

## **HAS CULTURE AND LANGUAGE LOST ITS WAY TO MULTICULTURALISM IN INDIA?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

India is known for its cultural diversity and unity. Language and culture attribute to a large extent for its rich cultural diversity. Language is the human ability to acquire and use complex systems of communication. Culture distinguishes one human group from another. It includes socially acquired knowledge, beliefs, arts, law, morals, customs and habits. India is a land of diversity in race, region, caste, language, landform, flora and fauna. From ancient time till today India has retained this and rightly called “the epitome of the world”. Common culture and common language facilitate communication between individuals. This article throws light on how this epitome of the world is gliding to multiculturalism through the modern technology and how language is being reduced to mere alphabets and symbols which the SMS and chat has developed. The endangerous atmosphere that the culture of West is propagating is alarming and the mere existence of language is at risk due to the wide spread of Multiculturalism in India.

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### **A land of diversity**

India is a land of diversity in race, region, caste, language, landform, flora and fauna. India has retained this diversity from ancient time. Nature has shaped the country so. Rightly, this land has been termed as “the epitome of the world”. India not only passes racial diversity but also linguistic diversity. It is said that almost 400 languages are spoken in India. What is really striking is that almost all these language possess their own literature which differs a great deal from each other.

In the social sphere also, the general customs and manners of the people are greatly different. People of different regions use different types of dresses, their eating habits and customs are also quite different. Certain people are quite civilized while others are yet backward in their customs, creeds and cultures, faiths and tongues and social systems. “India is indeed a museum of cults and customs, creeds and cultures , faiths and tongues, racial types and social systems.”

### **Language**

Language and culture form vital parts of our common heritage today, and we study these to define an identity for ourselves. Indian culture is the soil in which we are born, the material which has shaped the very foundations of our body, life and mind. This constitutes what we are and shall be. But the recent developments in our country has kept puzzling about the language and culture that our generations are following – It seems at the moment that we stand facing a turmoil at the crossroads of history where we shall basked either to fight a demonic host of cyber

culture and language that threatens our very roots and our cherished timeless values of virtue and culture or else to rise to the greater task of discovering a reconciliation that shall reconfigure the whole into a magical symphony beckoning us to a golden future.

Language as the organized manifest form of thought , speech, communion and intelligence is one of the most mysterious creations of nature; for it certainly is antecedent to man, though in its verbal form it is often taken to be a product of human mind and culture. If all gestures and motions of being including the production of various sounds are taken as effective means of communication and placed under the non-verbal category of language, then it goes without saying that all animals even all living beings- possess language in its various stages of growth. The languages we speak not only reflect or express our thoughts , but also shape the very thoughts we wish to express. The structures that exist in our languages profoundly shape how we construct reality, and help make us as smart and sophisticated we are. Language is a uniquely human gift. When we study language, we are uncovering in part what makes us human, getting a peek at the very nature of human nature. As we uncover how languages and their speakers differ from one another, we discover that human natures too can differ dramatically, depending on the languages we speak.

Bewildered by such infinity of its scope and depth, man in every culture and epoch has equated the language with the Divine. Thus we have in this country the concept of Sabda-Brahman, the word as another aspect of the Supreme reality, and in the Bible is said, “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God”. (John 1:1). T.S.Eliot in one of his poem –“Burnt Norton” has pointed to the debasement of language with telling effects:

“Words strain, crack sometimes break, under the burden, under the tension, slip , perish , decay with imprecision , will not stay in place, will not say still.....”. This cuts right to the fundamental questions we all ask about ourselves. How do we come to be the way we are? Why do we think the way we do? An important part of the answer, it turns out, is in the languages we speak.

### **Is Culture leading to Multiculturalism ?**

Now speaking about culture....What is culture? Culture is defined in various ways. The definition usually includes some notion of shared values, beliefs, expectations, customs, jargon and rituals. Language is the set of common sounds and symbols by which individuals communicate. Societies may include a number of cultures and languages. Culture distinguishes man from beast, one human group from another. Cultural Invention has come to mean any

innovation that is new and found to be useful to a group of people and expressed in their behavior but which does not exist as a physical object. Humanity is in a global “accelerating culture change period”, driven by the expansion of international commerce, the mass media, the human population explosion and above all the new technology.

India is no less affected by all these factors and engulfed by multiculturalism. Multiculturalism, or the tolerance by a society of many different cultures and languages, seems to be on the rise in India too. One of the most tangible of these is the recent growth of bilingual education. Multiculturalism in India has developed strong roots in recent years with the mushrooming of Multinational companies all over India. The MNC's with their corporate culture train us to speak, behave, eat in a way they are used- in short they give the “the art of living” where our Indian language and culture has no room for and the worst part being that we feel elated to be adapted by this culture.

The multiculturalism that we focus here is the ability of almost every young Indian's aspiration to achieve a top position of the firm he serves and the efforts he puts into embracing the whole new corporate culture which in turn not only gives him monetary gains but a new life where he speaks corporate language, uses only branded clothes and accommodates his palates to multicuisine – an Italian Pasta with a Mexican salad or a cappuccino.

Technology has almost invaded us and we have become slaves of technology and this is one of the important reasons for our change in culture and language. Technology can be defined as a body of knowledge uses to create tools, develop skills, and extract or collect materials, the application of science to meet an objective or solve a problem. In the words the application of scientific advances to benefit humanity. The most recent shock is the SMS language or the SMS text messages which has totally conquered the place of good language. This language has gained popularity irrespective of age- a child to an old man who are busy texting messages to communicate with each other. Once it became popular it took on a life of its own and is often used outside of its original context. Almost every Indian is literate in the so called SMS language where nobody greets each other with a good morning but a surely a ringtone which indicates a SMS wishing u “good morning” and “lots of love” expressed through a three letter word LOL. I am afraid if this continues in this haste- there would be no speaking language in the forthcoming era.

These recent trends in the culture and language of Indians influence in good and bad ways, and it allows people to share information which they would otherwise not be able to attain. Even if a person does not own a computer or have credit cards, there is information on a computer somewhere about everyone. Technology itself is not being generated but a few

creative minds who are innovative in nature create technology or useful knowledge. So we could see problem indeed as a majority of human being becoming slaves to such technology even without knowing the purpose for which it is develop[ed]. The overdose of this language and culture is transforming our lives and shaping our future at rates unprecedented in history, with profound implications which we can't even begin to see or understand. The impact of technology has to an extent improved the way people feed, clothe and shelter, education, job satisfaction, and leisure time activities.

Civilizations do meet and even mere but never has such an impact been witnesses as the impact of the west on India. A bird's eye view of the Indian scenario of language and culture depict a miniature or a distorted West in India. Impact of cultures is felt elsewhere also and this is bound to be, when two people or two societies or two countries meet but, neither leaves its own system wholesale as in India. This is a unique feature in India only because India is the best market for all the products from West, as we welcome everything that is not ours with open heart and wide hands. The culture of the west has penetrated so deep and far and wide that, the original Indian Culture and language has got lost somewhere leading to multiculturalism.

To find western impact on India we do not have to go far to seek. Each and every home, each and every sphere of life has been completely influenced by the west that it is difficult to recognize what is Indian in India. Our food, and food habits, our dresses, our dances, our songs, our music, our life style are all of the western pattern.

One often wonders whether where we live in India, or a colony of the west? The influence is also changing our education system. In schools, the language most prominent is English and not Hindi. The medium of instruction is also English, so far so good.

However, the sad part of this system is that, the schools that lay more stress on our mother-tongue /regional medium of instruction, are known to be second rate schools. Thus, we have not only adopted the British ways but we also appreciate only them.

The height of it all is seen when a person who can communicate in English is known to be smarter than a person who is not fluent. This volume of change is not understandable. It implies that, not only have we taken to western styles, in comparison to those who follow the Indian styles. This much influence is not only unwarranted but also shameful. It has often been seen that countries do adopt methods of other nations but in doing so, they maintain their own identity. The loss of the identity is only found in India.

To a great extent the influence of the west can be well understood as, we have remained slaves to them for two centuries. This much may be excused, but to revolt if anything Indian or anything indigenous is being introduced cannot be forgiven at all.

This only points to the ugly fact that, we have got independence from the British only physically and politically but, mentally and culturally the onslaught on India has been complete. We, even today, remain culturally and mentally bonded to the west. Whenever anything Indian is talked about there is an attitude of derision from it, even in the highest echelons of society.

This indicates a full and complete degeneration of Indian culture and its total merger with the Culture of the west. In my view, it is good to learn whatever is good anywhere, but, to learn a thing just because it is of the west only depicts a crumbled and shattered state of the Indian mind. We must learn to sort out and learn what is good anywhere, but, to learn a thing just because it is of the west only depicts a crumbled and a shattered state of the Indian mind. We must learn to sort out and learn what is good elsewhere and maintain what is good in us.

If we do this we can have the best of all- and that is what intelligent of all was ours.

**SOURCES:** Wikipedia

Websites :

Various Books on culture and language