

METAMORPHIC COMMUNICATION PARADIGM: EFFECTS ON ETHNICITY

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ABSTRACT

The progress of a nation depends upon its socio-economical, educational and cultural developments. Media plays the role of a catalyst in the process of development. It has its own impact and contribution on various fields. The greatest strength of media is that it can make people imitate which can definitely have an impact on the lingual, cultural, behavioural aspects of a nation and its citizens. Media content can have strong impact due to the techno-lingual amplifications wherein it loses its original form and flavour as the crux of it is used repeatedly over other different media.

In the population ridden South Asian nations, the youth who form the primary chunk in economic exercises, bring in enormous effect on identity and future. With a young India in the 21st century, the cultural prowess forms a strong basis for the strength of the nation.

'Acculturation' brings in pains along with progress. When drastic changes occur in cultures, the development of nations depending primarily on their ethnicity through irradiation of values, else suffers a serious jolt. Thus, studies on Ethnicity acquire importance. When Mass Culture instilled through media communication fails, conflicts set in among generations, each subscribing to their own theories and practices, becoming arbitrary without standards and regulations.

This explorative study is significant to find practical way out of the shortcomings as it falls back and relies heavily upon the Ethnicity, even as acculturation trend continues. The scope here is that it recognizes the acculturation of youth as endangered and has the objective to explore for strong measures to tackle problems through ethnic practices thus bringing solace to the societal members.

Keywords: *Ethnicity, Values, Media Effects, Acculturation, Development, techno-media amplifications*

INTRODUCTION

The rise of civilization saw the development of Communication as a basic instinct of mankind. The process of communication contained messages disseminated through a medium for intended purposes onto specific receivers for expected effects. However, no communication process is totally perfect.

The processes are ridden with 'noise' and other hurdles. With rampant growth of media and technology, today's communication increased its speed and nearness to communities. However, the ushering of technologies also brought in information explosion and information pollution along with positive outcomes. To address these problems, different paradigms of communication were promulgated, each with their own design to fit into the environment for enhancing effectiveness of communication process, yet new problems started cropping up due to complex socio-cultural challenges.

Mass media, the message carriers under Communication process, cannot function in isolation. As renowned communication expert Wilbur Schramm put it, '*No mass media can exist in cultural*

vacuum'. Culture is essentially cultivated habits by a group of homogeneous communities for comfortable living. These habits become very basic to their existence, aspiration, living, communicating and for life-style. Thus the habits become ethnic to the particular community. The factor of ethnicity decides the fate of different communities.

Ethnicity is often implicated in the formation of knowledge gaps, in which certain portions of the population receive and gain knowledge through the media at a faster rate than others, creating a difference between information 'haves' and 'have-nots'. As a result, the issue of ethnicity and exposure to communication becomes particularly important when trying to ensure equal access to Information pertinent to life in the twenty-first century. Ethnic groups are distinguished by common culture, language, religion and ancestral origins. There are no internationally agreed upon ethnic categorizations because history often plays a role in what aspects are considered most important for ethnic identity. For example, the historical conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland makes religious affiliation imperative to ethnic categorization, whereas the history of immigration in the US leads to a greater focus on ancestral origins (Migration and Immigration). Most research tends to use broader racial categories to define ethnic groups. The ethnic groups learnt consistently out of the need for a civilized living, thus giving rise of self-governance, a chief facet of Democracy.

Democracy is like delivering a baby. It takes a lot of pain, patience, tolerance, stamina, perseverance and labour to enjoy the fruits of Democracy. All of this has to happen only from the people who have accepted it. Each one of them should do their part, not to spare anybody, the rich or the poor, the coveted or the condemned. Democracy is not for the lazy, evasive, lackadaisical, crooked and the cracks. It is for the sensible, sound and sane countrymen. It is worthy to note that all the factors that a sustaining Democracy demands also form the characteristics of a culture.

Culture etymologically means a set of habits which is cultivated consistently and over a period of time. As a whole, the day-to-day life style led by communities in societies of different geographies aggregate to different cultures. Culture and Ethnicity are like two faces of the same coin.

R.W. Emerson, a great poet and lyricist looks into culture as an ornament to one's personality. Cardinal Neumann, another expert on society and culture puts the word 'Gentleman' equivalent to 'Cultured'. A great literary critic Mathew Arnold (1869) in his book '*Culture and Anarchy*' says,

"Culture knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindly masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light."

T.S. Eliot's work '*Notes towards the definition of culture*' reflects the life of man while he feels that the machines and technology sicken the innocent, clean life of man and make him lost, Indian culture can give back such a lost life. The values worth emulating from the democracies of the west and as their culture include Discipline, Punctuality, Individual Freedom and acceptance of the crisis.

The oriental nations believe that when economically weak or backward, the dictum "what if poor world wise, we are very rich spiritually and culturally". D.V.Gundappa, a Kannada poet and cultural philosopher of India, believes that culture is a very complex phenomena and needs hardships and sacrifices to achieve it. According to C.Rajagopalachari, among the first prominent citizens of independent India,

"Culture is the sum total of the way of living, built up by groups of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another.... Culture is not just character or morality".

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the first Vice-President of India interprets culture as certain hospitality of the mind.

The ethnicity in the eastern nations, by and large has been based on the principles of collectiveness, patience, tolerance and peacefulness, with no exception to India. Some of today's connected concepts of culture under ethnicity are like acculturation, work culture, corporate culture, media culture, mass culture, cultural hegemony, acculturation, etc.

'Acculturation' is a distortion into a new form of a culture by the influence of one or more other cultures, which is even beyond ethnicity. Acculturation is a process of acclimatizing to the cultural radiation outside one's own, about which Indians have time and again shown gritty adaptations. India, the largest of the South Asian nations, is also nearly one-thirds of the entire South Asia consisting of some prominent socio-economic and culturally rich players like Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, coupled with supportive economic bonding countries like Pakistan for food grains, Bangladesh in commercial crops, Maldives in tourism, also includes Myanmar and the just breathing Afghanistan. Most of these nations share different cultures, ethnicity and living patterns.

The size and density of population are usually the hallmarks of the urban community. But there is little agreement about where the line between urban and rural should be drawn. With growing numbers comes a greater heterogeneity of population. The city continually recruits its residents from elsewhere- farms, villages, perhaps other cities or even other societies or nations and these migrants will bring with them diverse beliefs, values and ways of life.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Communication paradigms devoid of value-basis could result in disastrous effects on ethnicity ending in gradual extinct of communities. Cultural shifts accompany these changes in social relationships. As sociologist George Simmel points out, the variety and number of external stimuli and of social contacts is likely to increase. The fundamental strength of ethnicity lies in value-based practices in communicating patterns for harmonic living. This close relationship between Values and Ethnicity decides the transformation needed in Communication paradigms.

METHODOLOGY

Under the scope of the study, the effort is towards answering some of the questions-

'Is acculturation leading people to become easily prone to external influences from outside their culture?' Are the people of the sub-continent suffering from cultural shock? Are they made to change their habits, customs and traditions by forces outside their culture? Or are they undergoing changes out of their own volition? If it is a forceful metamorphosis, then probably will it also lead to a 'displaced culture'?

To answer such questions, the scope of this study recognizes the acculturation of youth as nearer to endangered species and has the objective to explore for strong measures like a whip to crack the problems encompassing acculturation, thus bringing solace to the societal members, particularly of South Asia.

The limitation to this study is due to its confinement to the South Asian region, however with case studies drawn from Indian media and societal scenario. Therefore, deviations in findings could exist with respect to other neighbouring nations and it is further referred for research studies in other nations. The study here limits itself to modern youth, to mean predominantly those presumed to be affected by outside cultures, which herein most cases are the urbanites. The study is significant to find practical way out of the shortcomings as it falls back and relies heavily upon the Ethnicity or the Faith in Nativity, even as the acculturation trend continues. This theoretical study adopted explorative methodology with case studies and empirical evidences to arrive at findings. Exploration here into the anecdotes, incidents, statements from experts and socio-cultural developments of recent times is taken up to analyse the possibilities of auguring support and strength from ethnics in South Asian Societies through media culture for sustainable development and progress of these lands.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With a background of Anthropology, the study basically adopts the Sociological theory with the contravening Marketing theory for the effects of media on society and the Normative theory for solution for the effects of the problem.

ANALYTICAL REVIEW

Irradiation of Values

Table 1: Various roles in society with their associated virtues and vices

Role/ Profession	Main function or Duty	Important Virtues	Vices to Avoid
Parent	Serve family, children, Community	Love, patience, self-sacrifice for the sake of children, diligence, responsibility	Avoidance of duty and responsibility, possessiveness
Teacher	Understand students, impart knowledge	Understanding, seeking knowledge, patience, Love, caring	Laziness, partiality, apathy
Student	To learn	Curiosity, humility, respect, gratitude, obedience, diligence	Arrogance, laziness
Friend	To provide fellowship	Love, loyalty, honesty	Envy, manipulation
Doctor	Serve, help and heal	Compassion, sensitivity, technical skills, calm while treating patients	Greed, arrogance, apathy
Businessman	Generate wealth for Society	Righteousness, honesty, non-violence by not harming society	Greed, lust for money, conceit
Manager	Lead a group of people, be a team player	Understanding, just, calm, sharing, caring, respect, responsibility	Lust for power, arrogance, selfishness
Scientist	Generate knowledge to improve quality of human life, technical knowledge for working with natural phenomenon	Truth, righteousness, non-violence by avoiding harmful manipulation of scientific principles	Conceit and egoism, lust for name and fame

Source: compiled from Somenath Mitra's (2007) *Science and Mankind - Sai Baba and Human Values*, AP, India: SSSBP Trust, pg. 178

In the Hollywood movie *Spiderman*, a catchphrase used by Spiderman is, "along with freedom comes responsibility". In fact, one's freedom is usurped when he avoids responsibility. However, today the youth have missed out on opportunities to get trained from their elders and the leaders on responsibility as in recognising the nation they live in, the family they live with and the community they live for. Not to blame the youth, but each one of the parent, teacher and of the society are to take the onus on themselves.

A culture is inevitably an amalgamation of many values. The methods of passing on values and habits of life from a generation to its next need dissection here to help explore ethnicity under this study. In the societies of South Asian nations, most training from the elders to the younger on living patterns are often ridden with negativity [including the media], not very life affirmative or value emphatic. The

training often subscribe more to the avoidance theory of behaviour, such as Not-to-do-so, Not-to-be-like, Not-to-live-like, Not-to. . . No . . . Not to. Mostly, the values are uttered and not followed by the preachers themselves.

The values are abundantly available in the scriptures of the land and since ages, repeated and carried on for generations together. There are a lot of great cultural practices and its literature, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Kandahar to Kaalapani in the Asian sub-continent. The concept of supra-human potential or God and the devotion of human beings are best enunciated and driven home by the South Asian Nations. All of them provide strong hints on collective-comfortable living and that too with very high longevity. However not an iota of them are tried and practiced in real life by majority of the common masses. This 'saying but not doing' is prevailing at not only family level, but also at most levels of corporate culture, media culture, political culture, spiritual culture eg:- the case of Nityananda swami, India¹ and even economic culture eg:- the case of *Satyam* IT Company, India². At least those who persevered to live by those values in the past became heroes and divine but only to go back onto record in the scriptures once again.

If that is the story at social level, family level transitions are more painful. It is very well accepted that family is the smallest unit of society. In the sub-continent, the joint family system is virtually on the collapse. Nuclear families have set in and are the culprits regarding transfer of values. Earlier, grannies resorted to story-telling to grand children which increased their imaginative power. Desi-games, tongue twisters, riddles and brain teasers are missing today. In the absence of community activity, joint family is getting disintegrated or even annihilated.

Urban impersonality, rationality and diversity, tolerance of differences and a lack of concern with the behaviour of others that make possible, even encourage, innovation and lead to a disregard for ethnicity. Each individual can pursue his own interests, adopt new beliefs, and follow new lines of action. Tradition thus loses its force in the urban community.

Today, loyalty to a single life partner is fast disappearing vouching for dismissal of the theory of virginity. For eg:- ideas from TV producer Ekta Kapoor's tele-serials. Glorification of resistive culture through media programmes is on a new high as it appeals to the youth of today. The effect of such programmes however misses out on sensitivity. There is an alarming increase of crime in the city of Bangalore, where even a school going kid is killed on not meeting demand for ransom from their parents. Promises of pleasures of life through media programmes has lead to increased promiscuity of kidnapping drama, stealing of vehicles and jewellery shop juveniles.

Shabana (2009) reveals that the priming effects of television on young female adults are also the factors that possibly prime the viewer's thoughts and deeds.

There are many instances of programmes where TV channels have instilled promiscuity. As portrayed in one such programme, some anti-social elements make a sixteen year old boy commit a murder who is later arrested as a juvenile. After a decade in prison, he is released as per juvenile crime laws in India. The killers who hired him give lakhs of rupees and he enjoys the rest of his life comfortably!

Industrialization and modernization also have ruptured the cultural fabric on these lines. Because of these developments, festivals, deities and beliefs are not only forgotten, the whole structure has miserably failed to transfer it all to the next generations. Not many of the IT professionals are able to name their grannies or trace the history of their ancestors. The so called educated graduates, after reaching urban centres, are unwilling to go back to villages and do not even contact the villagers, for instance, as portrayed excellently in the story of an international award winning Kannada language movie *KaaDa Beladingalu*, by well known film and TV serial director B.S. Lingadevaru. There are two reasons for it- the comforts of urban living and the suffering from inferiority complexity. The reasons for inferiority are mostly the socio-economic conditions that dictate these complexities paving way for huge gaps between generations. Thus Acculturation is easy to seep in. This syndrome also may have an impact on thinking, behaviour and attitude and also towards annihilation of languages.

Ravi (2010), in a recent study on the 'impact of television on youth in Bangalore' reveals some interesting facts.

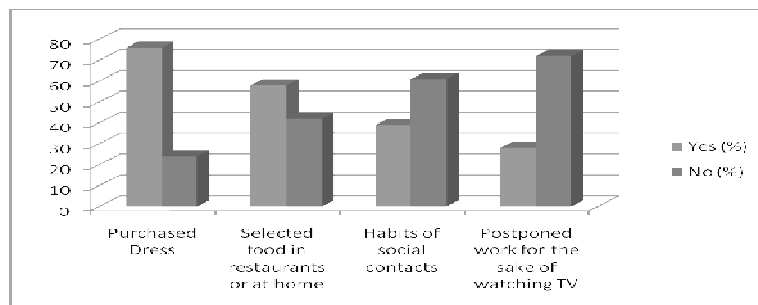
Table 2: Impact of television on youth in Bangalore

TV programme-influences on Youth	Yes (%)	No (%)
Purchased Dress	76	24
Selected food in restaurants or at home	58	42
Habits of social contacts	39	61
Postponed work for the sake of watching TV	28	72

Source: Data from an unpublished study on the "Impact of Television on Youth in Bangalore", Field Survey (2010), Dept. of Communication, Bangalore University, Bangalore, India by Ravi, B.K & Devadas M.B.

Note: Numerals in bold show significance

Graph – 1: Impact of television on youth in Bangalore



Note: This Graph is drawn out of data from the Table 2 as above

Bangalore was divided into five zones- North, East, West, South and Central. About 1000 respondents with 200 from each zone in Bangalore were surveyed to study the media habits of youth in Bangalore city. The profile of the youth included men and women from among the college going, the self-employed, the office going, I.T professionals and from creative fields.

The analysis of the findings of the study revealed that the TV programmes influenced the city youth quite much regarding purchasing of their dresses and to some extent on selecting their food in restaurants or at home. However, it is to note that the youth were not influenced to that extent in their habits of social contacts; also, they were not even influenced by the TV programmes to a great extent about postponing their works for the sake of watching TV !

Today's generation struggles to cope up with emotions. Self-emotion management has hit rock bottom. This generation is mostly pre-occupied with mere anxiety but not very focussed objectives or purposes. They lack the difference between the haste and the poise. Extreme mood-swings have made them groping to manage their emotions. Here it is to be noted that acculturation needs to be addressed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

What is practiced as culture in the West is very well compatible to that weather, climate and socio-economic environmental conditions prevailing in those countries. For example, wearing of a coat and gum boots is to protect themselves from cold. Drinking of alcohol is to keep themselves warm. Both these practices are incompatible for a by and large tropical climate like that of South Asian nations, except some very few parts of it. Since generations of imposed practices of such kind due to colonialism, the recent generation of youth obviously considers it as aboriginal and sees a beauty in it.

Today's generation has no clear base to eschew or specific objectives to achieve. Psychological theories vouch for the statement that 'Values are caught, not taught'. Maslow's theory of hierarchy puts values in a pinnacle of societal achievement. What comes on today's satellite television channels, what beams on the silver screens by the Bollywood or Hollywood and what prints as pinups on the backbeat pages of the newspaper The Times of India are thus simply accepted without choice and imbibed into their lifestyles, absolutely unaware of the worth or unworthiness of the same. In such a scenario, what is cultivated by the youth has become the culture of the day.



Figure 1.1: Collective evolution and the ascending order of societal needs

Source: Diagram from Somenath Mitra's *Science and Mankind - Sai Baba and Human Values* (2007), AP, India, pg.165

When life's habits are imparted or taught by the elder generation to its younger, it could be done only with the cooperation of the younger and not by means of confrontation. The elderly feel that they are experienced and they should be listened to. So, the upper-dog attitude prevails onto the next generation. The question then is who taught those practices to the elder generation. If it is their ancestors, then it defies reason as to why not they teach now to their current generation. If not learnt, then the question is about whom to make accountable- the media, the technology or the religions. If the parents fail to convince their children, the children then resort to teachers. On missing out here too, they seek solace from priests and god-men and thus the chain continues.

An observation here is, only after the elders learn about situations not going well for them in the current times, they preach their experiences to their oncoming generation, particularly the youth, fervently urging them to inculcate the learning. If the two contemporary generations have to co-exist, then each has to be heard by turns. If a pattern of cultivated habits by one generation which shouts, screams and conditions does not feel good for its next one, then the gen-next will find ways and means to adopt and adapt those habits which stylises, showcases and subtly occupies the mind for

sure. Media does it all very effectively. This then is manifested in actions, bit by bit and consistently, to become engrained into the lifestyle which becomes their culture. If this entire exercise is not resulting in transcending culture, then it would be attributed as Acculturation.

Table 3: Important institutions and associated virtues and vices

Important Collective Activities	Main function or Duty	Important Virtues	Vices to Avoid
Media	Disseminate information, upholder of truth, provide uplifting entertainment	Truth, responsibility, promote human values and ethics	Sensational coverage, “anything for money”, sex and violence, not to appeal to lower impulses
Science	General knowledge and information	Focus on truth with the vision to help humankind, love for mankind and nature	Lose sight of the human aspect, harmful manipulation of scientific principles
Technology	To improve the quality of human life by providing products and services	“help ever, hurt never”, non-violence, focus on ecology and environment, skill and efficiency	“anything for money”, greed, apathy towards the consequences
Education	Help the growth of individuals in knowledge and virtues	Truth and knowledge, rise above “making a living”, promote values and ethics	Apathy and shallow commercially motivated education
Elementary Education	Development of character / values for children, provide basic knowledge	Insight into human values, develop concept of ethics	Competition, overemphasis on technical knowledge, biased views
Business	Generate wealth for society	Righteousness, honesty, non violence by not harming society	Greed, lust for money, apathy to environmental issues
Government and bureaucracy	Govern to provide a stable society	Values based system, focus on service and efficiency, balance individual freedom with social needs	Apathy, biases against race / religion

Source: Compiled from Somenath Mitra's (2007) *Science and Mankind - Sai Baba and Human Values*, AP, India: SSSBP Trust, pg. 181

On the importance of folk media for living, media expert H.K.Ranganath (Ranganath 1981: 82-94) says,

“Indian experiments however have established that it is possible to preserve the culture of a medium and make it an effective communication tool both as live performance and folk integrated mass media programmes. Such an achievement is possible only when there is a complete understanding and harmony among the champions and practices of both the media who should bestow unreserved care and cautious consideration on the traditional performing art, for, it invariably finds itself in a position of disadvantage during the process of integration.”

The makers of media programs in short highlight what they think is desirable and denigrate those which they think are undesirable. Concepts of good and bad are highly cultural specific. Careful examination of newspapers, magazines, books, television, radio and other media in all cultures shows that the information passed on by them is primarily cultural in nature and reinforces the values, beliefs, expectations and customs of those who communicate through those media.

The media, especially television and films can also help project positive images of various ethnicities based on accurate information. In the process of bringing about cultural change, the media itself has become an important part of its own culture.

Mass Culture – Crass Culture

Today, the teenage problems are a burning topic in the sub-continent. Their relationship of any kind is ridden with aberrations- with parents, siblings, neighbours, friends, teachers, opposite sex and so on. Concepts of sex & sexuality have got scarred. Malls, multiplexes, Internet and pubs have become dearest substitutes for today's teenagers. The behaviour is once reserved and as introverts, another time aggressive and tantrums. On another dimension, fundamentalist forces are misusing this age for political or pseudo-social gains. The regional fundamentalism in Maharashtra state of India where workers from Bihar state were shoed out, and the Mangalore city pub attacks in Karnataka state of India are signs of dangerous intolerances.

In another incident, in Belthangadi village of Dakshin Kannada district of Karnataka a *burkha*³ wearing adamant woman-student coming to a College campus is counteracted by the men-students who wore *lungi*⁴ and came to the campus merely as a tit-for-tat and in the name of balancing the act, calls for severe concerns of social and religious amity. A Christian professor in Kerala state was supposedly preaching contradictions to Islam religion. His hands were cut-off by Muslim fundamentalists and it is indeed a deplorable act. Instances of the native Tamils of Tamil Nadu not entertaining the Indian national language Hindi also borders on such extreme stances.

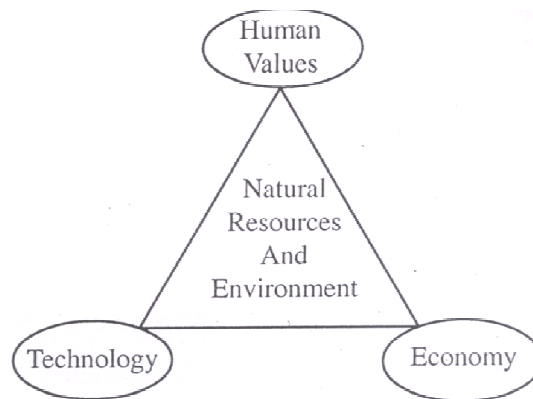


Figure 1.2: In future, it will be a judicious balance of technology and economy guided by human values

Source: Diagram from Somenath Mitra's (2007) *Science and Mankind - Sai Baba and Human Values*, AP, India: SSSBP Trust, pg. 139.

But the ray of hope is very much in the horizon. Today's youth is not bothered about Mandir-Masjid issue because they just cannot connect. Only those who witnessed 1992s demolitions can empathize. The issue of 3Ms⁵ could exploit the youth then but not so much today.

THESIS, ANTITHESIS AND SYNTHESIS

In India, the usage of language over most Frequency Modulation radio stations in the recent times, in the name of reach and commercialisation is alarmingly infringing on freedom of expression. These subtle changes will damage the value of expression through language, a chief means of human communication.

Today's Indian Cinema topping the world scene, is having its effect on the youth regarding their dress and costumes, behaviour, mannerisms, thinking and attitude. The Ghajni Cut⁵, blade used as a locket, shot-gun jeans, and the list goes on.

Author Steve Derne (Derne 2000: 203) on life-styles of Indians by the new millennium says,

“The locally oriented Indian middle class embraces cosmopolitan consumption like men’s fashion and consumer goods like televisions, to distinguish itself from the Indian poor, but it identifies itself in opposition to the vulgar and excessive consumerism that it associates with affluent Indians, whom it connects with the intrusion of foreign cultures”

Indian TV Programmes have successfully shaken up relationships. It has increased materialism, unduly rising the aspirations of people thus leading to sudden frustrations. It cajoles the middle class to jump to higher income levels leading to such dissatisfactions. Media is fast setting a trend for the next generations engaging them in writing love letters to girls and so on, which has led to frustrated actions like the tragic mass suicides, etc.

Instability in Democracy has deeply set in through constant violation of democratic norms like different voting behaviour, political, social and religious upheavals. Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation [LPG] brought in lot of changes; everything is seen as a market, which leads to commercialisation including education. Separate status for Information Technology, Bio-technology industry and the Information-Communication-Technology using groups has brought the Development Concepts entirely concentrating on urban populace fattening their pockets. The aim is on the middle class and on the pockets of emerging middle class. People below poverty line and the socially deprived are completely ignored here. This has resulted in creation of a multi-cultural behaviour of these communities, giving rise to a new phrase ‘fertilization of cross-cultures’.

Author Steve Derne (Derne 2000: 204) also states about relation between economy and culture of Indians wherein he says,

“The divergent cultural practices of the middle classes in India reflect divergent structural positions in the global economy. Affluent Indians have been influenced by trans-national capitalists’ efforts to incite their consumption. Given new opportunities by globalization and reacting to new media, affluent Indians have come to see themselves as operating on a global stage. But since the lives of ordinary middle class Indians have not been greatly transformed, they continue to work to justify their status within Indian horizons”

Faith in nativity

Mythology, customs, traditions, behaviour, temperaments, sentiments and holiness are capable of shaping up today's realities for a better society. What is grossly missing is the culture and characteristics of nativity of the soil, in any land for that matter and it is very important. Else, contribution for healthy society even by its own citizenry is next to impossible. Renaissance of Khadi, an indigenous, aboriginal cotton wear of India is one of the classic examples of revival of nativity.

In the concept of developing, particular to the Less Developed Countries [LDCs] mostly found among the South Asian nations, in the onslaught of technology, scientific invention, knowledge, sophisticated equipments, earning and purchasing power, the cultural values should never take a beating as these values are a part and parcel of the process of development.

It is worth taking the example of Japan, where it is a blend of the two, the former and the latter. Muscle power and money power should not come in the way of cultural identity, heritage, understanding and feelings, particularly in phases of development. The current type of development is

not blending itself with culture. The achievers of academic degrees interpret the existing culture in their own way criticizing the content and finally on no platform for sustained living.

Two extremes in the trend

As people get more literate, culture is thrown to the wind by the very conventional, orthodox, traditional families after they attain social and economic status in the society. The concept of modernization definitely may have an influence, which may finally dictate the priorities of a nuclear family thereby fading the ethnicity in the region and even of the rigid customs. To depict culture, they select some of the alternative measures. For eg:- disappearance of Rangoli, a traditional decorative design drawn on the floors of Hindu houses and the Toranas, the fresh green mango leaves put on top-frame of the doors of Hindu houses to exhibit an auspicious occasion which are now replaced by the plastic stickers occupying the floors and the top-frames. Because of such alternatives, the skills, importance, values and healthy practices of lifestyles are equally forgotten.

The other extreme in cultural behaviour is the highest TRP rating for religious and astrological programmes on television. As a whole, it seems to be a cycle of behaviour. In the socially upcoming phase, audience will increase to watch such kind of programmes. The danger of acculturation is from the people who have attained economic stability. The middle class are still very much performing on the cultural front.

These factors triggers for review of the role of media. On Film and TV, the traditional practices are often mocked upon. With projection of tribal and de-notified sections of society as successful talents and performers on TV and cinema, other such clans also join the bandwagon but at the cost of giving up the conventional practices, instead of conserving the art forms through the judicious use of media.

Traditional art forms are abundant in the sub-continent. For maintaining ethnicity, we need to blend these art forms to media, script it to the needs of a programme. But the danger side of it today is that these forms are tampered with music, special effects, etc. suiting to media needs and thus resulting in loss of original format and the literature of the art forms.

Concept of integration of other media and folk media

The authors of the folk art forms are anonymous. These forms are not governed by any grammatical conventions. Artists here perform through electronic media. They are guided by certain do's and don'ts regarding the costumes, instruments, etc. Producers and professionals often invite and indulge them in their programmes without understanding about preserving the originality of the art form. Even before a programme shooting, the alternative make-ups, the restricted movements on the floor of the studio due to presence of large lights and paraphernalia, drastically disturb both the artists and the art form as well as disturb the originality of the art form. Such a distortion is not a good development for the survival of the ethnic practice. On Radio, particularly in outdoor situation, when they record the folk singers and replay, those artists surprisingly listen to the same recorded version, soon get scared to sing and even on coaxing them to sing further, the origin of the format is lost, resort to withdrawal symptoms.

Folk media by characteristic is essentially both rigid and flexible. Flexibility of folk songs is exploited by cinema or into a TV serial to make money distorting the originality of the form. In the process, it changes the very art form to the requirement of the media. Popularity of media is at the stake of destroying the original art form grossly. Because of media intervention, an art form gradually loses its originality and completely gets defaced.

For example, an art form A is produced over a television media to change it to a slightly altered form A1. This A1 does the rounds on various channels for a decade. After a decade, due to some other media this A1 transforms into another form A2, and so on. Now, where has the original art form 'A' gone!?

Table 4: Alteration of Art forms due to different Media productions over period of time

Stage and Period of time	Art Form samples Produced over TV channels	Slight alteration in the Art form
I stage – 1 st year	A	A1
II stage – 10 th year	A1	A2
III stage – X th year	A2	???

Acculturation of youth: towards an endangered species

Signals of acculturation are evident in the episode of Ayodhya, a holy place of Indians where the media communication was targeted on youth. Today's youth have started asking questions as to- Who is Lord Rama? What is this temple episode?! Thinking of the youth, post LPG is shaking the roots of a healthy Democracy. Any community or group if not assertive of their culture, will not have assertiveness of their patriotism; then how can a generation talk about the soil, water, climate of their own nation? Analysing, understanding and reacting to a problem become absent. With all tolerance, it is very much possible for a cooperative, amicable living.

The contribution of trans-national media to the cultural boils in a country like India is enormous. The Hollywood, the repeated telecasts of blockbusters, the local advertisement revenue being eaten up, transformed thinking and behaviour- all not just to sow seeds of western thought, but have intentions of destroying the originals of culture of this country. MTV Roadies and Big Boss, the youth-based popular reality shows on MTV India and Colours Channel respectively and many such rather cranky programmes cannot stand much of a worth as a programme. The producers of such programmes are compelled to have a hidden agenda of exploiting the youth and control the economy of nations by the commercial forces. Such negative signals will endanger the roots of sovereignty of a nation, with strong apprehensions of threat to the unity and integrity among the people.

A whip to crack

Sir Macaulay (1835) during the British Empire in India had once said,

“I have travelled across the length and breadth of India and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief, such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such calibre, that I do not think we would conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage, and therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self esteem, their native culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation”.

It seems to have all become true of today's youth as foreseen by Macaulay nearly two centuries ago. To this end, today's youth should be literate enough to understand about the media's narcotizing dysfunction, that is, charming by catching attention and not to mistake it as a real and promoting the change. Preparing a mind ready for action, that is, the Priming effect of television is upon the youth for sure. Youth should distinguish reality from fantasies. They should be cautious of media casting stereo types, and avoid blind acceptance, belief or practice of the same. For instance, one can be sensible to wear a mask as a preventive mechanism fearing the spread of the disease H1N1 instead of wearing it after watching news about it. Also, tribal males in cities who never cut or cropped their

hair earlier, need not change over into the new hair-redressing, merely because media of the 20th century repeatedly showing neatly hair cropped heroes on the screen. In these circumstances, it is necessary to redefine acculturation.

As a whole there is a need for better clarity in the planes of activity. The society may continue to glorify the material world. But knowledge and traditions are of higher importance and not mere academic degrees. What media does amidst the scenario is the prominent question. Media should stop borrowed set of ideas and designs, abstain from being highly imitative, aping the west or developed nations in its programme making and content. There has to be increased efforts to vibrate with the communities of the regions and their voices being reflected through media content. Moreover, the English media, which is the media that caters predominantly to the needs of urban audience, should rethink about its stance and habits. It has so far merely blindly and rampantly copied the practices of the West by resorting to commoditization of women, targeting youth media consumers for self-interests and increased profits, trivializing or sensationalizing without balanced and stoic viewpoints on issues and controversies. Such vagrant practices should blank out from the Indian electronic media screens and also from the more respectable print media, even at regional levels.

Media should thus reach out to the community that it serves and educate them. It should set the agenda for the next generation. Above all, what is needed for the South Asian societies urgently is a natural, socio-physical medicinal procedure that could be called the '*cultural enema*'.

End notes

1. Swami Nityananda, a self-proclaimed god-man settled near Bangalore city in India got into series of sex scandals.
2. Satyam, the global IT company in India involved in gross misappropriation of money during 2007-2008
3. *Burkha* is the traditional piece of attire covering the face, especially of Muslims.
4. *Lungi* is a traditional casual bottom wear for men.
5. 3Ms – Mandir, the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, Masjid, Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and Mandal for Sri. [Bindheshwari Prasad Mandal](#), Chairman of the Commission constituted by Government of India to identify the socially and educationally backward classes.
6. *Ghajni Cut* is an innovative style of hair cut popularised by Amir Khan in his movie by the same name.

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