



## Reflection of Indian culture: A review

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### **Abstract**

The beginning of Indian culture is yet to be known properly as it the oldest culture in the world. The Indian culture grew with diversity and firmness. However, youth of new India is getting attracted towards western culture. This paper reviews various aspects of Indian culture and differentiates it with western culture. The significance and authenticity of the Indian culture will be reviewed and will also attempt to search for better approaches to explain its importance to the youth.

### **Introduction**

This world comprises of various cultures and India a country with most diverse cultures. Culture can be defined as the pattern of behavior and thoughts of its people. It also comprises of the tradition, beliefs, values and rules of conduct along with social, economic and political organization. The benefits and responsibilities of cultures are passed on from one generation to the next by formal as well as informal processes. Therefore, all the achievements of group life are collectively called culture.

Classification of cultures can be made within 2 categories: (i) material, and (ii) non-material. The first includes technologies, instruments, material goods, consumer goods, household design and architecture, modes of production, trade, commerce, welfare and other social activities. The latter includes norms, values, beliefs, myths, legends, literature, ritual, art forms and other intellectual-literary activities. According to Indologists, Indian culture stands not only for a traditional social code but also for a spiritual foundation of life.

The culture of India holds an invaluable possession in our society. It can evidently be stated that the oldest culture around the globe is the Indian culture. The culture of India has faced several ups and downs but its shine and pride never faded. India is known for its diversity in culture. It will not be incorrect to view the culture of this country as its soul. On the basis of culture, we can experience the prosperity of its past and present. Culture is collection of values of human life, which establishes it specifically and ideally separate from other groups.

What is Culture?

Culture cannot be formed in a day and nor it can develop in a small amount of time. It takes decades and centuries for a culture to develop and creates its place in history. Our ancestors took their very next generation as their successor and passed the benefits and responsibilities of their culture to them. With the passage of time they also added to it from their own experience and gave up those which they did not consider useful. We in turn have learnt many things from our ancestors. As time goes we continue to add new thoughts, new ideas to those already existent and sometimes we give up some which we don't consider useful any more. This is how culture is transmitted and carried forward from generation to next generation. The



culture we inherit from our predecessors is called our cultural heritage.

### **What is Indian culture?**

Along with various reasons, culture is one of the most important reasons for which India is known and praised. The most vital constituents of the Indian culture which significantly increases the fame of the country are civilized communication, respect, values, beliefs, rituals, traditions, festivals, good manners, etc. Even after the life styles of everyone has been modernized, Indian people have not changed their traditions and values. The property of togetherness among people of various cultures and traditions has made India, a unique country. People here live peacefully in India by following their own culture and traditions.

Indians are proud of its culture. In our country it is traditional to respect elders, be truthful and honest and also to help out others in need. It is also considered traditional to celebrate our cultural festivals and religious activities with the family and neighbors.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN CULTURE**

Characteristics of any culture defines the base and significance of any culture. There are various distinguishing characteristics which can be considered when the Indian culture has to be defined. But then again, it is a fact that India is an amalgamation of numerous ideologies and thoughts. It is a very vast and varied culture rich in beliefs, feelings, knowledge, emotions, good deeds, learning, spirituality and devotion. It is the broad-mindedness of Indian culture that it assimilated all those characteristic features without any hesitation to which it was exposed from various other cultures and molded them in their way. India did not believe in invasion or war to propagate its culture, religion, ideology, or any other thing. It treated all living creatures with the same equality and compassion. Features of Indian Culture:

1. Longevity and continuity
2. Unity in diversity
3. Tolerance
4. Amalgamation of Spirituality and Materialism

### **Different types of Indian Culture**

Centuries have passed and with that a significant fusion among the Hindus, Sikhs, jains, Muslims and several other tribal population in India had took place. Various religions took birth in India such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism and several others. They are collectively known as Indian religions. Indian religions are a major form of world religions along with Abrahamic ones. Today, Hinduism and Buddhism are the world's third and fourth-largest religions respectively, with over 2 billion followers, and possibly as many as 2.5 or 2.6 billion followers. Followers of Indian religions – Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists make up around 80–82% population of India.

India holds the position of the most diverse country around the globe especially in relation to ethnic and religious views. It also comprises of the most deeply cultural and religious society of the world. For many people, religion and culture plays definitive and central role in their lives. Although India is a secular Hindu-majority country, it has a large Muslim population. Except for Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Lakshadweep,



Hindus form the predominant population in all 28 states and 8 union territories. Muslims are present throughout India, with large populations in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Kerala, Assam and West Bengal; while only Lakshadweep and Jammu and Kashmir have majority Muslim populations. Christians and Sikhs are other significant minorities of India.

Indian philosophy constitutes the philosophical traditions of the Indian subcontinent. There are six schools for teaching Hindu philosophy—Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta—and four heterodox schools—Jain, Buddhist, Ājīvika and Cārvāka – last two are also schools of Hinduism. However, there are other methods of classification; Vidyananda for instance identifies sixteen schools of Indian philosophy by including those that belong to the Śaiva and Rāśīvara traditions. Since medieval India (ca.1000–1500), schools of Indian philosophical thought have been classified by the Brahmanical tradition as either orthodox or non-orthodox – āstika or nāstika – depending on whether they regard the Vedas as an infallible source of knowledge.

The main schools of Indian philosophy were formalised chiefly between 1000 BCE to the early centuries of the Common Era. According to philosopher Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the earliest of these, which date back to the composition of the Upanishads in the later Vedic period (1000–500 BCE), constitute "the earliest philosophical compositions of the world." Competition and integration between the various schools were intense during their formative years, especially between 800 BCE and 200 CE. Some schools like Jainism, Buddhism, Śaiva and Advaita Vedānta survived, but others, like Samkhya and Ājīvika, did not; they were either assimilated or became extinct. Subsequent centuries produced commentaries and reformulations continuing up to as late as the 20th century. Authors who gave contemporary meaning to traditional philosophies include Shrimad Rajchandra, Swami Vivekananda, Ram Mohan Roy, and Swami Dayananda Saraswati.

### **Wedding rituals**

The bride and the groom are seated together, receiving instructions from the priest. The sacred square fire container (yajna kund) is behind the priest. Weddings are festive occasions in India with extensive decorations, colors, music, dance, costumes and rituals that depend on the religion of the bride and the groom, as well as their preferences. The nation celebrates about 10 million weddings per year, of which over 80% are Hindu weddings.

### **Festivals**

Since India is a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, therefore it celebrates holidays and festivals of various religions. The 2 national holidays in India, the Republic Day and the Independence Day are celebrated with enthusiasm and zeal across the nation. Moreover, many Indian states and regions have local festivals which depend over prevalent religious and linguistic demographics. Popular religious festivals include the Hindu festivals of "Navratri, Janmashtami, Diwali, Maha Shivratri, Ganesh Chaturthi, Durga Puja, Holi, Rath Yatra, Ugadi, Vasant Panchami, Rakshabandhan, and Dussehra. Several harvest festivals such as Makar Sankranti, Sohrai, Pusnâ, Hornbill, Chapchar Kut, Pongal, Onam and Raja sankranti



swinging festival” are also fairly popular.

### Greetings

Indian greetings are based on Añjali Mudrā, including Pranāma and Puja.

Greetings include “Namaste (Hindi and Sanskrit), Namaskar (Hindi), Namaskaara/Juhaara in Odia, Namaskar (Marathi), Namaskara (Kannada), Namaskaram (Telugu, Malayalam), Vanakkam (Tamil), Nomoshkaar (Bengali), Nomoskar (Assamese), Aadab (Urdu), and Sat Shri Akal (Punjabi)”. All these are commonly spoken greetings or salutations when people meet and are forms of farewell when they depart. “Namaskar” is considered slightly more formal than Namaste but both express deep respect.

### Cuisine

Indian food is as diverse as India. Indian cuisines use numerous ingredients, deploy a wide range of food preparation styles, cooking techniques, and culinary presentations. From salads to sauces, from vegetarian to meat, from spices to sensuous, from bread to desserts, Indian cuisine is invariably complex. Harold McGee, a favourite of many Michelin-starred chefs, writes "for sheer inventiveness with the milk itself as the primary ingredient, no country on earth can match India.

### Difference among Indian culture and western cultures

| Basics               | Western culture  | Indian Culture   |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Meaning              | The culture which is followed in most western countries like USA, Spain, Canada, Europe etc. is termed as Western culture. | The culture which is followed in India is termed as Indian culture.  |
| Religion             | Christianity, Judaism is preferred.  | Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism etc.   |
| Family               | Nuclear family is preferable   | Joint family is preferable   |
| Music                | Hip-hop, Jazz, Blues, Rap, Heavy metal, Rock music are appreciated in western culture.                                     | Folk, Classical music are liked in India   |
| Equality             | Both man and woman are considered to be equal.   | Woman are considered inferior than man, however the thinking is changing with the effect of westernization.    |
| Languages            | English is widely spoken in western countries like French and Spanish.   | Hindi is the highly spoken language, but there are many other like Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam etc.      |
| Relation with family | Individual is not much attached to their family; they leave their parent's home by the age of 18.                          | Every individual is closely attached to their family, they respect and care about family more than themselves. |
| Society              | They are open minded and gives priority to making themselves happy.  | People will kill their own needs and desires because they assume in advance, what the society will think?      |



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|-----------|---|--|
| Marriages | Love marriages are common.                | Arranged marriages are preferred.                      |
| Clothing  | A person can wear whatever he / she likes | Traditional clothing depends upon region and religion. |

**Literature reviews**

(Culture, n.d.) Methods of understanding cultures, including Indian culture, are embedded in a broad spectrum of sociocultural approaches to human behavior in general. The approaches examined in this paper reflect evolving perspectives on Indian culture, ranging from the starkly ethnocentric to the largely eclectic and integrative. Most of the methods herein discussed were developed in the West and were subsequently taken up with or without adaptations to fit the Indian context. The paper begins by briefly reviewing the intrinsic concept of culture. It then adopts a historical view of the different ways and means by which scholars have construed the particular facets of Indian culture, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of each. The final section concludes with some proposal about the best ways of understanding the complexity that constitutes Indian cultural reality.

(Indexed, 2017) Life style has a major importance from ancient times. In various countries, people will adopt various cultures. India also has a culture from ancient times and the people of India also adapted to that culture. India’s culture is considered to be the oldest culture that people had followed. Whole world will give respect to the India’s culture as we know that, “India defined the culture to the world”. The study revealed that present system of culture in India was not in practice and getting down. In order to save our Indian culture, people should not encourage the foreign products and their traditions. Instead they should use Swadeshi products and services. So the various different cultures in India laid a pathway to foreign culture which intends results in change of life style in India.

(Mohapatra, 2017) Globalization has a wide role to play worldwide. It has left back its footprints in every sphere of life. Not only in India, but the interchange of world views and ideas has resulted in a major transformation of the lifestyle and living standard of people globally. Indian culture is no bar to this transformation process. Our deep-rooted traditions and customs have loosened up their hold with the emergence of globalization. India has a rich cultural background and pride in its culture is famous throughout the world. Globalization has not only inculcated the westernization in India, but conversely, the Indian culture has also spread its impact globally. Culture and traditions of any geographic region hold a special significance concerning its uniqueness and that is the differentiating factor for a population within a geographic boundary from the other. This uniqueness has been disturbed to varying degrees in place of globalization. Such an impact is very much pronounced when they hit a developing country like India.

(Kochhar et al., 2016) Cultural Computing is the most important area in research in these days. By taking this concept this paper presents a case study of northern Indian culture based on Hindu & Sikh religion. It is associated with the conscious and unconscious states of human mind. A prototype model of an AI based interactive narrative system going to be developed.



This model is reflecting the Northern Indian culture and religious aspects of Hindu & Sikh religion. The implementation details of 5 stages considered in the prototype model have been described in this paper.

### **Conclusion**

Indian culture is best known for its diversity. However, despite of so many diverse cultures and traditions, Indian values are getting extinct on own land. Where, western society is steeping ahead in praising and adopting the Indian culture, people of India are getting more attracted towards the western culture. Few flaws such as suppression of women powers, youth vulnerability, etc. are the biggest demerits of the Indian culture. The biggest drawback of the Indian culture is that gradually the logic behind every factor has been forgotten and is not taught to the youths. This makes the youths aggressive and they deny following the rules and instructions of their own culture. This problem demands a new programme through the reason behind these rules and instructions are explained and taught.

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