

Globalization and its Socio-Cultural Impact on Indian Society

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ABSTRACT

Globalization, characterized by increased interconnectedness among nations, has brought profound socio-cultural transformations to contemporary Indian society. This paper examines the multi-faceted impact of globalization on India's social and cultural landscape, analyzing how global integration has reshaped traditional norms, values, and lifestyles. While globalization has catalyzed economic growth, modernized infrastructure, and enhanced India's global presence, it has also led to significant cultural shifts that challenge the country's rich heritage and identity. The influence of global media, technology, and consumerism has facilitated the diffusion of Western ideals, fostering a hybrid culture that embraces diversity but risks diluting indigenous practices and traditions.

In education, family dynamics, and even language, the effects of globalization manifest visibly. Younger generations increasingly favour individualism over collectivism, leading to evolving family structures and changing intergenerational relationships. Simultaneously, the preservation of local traditions and languages faces challenges amid the rise of globalized pop culture and English as a dominant language. While globalization offers opportunities for social progress, cultural enrichment, and increased acceptance of diversity, it also raises critical questions about cultural homogenization and the loss of identity.

This paper highlights the need for a balanced approach that leverages globalization's benefits while safeguarding India's cultural heritage. By fostering policies that promote cultural preservation alongside progressive modernization, India can navigate the socio-cultural complexities of globalization and contribute a unique identity to the global stage. This research provides a nuanced perspective on the ongoing cultural transformations, offering insights for policymakers, educators, and society as they adapt to and shape the future of India in a globalized world.

Keywords: *Cultural preservation, Cultural transformation, Indian society, Socio-cultural impact, Globalization, Traditional values*

Today globalization is a common usage, but invites controversial interpretations. As a term it is poorly defined. There are some commonalities in the interpretation of the term in different disciplines. The commonalities include terms like uniformity, standardization through a technological, commercial and cultural synchronization coming from the west. Globalization has a wide role to play worldwide. It has left back its footprints at every sphere of life. Not only in India, but the interchange of world views and ideas has resulted in a

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major transformation of the lifestyle and living standard of people globally. Indian culture is no bar to this transformation process. Our deep rooted traditions and customs have loosened up their hold with the emergence of globalization. India has a rich cultural background and pride of its culture is famous throughout the world. Globalization has not only inculcated the westernization in India, but conversely the Indian culture has also spread its impact globally. Culture and traditions of any geographic region hold a special significance with respect to its uniqueness and that is the differentiating factor for a population within a geographic boundary from the other.

SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE TERM GLOBALIZATION

In the domain of Sociology, it can be noted that the term “Globalization” has got extensive treatment in the hands of many sociologists. The sociologists perceive that though economic in origin, the term has enormous social implications.

According to Albrow “Globalization includes all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single society, global society”.

According to Ronald Robertson “Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.”

According to Anthony Giddens, “Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”.

According to Water “Globalization is a social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly”.

According to Held et al, “Globalization can be thought of a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power”.

In simple words “globalization is refers to a process of increasing economic integration and growing economic interdependence between countries in the world economy”

HISTORY OF GLOBALIZATION

During the 19th century, globalization approached its modern form. Industrialization allowed standardized production of household items using economies of scale while rapid population growth created sustained demand for commodities. Globalization in this period was decisively shaped by nineteenth-century imperialism. In the 19th century, steamships reduced the cost of international transport significantly and railroads made inland transport cheaper. The transport revolution occurred sometime between 1820 and 1850. More nations embraced international trade. Globalization in this period was decisively shaped by nineteenth-century imperialism such as in Africa and Asia. The invention of shipping containers in 1956 helped advance the globalization of commerce.

After the Second World War, work by politicians led to the Bretton Woods conference, an agreement by major governments to lay down the framework for international monetary policy, commerce and finance, and the founding of several international institutions intended to

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facilitate economic growth multiple rounds of trade opening simplified and lowered trade barriers. Initially, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), led to a series of agreements to remove trade restrictions. GATT's successor was the World Trade Organization (WTO), which created an institution to manage the trading system. Exports nearly doubled from 8.5% of total gross world product in 1970 to 16.2% in 2001. The word globalization is now used to sum contemporary world order. But the influence of the globalization of directly visible in the economic field and hence the term is very often taken to me economic globalization of market. The globalization defined as the process whereby there are social, cultural, technological, exchanges across the border.

Globalization has been facilitated by several factors. Three of these have been highlighted: rapid improvements in technology, liberalization of trade and investment policies and, pressures from international organizations such as the WTO.

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION

India is a culturally diverse country. Sixteen per cent of the world's population lives in the country. There are over 826 languages and thousands of dialects spoken. The difference in regions, topography and climate allow for different types of lifestyles and culture. Although about 70 per cent of the populations live in rural areas, India is rapidly urbanizing with more than 225 cities with over 100,000 population, and at least ten cities alone with over a million people.

Globalization is hardly a new force affecting India. To think so is to ignore a diverse and pluralistic long-standing civilization that was shaped by a long list of "invading" (globalizing) cultures that became what we now know as India. The previous globalizers of India include the Aryans, Greeks, Turks, Afghans, Muslims and most recently, the Europeans, Portuguese, French, Dutch and finally the English. The former globalizers that came with invading armies have increasingly been replaced by less violent but equally powerful globalizers.

Society

The traditional Indian culture is defined by relatively strict social hierarchy. From an early age, children are reminded of their roles and places in society. Several differences such as religion divide culture. However, far more powerful division is the traditional Hindu bifurcation into non-polluting and polluting occupations. Strict social taboos have governed these groups for thousands of years. Among developing countries, India has low levels of occupational and geographic mobility. People choose same occupations as their parents and rarely move geographically in the society.

Family Structure

Let us start with the key attraction of Indian joint family culture. The joint families have become a strange surprise to the Indians especially to those residing in the metropolitan cities in the small flat culture with the nuclear families blooming up like mushrooms in the rain. We have lost the patience to get adjusted into the joint family, imbibing the values of the elders and getting the young ones brought up under the shadow of their grandparents. Children have started treating grandparents like guests or visitors, and such an upbringing is one of the main reasons of increasing old age homes, as those children consider their own parents as burden in their state of adulthood.

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Marriage Values

Similarly, marriages have also lost their values. It is very much evident from the increasing number of divorce cases and the extra-marital affairs reported every now and then. Marriage used to be considered as bonding of the souls which will be linked even after the death; but today marriage is like a professional bond or a so-called commitment to share life without compromising their self-interests. The ego factor into the Indian youth is again a product of globalization.

Culture

The culture of any country does not only portray the region and language of the region, but it starts with the mindset and mentality of the residing citizens. Indian culture is quite rich with respect to its heritage and resources, and more importantly due to the welcoming approach of its citizens. India is bouquet of flowers varying religion, dialect, edibles, tradition, custom, music, art and architecture etc, bundled into a single unit of patriotism and unity. The common factor within all these diversities is the Indian mindset of welcoming, greeting, celebrating in a united way with immense affection and togetherness. This is the rich essence of the Indian culture that has attracted many foreigners to stay back in India and mingle into its eternal fragrance.

Food, Clothing and Dialect

Indian food, clothing and languages are varied with respect to different states. The food varies in its taste, but every food has its own nutrient value and every region is specified and rich in its medicinal preparations with the home remedies. Even the clothing varies in different states which is very much particular in maintaining the dignity of woman. The varies cuisines from all over the world though have different flavours to add, still the food ingredients that have inflicted with much popularity are the junk food items which has increased the health disorders in the country. Again the dressing like the suitings for the males is an inappropriate match for the Indian type of climate. The female dresses are again a way of distraction to the perverted minds. Even the Indians are not very much in favour of promoting their mother tongue or our national language. Instead the youth today consider it to be a shameful condition to speak in their national language Hindi. The way the foreign languages are getting prevalent in India like the French, German and Spanish, right from the school level, is the example of how much we provide importance to Indian languages in comparison to the foreign ones.

Social Values

We have the incorporated values of treating the guests as God, warm-hearted welcoming, greeting elders with due respect and a celebrating every small festival with great colour of enjoyment and togetherness. Such a wide gathering with full hue and light can hardly be seen today. People have highly restricted themselves in social interaction. The interaction in present generation is highly diplomatic considering the financial status and wealth. We have lost our social values and cheerful blessing of togetherness. The present generations are more happily celebrating Valentine's Day rather than Holi and Diwali.

Rural Poor

In the villages, farmers are not much aware of global economic system. Most of the food crops are converted into cash crops. Sugar cane farmers are getting advance loan from banks and MNCs. They used to supply hybrid seedlings, fertilizers and highly advanced equipments. This equipment utility reduced the human labour force. Hence the rural people are shifting from place to place for want of labour for their livelihood. Natural manure is replaced by synthetic

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fertilizers. As there is a shift from food crops to export crops, the prices of food items went on high, and the poor people couldn't buy from their meager income. Similar trend continued for clothing, housing, transportation, health etc. So people were forced to consume less of even basic necessities.

Aged People

Indian society is undergoing rapid transformation under the impact of industrialization, urbanization and globalization. Consequently, the traditional values and institutions are in the process of erosion and adaptation, resulting in the weakening of intergenerational ties that were the hallmark of the traditional family. Industrialization has replaced the simple family production units by the mass production and the factory. Economic transactions are now between individuals. Individual jobs and earnings give rise to income differentials within the family. Push factors such as population pressure and pull factors such as wider economic opportunities and modern communication cause young people to migrate especially from rural to urban areas.

With the rapidly increasing number of aged compounded by disintegration of joint families and ever increasing influence of modernization and new life styles, the care of elderly has emerged as an important issue in India. Providing care for the aged has never been a problem in India where a value based joint family system was dominant. However, with a growing trend towards nuclear family set-up, and increasing education, urbanization and industrialization, the vulnerability of elderly is rapidly increasing. The coping capacities of the younger and elder family members are now being challenged under various circumstances resulting in neglect and abuse of elderly in many ways, both within the family and outside.

In the cultural sphere, the global diffusion of Levi's, McDonalds, MTV and Coca Cola-PepsiCola has shown increasing assimilation of local cultures into the American culture or what could have been said as Americanization, or McDonaldization or in Hannerz's interpretation of Cocacolonization and Benjamin Barbers's terminology of „Mc World“. Americanization is a process that refers to the growing influence of the United States of America on the culture of other countries, as a result substituting a given culture with the American one. McDonaldization refers to the global spread of the fast food restaurant.

So, from this perspective, it is claimed that cultural globalization is spreading cultural imperialism. J. Bhagwati points out: “if the 19th century was British, a time of Pax-Britanica, and the 20th century was American, when Pax-Americana prevailed, the 21st century which many feared would be Japan's, a Pax-Japanica promises to be American again”.

CONCLUSION

Overwhelming impact of globalization can be observed on the Indian culture? Every educated Indian seems to believe that nothing in Hindu India, past or present, is to be approved unless recognized and recommended by an appropriate authority in the West. There is an all-pervading presence of a positive, if not worshipful, attitude towards everything in western society and culture, past as well as present in the name of progress, reason and science. Nothing from the West is to be rejected unless it has first been weighed and found wanting by a Western evaluation. “Swami Vivekananda foresaw the dangers of Globalization as early as in 1893 when he spoke at the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago. To quote his soul-stirring words: 'Shall India die? Then, from the world all spirituality will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct, all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the

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duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force, and competition its ceremonies, and human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be.'” Precisely such a terrible thing is taking place in India today on account of the inexorable and immutable process of Globalization. In the end we can say that, every step of movement towards economic, political and cultural modernization, taken by the state in India, is responded to by the people with an enhanced sense of self-consciousness and awareness of identity.

Cultural modernization, sponsored by the forces of globalization, is resented if it encroaches upon or does not promote the core cultural values of society, its language, social practices and styles of life. The vigour of the renewed sense of self-awareness generated among the members of the local cultures and communities is such as to succeed in making adaptive reconciliation with the forces of globalization. The linkages both visible and invisible, defining the cultural interdependence among communities and regions in India which have existed historically, reinforce instead of threatening the national identity. These bonds seem to become stronger as India encounters the forces of modernization and globalization.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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