



## **SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION WITH REFERENCE TO FOLKLORE IN INDIA**

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### **ABSTRACT :**

*Globalisation refers to the global adaptation of the local or regional objects or events. It is the increasing exchange of goods, services, capital, technology, information etc. in the entire world. The Adjective 'folk' indicates customary ways of life of certain associated people. Such groups of people carry their own identity and share certain factors, recognized as folk traditions. Folklore is affected by the changes in values due to the progressions notable at various times. The theory of international relations also impacts the growing correlation among the people of various spheres, rooted in the socio-economic connections. Also, due to the global culture of consumerism, the world has been converted to a global market with the play of multinational companies. Due to globalisation, developing nations like India have their folk traditions influenced by the internal economic condition, which is further operated by the state of the economy in certain foreign countries. In this scenario the cultures of the world are not only getting influenced by each other, they are influencing each other as well. People living in local communities and cultures are under the influence of global vision and ideas. The processes of Globalisation have replaced the concerns of a local community or a race with issues encompassing the entire world-mostly because the outlines of human societies are gradually fading. In one sense we may conceptualize a global culture instead of smaller cultural identities. In the scenario of multiculturalism as fallout of globalisation, loss of traditional cultural identity is not unusual, even in cases where it may not be noted in equal measure.*

**Keywords:** Americanisation, cultural homogenisation, cultural identity, folk, folklore,

globalisation, popular culture

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### **I. Introduction:**

Globalisation refers to the process of adaptation in the global realm, of the local or regional objects or events. It is the increasing exchange in the world, or the spread of the flow, of goods, services, capital, technology, information and so on. The process is governed by commercial systems. Globalisation has been pitted as essential for global prosperity. It is one process that has brought about the maximum unprecedented transformation in our concept of the world;

"Globalisation is a key macro-level concept and has changed the way we need to think about our world. Time and distance have been radically altered. There is increasing complexity in the political process because new technologies have enabled more intense connections between different organisations [7].



The theory of international relations also impacts the growing correlation among the people of various spheres. Such a correlation is mainly rooted in the socio-economic connections. This, in result, has happened chiefly due to the application of technology and communication media, the influence of which has been noted across the world. In the widespread expansion of globalisation, the role of capitalism, industrialisation and international coordination is noticeable. Production systems. expansion of markets, exchange and utilisation of goods are all a part of this process. It is significant to note that the unusual configuration of technologies leads us to consider the irregularity of technoscapes. Technoscape would mean the fluid global configuration of technology: technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries." [2]

Market and media are two important components of globalisation. Due to the global culture of consumerism, the world has been converted to a global market with the play of multinational companies. Modernisation and globalisation are like two faces of the same coin. Similarly, people of the world are increasingly interested in information and entertainment which they may avail through the various forms of media Media such as television, mobile phones, internet, newspaper etc. strongly influence our daily lives. People seek news, views and knowledge from local, regional, national and international spheres. In fact, technology has been a powerful tool in uniting the world across borders, and in acquiring and delivering rapidly. Effects of globalisation may be seen in the way global views on concepts such as democracy, human rights, welfare etc. are created and moulded for the entire world:

"What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide... large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapescapes to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed. What this means is that many audiences around the world experience the media themselves as a complicated and interconnected repertoire of print, celluloid, electronic screens, and billboards" [2]

This apart, a remarkable aspect to consider is that the cultures of the world are not only getting influenced by each other, they are influencing each other too, due to the process of globalisation. Sea changes are observed in the socio-cultural associations as well. Society, as understood commonly, may have gone through a modification in its previously accepted definition, which depended on "relatively fixed social structures and geographical boundaries." [7] Interestingly, the socio-cultural sector has now become more and more materialistic with the world viewed as a single market. Earlier, social relations among people used to be obvious and intimate. Yet, in the 20th century and beyond, the relations have become less conspicuous and narrow, or otherwise too bold, fickle or transient. In a way, rapid changes are observed in the



social values in families and communities Bhagwati indicates that "globalisation has become a controversial term leading to violent oppositions as well:

"It has become by now a phenomenon that is doomed to unending controversy, the focal point of always hostile passions and sometimes violent protests. It is surely a defining issue as we move further into the new century". [3]

## **II.Objectives of the Study:**

The paper aims at examining the concepts and issues associated with the phenomenon of globalisation, to analyse and establish its impact on the folklore of India. It will observe how the cultures of the world are getting influenced by other cultures, mostly by the imperialistic powers. In the process it will try to ascertain the change in meaning within folklore in India and the way local cultures including the art literature and their commercial practices have suffered due to globalisation.

## **III. Methodology:**

The methodology followed in this paper is partly analytical and partly descriptive. Books and scholarly research works on globalization and its impact in India and the world; as well as those on folklore in general and the folklore of India in particular; and dictionaries, encyclopedia and other books and materials on concepts such as modernity, popular culture, imperialism etc. have served as sources for the study.

## **IV. Discussion:**

People living in local communities and cultures are being tied down not simply by the local beliefs and ideas. Rather, they are living their lives under the influence of global vision and ideas in the era of globalisation. Migration of people is also one important contributing factor. Many people today do not feel bound by the nation, a culture or a society. They embrace a shifting existence, always on the move beyond borders and other perimeters.

There is a need to consider the ethnoscape, which can be defined as the "landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree [2]. This shift of people is not a new event as the migration of men began with the beginning of human civilisation. Their movement depends on a search for better opportunities in areas such as health. education, jobs, tourism and the like. One more aspect is the flow of capital across the world and its impact on the global cultural flow.

Rupp talks about traditional communities and modern bureaucratic society, while referring to the challenges of globalisation. In this context he points to the perilous disparity between the processes of globalisation and the role of local communities. The challenge is to do



away with that disparity "to engender a sense of community that is inclusive without simply submerging particular convictions into a generically global and predominantly Western culture" [11] This turns our concern to a 21M century issue of the Western imperialistic tendencies; and to realize the problem we may borrow the ideas of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, which Rupp has found in scientific deliberations in the West. He explains that Gemeinschaft is similar to community in concept and the idea of Gelleschaft is akin to a society. Going further, Rupp has to stress that we are not only to appreciate the philosophical senses of the terms, but we must comprehend an essential divide between traditional, communities and modern bureaucratic societies: "But the various uses have a shared reference to the stereotypical contrast of provincial town versus cosmopolitan city, intimate community versus bureaucratic society, personal bond versus impersonal market." [12]

The processes of Globalisation have replaced the concerns confined within a local community or a race with issues that encompass the entire world-mostly because the outlines of human societies are gradually fading. In one sense we may conceptualize a global culture instead of smaller cultural identities, which embraces common cultural values of the world. Although it claims to make distant cultures accessible and known, the transformation is in a way risky as social institutions, including language and belief-systems of communities are losing their identities. The alterations in the modes of production and distribution bear heavily on the modes of living in urbanized societies-caused by the technological advancements. The effects are on the whole unfavourable as the new hybrid cultural identity threatens to weaken the existing traditional values of a group.

In the formation of the uniqueness of the ethnicity of a community, folklore has always played a vital role. Hence, it is imperative that folklore, which assumes forms of art and literature, amongst others, is affected by the changes in values due to the progressions notable at various times. In the area of folkloristics popular culture signifies the sense of cultural pursuits that agree with, or seek to cater to the preferences of the general mass. In other words, popular culture is formed by the choices of a greater sextion of the population. Popular culture significantly in turn constructs the meaning of folklore today. In our discussion on globalisation and culture, it is vital to examine the extraordinary change in tastes of the majority of the population today, thereby identifying the altering distinctiveness of modern folk culture. Popular culture, as a construct of globalisation, has segregated in many ways from the ancient forms of culture. In the scenario of multiculturalism as fallout of globalisation, loss of traditional cultural identity is not unusual, even in cases where it may not be noted in equal measure

John Storey in *Inventing Popular Culture* significantly dwells on the construction of meaning in his discussion on popular culture. According to him, the term popular culture is a coinage by intellectuals in the eighteenth century, for the purpose of defining or analyzing folk culture.



Storey asserts that meaning comes from how we try to construct reality in our efforts to describe it; and such practices are important while arriving at any significance:

"..although the world certainly exists in all its enabling and constraining materiality outside representation, it is only in practices of representation that the world can be made to mean. Representation constructs the reality it appears only to describe."(x)

Storey also indicates that a form of production impacts meaning, which, according to his idea, is contained in the view of the problem of economic reductionism'. (x) Further, homogenized culture is a concept relevant in the context of globalisation, which is alluded to by Lau, and this notion actually assumes the shape of cultural imperialism:

"The belief that increased globalisation entails cultural homogenisation, most commonly in the guise of Americanisation, is a popular one. It is a belief enacted by tourists who travel to far-off lands only to stay in Sheraton hotels, eat at the local McDonald's, and watch big Hollywood pictures in the evenings. It is a belief conveyed by the more adventurous who undertake pilgrimages in the Himalayas only to find roaming snack vendors selling Snickers bars and Coca Cola along the way. It is a belief reinforced by anthropologists returning from the field with photographs of African bushmen wearing Nike shoes and UCLA t-shirts. Yet this idea is not perpetuated by tourists and anthropologists alone. Movies, advertisements, and news reports are relentless in their depiction of such cultural interchange, perhaps the ultimate popular postmodern irony" [6]

Story has his own perspective of looking at how meaning is embodied in folklore and it isn't different from what Lau notes about cultural imperialism in our perception of folklore. Primitive pastoralism is mostly cited as a proper element of the sense of the term folk. Storey mentions that as well. Also, Storey points to the unlettered common people as constituting the folk, whose lives do not depend much on formal education as much as it does on the process of associated living in groups resolving issues and relating with their environment, Such an idea of the exclusive folk with its singular identity, though, seems far-fetched in the times beyond the nineteenth century [8]

Traditional methods of producing goods and of distributing goods and services have Muffered noticeably due to globalisation. The chief reason for this is the easy availability of foreign goods, which majority of people prefer in place of locally produced stuff. For instance, clothes and other products manufactured abroad; and continental food items, may be readily accessed or had today by any regim at arry corner of the world. Consequently, artisans, craftsmen and other skilled producers in Indian villages do not feel encouraged any more to produce clothes on the handloom, to make decorative objects using traditional tools or to cook local food items known and loved in the past, to cite a few examples, in large measures for business

Traditional or customary skills and practices involved in those activities are on the paths leading to their slow death. Knowledge, talent and expertise demanded by the mentioned occupations or pursuits were previously handed down from older generations of workers to the next; but they unfortunately reach a dead-end due to the lack of interest and demand. As said, customary practices and skills are eradicated and cultures undergo an undesired transformation.



"Americanisation" of world cultures prominently impacts in India as it does in other parts of the globe. As Giddens tells us, one major fall-out of globalisation is that social relations are no longer constricted by distances. He mentions of "intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (64)

## V. Conclusion:

Majority of the youth in urban India today are victims of the phenomenon of social transformation and cultural remodelling and, in the twenty-first century, most of them are sadly ignorant about the lifestyles, practices, rituals and beliefs that constituted their own rich cultural heritage for centuries. As Powell identifies

"Globalisation may be seen as encroachment and colonisation as global corporations and technologies erode local customs and ways of life, which in turn engenders new forms of protest. Giddens has argued that the effects of globalisation must also be seen as positive and that integration into the global economy increases economic activity and raises living standards."

The lore in folklore is the body of knowledge which is orally propagated among the members in a community or group. The traditional knowledge passed down among the contemporary Indian folk (twentieth century onwards) is heavily predisposed and conditioned by industrialisation, globalisation and European cultural imperialism, favourably shaped in this direction by the technologies of advertising and mass media and the values of commerce.

Cultural homogenisation has vastly expanded its scope to realize its new meaning in the global context and so, local, native cultures are bound to modify themselves. Local cultures require to change or adjust in their bid to fulfil the growing desire for global products, or are attempting to make global products culturally acceptable in spite of incoherence. When folklore attempts at constructing reality (for a faithful representation to arrive at meaning) the loss of cultural identity as well as the cultural modifications and the adjustment discussed above, are imperative and must not be overlooked. This is evidently relevant in the context of India of the twentieth century and after.

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