

Management in Indian Culture: A Study

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I. Introduction

Indians have made authentic and foundational discoveries in mathematics and astronomy. The invention of zero, the most accurate value of pi, and precise descriptions of the solar system all originated in India. Certain negative incidents and influences of the past have cast a veil over our cultural lifestyle, which now needs to be carefully removed. We must preserve and enhance our cultural heritage from the past, and by standing firmly on its strong foundation, we should create and develop new values and a new culture.

II. Culture

The word Sanskriti (culture) originates from the Sanskrit root *kr* with the suffix *kti* and the prefix *sam*, forming *sam + kr + kti* = *sanskriti*. In reality, the meaning of the word “culture” is extremely broad. Some scholars consider culture to be a transformed form of *sanskar* (refinement). Various scholars have defined culture as follows:

According to Redfield –

"Culture is the organized body of conventional understanding manifested in art and architecture, preserved by tradition, and characteristic of a human group."

According to E.B. Tylor –

"Culture or civilization, taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

In the words of Kanhaiyalal Maniklal Munshi –

"Culture is the name of those states of life that give rise to behavior, dedication, and wisdom within a person. It determines human behavior and illuminates the ideals and principles of life."

Satyaketu Vidyalkar wrote –

"When a human being uses his intellect to create in the field of action, that is called culture."

According to Ramdhari Singh Dinkar –

"Culture permeates human life just as fragrance in flowers and butter in milk. It is not created in a day or two; culture is formed over countless ages."

III. Indian Culture

When we consider the integrated form of Indian culture, we observe several distinctive features. Indian culture reflects a harmony between spirituality and materialism. In ancient times, Indian culture outlined the four *Purusharthas* (goals of human life): *Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (desire), and *Moksha* (liberation), as well as the four *Ashramas* (stages of life): *Brahmacharya* (student life), *Grihastha* (householder), *Vanaprastha* (hermit stage), and *Sannyasa* (renunciation)—all of which aim to balance the spiritual and material aspects of life.

It is worth noting that Indian culture has embraced the noble ideas of many races. Alongside the assimilation of the indigenous people, outsiders such as the Shakas, Huns, Greeks, and Kushans also became integral to Indian culture. The arrival of Islamic culture through Arabs, Turks, and Mughals further added to this cultural tapestry. Yet, Indian culture retained its unique identity and generously absorbed the positive aspects of these incoming traditions.

Today, in language, cuisine, clothing, art, music, and more, we embody a "Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb"—a beautiful blend—or we might even say a model of global culture. Who can now say that *salwar-suit* is purely Iranian attire or that *halwa*, *kebab*, and *paratha* are not authentic Indian dishes?

Moreover, Indian culture emphasizes the human-nature relationship. Our culture revolves around the inseparable and harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and the environment. The Indian Upanishads proclaim: "*Ishavasyam Idam Sarvam*", meaning the divine pervades every particle of the universe.

The integrated form of Indian culture is also visible in various Indian art forms such as sculpture, dance, painting, and folk culture. Notably, culture finds its most profound expression in literature, which is often referred to as the soul of culture. The values at the

core of Indian culture—compassion, kindness, love, peace, tolerance, flexibility, forgiveness—are beautifully conveyed through Indian literary works.

This integrated form of Indian culture has repeatedly found expression through language, in epics such as the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, and in the poetry and plays of Kalidasa, Bharavi, and Bhāsa. Tamil Sangam literature, Telugu Avadhanam literature, Hindi Bhakti poetry, Marathi Powadas, and Bengali Mangalkavyas are all precious blooms in the garden of Indian cultural heritage.

Together, they form a garland that truly represents composite Indian culture. In the medieval era, Tulsidas stands out as a great poet who represented the cultural harmony of India:

"Swapach sabar khas jaman jad, pānvar kol kirāt

Rāmu kahat pāvan param, hot bhuvan vikhyāt."

(Translation: Even those from humble or tribal origins become sanctified and renowned in the world when they utter the name of Lord Rama.)

Features of Indian Culture

The main features of Indian culture are as follows:

1. Antiquity:

The rock paintings of Bhimbetka from the Paleolithic era reflect the ancient origins of Indian culture. Similarly, the Vedas, the world's oldest known scriptures, also belong to India.

2. Continuity:

Even after thousands of years, Indian culture is alive in its original form, while the cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Rome have lost their original essence. In India, customs such as the worship of rivers, banyan trees, the sun, and various deities have continued for centuries and are still practiced today.

3. Unity in Diversity:

India's geographical features, climate, and economy have given rise to regional distinctions and diversity. This is why India shows variety in food, clothing, lifestyle, and customs. It is rightly said, "We are strong because of our unity, but we are even stronger because of our diversity."

4. Universality:

Indian culture believes in the philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" – the whole world is one family.

5. Spirituality and Materialism:

A defining feature of Indian culture is its ability to harmonize both material and spiritual pursuits. The ancient system of four Purusharthas (Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha) and four Ashramas (Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha, Sannyasa) testifies to this balance between worldly and spiritual life.

IV. Management Culture

An effort has been made to extract principles and practices related to management theory and behavior from various Indian texts. Several works have influenced this domain, including the Autobiography of a Yogi, Tirukkural, Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Shrimad Bhagavad Gita.

Management culture is an organizational leadership practice that helps define and maintain the overall working culture of a business. Management culture may include:

Quality

Measurement

Innovation

Management style

Response to failures and successes

Spending habits

Generally, the management culture that shapes a company's understanding also influences employee behavior. It not only helps define the standards of an organization for its employees but also allows customers to recognize the organization's core values.

Some factors that influence management culture include:

Management Values

An organization typically determines its management culture by first evaluating its core values. Each organization emphasizes different values, such as:

Competitiveness:

Organizations vary in their level of competitiveness depending on their products or competition. For example, a fast-food chain may be highly competitive, whereas an independent roadside convenience store may not need to be as competitive.

Results-Oriented:

Many businesses focus on outcomes—such as products, final results, customers, and profits. Results-oriented businesses prioritize achievements and results more than processes or the individuals executing them.

People-Centric:

Some companies emphasize their individual employees more than their processes. They treat each person in the organization fairly and respectfully.

Collaboration-Focused:

Companies that focus on collaboration strive to reward and encourage teamwork as much as possible.

Detail-Oriented:

These companies emphasize the specifics of a project regardless of size, aiming to produce quality products over mere quantity.

Consistency:

Companies with this focus pay special attention to ensuring that their processes remain consistent.

Creative Innovation:

Organizations with a culture of creative innovation rethink processes to improve efficiency and redesign products to enhance their value.

Types of Management Culture

Here are some different types of management cultures to consider:

Clan Culture

Clan culture emphasizes friendly and informal interactions among all members of a company. To make the workplace more comfortable and flexible, managers may adjust the work environment, dress code requirements, and deadlines. Clan cultures tend to value the individual more than the overall organization. This means more policies are designed to benefit employees, and departments focus on individual needs.

Organizations with clan cultures usually have high employee engagement, fostering friendly yet transparent communication in every aspect of the workplace. The underlying belief is that happy employees ultimately lead to happy customers.

Adhocracy Culture

Adhocracy culture strives for innovation and flexibility. This type of culture focuses on taking risks, inventing new methods, and setting new standards. To anticipate trends, adhocracy cultures work to develop unique ideas. As a result, managers often promote new ideas and take creative risks while moving forward. Adhocracy culture is typically process- and task-focused.

Market Culture

Market culture aims for stability and rarely takes risks. It prioritizes profitability, aligning each employee or department with specific objectives that support the company's goals. Many market cultures employ a more rigid hierarchical system to better coordinate efforts toward external success. Managers in this culture typically strive to meet quotas, targets, and outcomes with minimal loss whenever possible.

Management in Indian Culture

In ancient times, the varna system was an inherent aspect of Indian society. It categorized society into different functional orders.

The four main categories of the varna system were:

Brahmins

Kshatriyas

Vaishyas

Shudras

Brahmins

In the varna system, Brahmins held the highest position. They were considered the top in spiritual matters. They symbolized the link between the four varnas and the eternal, divine principle.

Kshatriyas

Kshatriyas occupied the second position. They were regarded as the warrior class, meaning their primary role was to fight on the battlefield. It was their duty to protect the other three varnas from any external enemies.

Vaishyas

Vaishyas were third in the hierarchy. This class included merchants, farmers, and other professionals. They worked in cooperation with the administration to improve living standards by engaging in profitable business ventures.

Shudras

Their main duty was to serve the other three varnas and handle bureaucratic or service-related work. According to the Atharvaveda, they were allowed to listen to and memorize the Vedas. Some Shudras were also permitted to work as farmers and merchants.

V. Conclusion

Regarding Indian culture, Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya stated:

“The greatness and vastness of Indian civilization and culture lies in its sacred spirit of identifying with all of humanity — the noble ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The world is one family).”

India’s history and culture are dynamic and trace back to the dawn of human civilization. It begins with the mysterious Indus Valley Civilization and extends to the agrarian communities of southern India. Throughout its history, Indian culture has continuously integrated with surrounding civilizations.

Archaeological evidence shows that the use of iron, copper, and other metals was prevalent in the Indian subcontinent from very early times, indicating the region’s technological progress. By the end of the 4th millennium BCE, India had emerged as a center of highly developed civilization.

In Indian culture, the social order was managed through the varna system, while life management was governed by the fourfold goals — Dharma (righteousness), Artha (prosperity), Kama (desire), and Moksha (liberation) — forming the holistic foundation of Indian life philosophy.

संदर्भ सूची

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