

Culture Have Two Sides

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Abstract

Culture refers to tradition, customs, values of a society followed in a community, ethnic group or nation. It may be described as a norm and social behaviour shown in human society. It is a central study of anthropology, which encompasses the range of social behaviour displayed and transmitted through social learning in human society (Tylor, 2016). Culture is a collective programming of the mind. It represents us in different forms of society. When we equate culture to the tip of an iceberg. We can start to grasp a very essential trait that all cultures shared. The most notable characteristic of an iceberg is that the majority of it is underwater, and you can only see about ten to fifteen

percent of it above the surface; the rest is a bit of a mystery; we know it's there, but we can't see it readily. The culture reflects the same characteristics. When we travel to another nation for the first time, we will notice a variety of small differences in how people dress, eat, listen to music, and generally act and do things. This is a facet of culture that we can easily witness and feel with our five senses. As the title says, the notion of culture in India comprises both the stigmatising and empowering aspects of its manifestation.

Cultures are always evolving as they affect one another and adapt to socio-environmental changes. It might be difficult to discern across cultures when there has been so much overlap as a result of member. Membership in a cultural group is defined by your behaviours and beliefs, not by intrinsic characteristics such as your true age, gender, ethnicity, sexual preferences, employment, citizenship, and so on. Being a part of a culture implies that you understand how and why the group functions the way it does, and that you know enough to function well within it. People often live within the cultures of which they 'appear' to be a part. Most people between the ages of 13 and 19 prefer teenage language, dress codes, and music, but some people in that age group prefer older or younger cultural lifestyles, and some people outside that age group adopt the teenage lifestyle - both of which can be very

disconcerting to others who expect them to act in accordance with their chronological age. Culture defines the group, not the individuals inside it; as a result, not all members of the group agree on etiquette, morals, arts and customs, lifestyle, and what should be taught to the group members(Treaty Resource Centre, n.d.).

Peter L. Berger gives culture a new authentication by giving their thesis on social construction. I'm sure everyone has thought at some times, is culture real? But the important question is what makes something real? Most of the time the things we experience in this world are just constructs. We have opinions about everything and we experience the world through that lens.Social constructionism is the belief that knowledge and many elements of our surroundings are not in and of themselves real(Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009).They exist only because we make them so via social consensus. Our cultural identity is also formed as a result of social interactions and our reactions to societal expectations. there are two threads of cultural formation(Luckmann, 1966).Some cultural groups wield more power/authority in society than others, which inspires some people to learn adopt such cultures. Some women, for example, have learned to function inside heterosexual men's society in order to get lucrative jobs; many Māorihave embraced Pākeha culture.However, certain unusual cultures are not as effective in society, and as a result, they are followed by

a specific sect of individuals. This culture is stigmatised, and they might even have a detrimental impact on culture. and on that regard, this article presents you with two examples each, as to how culture is empowering and stigmatising.

Nauvari Sari

Did you know that the nine-yard sari was important in Indian history and battles? Legendary queens like as Queen Tarabai, Queen Kittur Chelamma, Queen Velu Nachiyar, Queen Abakka, the queen of Jhansi, Laxmi bai, and Queen Avanti Bai have left us with tales of courage, endurance, and valour. In all of their accomplishments, there was one piece of clothing that always aided and encouraged their free of movement of body at the time of war. It was called a 'Naugaz ki Saree,' or a sari of nine yards. Since then, this sari has become a global symbol of power, courage, and equality. The nine-yard sari has two major forums. 'Nauvari' and 'Medisar' are their names. The 'Nauvari' sari got its name from its length. The nine-yard sari was supposed to have been invented in ancient times. They combined two garments, 'Antariya' and 'Uttariya,' to make a single outfit. It is sometimes referred to as 'Akhand Vastra.' It refers to clothing that has no seams and can cover the full body on its own. Women began to wear trousers in Western nations and our Indian ladies had been wearing the nine-yard sari many years before them.

There are two main forms of the nine-yard sari. They are 'Nauvari' and 'Madisar'. 'Nauvari' sari gained its name due to its length. 'Nau' means 'Nine' and 'Vari' means 'Yard'. This Maharashtrian style is known as Kaastha, Sakachcha and lugada. Traditionally, Maharashtrian women wear the 'Nauvari' sari after getting married. The meaning of its other name, 'Madisar' is hidden in the name. 'Madi' is the loose end of the sari or commonly known as Pallu and 'Sar' was derived from a Tamil word 'Thar' which means 'Kashta' or tucking the border in the back. Traditionally, Tamil brahmin women both Iyer and Iyengar wear the 'Madisar' after getting married. The Nine-yard sari is an attire that erases the differences between men and women beautifully and effectively and proves that they are the same. The pleats in the bottom make it look like a Dhoti and the loose end of the sari gives it a feminine look. It's strange two in one style ties the character of men and women in one thread and gives them the form of 'Ardhanarishvara'. Nauvari is Maharashtra's pride and the people of every stratum wear it. Brahmin women wear it during venerations and the women of the Warkari community during 'Pandharpur Wari', the pilgrimage to Pandharpur. Also, for the 'Lavani' dancers, female farmers and fisherwomen of the Koli community this sari is a part of their livelihood. Be it war or entertainment the nine-yard sari has always uplifted the personality of women. Be it Madhuri Dixit's famous dance number,

Vidhya Balan's famous 'Lavani'. The epic characters of historic films like Mastani, Savitri Bai and Devasena cannot be imagined without the nine-yard sari. The 61-year-old Lata kare wore the 'Nauvari' sari and ran three kilometres in the Baramati marathon. She even won the race. Her act inspired many women to run a marathon wearing a nine-yard sari and enhance the culture of this beautiful attire. Hyderabad's Jayanthi Sampath Kumar wore 'Madisar' and participated in the Hyderabad Marathon. And Mumbai based, Kranti Salvi wore a nine-yard sari to marathons organised in Berlin, Germany and made the world record of the fastest run in a Sari. This proves that even today, the nine-yard sari still symbolises power, courage and equality. It represents those bold and fearless women who change the old and awful customs of society and give rise to new thinking. The future generations follow them(Utsavpedia, 2013).

Mudhubani

Madhubani paintings or Mithila paintings are vibrant paintings from the state of Bihar in India. They were originally paintings that were painted on floors or mud walls. Now they are painted on paper, canvas or cloth. They are even found decorating coffee cups, cushions, bags, etc. Madhubani paintings were mainly painted by women and this art was passed down from generation to generation. One may make these paintings with different things like sticks, pens with nibs,

fingers, and even match sticks. Natural dyes are used for preparing the paints like yellow is taken from turmeric, black is prepared from charcoal, etc. Bright colours are used to make these paintings. First, an outline is prepared which is made of rice paste. Then the colour is filled in. It is said that the first Madhubani painting was made to capture the moments from the wedding of Lord Ram and Sita. The characters that are painted in these paintings have distinct pointy noses and unusually big eyes that are shaped like fish. Marriages, festivals like Holi, elements from nature such as the sun, the moon, tulsii peacock, fish, etc. Deities and scenes from epic stories are depicted in these paintings. The Dashaavtaar of Lord Vishnu is a beautiful example of a theme used. These paintings have helped to save the environment too. Once when trees in Bihar were being cut down to make the roads wider. Womenfolk got together and decorated many trees with these Madhubani paintings. This act of theirs saved the trees. Jagdamba Devi was the first Madhubani artist to get a national award for this art. Since then, there have been many. Madhubani Art is a traditional art that still enjoys popularity all around the world even today. Did you know that there is a Mithila Museum in Japan? Yes, you heard it right. This art museum in Tokamachi houses many Madhubani paintings, some that are up to 10 feet long!(Tripathi, 2013) This art not only empowers the culture of this art nationally but also on the international

perspective.

Child Tossing

“I am a citizen of a country that has had rulers such as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Emperor Ashoka. I am a citizen of that nation, where the appearance, clothing, and culture changed every fifty miles. I was born in that land, where gold birds were used to guzzle on lentils. I am a citizen of that country, which knew the geography of this cosmos before it comprehended its own geography”.

More than 1.3 billion people reside in India. India is a nation of diverse cultural traditions. Many foreign countries are drawn to India because of its "Unity through Diversity." India, like the United States, is a federal federation with several states that speak different languages and have different cultural identities. India's culture is the world's oldest, dating back over 5000 years, and it is regarded the world's first and highest culture land. The phrase "unity in diversity" refers to India as a varied country where people of many religions coexist peacefully with people of other cultures. Among the 28 states, India has a diverse cultural and traditional presence. Indian origin religions Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism all based on Dharma and Karma. Indian culture is characterized by strict social hierarchy. furthermore, Indian Children are taught their role and place in society from an early age. Probably, many Indians believe that God and spirits have a role in

determining their life. Indian culture is unquestionably varied, and youngsters learn to appreciate and absorb the distinctions. Culture is dynamic and changes through time, therefore it is not static. Indian culture has seen significant transformations in recent decades. Female empowerment, westernisation, a reduction in superstition that stigmatises culture, literacy, and education are among the most significant developments. Even said, there are some practises that are improper in the name of culture in India, one of which is the throwing or tossing of children. From benign ceremonies to the truly lethal, India has seen it all. However, new-born babies are thrown from a roof for good luck in Karnataka (in places like Nagrala hamlet) and Maharashtra (in places like Solapur and Harangal). Solapur, Maharashtra, is especially well-known for this ritual, as it is home to the Baba Umer Dargah, where it has been done for generations(Nair, 2021). This is a 700-year-old ceremony done in the area by both Hindu and Muslim households. According to legend, years ago, when infant mortality was rampant, a saint urged the families of this region to express their trust in God by tossing their infants from the roof of a shrine, and God would mysteriously generate a sheet below to catch them in(Nair, 2021). The district authorities attempted to outlaw this practise in 2009. It was put on hold for a period in 2011, but it was reinstated in the Digambareshwara temple in Nagrala in 2012. As

recently as 2016, the baby tossing ceremony still actively practised(Nair, 2021). In Karnataka Human Rights group have been trying to stop this ancient topic of dropping babies. This practice stigmatises the follower of that belief not only in India but also internationally.

Food Bath

We are literate enough to create new things, to create a new world, and to follow a new culture, yet we are essentially illiterate when it comes to respecting one another. We do not permit our domestic assistant to use the same plates as us. We don't care about the individuals who clean our garbage, sweep our streets, and clean our drainage, and this stereotype creates an invisible ceiling that is quite obvious in our culture. This is the true India. This is the India we live in; we continue to brush caste aside as if it does not exist, despite the fact that it is there in every cell of our society, our lives, the decisions we make, and our deaths. One such cultural practice is Madasana.

In the temple, a peculiar practise of clearing up leftover food and leaves takes place. This is known as Madasana, or rolling bath. Kukke Subramanya (also known as Kukke Subrahmanyain Tulu and Kannada) is a Hindu temple in the hamlet of Subramanya, Karnataka. Kartikeya is revered as Subramanya, the Lord of All Serpents, in this temple. This temple is a well-known Karnataka temple. Big names like Sachin

Tendulkar, Hema Malni, and Aishwarya Rai have taken their vows here. On the occasion of the temple's yearly celebration, after the Brahmins have eaten, the Dalits clean the leftover food and the floor according to ritual. Madasana rituals have been a source of contention in Karnataka for many years. Many individuals wish to put a stop to this strange culture. This ceremony was declared illegal by courts in 2010. However, one of the Mukami tribes stated that if this ceremony is halted, the outcome will not be good. In 2013, the Karnataka High Court permitted Madasana (Narayanan, 2014). This culture stigmatises the dalit people living in India and shows how we are still rocked by the thoughts of stereotypes.

Replicating Skewed Structures of Culture

Robert Bierstedt once said, "culture is the complex whole that consists of all the ways we think and do and everything we have as a member of society. This definition fits in every circumstance that occurs as a part of the culture" (Bierstedt, 1938). It is transmitted from one generation to the next. Parents pass on culture to their children and hence the cycle of culture forms a loop, that just keeps going. Various epochs came and went, but no one had the capacity to alter the effect of true culture. The umbilical cord is a conduit for the younger generation's culture. Our ethnic culture instils in us the values of behaving appropriately, respecting elders, caring for the helpless, and constantly assisting

the poor and needy. Humanity and spiritual practise are the foundations of our wonderful civilization. Every culture has its own tiny quirk, which we must be aware of. India is rapidly modernising and expanding, yet some antiquated ideas still persist. Despite of the fact that institutions such as the caste system have been abolished, caste prejudice and segregation continue to exist. The essence of Indian culture lies in a quote called "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhena" which means peace everywhere and live at this stance we have to do three major things love, care and awareness. In the end, I'll like to conclude by quoting Henry James for spreading the words enlightenment

**“Do not mind anything that anyone tells you
about anyone else.
Judge everyone and everything for yourself”**

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