

Impact of Cultural Globalisation on Indian Youth: Facing the Challenges of Dialectical Identity.

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Abstract

Modernization and Cultural Globalization both are the processes through which Indian society is changing itself towards adapting the modern rational values within the sphere of structural and institutional patterns of behavioural norms. While internalising the values and norms of cultural globalization, Indian youth are facing the challenges of conflict between tradition and modernity which is somehow responsible for creating the crises of dialectical identity among youth. With the learning of values such as equality, freedom, egalitarian and rational approach towards life, individualism, economic progress and secular belief, Indian youth still follow the traditional behavioural patterns due to structural (Caste system) and institutional (Family, kinship system) characteristics of society. This conflict generating the dialectical consciousness and identity feeling among youth in Indian Society. The objective of this paper is to analyse those factors and assumptions which are responsible for developing the dialectical identity crises into the personality system of Indian youth.

Keywords: Modernization, Culture, Globalization, youth, Tradition, Identity Crises, Dialectical consciousness.

Indian youth are in a dialectical identity. How this socio-cultural Phenomena of Indian youth could be comprehended. This is a one kind of sociological Problematic to be coped with sincerely and with the help of Phenomenological method of understanding the nature of social reality. Emergence of the dialectical identity in Indian youth is not a matter of analysing any socio-cultural Phenomena with the help of data collected through five senses and making statistics. Rather it is a matter of investigation, which could be possible through understanding the nature of experiences experienced by Indian youth and nature of encountering Process in facing the structural and institutional changes accelerated by cultural globalisation.

It is essential here to mention some arguments of the two leading sociologists regarding the impact of cultural globalisation in Indian social realities. Sociologist Y. Singh writes that each culture has a basic 'theme' or 'Pattern' or 'symbolic code', which constitutes its core and all changes in it are mediated by it. The continuity of culture is also associated with the formation of 'identities' in 'basic personality structures' of the members of society. He further writes that as to the extent to which our youth in particular and people in general are tending to accept the western lifestyle or the 'norms of modernity', these changes in cultural aspect become relevant (Y. Singh, 2000 : 108, 109). Another leading Sociologist Dipankar Gupta says that in a atmosphere of globalisation people (including youth)

have become westoxicated rather than westernised. In his sense, westoxication is about superficial consumerist display of commodities and fads produced in west. (D. Gupta, 2000 : 11)

Considering these arguments expressed by leading sociologists, this paper explores the social-cultural conditions of Indian youth while facing the phenomenon of cultural globalisation facilitated by global cultural forces.

The hard-core process of globalisation has started in Indian society since 1991 when the policy of liberalisation had been introduced in Indian economic structure in the view of economic reforms by Indian Government. This was the major ideological shift, which moved from the closed and regulated economy to open and liberalised economy or more hard-core capitalist economy. In the view of this change, new and energetic social, economic, political and cultural actors emerged which started to dominate and influenced the social structure and institutional practices of Indian social system.

Before 1991 the process of globalisation was very slow and selective in regarding with the change in culture and socio-economic realities of Indian society. But the matter of consideration is that, before 1991 the proper ground had been created for the welcoming of strategic policies formulated by global and indigenous capitalist classes (in the form of multinational Corporations, funding agencies and various industrialists) for making the greatest profit from Indian market. In doing so, these newly forces of world economy started to manipulate the socio-cultural realities of the society for capturing the market as a whole. In a true sense, it can be said that global capitalist classes are those classes, which have rich accumulation of modern values, institutional practices and modern patterns of behaviour whether it be of European, American or any other developed nation as they are being termed. After liberalisation these classes entered into the vast market of developing nations including Indian market with their cultural capital with aim of manipulating the cultural practices and social behaviour of Indian people for making profit 'at any cost'. This is how the process of cultural globalisation began to take the radical form for fulfilling its own hidden logic.

It has been observed that cultural globalisation has become a powerful strategic means for bringing about social change in Indian society. What cultural globalisation is doing is to changing the personality and cultural system of Indian people, which will be instrumental for change in social system. The impact of cultural globalisation is manifested in the following process of change in Indian society –

1. The global capitalist classes have used the powerful instrumental means in the form of electronic media, cinema and other similar organisation for introducing global cultural patterns of behaviour in Indian social setting.

For example, after seeing the movie 'Student of the year', University students started to glamorise themselves and adopted new cultural practices of interaction in university campuses.

2. These powerful means are also being used for changing the normative socio-cultural practices in the interest of global capitalist classes.

For example, movie like 'Metro' has big impact upon Indian youth and different advertisement in the form of simulation and images forcing Indian youth to adopt global cultural practices. These practices also influenced the interaction process within established social relationships be it brother-sister relation, husband-wife relation or friendship relations.

3. New means of communication such as Internet and cell phone are also creating opportunities for change but the pattern of using these objects is always propagated through global capitalist classes.

Over all it can be said that cultural globalisation has produced here different sorts of realities, which must be understood in the view of Indian socio-cultural values and perspectives.

Emergence of dialectical identity in Indian youth is the one reality among many realities, which is being created by cultural globalisation.

The present paper explores the socio-cultural conditions of Indian youth while living in an atmosphere, which is culturally dominated by those economic institutions, which have their own logic or strategy to rule over the all nations of the world. It is clearly evident or manifested in economic policies of global economic organization like W.T.O., world Bank, I.M.F. and above all the M.N.Cs functioning under the authorities of rich nation states. The protest against globalisation as a whole in W.S.F. (world social forum) and whenever the G-8 nations meeting take place is the indication of defectiveness of the practice of globalisation.

But the point which is being discuss here is to understand the dialectical form of the identity emerged after facing newly global cultural practices by youth of Indian society. After 1991 Indian youth started to rethink about their personality system with the changing conditions of socio-cultural realities. The matter of considerations is that the process of rethinking about social structure and institution such as caste system, religious system, indigenous knowledge system, family and kinship relations was influenced by the components like new technologies of the information age, new means of the global communication process, new means of entertainment technologies (satellite T.V. network) and most importantly those M.N.Cs and T.N.Cs, which had their own logic of profit making from Indian market in which the percentage of youth consumers were very high. Coming of M.N.Cs, private companies, free trade and commerce, investment economy and establishment of special economic zones have together created the hard differentiation in the employment related labour market. The matter of fact is that these factors of economic and cultural globalisation have intensified the process of differentiation among classes in both urban and rural society.

Impact of cultural globalisation upon Indian youth and emergence of dialectical identity within themselves will be cleared after brief analysis of socio-cultural aspects of their existence within class structure. Class structure has three dimensions: upper class, middle class and lower class. In an atmosphere of cultural globalisation upper class youth have rich privilege to interact with global cultural practices. Because of being highly educated and keeping technocratic consciousness (Habermas), they are able to exploit the global resources such as getting educational degrees from reputed foreign Universities established in U.S.A., U.K. and Australia, accumulation of luxurious consumer products which are global in outlook for creating a image of global personality and adapting western style of cultural practices and values such as individualism, materialism for escaping from rigid form of socio-cultural practices of Indian society. They are more ahead of doing experiment with established traditional form of social relationship (inter-caste marriages). They are to some extent rationalist but it has a flavour of western cultural values. Upper class youth are now enjoying the global music culture and representing the truly globalise cultural identity. For example youth from Panjabi community doing experiment with western music and strengthening the notion of global India.

But the other side of reality is that when Shilpa Shetty kisses Hollywood actor Recharred Gere, protest starts from all over the nation in the name of socio-cultural crisis. A majority of youth also participated in this protest. This incidence reflects the dialectics of Indian youth whenever the question arises of cultural preferences. Incidences like suicide, violence and crime increasing sexual gratification by any means are showing the instability of socio-cultural life of upper class youth. For example Fardeen Khan, Rahul Mahajan and other similar kinds of youth are experiencing the meaninglessness in their socio-cultural life, while living in an atmosphere, which is culturally globalise. The marriage of

Ash and Abhishek also represents the dialectical identity of Indian youth. These people exercise global cultural practices in their daily life but they also follow the traditional institutional rituals in the interest of happy married life.

Middle class youth are in a serious struggles for creating balance between global cultural practices and are very sensitive towards national issues, indigenous cultural ethos, rationality of Indian kind of social relationship and institutional behaviour and sensitive towards major social problems such as A.I.D.S. poverty and promoting education in non educated people. For example, on the question of reservation policy, criminalisation of politics, corruption and caste politics, middle class youth give their own logical opinions and arguments for solving the situation.

But the mater of fact is that middle class youth are also under the big influence of cultural globalisation. Infect, middle classes, as a whole is a big consumer market for global capitalists class for making extreme profit. Considering this realisation middle class youth are being targeted through different means such as electronic media, cinema, and creating new trend in job sectors which includes fashion industry, hotel industry etc. for the adaptation of global cultural values and practices and these values are influencing the pattern of social relationships. For example, in metropolitan cities there is a phenomenon of living relationships, single living pattern etc. Middle class youth are also society carrying the religious values of Indian society. Recently religious and spiritual discourses delivering by different saints are re-establishing functional values of Indian culture and social system. Indian middle class youth are creating balance between these two aspects of cultural realities. In the result they are creating the dialectical identity between tradition and modernity.

In the other front lower class youth are more associated with the indigenous cultural and social practices but their aspirations to become a modern, rich, living a life with the adaptation of global cultural practices, accumulation of consumer product and desire to increasing mobility in the circle of middle and upper class youth are de-establishing their life and generating norm less behaviour in them. Moreover, cultural globalisation through cinema, popular culture and entrepreneurial ideas and establishment of shopping malls, super markets is creating a addiction towards materialistic approach of life leaving the Indian value of 'simple living and high thinking '. These trends reflect the condition of dialectical attitude in lower class youth.

Some cultural traits like dressing pattern which is moving form traditional to western trend, are common in youth belonging to all classes. This trend strengthened the notion of cultural homogenisation of outlook of Indian youth in which the western influenced is more revealed. This is how the cultural globalisation is gradually producing the dialectical kinds of personality structure in Indian youth. As economic liberalisation is speeding, liberalisation in socio-cultural practices of Indian in youth will be more visible.

The condition of the socio-cultural identity and reality of the youth belonging to northeast states or regions is also not so much different and the youth of these states are also struggling to defend their local, tribal and ethnic identities while facing the increasing dominance of cultural globalisation. Youth in these states have very serious socio-cultural and economic problems such as they want to develop them selves but also want to strengthen their local-regional identity and culture while dealing the impact of global cultural practices.

Thus, the youth in these states are also in a dialectical conflict for identifying the real identity while living in an increasing complexity in society.

Considering the whole analysis of the phenomenon of emerging dialectical identity in Indian youth, one can assume that it's a reality of conflict between tradition and modernity. But through this paper, this conflict has been touched with the different perspective. The application of the perspective, which has been used in this paper, is supported by post-modern assumption of Fredric Jameson about 'cultural logic of late capitalism'. The assumption about 'colonisation of life world by system' propounded by Jurgen Habermas has been the rational behind analysing the subject matter of this paper.

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