted in entering the foreign market in terms of trading. The speaking style of Indian people has also changed over time and they were greatly influenced by modernization. It has helped the community to update their daily habits and create new norms for the growth of society. Scientific rules have been adopted to abandon my superstition and thus, the logic behind the science is accepted.

## Literature Review

According to Darwin the concept of Culture evolution is based upon the idea of cultural changes in human such as changes in the beliefs of society that has been transmitted from older times, upgradation of knowledge and skills, modification of languages and pronunciation depending on various area, finding justification behind every change, changes in political and social ethics, reconstruction of economical pillars and most importantly modernization of the educational system. The root of Indian culture is the Indus Valley civilization which introduces the society with distinct examples of the usage of several materials and cultural arts such as sculptures, pottery, gold jewelry, terracotta, bronze, copper and many more. The economy was centred on the agricultural growth of several grains such as wheat, and barley pulses and animal farming was an important factor in economic growth. The civilization was matriarchal, woman took part side by side with men in the governance of the society (Malik, 2022). They used to follow two systems of education Buddhism and Vedic and the languages used to follow were Pali and Sanskrit and the social structure followed the rule of "equality".

Following the ancient period, medieval times introduced four major socioeconomic statuses Brahmins the priests occupied the highest positions, Kshatriyas the governing authority of society, Vaishyas the merchant and Shudras the slaves and prisoners. During the medieval ages, the Indian economy was the "Agrarian Economy" it was the major source of revenue collection through trade and commerce side by side assisting the economy (Kennet *et al.* 2020). With time foreign rule was established inside India and Islam started to spread its footprint all over India. An outstanding interaction between the Indian and Islamic concepts such as in the field of Architecture, mathematics, medicine, and astronomy took part during the ruling time of Akbar. Indian Ocean played a huge role during this time in trading. But there was a degradation in the

position of women at this time they were suppressed and lost their freedom. The customs like Sati introduced themselves to the Indian culture from the medieval period.

Indian culture modernized itself in several aspects over the period after the medieval era. The British Empire after the termination of the Mughal era played an important role in the changes in society. During the time of 1820, the GDP of India was near about 16% which reached 4% in 1947 and today it is the fifth largest economy in the world according to the nominal GDP. Though there are no such socioeconomic divisions in today's culture still there is an invisible barrier between the upper and lower class (Sarbhanga and Kumbhar, 2020). The government of India has now announced India as a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic that has prioritized no such religion, caste, or gender and has made education available for all. Women nowadays can take part in every field as men.

The most advantageous impact that Indian society has to get due to cultural evolution is the end of socioeconomic divisions. This has made education, and opportunities available for all. The economic status of the abolishment of gender discrimination has led women to enter various fields other than household which indirectly has benefitted the country (Nunn, 2020). The finishing of illogical rituals such as Sati, religious tax, and lower cast tax has increased the moral value of the society. The introduction of new scientific technologies in the domain of communication, research, space astronomy, and medical science has reduced the weightage to improvise society manually.

Though society has benefitted in a few aspects from the ancient to the modern period still some gaps are remaining like the acceptance of the changes in a proper way. With the introduction of new technologies and ideas, society has lost its moral ethics (Luckmann, 2022). The competition and World wars among the powerful countries have led the under-developing ones into a huge crisis. The cold war between them not only continuously harmed the poor ones at the bottom line of society but also mother nature. Many plants and animals are rarely available today and the optimum temperature of the earth is raising and causing several diseases. Extreme greed, easy availability of necessities, lack of respect for elders, and loss of ethical values have led the culture to a dangerous point.

Like other cultures all over the world, Indian Culture also has gone through several challenging circumstances during its evolution. The first one is resistance to change, to introduce new values the older ones have to be finished. But during this procedure dealing with the age-old beliefs, attitudes and myths of Indian society people with typical mindsets have created several

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problems. Several times the uneducated ones of Indian society were unaware of the fact that why changes were needed which raise unanswered questions in their minds and they choose the mark of revolt and protest (Sivakumar and Manimekalai, 2021). In most cases, the western civilization culture was prioritized among the innovations which have created a negative impact during the time of change. Women's empowerment was not accepted in several religions so women education created a massive disrespect towards the innovator of society (Sahoo, 2020). Also, the self-centred attitude of a few rulers let the civilization outdated in the medieval era.

The Conflict theory states that culture goes through several competitions among the groups in society where the resources are limited. The main elements of this theory are the economic and social tools that are finally owned by the dominant ones (Kühne, 2020). Indian culture evolution also aligns itself with the concept of this theory in many aspects. The dominant ones from the very beginning (Ancient era) have dominated the weaker ones which caused a lack of outcomes from the recessive ones. Muslim rulers like Khilji and the Mughals always have taken the advantage of being the stronger ones and ruled the Indians. The British also used the same opportunity during the time of the Hindu-Muslim conflict that made them weaker by losing unity to rule over India. But after such hectic circumstances, Indian Culture has always found a way to evaluate itself.

## **Discussion**

Indian literature is considered one of the oldest forms of literature in the world and in ancient times, novels were not written in manuscript form. It was an oral transmission as young people during their student age used to listen to the literature from their *Gurus*'. This transmission of knowledge has been transformed into diversity for the different cultures of people who live in India. The first old or ancient literature was Sanskrit which used to comprise the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Rig Veda. With the evolution of time, regional languages used to flourish in Indian literature and it has helped in taking gradual changes in the formation of literature.

Modernization has evolved in India since and from the colonial period under the influence of the supervision of Mahatma Gandhi. Modernism used to be supported and it has also influenced Indian culture since then to a large extent. British colonialism has induced the teaching of the English language within Schools and it has changed the way of thinking young people for accepting the relevance of modernism (Singh, 2018). Since then, with the reform of social fraternity, secularism, and individualism were introduced in India. Bureaucratic society was reformed with the administration of public opinions through which equality in social values had been established. Considering this social change, Indian literature had also been evolving through which new or modern approaches could be delivered to the community. Besides this, the evolution

of language had also taken place in India through which westernization had left some footprints in Indian culture. After the British came and started ruling India, western culture was adopted by a number of people and it gradually influenced a mass community for making upgradation into the social forms. The printing press has been introduced since then which has influenced the transmission of modern knowledge. Education used to be liberal and could not be limited to the upper class of society. Equality has been introduced for the community and education was accessible to all people irrespective of gender, culture, or caste. The English language has also been entered into the syllabus of schools and it has become one of the dialects of common people living in India. Unorthodox views were abolished due to the enlightenment of science and logic. Women were not confined to the four walls as they got equal opportunities for education in their lives. The concept of patriarchy in Indian society became changing due to the effect of westernization as people beyond all gender support the emergence of equal status or values (Dalmia, 2019). The concept of burning a widow on the death of a husband was also abolished in Indian society. The institution of polygamy and child marriage were also been dismantled. Widow marriage had been introduced under the influence of western culture and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar took a great part in starting these norms in the society.

A great evolution had taken place in Indian culture after the inclusion of modernization and westernization. This has resulted in changes not only in social norms but also in economic and cultural values. These had brought structural changes in the society where all people are equally treated and the justice system had become equal for all. Changes were also brought in the clothing habits as home-spun clothes were replaced by readymade garments. It has helped in updating the living habits of the Indian community. All these factors that have contributed to the evolution of Indian culture are reflected in the novels of Indian literature. The modern lives of human beings are portrayed in Indian novels which helps in modernizing social values.

With the advent of the East India Company, western culture started influencing the literature of India. The elite society of India could not only have the power to dominate the subordinate as equality has been reformed in the social changes of India. The influence of the Derozian movement was also indelible in the evolution of language practices in India as it has helped the community and the young generation to accept the western culture. Since then, English has been promoted or used as a predominant language in day-to-day life. A new baton for incorporating the relevance or trend of the English language was established. This trend has been reflected in the works of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Madhusudan Bhattacharya. The theme of literature has been more inclined to the revolutionary mindset in order to influence the youth. The influence of Marxism was also shown in the literary works or novels of Indian writers

that helped the youth to believe in different political overviews. The works of Rabindranath Tagore also need special mention with the involvement of modernization as he supports the growth of society by developing the way of thinking, and perception and improving knowledge for the community (Torri, 2017). The differences between culture like Hindu and Muslims were dismantled with the works penned by Rabindranath Tagore and his global reputation has enriched Indian culture.

Indian culture was also started to enrich the society with the work of R.K.Narayan as he used to support the condition of Indian women, the current condition of education of the country. From 1950, his writings have brought an evolution in society as people started thinking about new social values for the reformation of society. A sudden rise in terms of resistance has been witnessed in Indian literature which was against the views of imperialism of British colonialism. Since then, the writing pattern of Indian literary works started changing as it insisted the youth adopt revolution. These kinds of literary works portrayed the exploitation faced by the Indian people and based on this the trends of societal uprising had progressed. Unlike the ancient literature, Indian literature does not only point towards the history of lives, but also it rejuvenates some new norms for the future growth of society. It majorly concerns the life balance and the perspectives of emotions associated with various relations. The amalgam of Indian culture has been introduced by the works of modern novelists or poets of India through which better societal standards have been developed.

Indian society is known as a pluralistic society that has a complex social order with a multitude of linguistic, caste and religious divisions. The terms of living from the past era has been changed in India to a large extent and urbanization has a great influence on this. In the ancient era, the majority of Indian people used to be dependent on farming or related things to agriculture. Technology or the Industrial development have brought changes to society. It is also closely associated with the economic development of the country where information technology has been prioritized. Political democracy has been established in the country through which people have the freedom to choose their leaders. This ruling system in Indian culture has helped to give priority to all people irrespective of their financial or religious background. The aspects of modernity have been accepted by people which improves theory perspectives and they started to grow financially as well. Indian people also started accepting the values of globalization and as per this value, the free movement of services are experienced for future growth. It has helped in establishing a good relationship with the neighboring country and thus, Indian tradition has made tourists overwhelmed.

## Conclusion

As per the above study, this could be concluded that the evolution of Indian Culture is divided into three major periodic eras. With the flow of time, society was divided into crucial groups depending on socioeconomic status. By that time the Indian culture has adapted to modernization in many aspects like abolishing socioeconomic barriers, restrictions on women's education, modification of the tax system and improvisation of the system of governing authority. From the matriarchal society in the ancient era to equity among every gender has led society to reach a high cultural point. The development of new values and technologies and the ending of old myths have made the Indian culture relevant to other cultures of the present time. Though the misuse of new opportunities did not make it able to reach the final goal till now. Besides of highly modulated concepts of some inventors there were some challenges during the time of introduction of each new opinion. But still, Indian Culture has overcome all barriers and succeeded to justify the term "Unity in Diversity" in a true way.



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