



Dimensions of culture and core cultural values: Indian context

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Abstract: *India's one billion people have descended from a variety of races. The oldest ones are the Negroid aboriginals called the Adivasis or First settlers. Then there are the Dravidians, The Aryans, the Mongols, The Semites and innumerable inter-mixtures of one with the other. The great Epic, The Mahabharata and the sacred text, the Bhagavad-Gita teaches the Indians that survival can only be in terms of quality of life. It provides a framework of values to make the Indian culture well-groomed. The deep-rooted cultural diversity and values of a country make it difficult for a marketer to opt for a standardized strategy to outperform competition. It has been found that even after tremendous exposure to globalization, consumers from different cultures have different attitudes, perceptions, tastes, preferences and values, and remain reluctant to purchase foreign products.*

Key words: *Satyagraha, Ahimsa, Freedom, Culture, Attitudes, Values.*

Introduction

The intellectual development evolved out of the physical and mental training acquired in the course of the ages in a country. The culture of India (or) Indian culture can be best expressed as comprising the following: The mildness of the Indians has continued till date, despite the aggressiveness of the Muslim conquerors and the reforming zeal of the British, the Portuguese and the Dutch. The Indians are noted for their humanness and calm nature without any harshness in their principles and ideals. Gandhiji's Satyagraha principle or Ahimsa - freedom without taking a drop of blood, worked wonders and gave credit to India in the international arena.

India is a conglomeration of men and women of various castes and creed. It is a fusion of old traditional values and the modern principles, thus satisfying all the three generations in the present India. The Elite businessman and the

common vendor on the road share the same news and worship the same deity. India is a secular country as stated in its Constitution. There is freedom of worship throughout the length and breadth of India without any breeches or violations of any other's religious beliefs. The Hindus, The Muslims, The Christians, and The Sikhs in times of calamity and during festivities come openly together to share their thoughts despite their religious affinities. The Indian Social System is mostly based on the Joint family System, but for some of the recently cropped nuclear families. The families are closely knit with Grandfathers, fathers, sons and grandsons sharing the same spirit, tradition and property.

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Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) laid stress on physical development as a prerequisite for spiritual development, which in turn leads to the development of the culture of the country. For the past 1000 years various foreign invasions like that of the Huns, the Kushanas, The Arabs, The Muslims, The Dutch, The French and the British took place. So the Indians were exposed to cultures that were totally alien to them. Several attempts were made by the Indian rulers like the Pallavas, the Chalukyas, the Palas, the Rashtrakutas, the Cholas, and the Vijayanagar Emperors to give the Indians an administration, which was in consonance with the cultural heritage of the country. Later, religions became an important part in the culture and places of worship became community centers. The innovations in religious thinking brought two popular beliefs in India, namely Buddhism by the Buddha and Jainism by the Saint Mahavir. Then there was a socio-religious shift or orientation in the Indian culture. Later in the century Westernization of Indian culture began, but it was stemmed by the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayananda Saraswathi, Swami Vivekananda, Narayana Guru, Maharisi, Aurobindo, etc. Then there took place a Renaissance that emphasized the need to recognize the country's own culture while ushering in an age of modernity. If India's culture tended to become tolerant, accommodating, open-minded, deeply but not ostensibly spiritual and concerned with the common

human welfare, then it is due to the great and relentless efforts of our great ancestors and leaders. Thanks to them our country has achieved a common culture, despite a staggering pluralistic society.

I. The Traditional Indian Values:

Let us begin with seeking to formulate, for our present purpose, a representative image of the Indian traditional values. It must be remembered, however, that the Indian traditions and values, which we are in search of, in the present context of our efforts to determine our educational goals and values to suit the requirements of our contemporary life in a scientific and technological world, need not be the transcendently philosophical or religious ones. Philosophy and religion are, doubtless, very important sectors of our spiritual life. But evidently they are the speculative and intuitive essays of the human spirit, which, at their highest level, ultimately and in the last resort, impinge upon the transcendental and the cosmic. They have their own place, and very legitimate and valuable too, in the intellectual and spiritual life of man, and cannot be surrendered on any account. But the transcendental and the cosmic cannot serve as suitable bases for a secular social theory, of which educational theory normally constitutes a part. Where Indian speculative traditions and values will need some adjustment for their harmonization with the conditions and the needs of our secular life in the modern age.

Now, the Indian tradition is a very complex thing and not an articulated or self-consistent or unitary concept, and so are the values incorporated in it. India, through the long course of her history, has been the stage of interracial, intercultural, inter-religious and inter-



philosophical confrontations and even conflicts. But, by and large, the dominant and operative traditional values in Indian life have been, fortunately, the values that can be stated, for our present purpose, in broad and categorized terms. I propose, in what immediately follows, to locate and identify three such typical cardinal traditional Indian values, broadly corresponding to the three sectors of man's life: (1) intellectual-speculative, (2) social-cultural and (3) moral-spiritual. To enlarge on these values of the life of man, which merit and need to be preserved in all our efforts in the future educational reconstruction of our national life, viz. the values are

- Cultivation of Knowledge and the Methodology of Knowledge
- Tolerance, Accommodation and Assimilation
- Inculcation of Swadharma as the principle and embodiment of Moral Goodness and spiritual Holiness and Sanctity.

i. The Intellectual-Speculative Values:

One of the most fundamental points for our educational planning, which directly arises out of the intellectual-speculative values we have referred to above, is that our whole educational policy for the planning of our education, at all its stages, should be oriented towards the inculcation in our educands of an attitude of avidity for knowledge and creative and constructive thinking, and their relevant methods. In particular, a deliberate attempt will have to be made especially to inculcate the appropriate scientific attitude and scientific methodology in all the studies of our students at all the stages and in all the branches of their studies-the

Humanities, Science and Technology. In the University context especially, care may be taken to provide for the study and inculcation of the scientific methodology relevant and appropriate to the branch of learning specialized in, and with a practical bias given to that study. All the ingenuity that our educational theory and practice are capable of will have to be brought to bear on the achievement of this most important educational goal.

ii. The Social-cultural Values:

The social-cultural values and their educational indications, the main point, which arises for our consideration and action in the educational context and as a background for our educational effort, is the need for our social and political leaders for once to make up their minds and the limits of our traditional values of tolerance, accommodation and assimilation. These leaders must ensure that these values serve as sources of our strength and development, rather than those of weakness and deterioration. Accommodation means readiness to admit the incoming elements to an equality-status for purposes of co-existence and willingness to make civic adjustments in the interest of that co-existence on the basis of humanism and democracy. But when this accommodation, in its aspect of civic co-existence, comes to be worked and to operate as mere passivity and submission of the one element in response to the external or internal aggression and proselytism of the other, it makes for conflict, and for the weakness and deterioration of the civic organism, as it has done at certain significant stages, during quite a few centuries, in India's history. India has suffered very heavily on this account, and she ought to take a



lesson from that experience of hers in the interest of her own future reconstruction on the right lines. It is for our social and political leaders in charge of the nation's destiny to take due care in respect of the internal forces that militate against mutual accommodation and assimilation and not to encourage them or treat them with any premium, and to dissuade them from ways of intolerant aggression or importunate proselytism. Their ways of dealing with such forces have to be those of impartiality, coupled with considerateness as well as firmness also, in the interest of the nation itself. It is only against such a favourable social and political background and in the civic climate created by this background that education can work for the realization of our social-cultural values of accommodation and assimilation.

The main thing to do in this behalf in education would be to inculcate, in the younger generation, attitudes of loyalty and devotion to the secular, civic and national values in social life and a sense of their priority over all other values in the social context, including their priority over the values of denominational religion. Teaching of denominational religion, except in the historical context and for the historical or cultural purposes, in public educational institutions must be discouraged, if not quite disallowed. The dangers and evils of extra-territorial or extra-national loyalties from the standpoint of the national life and national interest must be brought home to the students and a stigma of social and moral inferiority must attach to those nourishing or cherishing such loyalties. Religion, for social and political purposes, must be taught to mean national morality touched with the emotion of the holiness of the nation.

iii. The Moral-Spiritual Values:

Regarding the moral-spiritual values and their educational indications. We must carefully visualize the exact nature of the problem for the educationist in this context. That problem is to invest, in the minds of our educands, the supreme moral value of one's own duty or swadharma in our secular national life, with a sense of religious sanctity and holiness without any exclusivist denominational commitment, but also with a denomination-like attachment all the same. It must be realized that the transcendent and the religious have a peculiar fascination for and a peculiar hold on the human mind, they have an appeal for the human mind which cannot be equaled in its strength by the merely secular or the moral.

II. Educational Indications of the Traditional Indian Values:

In the first place, it may be realized that there is hardly anything spotted out above which cannot suitably harmonies with the relevant requirements and implications of modern science and technology for our life in our contemporary situation. Science and technology imply industrialization, urbanization and formation of large-scale extra-religious communities and groups, in whose life religion, in the revealed authoritarian, denominational or exclusivist sense is bound to develop, as it should, more and more a personal significance, rather than its old uncivil or exclusivist importunities, which it may also be discouraged from doing. And yet in the life of such communities and groups, the operation of our values can be ensured by suitable educational means and methods, which can be suitably worked out by our specialized educational theorists and educationists



Conclusion: From the above discussion we may conclude that deep-rooted cultural diversity and values of a country make it difficult for a marketer to opt for a standardized strategy to outperform competition. It has been found that even after tremendous exposure to globalization, consumers from different cultures have different attitudes, perceptions, tastes, preferences and values, and remain reluctant to purchase foreign products. As brands have become the focal point of many a company's marketing efforts and are seen as a source of market power, competitive leverage and higher returns. As a result of consumer acculturation to the country of origin, consumers respond in a manner that is consistent with their culture's norms and values. At the time of starting its journey in a new country like India, the best approach a firm can adopt is to accept major issues involved with culture and values.

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