TRANSCULTURAL SOCIETY: A CONFLICT BETWEEN MODERN INDIAN CULTURE AND TRADITION
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ABSTRACT

Transculturalism is a movement of ideas, influences, practices and beliefs between cultures. The present study analyzes the transcultural Indian society in which, cultural change and fluidity creates conflict between traditional and modern means of values and experiences. It creates the condition of transfer and transition life styles. And it imposes every individuals and groups to adapt and adopt new discourses, values, ideas and knowledge systems by ignoring or giving little preference to traditional values, customs and cultural heritages. The word Transculture is a product of Colonization. With no exception, in Post-colonial India there have been enormous changes in culture and tradition existed before. The west influences the people by means of education systems, science and technology, modern life styles, modern families, art and architecture.

Key Words: Trancultural society- Colonization- Subjugated cultures- Transition of Life styles-Social systems.

The word transculturalism is denoted as ‘seeing oneself in the other’. The human culture encompasses and extends across two or more cultures leading dilemma in survival conflicting one with another. In the transcultural society, there seems cultural change and fluidity which creates conflict between traditional and modern means of values and experiences. It creates the condition of transfer and transition life styles. And it imposes every individuals and groups to adapt and adopt new discourses, values, ideas and knowledge systems by ignoring or giving little preference to traditional values, customs and cultural heritages. With no exception, in Post-colonial India there have been enormous changes in culture and tradition existed before. The west influences the people by means of education systems, science and technology, modern life styles, modern families, art and architecture.

The western response to Indian culture is seen itself in the ways people changed and came to its first culmination at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of nineteenth centuries. In India, colonial rule led to strange but fascinating amalgamations of European and oriental styles. Industrially, South Asia has made progress in the past. The policy of self-sufficiency based on cottage industries and small scale production is virtually forgotten and large scale industries are owned by big shots. Due to shortcoming rulers and colonization, India felt unsatisfied and tend to lean backward the former colonies and adapt their cultures. Communal, social and regional tensions have been contained, and the country remains a single political unit. Great advances have been made in education and the literacy rate has risen considerably, though the quality of higher education is declined nowadays. Industrialization has advanced so far that India has even exported the products of heavy industry to various foreign countries especially, the western countries. New strains of seed, the increased use of fertilizers and the spread of technical knowledge have greatly raised the agricultural outcomes. But still there is a confused mind about the legacy of India.

In the earlier times, family was potent source of material and psychological security for every individual and they cannot be satisfactorily replaced by the state on the one hand and the small nuclear family on the other. But in the old tradition law has been abrogated, replaced by a new code, modelled largely on that of the west. Divorce is now possible both for wives and husbands. Monogamy is enforced and women are entitled to possess property of their own.

The social system based on the joint family and caste system is slowly breaking up. The caste system permits miscegenation, which in fact seems to have been possible in very early times, the traditional thinkers believed that the hierarchical social structure of India depended on arranged marriages. In the present day, inter-caste marriages and living together policies are freely
performed between the parties concerned and becoming increasingly common stating that the individual right is flourished in contemporary culture. The institution of joint family graded hierarchically according to age and sex, is also beginning to lose its grip in India, at least among many of the educated folk in the towns, though the sense of kinship in India is still in general much stronger than in the western world. Younger members of the family are no longer so inclined to contribute to the upkeep of impoverished relations and carry out the wishes of their elders implicitly, especially when they have reached maturity. Industrial society and the influence of western social ideas are chiefly responsible for these changes and such ideas are carried to a wide range of ordinary people through the movies and popular books. The west exploited the traditional ethics such as respecting elders, obliging family customs and responsibilities getting degraded and created conflict in families and in public.

India is a democratic country in which people can express freely their likes and dislikes of the government in the press, public meeting and in particular the polling booth. But it has been squeezed by high class and autocratic rulers. They use the tactics of kindling the materialistic mind of ordinary people and compliment freebies, money and necessary things to woo them. In fact, the concept of democracy is degraded due to the cultural conflict. Political consciousness is adapted by the politicians, in which, people had a faith on ballot box.

In politics, there have been conscious attempts to revive the past in a new form and to fit traditional Indian conceptions into the framework of twentieth century democracy. The Maharajas ruled over India, who lost all theirs powers and principles and much or their wealth, so strongly has the twentieth century affected the thought of India’s rulers. In former princely states, the common man feels respect and in some cases affection too. But the former rulings and tradition monarchy has gone forever in India. Consequently the change makes uncomfortable in the present political scenario. In one respect, however the Indian government consciously tried to revive the past political traditions. This is in the establishment of elected village councils, continuing the tradition of the panchayats. But still leads the declination of traditional system due to the western influences.

In the field of arts, the fate of India’s ancient heritage has varied. In early times, the classical tradition of music was reserved only for rich. But now it is available for larger audiences due to the improvised technology. In the post-colonial India there is a conflictual taste between the classical and western music. A unique genre of popular music, a hybrid of Indian and western conventions commonly known as Film song is immensely popular. Next, the wonderful tradition of Indian dance was once exploited by devadasis and courtesans. The classical dances made respectable and are played before large audience. On the other hand, western dancing, whether Ballet of ballroom has not caught on and few Indians are interested in it. In the field of visual arts, the ancient traditions, whether Hindu or Muslim have virtually disappeared. In post-colonial tradition, hybrid styles have been adapted for attraction and for good measures.

The wonderful tradition of Hindu classical, the art of Sculpture have been dead for many centuries. Now in post independent India, it has been perhaps the weakest of the arts in India. And few traces of Indian tradition are to be seen in the products of post -Independence ateliers. The tradition of Indian painting also seems to be lost. In the closing years of last century, a group of able Bengali artists led by Abanindranath Tagore developed a typical Indian style of paintings based on the murals of Ajanta and the Rajputs. Later the modern painters developed personal styles and gave importance to individual skills. Now there is probably no good Indian painting. The work of the best painters of modern India is not true Indian painting. It is international painting which happens to be produced by Indians.

The traditional system of medicine, Ayurveda and Yunani are still very active. Both these systems, though based in their classical forms on the false premises are pragmatically effective in curing and relieving many diseases and their drugs and therapy are less expensive than those of modern medicine. In post-colonial India, people have been wrongly channelized and confused to
opt whether to choose traditional or the immediate relief from English medicine. People are unaware of the complications when consuming the western medication.

Throughout the world the speed of change grows faster and opposed trends make themselves felt with increasing force. The tendency of culture is to become one and the same, with slight regional variations according to climate. This can be witnessed in architecture, art, and music and to a lesser extent in the general values of civilization. Also it attempts to preserve the traditions of national and regional cultures against the pressure of twentieth century technology, which makes for greater uniformity and against other pressures, often of a political type, which tend in the same direction. Both trends are to be seen in contemporary India.

The cultural traditions seem to have considerable power of survival. Indian art and architecture, as distinct for international art and architecture practiced by Indians may be dead or dying. There are some other aspects of life and thought which go deeper than aesthetics or than artistic and literary fashions and styles. The Indian tradition of hierarchically graded society yet survive, but in a form rather different from the traditional system.

References: