



Indian Culture

Cultural History Of India (University of Kerala)



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Indian culture is one of the world's oldest ancient cultures. Egypt, Greece, Rome, and other ancient cultures have all but vanished, leaving only their ruins. However, Indian culture is still alive and well today. Its basic ideas are the same as they were in ancient times. Village panchayats, caste systems, and joint family structures can all be seen. The teachings of Buddha, Mahavira, and Lord Krishna are still relevant and inspirational today. Spirituality, prayer to nature, belief in karma and rebirth, nonviolence, truth, non-stealing, chastity, and non-acquisitiveness, among other qualities, continue to inspire people in this country today. Civilization includes material growth and materials, but culture includes art of living, conventions, and traditions. To a certain extent, material progress is conceivable. Because the basis of progress was spirituality rather than materialism, civilizations were destroyed and Indian culture survived until today. As a result, Indian culture can be described as an old culture with a living history. Pallavaram, Chingalpet, Vellore, Tinnivalli near Madras, the Sohan Valley, the Pindhighev area in West Punjab, the Rehand area of Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh, the Narmada Valley in Madhya Pradesh, Hoshangabad, and Maheshwar all demonstrate that India has been a land of development and growth of human culture. On the basis of excavations carried out in areas like as Harappa and Mohanjodaro, we have learned the following:

Around 3000 B.C., a developed civilisation and culture of the prehistorical age flourished. As a result, Indian culture is around 5000 years old.

Indian cultural characteristics

Traditional Indian culture stresses moral principles and attitudes of generosity, simplicity, and frugality as part of its larger spiritual drive. The following are some of the outstanding elements of Indian culture that may be found across its many castes, tribes, ethnic groupings, religious groups, and sects.

A Cosmic Vision

Human beings are positioned inside an Indian cultural framework that views the universe as a divine creation. It is not just anthropocentric (human-centric), but also believes all living and non-living aspects of creation to be manifestations of the divine. As a result, it honours God's design while promoting the concept of coexistence. As a result, this perspective integrates humans, nature, and God into a single whole. The concept of satyam-shivam-sundaram reflects this.

Sense of Harmony

The goal of Indian philosophy and culture is to create natural harmony and order, which is applied to the entire cosmos. Natural cosmic order is said to be the foundation of moral and social order in Indian culture. The foundation of exterior harmony is meant to be inner harmony. Inner harmony will naturally lead to external order and beauty. The concept of purushartha aptly illustrates how Indian culture attempts to balance and synthesis the material and spiritual.

Tolerance

Tolerance is a fundamental aspect in Indian culture. Tolerance and liberalism are present in India for all religions, castes, and communities. Many different cultures invaded India, and Indian society provided opportunities for all of them to thrive. Shaka, Huna, Shithiyan, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist cultures were all welcomed and valued in Indian society. Indian

society is characterised by a remarkable sense of tolerance for all religions. According to the Rigveda, truth is one, yet scholars describe it in numerous ways. Lord Krishna says in the Gita, "Those who pray for others are essentially praying for me." This is the most extreme form of tolerance. In India, numerous religions coexist peacefully, and all have an impact on one another — however this tradition has been harmed by activities of religious conversion by some religious organisations. All of India's religions are treated with equal respect. Indian culture respects the complexity of reality and incorporates a diverse range of perspectives, behaviours, customs, and institutions. It does not attempt to eliminate variation in the name of uniformity. Indian culture's credo is both unity in variety and diversity in unity.

Continuity and Stability

The concepts of Indian culture are still as much in use today as they were when they were first introduced. The constant flow of Indian culture is a unique feature. Due to the fact that Indian culture is founded on

As a result, it is always evolving. Many centuries have gone, many changes have occurred, and many foreign invaders have been encountered, but the light of Indian culture continues to shine today. No scholar can conclude the history of cultures such as Egypt, Greece, Rome, Sumer, Babylon, and Syria because they are still in the construction phase. the current cultural standards in India can be used to understand Indian culture. The old Indian culture's light continues to shine. Many invasions took place, many rulers came and went, and many laws were established, but traditional institutions, religion, epics, literature, philosophy, and traditions are still alive today. The problems were unavoidable, and the government was powerless to change them. Even today, the stability of Indian culture is unparalleled. Change has always been favoured

within the context of continuity in Indian culture. It is in favour of reform or progressive transformation. It is not a fan of sudden or drastic changes. As a result, most philosophical shifts have occurred as a result of commentaries and interpretations rather than new systems of thought. In terms of behaviour, synthesis of the old and new is favoured to replacement of the old with the new.

Adaptability

Adaptability has played a significant role in the immortalization of Indian culture. The process of altering according to time, place, and era is known as adaptability. It is a necessary component of any culture's long-term survival. Indian culture has a remarkable ability to adapt, as a result of which it has survived to this day. Family, caste, religion, and institutions in India have evolved over time. Indian culture's continuity, utility, and activity are still extant due to its adaptability and coordination. When expressing the adaptability of Indian culture, Dr. Radha Krishnan wrote in his book, "Indian Culture: Some Thoughts," that "all people, whether black or white, Hindus or Muslims, Christians or Jews, are brothers and our homeland is the entire universe." We should be dedicated to those things that are beyond our comprehension and about which it is difficult to say anything. Our faith in humanity was founded on people's respect for and loyalty to the opinions of others. There should be no attempt to impose our beliefs on others.

Receptivity:

The ability to be receptive is a key feature of Indian culture. The benefit of invading civilizations has always been embraced in Indian culture. Indian culture is like to an ocean, where various rivers converge. In the same way, all castes fell prey to Indian culture and were quickly absorbed by Hindutva. Indian

culture has always adapted to various cultures, and it is best known for its capacity to maintain harmony amid diverse cultures. The trustworthiness that has formed in our culture as a result of this sensitivity is a gift to the world that is valued by all. We have always assimilated characteristics from many cultures. Indian culture is defined by Vasudaiva Kutumbakam. Indian culture has always responded to and awakened itself by absorbing and adapting elements from other cultures. Indian culture has absorbed components of Muslim culture and has never been hesitant to incorporate valuable aspects of other cultures. As a result, its utility, continuity, and activity are still present now. This culture's adaptability and receptivity have given it the ability to change the world.

In all circumstances, stay alive. Indian culture was never destroyed as a result of this property, even when it was subjected to foreign invasions. In fact, Indian society and culture aided foreign attackers by bringing them close to them and becoming familiar with them, not only giving but also receiving a variety of gifts.

Spirituality.

The soul of Indian culture is spirituality. The presence of a soul is acknowledged here. As a result, man's ultimate goal is not bodily comfort but self-realization. In his work, 'Hindu Civilization,' Radha Kumud Mukerjee examines how Indian culture, while maintaining individual specialties, binds the entire nation in oneness in such a way that nation and culture are deemed inseparable and unanimous. Culture became nation, and nation became culture. Beyond the physical realm, the country assumed the form of the Spiritual World. When Rigvedic culture first emerged, it extended to Saptasindhu, Bramhavarta, Aryavarta, Jumbudweepa, Bharata Varsha, and India over time. Because of its might, it expanded outside India's borders and established itself there as well.

Religious Dominance

In Indian culture, religion is very important. The people of Indian culture are influenced by the Vedas, Upanishads, Purana, Mahabharata, Gita, Agama, Tripitak, Quran, and Bible. Optimism, theism, sacrifice, penance, constraints, good behaviour, truthfulness, compassion, authenticity, friendship, forgiveness, and other virtues have all been cultivated through these texts. Despite the fact that India has over 500 dialects, Monier Williams correctly stated, "religious language is just one, and religious literature is also one, which all Hindus, regardless of caste, language, social rank, or opinion, believe and pray with devotion." Sanskrit is the language, and Sanskrit literature is the literature. It is the sole Vedic or other knowledge dictionary. It is the single source of Hindu religion and philosophy, the only mirror in which Hindu views, thoughts, practises, and traditions are accurately reflected. It is a source of material for the dissemination of important religious and scientific ideas, as well as for the development of regional languages.

Karma and Reincarnation Thoughts

In Indian culture, the concepts of Karma (doing) and Reincarnation are particularly important. It is thought that a person earns virtue via good deeds and gains a better birth order in his next birth, resulting in a comfortable life. The person who commits a wicked deed has a lower birth order in his next birth, suffers agony, and lives an unhappy existence. According to the Upanishads, the Principle of Action's Fruits is valid.

A person reaps the benefits of his actions. As a result, man must alter his behaviour in order to enhance the future generation. He will be saved, or freed from the cycle of birth and death, if he consistently does good activities throughout his life. This principle is not just found in the Upanishads, but also in

Jainism, Buddhism, and other religions. As a result, the concept of The principle of action is linked to reincarnation. The activities taken in a former life are the true reason of reincarnation.

Emphasis on Responsibility

In contrast to rights, Indian culture emphasises dharma, or moral responsibility. It is widely held that carrying out one's responsibilities is more important than asserting one's rights. It also emphasises the complementarity of one's own obligation and the rights of others. Thus, Indian culture fosters interdependence rather than individual independence and individuality by emphasising communal or familial obligations.

The Joint Family Ideal

In India, there is a lot of diversity when it comes to marriage. However, there is a strong resemblance at the familial level. Almost every Indian, for example, believes in the ideal or standard of a mixed family. Although not everyone lives in a mixed family, the ideal of a joint family remains popular. In Indian culture, the family is the most important aspect. Despite the fact that Indians distinguish between individual and familial identities, Western-style individualism is uncommon in Indian society.

Caste System

Social stratification is another feature of Indian culture. There are around 200 castes in each of India's regions. The social structure is made up of thousands of castes and sub-castes that determine a person's social rank based on their birth. According to E.A.H.Blunt, a caste is a collection of intermarried or intramarried groups with a common name, whose membership is determined by genetics, and which imposes restrictions on its members living together

socially. Its members either conduct traditional business or assert their shared identity. As a result, Indian culture has its own stratification structure.

In diversity, there is unity.

Unity in Diversity is an essential feature in Indian culture. Indian culture is diverse in many ways, including geography, caste, faith, language, religion, politics, and so on. India is a museum of varied types, groups, customs, traditions, religions, civilizations, beliefs, dialects, castes, and social systems, states Dr. R.K.Mukerjee. However, despite its exterior diversity, no one can deny Indian culture's inherent unity. As a result, there is Unity in Diversity in Indian culture. Those who see India, according to Pandit Nehru, are strongly impressed by its Unity in Diversity. No one is capable of severing this bond. India's great foundation factor is its basic unity.

Even despite linguistic, social, and geographical diversity, an unique homogeneity can be detected from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas, according to Sir Herbert Rizle. Indian culture is a massive tree with roots in Aryan culture. Every year, a new layer forms all around the tree; similarly, layers from different historical eras surround the Indian cultural tree, safeguarding it and drawing life sap from it. We all reside in the shadow of the tree, which keeps us cool. In different paragraphs, the concepts of unity and diversity will be discussed in greater depth.

Four responsibilities are listed in

A person can follow his religion while living in physical comforts and so obtain salvation by fulfilling responsibilities. Indian culture is characterised by the performance of tasks. Four foundations are considered in a person's life: Dharma (religion), Arth (money), Kama (desire), and Moksha (liberation) (salvation). Religion is linked to the performance of moral obligations. Money is

linked to the satisfaction of all requirements. Lust is related with life's pleasures. The final goal is salvation. All of these things motivate a person to carry out his responsibilities and live a disciplined life in society. In the history of the world, two contradicting ideas have emerged: first, that the universe and life are impermanent and destructible, and second, that the success of life is dependent on enjoyment.

The Western school of thought is the best example. However, in Indian culture, there is a clear correlation between the two. Both should be considered in relation to the true nature, significance, and purpose of human life. The Principle of Efforts is the expression of this cooperation.

It is thought that a nation that has forgotten its culture is no longer alive. He was always emphasising the significance of Indian cultural values. People who believe in material progress might be abrasive. Those who believe in weapon development can be irrational. Those who believe harm done to others for their personal benefit to be acceptable can be liberal, but Indian culture is unique in that, while financial possessions are important, they are not the centre of faith. It has employed the power of weaponry, but it has also prioritised its own well-being. It has seen harm done to others in the sake of its own well-being as inexcusable. The ultimate objective of life here is sacrifice-penance and self-realization, not luxury and pleasures.