



SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIAN CULTURE, RELIGION, LANGUAGE, ETHNICITY, NATIONALITY, AND RACE

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Abstract: Unity in diversity" - these are not just words, but something that are highly applicable to a country like India that is incredibly rich in culture and heritage. A few quotations or statements cannot describe the pedestal that India holds on to the world map because of its colourful and unique culture. From the times of Mauryas, Cholas and Mughals to the period of British Empire, India has always been famous for its traditions and hospitality. The warmth in the relations and euphoria in celebrations make the country stand out distinctively in the global fraternity. The country's liveliness and generosity attract a number of tourists to its vibrant culture which is an amalgamation of religions, festivals, food, art, crafts, dance, music and many other subtle things. Everything, from the culture and values to customs, rituals and traditions, is 'special' in this 'Land of Gods

Key words – Indian culture, Religion, culture

1. INTRODUCTION

Unity in diversity" - these are not just words, but something that are highly applicable to a country like India that is incredibly rich in culture and heritage. A few quotations or statements cannot describe the pedestal that India holds on to the world map because of its colourful and unique culture. From the times of Mauryas, Cholas and Mughals to the period of British Empire, India has always been famous for its traditions and hospitality. The warmth in the relations and euphoria in celebrations make the country stand out distinctively in the global fraternity. The country's liveliness and generosity attract a number of tourists to its vibrant culture which is an amalgamation of religions, festivals, food, art, crafts, dance, music and many other subtle things. Everything, from the culture and values to customs, rituals and traditions, is 'special' in this 'Land of Gods

2. Indian Religion has a great impact on shaping the culture and traditions of India. India has several religions that originated five thousand years ago. Hinduism originated from Vedas, so all Hindu scriptures have been scripted in the Sanskrit language. People believe that Jainism has an ancient origin and exists in the Indus valley. Whereas another religion, Buddhism originated through the teachings of Gautam Buddha in the country. There are various eras that came and gone but have not changed the influence of real culture. That is why the younger generations still follow the older generation's culture. However, Indian ethnic culture teaches people to care for the helpless, help poor people, and respect elders. The traditional aspect of India to greet anybody is by saying 'Namaste' and touching the elder's feet. The traditional family structure in India is a joint family, where many generations stay together in one house. People in India still follow the traditional marriage concept of 'Arranged Marriage' where the life partner of a child will be chosen by their parents.

2.a. Indian Festivals

Festivals play an important role in Indian culture and tradition. People from different religions celebrate different festivals in India. Popular festivals like Diwali, Dussehra, Navratri, Janmashtami, Shivratri, Ganesh Chaturthi, etc. are celebrated by Hindu people in India. Whereas Eid-ul-Fitr, Bakrid, Muharram, etc. festivals are celebrated by Islamic people in India. Other than this, many harvest festivals like Makar Sankranti, Chapchar kut, Pongal, Sohrai, etc. are celebrated by farmers. However, Christians also celebrate Christmas, Good Friday, etc. festivals in India. There also exist different regional festivals in each state of India like Teej, Onam, Ugadi, Saraswati Puja, Panna Sankranti, Chhath Pooja, Pongal, Lohri, and so forth.

2. b. Indian Cuisine

Indian Cuisine is also equally diverse in India like festivals and religions. Indian food and eating habits differ from place to place as each state has its own particular food and eating habits. In other words, people belonging to various parts of the country have their own cuisine, living style, environment, and availability of goods. Indian cuisine is most inspirational. Different states have different cuisines. Indian foods include so many ingredients and are more influential across the world. Indian food is mainly influenced by the diversity of people, so it has a variety of rich Cuisine. North Indian food includes vegetables, roti, dal, rice, fish curry, parathas, etc. South Indian food includes dosa, sambar, idli, vada, upma, uttapam, etc. In general, South Indian people cook food using coconut oil rather than mustard or sunflower oil.

2. c. Indian Costume

Indian Costumes are different for the different states of India. It varies depending on the origin, climate, and heritage of the place. Indian culture still follows traditional costumes. In eastern states such as Odisha, West Bengal and southern states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, women wear saree as the authentic clothing. It is a single and long fabric piece draped around the body. In a similar way, men wear Dhoti-Kurta or Kurta-Pyjama as the authentic clothing in eastern states. In northern states like Punjab, women wear salwar kameez and Kurti as traditional clothing. Whereas men wear headgear or turban known as the Dastar as the traditional clothing. In India, all the married Women wear Sindoor, a vermilion powder in the parting of their hair. They also wear bindi, Mehendi, bangles, and earrings as part of their attire.

2. d. Indian Literature

In the 19th century, the first literature Rigveda was created in India. It was written in Sanskrit and became the foundation of many religious scriptures and literary works laterwards. Also, the Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda written by the Aryans followed by Indians. Other famous literary works are Ramayana written by Rishi Valmiki and Mahabharata written by Rishi Vyasa in India. The Biographies of kings like the Mughal Empire, Baburnama, and Akbarnama are also precious literature by which we can know about the era. Other than this, foreign travelers have written some scriptures like Fa Hein and Hussein Tsung which provide knowledge about Indian people's traditions and lifestyles.

2. e. Indian Culture - Traditional yet Contemporary

Culture plays a pivotal role in the development of any country. A culture of a nation represents its values, goals, practices and shared beliefs. The Indian culture has never been rigid and that's why it is surviving with pride in the modern era. It timely imbibes the qualities of various other cultures and comes out as a contemporary and acceptable tradition. That is what is unique about the Indian culture, it moves on with the time. There are certain things about India that are famous worldwide, like:

2. f. Ways of Greeting

India is a land with varied greeting customs. Different religions here have different ways to express their greetings to others. For instance, in major Hindu families "Namaste" is the most common way of greeting the outsiders and elders. Both palms placed together and raised below the face not only show the respect for others but also makes the greeter feel the affection in return. Similarly, Muslims greet by saying "Adab", which involves raising of right hand towards the face in such a manner that the palm is inwards and is in front of the eyes with the finger tips almost touching the forehead. It is for sure that no 'hello' or 'hi' can create that magic.

2 g. Flower Garlands

Indian people are also famous for welcoming with flower garlands. In Indian marriages, the exchange of garlands between the bride and the groom is a ritual in itself. People also offer flower garlands to Gods and Goddesses during their prayers.

2. f. Indian Marriages

Time has changed but the lavishness has always been an integral and indispensable part of Indian marriages. In India, marriage is still taken as an institution where not two people but two families get united. So, it always calls for boisterous celebrations full of music and dance. Within India, every caste and community has its own way of performing the rituals of marriage. In Hindu marriages, while Punjabis perform the 'Roka' ceremony in weddings, Sindhis perform the 'Berana'. But most common of all is the ritual of Hast Milap ceremony popularly called Paanigrahan Sanskaar. Muslims also have their own special way of celebrating the marriage ceremony, popularly called Nikaah. During the auspicious occasion, the groom's family gives mehar (nuptial gift) to the bride. Parsis plant a young mango tree in a pot during the marriage ceremony. This ceremony is famous as 'Madhavsaro' ceremony. Every state has its own special way of celebrating the marriage ceremony.

3. Conclusion

Despite so many diversities, people in India are united and feel proud of their culture and tradition. On the world stage, either through international film festivals or through beauty pageants, India regularly displays its talent and culture. Many rulers came but none could cause any harm to its culture, rather Indians preserved the good values of their cultures. The flexibility and movement with time make Indian culture fashionable and acceptable too. India is a land of rich culture and tradition which teaches people kindness, generosity, and tolerance. Indian culture differs from place to place as it is a multilingual, multicultural, and multi-ethnic society. Indian culture is a unique blend of modern western culture and historical traditions. India is a country of great legends where many great people were born and remembered forever due to their sacrifice for the nation. People across the world come to enjoy and feel the culture and tradition of India.

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