

Culture of the India :

About 2400 BC, spread over half a million square miles on the Indus Valley, lived a people belonging to an advanced civilization. Their cities were built on a grid system, whose population numbered about 30000. There were houses with baths, plumbing and drainage, made of uniformly sized bricks. This civilization invented script and standard systems of weight and measures. Indian culture is rich and diverse and as a result unique in its own way. Indian culture operates at two levels-the individual and the group. At the individual level it talks of development of the self and at the group level of duties /responsibilities of individual towards social groups, i.e. family and community. Indian culture is oriented towards harmonious group activities. It feels the strong emotional need for vertical leaders. In summary the Hindu culture operates on the following paradigms.

- 1 .Development of self: Spiritual Pre-eminence.**
- 2. Harmony with nature-Living with nature.**
- 3. Labor intensive-Importance to individual skills of production.**
- 4. Society oriented- importance to family and community as a unit.**

Comparison between Indian culture and Western culture

Factors	Western culture	Indian culture
thinking	compartmentalized	Integrated
Man	Material	being Spiritual
being	Society club	of self-centered individual
A	body with individuals	as its
Limbs.	Happiness For oneself	for all.
Possession	Acquisitiveness	Non possession
Motive	profit motive	Service motive
Consumption	Consumerism	Restrain Consumption
Natural Resources	For exploitation	living with nature
Relationship	Right	oriental consciousness of others
duties	Put –oriented	Consciousness, of others
Rights	Economy	Rising cost of production due to scarcity of
Resources.	Declining prices and	Abundance of production
Due to sustainable use of natural	resources	Market. Institutional Capitalism (Patents brands copyrights cartels)
Individualized free	competition without	Manipulated markets
every society is free to choose its model on a take all	leave all basis.	However both cultures need to interact and adopt the strengths of each other for
sustainable development of the human kind.	Today we are witnessing in India	neither the
continuation of all the traditional norms	the complete institutionalization of the newly introduced	values, but an intermediate situation containing elements of both tradition and modernity.
There is a cultural crisis too evident.	The publicly recognized values of life in India	are Truth, goodness

and beauty Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram. Few, of course, follow in practice these values. There is a clear contradiction between professed beliefs and those implicit in actual behavior. There seems to be general dehumanization, desensitization in the individual of today's India. Honesty and integrity are a discount today and this affects adversely every aspect of economic, political and social life. The crisis of the value system and distorted and contradictory norms and behaviour are the ultimate causes of present day problems.

ELEMENTS OF INDIAN CULTURE:

1 .Religion and Philosophy

Religion evolved as a set of beliefs regarding the nature and purpose of the universe. Gradually they became organized systems of beliefs binding groups of people into a close knit society. Religion has played an important part in the lives of the Indian people from the earliest times. But religion in India has never been static; various movements have developed with new ideas and in response to evolving socio economic situations. There is a long tradition of religious Pluralism in India. Almost all major religions of the world are professed in this country. There are four religions of Indian origin Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikkism. Others which many are termed alien are Islam and Christianity, Zoroastrian Judaism and Baha.

HINDUISM: Originally word 'Hindu' did not have religious connotation, but merely denoted the people in a geographical area around the river Indus later word assumed religious connotation, to some extent under Mughal rule but more firmly under British rule. Hinduism derives its basic ideas and tradition from the Vedas, considered as sruthi, that which is heard or revealed. Hinduism is the largest religion in India with 80.5% of population identifying themselves as Hindus.

JAINISM: Mahavira (6th Century BC) is said to be the historical founder of Jainism. There were 23 thirankaras (Prophets/Gurus) before him, Rishabha being the first and Parshvanatha, the twenty third. The Jain split into two groups the Digambaras (sky-clad or naked) and the svetambaras (clothed in white). Indian Culture has been deeply influenced by Jainism in ideas such as ahimsa in language development art and architecture and around 4 million of ains mainly concentrated in the West and South west of India namely state of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

BUDDHISM: The Buddha variously termed Sakyamuni or Thathagata founded this religion in the 6th century B.C. The Philosophy of Buddhism is to avoid the extremes of life addicted to

worldly pleasure and a life of painful asceticism and self-mortification. The Buddha brought about change in the social thinking of the day by speaking up for equality and rejection of rigid rituals. His teaching made people aware of the importance of tolerance, ahimsa, service, compassion and personal morality. The Mahayana and Hinayana are the two sects. Buddhism propagates the eight fold path as the way to salvation. Indian culture got a fresh impetus from Buddhism in the intellectual, literary, artistic and architectural fields. Indeed its missionaries spread India's culture beyond the country boundaries to Burma, Ceylon, China, Laos, Thailand and other places.

ISLAM : The term Islam is of Arab origin meaning 'submission' and the followers of this religion founded by the prophet Muhammad are the Muslims –those who submit (to God).The word of God was revealed to Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel and his messengers and is embodied in the Quran. Islam came first to India with Arab traders on the west coast but spread with the conquest of the North West areas. The coming of Islam brought about a fusion of two vibrant cultures to evolve Indo- Islamic styles in art and architecture, music and literature. India has some of the biggest and beautiful mosques of the world.

CHRISTIANITY: Jesus Christ founded Christianity which spread throughout the Roman Empire where it was made the state religion in the 4th century A.D. Christians believe like the Jesus that there is one God who created the universe and cares for it. Jesus, the son of God, was sent into the world as his chosen servant called Messiah, to help people fulfil their religious duties. Christians are said to have arrived in India during the first century after the birth of Christ. In the early stages churches were quite influenced by the caste system and the Kerala Christians adopted social rules very similar to high class Hindus. It was only in the late 18th century that attempts were made to abolish discrimination on the basis of caste. The influence of Christian missions in education and medical work was however greater than Proselytizing force. Indeed, education in Christian Schools stimulated reformist movements in Indian Hinduism itself. Organizations like YMCA, YWCA and Salvation Army still do valuable work.

ZOROASTRIANISM: The founder of Zoroastrianism was the Persian prophet Zarathustra, who probably lived around 6th or 7th century BC. The first Zoroastrians arrived on the west coast of India in 936 AD being persecuted and forced out of their native Iran by invading Islamic Arabs. They became known by their much more familiar name Parsis. Although a minority even in cities where they are concentrated and religiously conservative the Parsis have been a

prominent economic and social influence. They adopted westernized customs and took advantage of the economic opportunities offered by colonial industrialization.

JUDAISM: One of the oldest major religions of the world, Judaism teaches the belief in one God. It is the religion of only one people-the Jesus. Both Christianity and Islam developed from Judaism. India has two Jesus communities-the Malayalam speaking Cochins and Marathi-speaking Bene Israel. Jewish refugees came and settled on the west cost of India nearly two thousand years ago. Their number is negligible but they have since the very beginning been allowed to live their own lives and build their synagogues and prayer halls without persecution.

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS in Hinduism: Fairs and festivals are an integrate part of Indian life. The diversity of religions and communities ensures vary of 'holy' days which are celebrated all over the land.

HINDU FESTIVALS

- Sankrant
- Lohri
- Pongal
- Vasanth Panchami
- Mahasivarathri
- Ramanavami
- Ugadi (Telgu Newyear)
- Baisakhu
- Goru and Rangoli Bihu
- Vishu
- Pooram festival
- Rath Yathra
- Naga Panchami
- Raksha Bandhan
- Ganesh Chathurthi
- Onam
- Dusshra
- Diwali
- Kartwkai

The Festivals and Religious days of the Muslim.

- ❖ ID- UL-FITR
- ❖ ID-UL-ZUHA
- ❖ MUHRAM

CHRISTIANS

- ❖ Easter
- ❖ Chritsmas

- ❖ Gurpurahs(Sikhs)
- ❖ Buddha Jayanthi (Buddists)
- ❖ Mahavira Jayanthi (Jains)
- ❖ Navroze (parsi)

SOCIETY: Indian society is characterized by the caste system agrarian class structure urbanization, multiplicity of religions, a variety of regional cultures joint family system (with increasing trends towards nuclear families in urban settings) spiritual outlook and superstition , and resistance to change in traditions. However modernization is evident and social transformation has brought in its wake problems and conflicts features of the present day Indian society.

FAMILY:Family has got huge relevance in Indian culture. India for ages has had a prevailing tradition of the joint family system. There are two types of joint family the matrilineal joint family and patrilineal joint family. However in modern Indian society industrialization and urbanization have augmented the process of westernization and sanskritisation .Nuclear family is ideal for these social processes.

MARRIAGE: Marriage ensures a biological satisfaction and a physiological satisfaction on the individual plane; on the wider collective plane; it ensures a twofold survival that is of the group and its culture. Arranged marriages have been the tradition in Indian society for centuries. Even today majority of Indians have their marriage planned by their parents and other respected family members, with the consent of the bride and groom. In India marriage is thought to be for life and divorce rate is extremely low compared with other countries.

EDUCATION: Education is a cultural factor responsible for major social changes in attitude basic pursuits and values are the result of education. In ancient and medieval India education was largely religiously oriented and confined to elite. The beginning of the state system of education in India under the British rule may be traced back to the year 1813, Charter Act when the East India Company was compelled to accept the responsibility of education of Indians. The tremendous increase in the number of students and educational institutions has given rise to the term education explosion. In recent times new educational opportunities have been invented one of such being correspondence education. Today virtually every university in India is offering correspondence courses for different degrees and diplomas.

STATUS OF WOMEN: The position of women in India has never been very high despite the

myth of her being considered “goddess”, “Shakti” personified she may be embodiment of power or Shakti but then there is the concept of power having to be controlled and channelized and controlling agent is conveniently man. So woman loses her individuality her right to herself. She is to be protected by her father in her youth by her husband after marriage and then by her son. In most –Indian families’ women do not own any property in their own names and do not get a share of parental property. Removal of disabilities of women and betterment of working conditions of women has been brought about through legislation. However, since implementation of laws depends much on social attitudes, legislation, in itself, cannot bring about social change.

Music: Development of music commended with the folk idiom evolving in consonance with regional ingenuity and slowly blossoming in to classical forms. Indian music is now styled Hindustani (North) Karnatik (South). They have several common features but are distinguishable from each other. Institution was established to encourage the study of music as a science. Many Indian Universities and schools had music on their Academic curricula, and several students on their rolls studying and doing research in this field. Cinema has popularized music; though film songs are now very much influenced by western techniques.

Dance: Classical dance forms: There are two bases as part of Indian classical dance, namely tandava and lasya. Classical dance comes in many forms in India. Each region has evolved its distinct style with its special nuances, though the basic roots are same.

- **Bharathanatyam Tamil Nadu**
- **Odissi- Orissa**
- **Kunchipudi-Andhrapradesh**
- **Kathakali-Kerala**
- **Manipuri-Manipur**
- **Kathak-Uttar Pradesh**

Folk Dance: Well-known folk dances are the bhangra of Panjab, the bihu assam the ghoomar of Rajasthan The dandiya and garba of Gujarat and lavani of Maharashtra and Dekhnni of Goa. Indians rich tribal heritage includes special dances as well. Some of the well dances and the region/ peoples associated with them are given here. Rengma-Nagaland Daga-Bhil men and women Tapadi- Baiga women Sarhul-Oarons of Bihar

Drama and Theatre: Indian drama and theatre has a long history alongside its music and dance. Kalidasa’s plays like Shakuntala and Meghadoota are some of the older plays. One of the oldest

surviving theatre traditions of the world is true 2000 year old kutiyattam of kerala. It strictly follows natya shashtra. The tradition of folk theatre is popular in most linguistic regions of India. In addition, there is a rich tradition of Puppet Theatre in rural India, going back to at least 2nd century BCE.

Painting: The earliest Indian paintings were the rock painting of pre-historical times, the petroglyphs as found in places like Bhimbetka. Some of which go back to the Stone Age. Cave painting from Ajanta, Bagh, Ellora and Sittanavasal and temple paintings testify to a love of naturalism. A freshly made coloured flour design is still a common sight outside the doorstep of many Indian homes. Raja Ravi Varma is one of the classical painters from medieval India. Madhubani Painting, Mysore Painting, Rajput painting, Tanjore painting, Mughal painting are some notable genres of Indian Art.

Architecture and Sculpture: It is a striking fact about ancient and medieval Indian architecture that sculpture was almost integral to it. Some of the earliest productions are found in the Indus Valley civilization which is characterised by well-planned cities and houses. During the period of the Maurya and Gupta empires and successors, several Buddhist architectural complexes such as the caves of Ajanta and Ellora and The monumental Sanchi stupas were built. The advent of Islamic influence from the west, Indian architecture was adapted to allow the traditions of new religion. Fatehpur Sikri, Taj Mahal, Gol Gumbaz, Qutub Minar, Red Fort of Delhi are creations of this era, and often used as the stereotypical symbols of India. Indian architecture has influenced eastern and south eastern Asia, due to the spread of Buddhism Indian sculpture has not been confined to stone; bronze has been an important medium for it. While a few small bronze figures have been found of the Saka-Kushana era, it is the Gupta period that saw high workmanship in bronze and copper work.

Cinema: Coming to Indian cinema India produces maximum number of movies in the world. The first fully indigenous silent feature film was "Raja Harishchandra" made by Dhundiraj Govind Phalke (Dadasaheb Phalke) in 1913. Hence Phalke is rightly called as the father of Indian Cinema". The silent film era was overtaken by the talkie era. When in 1931 Ardeshir Irani produced Alam Ara under the banner of Imperial Film Company Indian cinema has progressed through distinct phases. In the thirties and forties the films were made with firm social purpose. In fifties Hindi cinema felt the impact of neo-realism. With the coming of colour also came glamour, big budgets enterprises and vast production. In the seventies the trend of multi star blockbusters

