

Role of Cultural Diversity in Indian Administration

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ABSTRACT: The phrase from the Maha Upanishad entails the secret of worldly success: the word, with all its variety of life forms, is a family. It upholds the value of respecting diversity in cultures long before the concept was popularized by Stuart Hall, the godfather of multiculturalism. In 2002, following the UNESCO Declaration on Cultures, May 21st was recognized as the day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. The day highlights the need for cultural diversity to preserve the richness in the culture, promote peace through intercultural dialogue among countries where cross-cultural interaction happens to be minimal, and sustainable development by bringing innovative problem-solving as well as traditional knowledge rooted in the cultural affiliations of people.

In the era of , acceptance and respect for other cultures are essential to progress towards a peaceful India. As Robert Alan puts it, "Intercultural dialogue is the best guarantee of a more peaceful, just, and sustenance." The shooting of people from other cultures and the vandalization of related cultural spaces underscore the cultural differences, lack of tolerance, and the need for cultural diversity. It also becomes essential to define what progress and development mean here.

KEYWORDS-cultural,diversity,Indian,administration,role

I.INTRODUCTION

For a long time in popular discourse, they have signified merely economic advancement that led to the brazen exploitation of natural resources in the industrial era and thereafter. Development is a highly contested concept, heavily influenced by developed countries in how it is perceived, and hence the formation of international policies on it. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen describes it from a 'capabilities perspective' that enables people with actions - economic, social, family, etc. It refers to a holistic improvement in human life (including the fulfillment of human needs) and natural processes that are crucial to their existence. Progress refers to moving ahead towards a peaceful coexistence and an enriched life that brings good health, happiness, and contentment. Advancement of only one form, one culture, and one race cannot be sustainable. The colonial era, where European cultures colonized most parts of the world, gives a reflection of cultural differences, diversity, and how power is associated with them.[1,2]

Cultural diversity refers to the coexistence of several sets of ideas, beliefs, rituals, traditions, languages, knowledge, arts, laws, lived identities of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, and disability that together form a culture as lived and passed on (as heritage) through generations of a society. India (with 20 official languages spoken) also ranked high in cultural diversity. The extrapolation of only language as an indicator of diversity limits the study. Chad has high ethnic diversity with African, Arabic, and French influences, as does India, where vastly different cultural practices exist even within a single religion; cultures nearly overlap with the spatial distribution of different ethnic groups, which are largely identified by their language (Marathi, Gujarati, Avadhi, Garhwali, Malayali, Bengali, Odia) and divided broadly into states.[3,5]

Threats to cultural diversity

Over different time periods, different cultures emerged in different spaces. In the past, some cultures were lost due to unknown source-based mass extinctions (like the Indus Valley civilization). Those that have survived to the present day have passed on their tangible and intangible heritage through generations. Many of these had to, and even today, face threats to their existence, which may be listed as below:

- Impact of the colonial era: Colonization by European nations ripped the cultural fabric of colonies as they labeled indigenous cultures as inferior, barbaric, and backward. Several animistic religions of colonies were stereotyped as pagan. Religion, language, and other cultural elements deemed superior were forced or penetrated into the populations of colonies. Damage to cultural diversity still exists today but belongs to history, albeit recent.
- Globalization: In an increasingly globalized world, influences from dominant cultures that were popularized as superior tend to heavily impact the younger generations, who are shunning their own cultures in order to follow the popular, superior ones.
- The notion of development as proposed by the West: The terms 'First world,' 'global North,' and their continued use are self-explanatory in showcasing how deeply rooted discrimination against the so-called 'Third world,' 'global South,' and cultures therein is. Development as perceived in North Western cultures stands for more or less economic development, compromising heavily on what development means in other cultures: social and spiritual aspects of development, and symbiotic human-nature relationships at the core of tribal indigenous and animistic cultures.
- This limited worldview of development has boosted consumerism and fast industries, as opposed to sustainable development. Thus, fast fashion, which does immense damage to environmental and human resources, grows at an unabated rate.[7,8]

II.DISCUSSION

- Migration and the forced or inherent need to fit in or assimilate new cultures: Whether it be national or international migration, it comes with its own challenges for the migrating populations. A classic example of how migration in search of better living standards can sabotage cultural diversity can be derived from the recently released movie "Mrs Chatterjee versus Norway." Norway ranks high in HDI and happiness rankings, but even for so-called developed cultures, it is difficult to understand or accept the practices of other cultures as healthy and rightful. Based on a true story, one of contention between parents and Norwegian authorities is the 'handfeeding' of a child.
- Homogenization or McDonaldization attempts: In the era of a highly connected world of television, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter, information transfer has become very easy. Cultures that survived past erosion owing to geographical isolation no longer have that security net. While colonization changed the primary language of communication in many places (like Spanish in Mexico, French in Congo, English in India), multiple cultural practices survived. The availability of other cultural practices threatens original cultures partially because of the inferior status attached to some, as opposed to the term 'modern and developed' references for others, not just globalization.[9]
 - Forced conversions and culture adoption: Forced religious conversion from indigenous spiritual practices to proselytizing faiths has led to fewer religions in the world, which can be counted on fingertips. Forced culture/language adoption is prevalent in many parts of the world, like Uyghur and Rohingya Muslims in China and Myanmar, respectively.
 - Reinforcement of single national identities: In countries with diverse cultural groups, the need to align with a single dominant identity may wipe out diverse cultural identities.
- Commercialization of culture for tourism: It also erodes cultural diversity by promoting preferred practices (language, dressing, food) depending on tourist influx.

These threats pose significant challenges to the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity in today's world.

Role of Cultural Diversity in Progress and Development

The role of cultural diversity in progress and development varies across different cultures. Enhancing the living standards of individuals, upholding societal values, and enabling sustainable lifestyles through cultural practices are all integral to development and depend on the existence of diverse cultures.

- Cultural Diversity and Economic Growth:

Cultural diversity fosters innovation and creativity, serving as a key driver of development in workplaces, societies, and organizations. It brings together a wide range of skills, knowledge, and ideas.

Group heterogeneity, particularly in terms of culture, influences critical thinking for problem-solving and self-employment, ultimately impacting entrepreneurship. Industries such as agriculture, food, and hospitality benefit significantly from higher cultural diversity.

Among economically thriving diverse societies, India, stands out, with Saskatchewan being a noteworthy example.[2,3]

III.RESULTS

▪ Cultural Knowledge:

Diverse cultures bring with them a wealth of knowledge. For instance, various cultural practices aimed at living in harmony with nature represent the cultural ethos of different societies. The loss of this knowledge in mainstream education has led to the emergence of different approaches to nature preservation, whether through technological or traditional means. Inclusive representation in businesses, corporate employee teams, political parties, administrative positions, schools, and more enriches these areas with deeper knowledge. Europe has made efforts to harness the potential of diversity for economic development by fostering "inter-cultural cities."

▪ Achieving Sustainable Development:

Accepting and respecting diverse cultures is a fair way to achieve happiness, sustainable development goals, and individual spiritual contentment.

▪ Improved Human Health:

Different cultures possess intrinsic practices that have evolved over generations to heal the body and mind within specific spatio-temporal contexts. As a result, specific cooking techniques have been developed in local cultures, diverging from fast foods. Yoga, an Indian cultural heritage, has now gained worldwide acceptance and practice for better health.[5,7]

▪ Escaping Poverty Traps:

Honoring diverse cultural livelihood practices prevents people from falling into poverty traps generated by economic development. Abandoning traditional livelihoods in pursuit of esteemed jobs not only leads to the loss of traditional arts and crafts but also poses challenges in terms of housing ownership in cities. Additionally, education loans often burden individuals with debt. Migrants to cities often find themselves trapped in domestic work, with fathers engaged in labor at construction sites and mothers performing household duties, leading to neglected children and school dropouts. This is particularly true in the context of Indian metros.

▪ Progress towards a Peaceful World:

Acceptance of diverse cultures can contribute to reduced armed conflicts and a more peaceful coexistence. Fear of other cultures often leads to attempts to homogenize them, sometimes to the extent of genocide (such as the Armenian genocide in Turkey and the Sami or Lapp ethnocide in Norwegian countries). Respecting people from war-torn countries as refugees in foreign lands leads to better lives for them, as opposed to their ghettoization.

▪ Better and Just Development Policy Creation:

Having ethnically diverse groups in positions of power leads to a trickle-down effect, ensuring fairer distribution and access to resources. Increased representation in local, national, and international knowledge creation and policy-making institutions, which define development and implement it in diverse cultures, results in inclusive policy formation. The Council of Europe's promotion of intercultural cities allows for the formulation of policies inclusive of cultural diversity. The UN Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, signed by 152 parties, and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity seek to safeguard cultural diversity through different objectives and their enforcement.

▪ Development of Culture-Centric Tourism:

The threat of cultural degeneration due to commercially driven tourism can be mitigated by providing unique immersive cultural experiences that value language, food, and overall culture. Promoting the participation of local populations in such endeavors fosters a fairer development process.

Policies and Legislation to preserve cultural diversity and expression

Countries have established policies and legislation to preserve cultural diversity and expression. In 2016, Bulgaria adopted a host of measures for cultural expression, including a cultural fund and others. The UAE adopted the Awareness and Promotion of Cultural Diversity Values, focusing on inclusive education policies, spaces of coexistence, and guidelines for religions, among other important initiatives. Peru adopted a cultural policy in 2020 following UNESCO guidelines.[8] A four-year project called "Reshaping Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions" (2018-2021), supported by Sweden and UNESCO, assisted 16 countries in reformulating their policies and conducting periodic assessments. Canada has different multiculturalism properties in different provinces. UNESCO's role in preserving diversity worldwide has been significant. The intercultural cities of Europe serve as a unique example highlighting the economic impact of diversity and the need to accept and assimilate it into policies and laws. Economically, socially, and spiritually better living is possible only through the coexistence of thriving cultures.[9]

IV. CONCLUSIONS

A world with vibrant cultural diversity relies on tolerance and respect for a variety of cultures. Strengthening local cultural governance systems, languages, folk arts, music, dance, and other practices is essential for progress towards a more developed world. Every group has an equal right to exist, and culture is dynamic yet needs protection from erosion while promoting diversity.

" भैर आयूँ अफरा गढ़वाल छोड़िक, बिती कई साल छन,

'Vulnerable भाषा' होयीं मेरी गढ़वाली, संस्कृती का यि हाल छन।

अंग्रेजी मा 'blog' लिखदूँ, missionary school कॉन्वेंटै य देन च,

कनै पड़ि हैक्की संस्कृती य छाप इथा गर्री, सब क्य 'colonialism' कू खेल च?

पलायन भी होलू हिस्सेदार ये मा, पर संक्ति देखा अंग्रेजीई 'demand' च।

सोचदूँ छौं विकासै गति मा गढ़वाल्यु क्य भाग च,

सांस्कृतिक विविधता बढ़ै, जोड़दी सैदू गढ़वाल च।

हिमलयै गोद मा उपजीं च य, इंका गीतौं मा जड़ी-बूट्युं कु ज्ञान च,

मेरी आत्मा की चार च य, ई सि लिप्ट्युं मेरू आध्यात्मिक विकास च।"[10]

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