

A Study of Changing Pattern of Cultural Environment of the Indian Region

Yashika*

MA (Geography), Net Qualified

Abstract – The social structure and the culture of society have great influence on the functioning of Cultural Environment activities. Each society has its own culture which consists of the customs, values, attitudes, beliefs, habits, languages and other forms of interaction between the members of the society. Any business firm which aims at entering any market for its products and services must develop complete understanding of socio economic philosophy of the society. In the era of globalisation, no business can survive and grow without social harmony and without understanding the impact of demographic changes in the country or in a region. This paper focuses on the changes in socio-economic environment in India and its impact on Indian Region in the future. The population realized these changes and took steps to reduce their fertility but the decline in fertility was not so steep. As a result the global population has undergone a fourfold increase in a hundred years and has reached in billions. This study will enlighten the changing pattern of population growth and planning in Indian Region.

Key Words – Cultural Environment, Indian Region, Social Structure, Society, Activities, Socio Economic Philosophy, Globalisation, Population Growth

-----X-----

INTRODUCTION

Reduction in imbalances between various regions and between various sections of society has become the foremost objectives of planned development in the State. Due to large variations in geophysical conditions of the State such as land, soil, rainfall, climate and some other historical reasons, remarkable differences in levels of development are existing within the State. The State Government has taken up large number of development programmes in planned manner through various Five Years Plans with main objective of enhancing the quality of life of people by providing the basic necessities of life as well as improvement in their social and economic well-being. Despite various socio-economic development programmes, Uttar Pradesh is still suffering from regional disparities and inequality. Even six decades after independence, some of the regions of this State are still backward. The State Government has made huge investments in backward regions to reduce the regional disparities but the achievements are disproportionately low. In the Eleventh Plan period Government have adopted "Inclusive growth" agenda and gave special emphasis to the schemes/ programmes meant for reducing regional disparities and backwardness especially through the mechanism of decentralized planning. The same policy has also been included in the Twelfth Plan. The State is divided into four economic regions viz. Western, Eastern, Central with more or less similar conditions and easily

distinguishable from each other. Out of these regions, are chronically backward in almost every critical area. There are several reasons for this backwardness, but the most significant among them are deficiency in some natural resources or exposure to natural calamities, both of these are largely beyond human control and have been great barriers to their growth and development.

HILLS AND MOUNTAINS

In general, they act as a physical barrier between the two region. Until very recently, they restricted the movements of the people. The restricted movement compelled them to follow different culture and it also prohibited the intermixing of two different cultures. For example, the Vindhyan ranges act as north-south cultural divide in India. We can see that north to Vindhyan, there is a dominance of Hindi language, whereas towards south, there is wide range of linguistic diversity like Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam and so on.

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

In general, climate determines the food habits, clothing, immunity against certain kind of diseases, etc. For example, people living in tropical regions mostly wear half sleeves cloths [lungi and mostly white shirt in India] as against the person living in the sub-polar regions who wear fully sleeves cloths.

Similarly, in the subtropical regions [mostly northern states in India], the crops like wheat is cultivated while in the tropical region [southern states], the crops like rice and coconut are cultivated on large scale.

Though the history of any nation and its environment are mutually complementary, it should be borne in mind that geographical determinism alone cannot explain the historical process of any nation. Geographical features play a significant role, though they are not the prime movers of historical process. India's history, in particular, has been greatly affected by geography.

NATURE IN INDIAN ART AND SCRIPTURES:

Indian painting, sculpture, architectural ornamentation, and the decorative arts is replete with themes from nature and wildlife reflecting love and reverence, and therefore the ethics of conservation. A wide range of images of forests, plants, and animals are to be found in Indian miniature paintings and sculpture. The theme of the Hindu god Krishna's life depicted in miniature paintings underlines an appreciation of ecological balance. He is shown persuading people to worship the mountain in order to ensure rainfall. Krishna swallowing the forest fire also signifies a concern for the protection of forests and wildlife.

Innumerable examples of the status given to plants and animals can also be seen in the traditional sculptural art of India. The concept of *vana devatas* (tree goddesses), vehicles of gods and goddesses, sacred trees, tree and animal worship,' etc. are depicted in stone and metal sculptures independently, or as part of temples, palaces, and historical buildings. In literature and scriptures too there has been considerable depiction of the appreciation and love for nature:

"Mahakavi Kalidasa, a prominent poet of the ancient period (fourth century AD) visualized, a cloud as a messenger in his *Meghaduta* and went into raptures when describing various seasons in his *Ritusamhara*. Such an involvement with nature is reflected even in the visual arts which excel in their minute depiction of nature.

Indian literature effectively mirrors the ethos of its deep and sympathetic understanding of animals through innumerable stories. Even amongst these one could pertinently mention are the *Hitopadesha*, the *Panchatantra* or the *Shukasaptati* which abound in allegorical references to the animal world. The impact of the *Panchatantra* was so great that as early as the seventh century AD it was translated into Arabic under the title *Kalila-wa-Dimna* and has been very popular in the Arab and Persian world ever since. Though an interior form of life, animals have been endowed with ennobling qualities which provide lessons in morals relevant even to human beings.

Just as the appearance of animals in dreams or visions is considered to express energy, which has still not been differentiated or rationalized, identification of oneself with animals has been interpreted to represent integration of the unconscious with sources of life itself. Indian approach to the animal world has consistently demonstrated this appreciation throughout its evolving pattern of thought, and it is no wonder that Indian art, while reflecting the changing approach to physical representation of animal form, has retained the core of thought that it has moulded."

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT:

India is no exception to the global phenomenon of environmental degradation brought about by developmental activities. Rapid industrialization, growing urbanization, intensive cultivation, and other developmental activities, coupled with increasing biotic pressure has had a very adverse impact on India's environment. The major areas of environmental concern today include,

- (i) Deforestation,
- (ii) Egradation of land resources,
- (iii) Pollution of air and water,
- (iv) Threat to natural living resources - wildlife, fisheries, etc., and
- (v) Problems associated with urbanization - slums, sanitation, pollution.

Human and animal pressures have led to considerable deforestation. Deforestation leads to soil erosion and sedimentation that shortens the economic life of reservoirs, hydroelectric facilities, and irrigation systems. The problem of water and air pollution is assuming serious proportions in various parts of the country. With eighty per cent of industrial production confined to ten cities, atmospheric pollution is concentrated principally in the major cities and industrial towns. Apart from industries, the density of traffic is also contributing substantially to air pollution.

Habitat destruction has endangered the survival of a number of plants and animals.

Two species of mammals - the Indian cheetah and the Lesser Indian rhinoceros, and two species of birds-the Pink headed duck and the Mountain quail-have become extinct during twentieth century alone. Eighty-one species of mammals, 38 species of birds, and 18 species of amphibians and reptiles are now listed as 'rare' and 'threatened'. Among these are the tiger, leopard, Asiatic elephant, and all- the three species of the Indian crocodile. About 1500 species of plants are on the endangered list.

India has often been described as a rich land with poor people. Its average annual precipitation, the second highest in the world, next only to South America, its perpetual sunshine, and its other resources-natural and human-place it among the potentially rich nations. History, however, decreed otherwise and it found itself in 1947, at the time of Independence, among the poorest with "a majority of its people suffering from hunger, ignorance, and disease, and with little infrastructure for irrigation, power, transport, communication or industry. Only 25 per cent of its men and 7 per cent of its women knew how to read and write. The founding fathers of the nation led by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru realized that political independence would have no meaning unless it enabled them to quickly release themselves from the morass of poverty. Thus began, in the words of Indira Gandhi, 'an enterprise unparalleled in human history-the provision of basic needs to one-sixth of mankind within the span of one or two generations'.

It was in the early seventies that, along with the rest of the countries of the world, India became conscious of another disquieting trend. The same efforts that had helped to bring people above the poverty line also put greater pressure on the natural resources of the country. The vast majority of our people are directly dependent on the country's natural resources for their basic needs of food, fuel, shelter, and fodder for their cattle.

While the annual per capita income in India has been rising over the years, about 40 per cent of the people are still below the poverty line. Environmental degradation has adversely affected the poor who depend upon the resources of their immediate surroundings. Thus the challenge of poverty and the challenge of environmental degradation are not two different challenges, but two facets of a single challenge.

In a developing country attempting to achieve rapid economic growth, there are often tensions between the claims of environmental protection and those of development. That environmental conservation cannot be isolated from the general issues of development and must be viewed as an integral part of it, and an essential prerequisite for sustainable development, is being increasingly understood today. Conscious efforts are now being made to integrate environmental concerns into policies and programmes relating to economic development. It is at this juncture that we should look back upon our rich tradition of living in harmony with nature, which over the years has been overshadowed by the Western utilitarian approach to scientific and technological developments.

Madhav Gadgil and Romila Thapar (1990) focus our attention to our traditional relationship with nature when they say:

"India obviously needs a new strategy of resource use and a new common belief system to hold the society

together and put this strategy into operation. The present strategy of resource-use intensification, leading to increasing levels of outflows from the countryside to the urban-industrial sector, which is heavily subsidized by the state, and from the country as a whole to the developed world, and the belief system centred on development and national prestige, which has replaced the unifying theme of a national struggle against the British, have proved inadequate. The new strategy has to be grounded in efficient, sustainable use of resources and supported by a belief system based on respect for the natural endowments of the country. There are welcome signs that such a strategy and such a belief system are beginning to emerge, although not enough has happened in terms of concrete action. What does ultimately happen will depend critically on how far society recognizes the real power of those whose well-being is organically linked to the health of the resource base of the country the peasants, the tribal peoples and the nomads".

CONCLUSION:

Living in harmony with Nature has been an integral part of Indian culture. This has been abundantly reflected in a variety of traditional practices, religious beliefs, rituals, folklore, arts and crafts, and in the daily lives of the Indian people from time immemorial. The present day global concerns for sustainable development and conservation of natural resources spanning the two decades between the Stockholm Conference of Environment in 1992 and the United Nations Conference on Human Environment and Development (Earth Summit) at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 are of recent origin in comparison to the long tradition and cultural ethos of nature conservation in India. They are the one to whom the earth is not something to be used, not a possession or an object for exploitation but a living entity, an object of reverence, and the relationship is one of sacred trust and loving intimacy. For, they believe as much in celebrating one's life in this world as in remembering, adoring and celebrating the world in one's life. The sacred soil of ancestors into which one is born is thus a part of one's fundamental psychic experience of life and is a part of its spiritual dimension. The earth, the land, the village enter into and are secure in racial memory and it is only an ethical imperative to worship the Earth goddess, the Mother Earth. Today, when people throughout the world are perturbed by the degradation of the environment and the disastrous consequences of this, traditional ethics of nature conservation could be looked upon as a source of inspiration and guidance for the future. Perhaps no other culture can provide such a profound variety of cultural practices and ecologically sound relationship with nature as the Indian.

REFERENCES

1. ABSSS (2007). Report of State Level Public hearing on Farmers' Suicides, Hunger Deaths, Poverty, Loan Recovery, Corruption and Exploitation in Bundelkhand Region, Akhil Bharatiya Samaj Sewa Sansthan (ABSSS), Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh.
2. Apda Niwaran Manch (n.d.). Dry days of Bundelkhand: A field report on the status of Social Welfare Schemes in Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh. MP: Madhya Pradesh Right to Food Campaign, Apda Niwaran Manch. Retrieved on 20 June 2012 from <http://indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/redry.pdf>
3. Bhuiyan, C. (2004). Various drought indices for monitoring drought condition in Aravalli terrain of India, Proceedings of the XXth ISPRS Conference, International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, Istanbul
4. Bhuiyan, C., Singha, R. P. & Kogan, F. N. (2006). Monitoring drought dynamics in the Aravalli region (India) using different indices based on ground and remote sensing data International Journal of Applied Earth Observation and Geoinformation, 8(4), pp. 289-302.
5. Chopra, R., Ravindra A., & Das, S. (1995). Drought Proofing Palamu. Dehradun: People's Science Institute.
6. Development Alternatives (1998, September). Report on Agroforestry: A sustainable alternative for Bundelkhand, Development Alternatives Newsletter 8 (9).
7. Development Alternatives (1999). Reversing the Downward Spiral: Understanding the influence of livelihood systems on the resource base in Bundelkhand. New Delhi: Development Alternatives.
8. Doi, R. D. (2001). Vegetation response of rainfall in Rajasthan using AVHR Rimagery. Journal of the Indian Society of Remote Sensing 29 (4), pp. 213-224. DOI: 10.1007/BF02995726
9. Drought Management Division, MoA (2009). Drought 2009: Overview and Management. New Delhi: Drought Management Division, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture,
10. Eriyagama, N., Smakhtin, V. & Gamage, N. (2009). Mapping Drought Patterns and Impacts: A global perspective, IWMI Research Report 133. Colombo, Sri Lanka: International Water Management Institute.
11. Gupta, A. K., & Singh, A. (2011). Traditional Intellect in Disaster Risk Mitigation: Indian Outlook, Rajasthan and Bundelkhand Icons. Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge, 10(1), pp. 156-166
12. Gupta, A. K., & Nair, S. S. (2013). Vulnerability Assessment and Mitigation Analysis for Drought in Bundelkhand Region, Project Report, ICSSR. New Delhi: National Institute of Disaster Management.

Corresponding Author

Yashika*

MA (Geography), Net Qualified

sanjiv29071967@rediffmail.com