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## IMPACT OF ENGLISH INVASION ON INDIAN CULTURE

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### ABSTRACT

*India is called the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history and the grandmother of tradition. India is a treasure of valuable materials and strong history. Indian culture is one of the oldest, dating back to more than 5000 years. Indian culture can be best expressed in terms of humanity, tolerance, unity, secularism, closely knit social system and a rich cultural heritage. A country that is highly reputed for its rich culture and heritage has undergone a massive change with the invasion of the British and English language into India. Since then India has not only given English prime importance it has also incorporated into its culture, the cultures of many other countries that has diluted the essence of its culture by making way for a cross cultural setup. This research paper is an attempt to re-emphasize the glory and grandeur of Indian culture and tradition among youngsters of this land by bringing to the fore, the true meaning of our ancient practices and its practicality even in today's modern world. In a time when foreigners are more attracted towards our rich culture and our youngsters mesmerized in westernization, there is an urgent need to understand that the need of the hour is to be a cultured human being and a proud Indian.*

### KEYWORDS

Indian culture, British invasion, westernization, diversity, english language, social and economic impact, education and religion.

### INTRODUCTION

The way of life of an entire society is determined by the culture of that place. Culture is determined by aspects like dress, rituals, religions, norms of behavior and manners, morality, belief system, languages and art. Though India is among the oldest cultures, it is diverse in many ways. All directions of the country like north, south, east, north-east and west are distinct with their own cultural practices. [1]

India is a great country that has to its credit many inventions like the number zero, the number system, Algebra, Calculus, Trigonometry, the Pentium chip, the value of Pi (Pythagorean theorem), cataract surgery, chess, button, shampoo and many more. The first plastic surgery was performed in India. It was our Indian scientists who first discovered water on the moon. India is also the largest milk producer in the world and maker of supercomputers along with US and Japan. Yoga is India's contribution to the world. Sanskrit is the mother language of all the European languages. But, above all this is its rich culture that also marks its recognition in the world [5]

Even before the British Invasion in India, the country had been invaded by many of imperialists, but the greatest impact on Indian Culture was caused by the invasion of the Britishers and English Language. Cultural invasion happens through language and in India English language imparted the greatest impact on the cultural life of Indians. Kachru (1986: 128-129) in his book explains the importance of language in a society. [2]

### FINDINGS

The world views India with awe and admiration for its rich history, size and current aspirations. India has enormous ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity with striking contrasts. It is a land where more than 200000 people are able to converse in 400 languages of the various languages present in India numbering to 1600. India also has the credit of having the largest English speaking population in the world, especially in an accent that is clear and best comprehended.

The Britishers came to India with an intention of trade. Their policies were framed to drain India of all its wealth and resources. Slowly they progressed as rulers and administrators, having a greater impact on economic and political system of the country. But only a partial influence on social and cultural life, as they followed policy of non-interference till 1813. Gradually changes were taking place in the social life of people.

**Education-** Thomas Babington Macaulay prioritized schooling for Indians and successfully introduced English medium, as a result by 1890 close to 60000 Indians had matriculated. In addition to this English medium of instruction was established even in administration by the British (1765-1947). Slowly English advanced as the language of government, administration and education. It was accepted as the language of the elite and the Indian press. The press began influencing the reading public. Indian culture was considered as somehow barbaric in the past while English was considered as a road to the light and a tool of civilization. The Europeans thought, to emancipate the souls and the language of Indians into divine, English was essential. This also saw an improvement in Indian literature in English. The current trend in India is most people want to enroll their children only in English medium schools and not in regional or government schools. Gurukuls are now replaced by Montessori schools and English medium dominates the education system. This tremendous progress in English literature has placed the country as the third largest English book-producing country in the world.

The key to success of English according to Kachru (1986:129-132), is the historical role of England as a colonial power. In India the power of language was linked to political power and therefore language became the symbol of political power and English became the language of the legal system, higher education, pan-regional, administrative network, science, technology, trade, commerce etc., as the indigenous languages were not suitable for these roles, English provided convenient vocabulary and was considered prestigious and powerful. English emerged as a tool for acquiring knowledge in the humanities and sciences. English acts as a link language and is required to acquire international relations, modernization and development. At present English language has dominated the functional domains in the widest range. [2]

The growing demand for English language has both positive and negative effect depending on who uses it. The negative impact however is the dislocation of native cultural tradition by introducing westernization. English is a magical tool of national identity, political awakening (as in the independence struggle) a link language, a window to the world. On the contrary it is also a tool of economic exploitation and domination.

Bailey also speaks of English having both positive and negative cultural values: In spite of exploitation there is Economic development, political and cultural ideas and institutions. Enrichment of English is at the cost of indigenous languages and the opportunities to communicate with readers around the world is at the expense of one's own language (Bailey 1991: 165) [3]

**Indian culture** effectively means Hindu culture, religion, Hindu society and civilization. This Hindu way of life is threatened by the ruthless power of globalization. The synonym of globalization has replaced the term colonialism that was present in the classical history books of the days of the British Raj. Colonialism wears new masks and pretends to uplift people in the name of modernization but, in reality is exploiting them. This is not a new phenomenon as the British in the past vaunted themselves as the Gods of Civilization and culture to an uncivilised India and gradually was given the title of 'White man's Burden' [4]

The British used the powerful tool of religion to gain power in India; they introduced Christianity followed by western culture, thoughts and customs that led to the gradual end the traditional ways of life. Indians were encouraged to convert to Christianity and also to give up their culture, religion and spiritual implications. They began to dress like an Englishman and emulate their mannerism in all things. Thereby the converted Hindus began to think, behave and live like Englishmen. This attitude to imitate the westerners has continued over the years and spread all over the country irrespective of religion.

When the English failed to convert many Indians they focused on education. By eliminating our traditional schools and by changing the education system, the British tried to colonize our minds through the system of westernization. Indians were taught to acquire skills of the English by becoming modern and rational. Electronic media has succeeded in bringing western culture to every household. The dressing, eating and behaviour of most Indians are western today. Thus Indian traditions, cultures and religion have gradually been eliminated or subverted.



**Traditional values:** The ancient practices of tradition were all made with a strong and scientific reason which over the years sounds like blind practices due to lack of knowledge. To quote a few of the Indian traditions that were passed on for generations is mentioned below. Indians greet each other by joining their palms, this ensures joining the tips of all fingers and is said to activate the pressure points and remember the person for a long time.

The toe ring is worn by Indian women on the second toe because a particular nerve connects the uterus and passes to the heart. It strengthens the uterus, regulates blood flow and menstrual cycle. Silver being a good conductor, absorbs polar energies from the earth and passes it to the body. The tilak placed between the two eyebrows is said to retain energy and improve concentration levels. It also ensures blood supply to the face muscles.

Piercing the ears helps in intellectual development, decision making, improves speech and hearing. Mehendi is a very powerful medicinal herb that can prevent stress because it helps in cooling the body and prevents nerves from becoming tense. This is the reason during marriages mehendi is applied on the feet and hands where nerve ends in the body. Sindoor is prepared by mixing turmeric-lime and the metal mercury, this controls blood pressure and activates sexual drive. Mercury is also known for removing stress and strain.

Navratri is a festival in India that is celebrated for a span of 9 days. In this time period poojas are performed by maintaining fasts; this helps the body to face the changing seasons. People keep fasts by avoiding excessive salt and sugar; meditate to gain a lot of positive energy, self-confidence and determination. Our ancestors have stressed that our meals should start with something spicy and end with sweets. The significance of this is, the spice will activate the digestive acids that help in the smooth digestion process while sweets and carbohydrates pull down the process of digestion. Hence sweets are recommended to be taken as a last item. Sitting on the floor to eat improves digestion as the circulatory system focuses on digestion as against the distraction of the legs supporting the body while standing or on our legs dangling from a chair while we sit.

Researchers say that idol worship was initiated to increase concentration while praying. Psychiatrists say that a person shapes his thoughts according to what he sees and his thinking will change according to the object he views. The coconut that is offered in temples is considered sacred, pure, clean and health giving. It is also offered on occasions like weddings, festivals, and use of new vehicles, bridges, houses and sacrificial fire. The coconut is interpreted as human head- coir with hair, hard nut to skull, water inside to blood and kernel as akin to mental space. Another interpretation is the outer shell is the physical body and the kernel is the subtle body. The coconut is considered as a substitute by people who wanted to continue the practice of sacrifice of other beings for fulfilment of their desires. The sound of temple bells clears the mind and helps improves concentration along with staying sharp. The bells produce a sound that creates unity of the left and right parts of our brain, its sharp and enduring sound that lasts for 7 seconds in echo mode is good enough to activate all the parts of our body. This sound helps our brain to clear all out negative thoughts.

The Vedic sages knew the benefits of tulsi plant and personified it as a goddess as it has great medicinal properties. It is a remarkable antibiotic, increases immunity, stabilizes health conditions and also increases life span. Tulsi kept at home prevents insects, mosquitoes and snakes. It also has maximum mercury and should not be chewed. If raw mercury is applied to teeth, they may fall immediately. Blessings are taken by touching the feet, usually of old or pious. When they bless it means they are pleased to receive respect from your reduced ego, positive energy and thoughts are emitted from their hearts that reaches you when you touch their feet or hands. This happens as a circuit is formed when your fingertips and theirs join to connect the energies of both bodies.

Most of us ignore our elders when they guide us about the direction we should sleep in. It is scientifically proven that when we sleep with our heads in the northern direction our body is asymmetrical to the magnetic poles of the earth. Thereby iron content present in our blood begins to congregate towards the brain. This leads to head ache, blood pressure and heart problems. It also causes disorders like Alzheimer, brain degeneration, Parkinson disease and cognitive decline. [5]

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We as a nation are obsessed with foreign things. We want foreign Televisions branded clothes, technologies etc., little do we realize that self-respect comes with self-reliance. We must understand that India is not an underdeveloped nation it is a highly developed nation. Indian economy has to improve by leaps and bounds. The only way to save our country from severe economic crisis is to stop using foreign products and use Indian products. Otherwise we will end up paying much more for the same products in the near future.
2. By 2020, the median age in India will be 29. The population in the 15-34 age groups is expected to rise from 430 million in 2011 to 464 million in 2021. Education is the most powerful weapon youngsters should have, to fight against odds and lead our nation towards progress. Sadly our education system is outdated and not relevant to the current trend. Most of the universities never revise their syllabus. Freedom and encouragement to do innovative work is still not applicable in many educational institutions. Our education system must cater to the need of the hour without failing to promote our rich culture. Instead of including foreign authors and stories into the language syllabus, Indian texts that teach about our culture and tradition should be incorporated.
3. There is a popular saying that it is easier to protect your feet with slippers than to cover the entire earth with carpet. Change yourself and then attempt to change fellow citizens. One has to take care of his actions because they will become his habits and his habits will form his character. We must train our children to practice good actions like morning prayers; yoga, meditation and kind habits that will help transform them as good citizens which are very vital for the progress of the nation.
4. The greatest pollution problem we face in India is negativity, we must eliminate the negative attitude and in being optimistic we can do wonders for the country. General Indian mentality is that Indian goods are not good and that foreign brands gives them style and status. The junk food we have is far more injurious to health than our Indian sweets and savories. It's time we realize this and use Indian products and contribute to the nation's economic progress.
5. It is believed that one who recites daily prayers and performs religious rituals and ceremonies, but doesn't lead a pious life or good to others, is compared to a man who ploughs the field but fails to get good results. On the other hand, one who besides reciting the prayers and doctrines puts them into practice in daily life, is like a person who along with performing his duty of ploughing and sowing, he also reaps the harvest. We have to strive hard and be patriotic retaining our culture and intellectual inheritance and also teach our children the same.

## CONCLUSION

Swamy Vivekananda once attended a conference of World Religions in Chicago in 1893 and spoke about foreseeing the dangers of Globalization. He said all spirituality; sweet souled sympathy for religion, all ideality will be extinct from the world if India dies. In its place, only duality of lust and luxury will reign as the female and male deities, money as the priest, fraud, force and competition will be its ceremony and human soul will be a thing of sacrifice. Such a thing should never happen. But, unfortunately such a disaster is already happening in India as a result of uncontrollable and inexorable globalization [4] Any Indian today does not approve anything that is Hindu Indian, unless it is recognised by the authority in the west. There is a strong positive attitude towards western society and culture in the pretext of progress.

In the current scenario globalization had spread so widely that no society can remain without the influence of western culture or any alien culture. This means that no country will have a monoculture.

Despite all this India has made a remarkable mark in the contemporary world and many countries want to adopt the Indian culture and follow Indian tradition and practices. Our culture is so strong that even with the influence of western culture we have been able to sustain our tradition in most parts of the country. The metropolitan youngsters get carried away with foreign culture and alter their dressing, food habits and small practices but, deep within them there is a conservative Indian who happens to balance the Indian with the western. Which is no doubt the upbringing of children by Indian mothers. As long as this balance is intact only the positive aspects of any foreign culture will be observed and Indian culture will still stand strong.

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