

# GALAXY

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Vol. 3, Issue-II (March 2014)



**Editor-In-Chief: Dr. Vishwanath Bite**



**Managing Editor: Madhuri Bite**

## Socio-cultural Evolution and Modifications in the Indian Society

**Anil Shirrang Awad**  
Kisan Veer Mahavidyalaya,  
Wai, Dist. Satara  
Maharashtra (India)

*The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,*

*But I have promises to keep,*

*And miles to go before I sleep,*

*And miles to go before I sleep.*

- Robert Frost

I still remember the day when I was just a kid. It was 1980s and for the last three consecutive days we had no news about my elder brother. He went to Bombay to bring the letter of Government Sanction to his Typewriting Institute. My parents were in anxiety. Suddenly, a postman appeared and brought a telegram. My mother sat down in misery. Most of the time, the telegram is an ill omen. It was a social perception about the telegram. Fortunately, it was good news. I read the only word 'Sarkarmanyata' (Government-sanction) and my parents offered sugar to the postman and others. I remember another day. It was the morning of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013 and I was reading the newspaper The Hindu. The headline was: '*Dot, dash, full stop: Telegram service ends July 15*'. By keeping aside the nostalgia, I asked: 'Why?' The answer was stated there: '*The growing use of mobile phones and internet has led to steep decline in the usages of the telegraphic service...*' (The Hindu, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013). My mind started to roam. What are the other areas which ceased to exist? What are the reasons? Who changed the scenario? What are the merits and demerits of it? The answer is simple. The sociocultural evolution is reaching to its revolution. It has affected not only the materialistic performance but also the social competence of Indian civilization.

The well-accessed internet source Wikipedia defines sociocultural evolution as 'the process by which structural reorganization is affected through time, eventually producing a form or

structure which is qualitatively different from the ancestral form.’ Charles Darwin, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, L.H. Morgan are the earliest sociologists to highlight the sociocultural evolution of the society. Richard Dawkins in his essay ‘The Selfish Gene’ (1976) points out that the sociocultural evolution among the humans is more perceptible than the animals.

Mass Media, Banking, Industries, Energy Sources, Infrastructure, Science, Space, Defense, Information Technology etc. all have become the means to change the Indian society. It is predictable that they have affirmative as well as negative impressions on the social behavior of the people. The present research article tries to spotlight such dimensions of sociocultural evolution and contribution of the means in it.

Now let’s see the sociocultural development since independence. India got Independence and we adopted (say imported) the Five Years Plan Policy from Russian Federation. The policy is reinforced with the huge success in the first two consecutive plans (1951-56 and 1956-61) and Indian leaderships started to dream the conversion of an underdeveloped economy into developed. They had icon countries like Japan and Germany which rose from the ashes like Phoenix after the World War II. But they neglected the contribution of the social perception and consciousness of the masses in development of these countries. Indian leadership was under the influence of Russian Marxism and Socialism and Modern Capitalism was yet to find its roots in the country. The dreams shattered in the third Five Year Plan. Failures of *Panchshil* Principles, Chinese aggression of 1962, Indo-Pak War of 1965, Lapses in the Mahalanobis Model, growing inflation and fiscal deficit, the death of Visionary Leader Pandit Nehru etc. affected the Indian phenomenon and we have Plan Holidays from 1966 to 1969. Indo-Pak War for Bangladesh, Emergency, Students Politics and resistance of Jayaprakash Narayan, Fall of Indira Gandhi, Gulf Crisis, Rise of Angry Young Man represented by Amitabh Bachchan in movies, re-empowerment of Indira Gandhi, Operation Blue Diamond and her assassination, Kashmir issue, Mandal Commission, Babari Masjid demolish, Shanti Sena in Sri Lanka and assassination of Rajiv Gandhi etc. are the major incidents which have direct or indirect impact on the sociocultural behavior of Indian Society. Political, Financial and Social instabilities continued till 1990s and it reached to its climax when Indian Government lost its credit and forced to deposit reserve gold in The World Bank to overcome the foreign exchange crisis. *The License Raj* was questioned and criticized severely and the magic words Liberalization, Privatization and

Globalization introduced to the Indian Economy. It was the time for the rapid encroachment of sociocultural change. Instead of roaming in the nostalgic idealism, Indian society was introduced to innovative vision. The vision boosted the living standard of the Indian society but not without affecting the social behavior of the masses. The materialistic means were the first to appear as mediators for the change and the parameters of progress changed rapidly. Instead, say, the Western parameters were applied to the conventional Indian society. In materialistic benchmarking we succeeded but the values are put on the stake. The above-mentioned paradigm of ceasing the use of telegram is a representative of materialistic success but it undermined the reactions of the people like my parents. There are more examples like these to be cited.

Telephone (landline) was the fastest means of communication than the telegram. Like telegram, post-office was the public venue for the telephonic communication. Only the rich people and landlords did have personal telephone connections. It was above the reach of the common people. But it had problems too. The consumer had to wait for two to three years to get the landline connections. Dialing the trunk call for 181 and waiting to connect for hours was the usual scene in the post office. The scenario changed suddenly. A person with a mobile phone of nine inch height appeared on the Indian road in 1995s. The charges were very high and the consumer had to pay for incoming calls also. The scene changed rapidly with the contribution of the corporate world. Today, the call costs are reduced almost to nothing and the mobile sets become less expensive. Now, it is a shock to hear from someone: 'I have no mobile phone.' Now we are living in the era of 5G. Android, Blackberry, iSO (Apple), Windows Phone etc. are the operating systems at our fingertips. The social networks like Facebook, Arkut, Twitter, What's App etc. are become the prominent tools of personal as well as social interactions. There are no more requirements to write a letter on post-card. Paperless messages like E-mail, SMS, Chats etc. are fastest means of communication and saved millions of minutes. No more waiting for weeks to get reply from friends and relatives. The communication technology changed the sociocultural panorama drastically and also the approaches of social interaction.

The television telecast started in India in 1959 on experimental basis. It reached to major cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras up to 1974. The year 1982 saw the nationwide telecast as well as introduction of color television sets in India. The mythical television serials *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* had had a great impact on the contemporary Indian society. With

economic and social reforms under the leadership of PM Narsimha Rao, the doors of television telecast opened to the corporate sectors. Cable culture spread not only in the metropolitan cities but also in the rural areas. Now, we have 'free-to-air', 'Direct to Home' (DTH) as well as 'IPTV' Satellite Broadcasting System. Bush, Crown, Philips (Holland) etc. TV sets are replaced by LCD and Plasma and we are moving to the 3D TV culture rapidly. Delhi Doordarshan was the only channel to broadcast. Now, we have more than 823 channels. Foreign and indigenous companies from corporate world are contributing in the reformation. The Indian Cinema moved from tent to multiplex. It is a very pleasing experience to watch the Classic Movie *Sholey* with 3D techniques. Cassette player and recorder is replaced by CD and DVD players and the computers are playing versatile roles. But it also brought the parodied culture of Remix and Remake. All India Radio and Radio Ceylon is no more part of the daily routine of common people. Bianca (later Cibaca) Geetmala ceased its projection and the magical voice of Amin Sayani lost in the noise of Radio Jackie from Red FM and Radio Mirchi. The sociocultural evolution changed the taste of the Indian society.

Once, Pune was known as the 'City of Bicycle'. Now it is the 'City of Bikes'. Rajdoot, Yazadi, Luna, Bajaj Chetak, LML Vespa disappeared and Royal Enfield (popularly known as Bullet) trampled the roads with new look. From Hero Honda to Harley Davison, all kinds of bikes are seen on the road easily. Mileage, Speed, Pick-up etc are the key words while selecting a bike and companies are providing numerous alternatives to the customers. Children running after a bike was a usual scene of rural India. Now bike is no surprise in rural areas, only the new models do. Ambassador and Padmini Premier, Fiat Cars, Jeeps were the status symbol in bygone India. The legend of Mercedes Benz is realism now. Maruti-Suzuki, Hyundai, Mitsubishi, Volkswagen, Skoda, Mahindra and Mahindra, Tata Motors etc. corporate companies are contributing to the progress of Indian Automotive Industries with new vehicle models. The means of transportation are moving dynamically. A person at Delhi eating fresh strawberry of Mahabaleshwar is no more a fairy tale. The projects like Golden Quadrilateral reduced the distance between places but people are getting away from each other.

A gentleman had to wait for hours with a token in his hand at the bank to withdraw the money. Now ATMs are everywhere. Net Banking is accessible even on his mobile. It saves his time. A gentleman wearing Kemy, HMT, Hendry-Shandro or Power Luba wrist watch was an

outstanding scene in past India. Now we have local watch companies like Titan, Timex and Maxima with cheap models. Imported Rolex and Rado watches can be seen on the wrists of middle class people easily. *Gavathi, Talam, Khadi, Manjarpath* clothes are replaced by Siyaram and Raymond's. Now, the so called gentleman is wearing Pan America, Oxford, Oxymber etc. readymade cloths for office purposes and using Reynolds or Parker Pens to sign the documents. He is also seen at the centre of MacDonald's or Pizza Hut in lunch break. No more homemade food in his tiffin.

The images like aboriginals living in a hut on the top of the tree, is no more part of the current Geography text. Now, it is the part of eco-tourism. Wilderness of the woods is sacrificed for eco-tourism. The statement '*Eskimos live in Igloos*' is the part of the history, so the animal fables. De-schooling of Society has been taking place but no teacher is ever appointed to look after it. Once, India had to spend the largest amount of foreign currency in importing the food grains. Now it is exporting. With the headline of growing reserve stock of grains, the snaps of wasted grains also attract the attentions of the newspaper readers. Fertilizers and improved seeds contributed to the green revolution but decreased the underground water level. Life expectancy has reached near to seventy years, from forty at the time of independence but the ration of the risk also increased. Measles, plague and polio diseases are banished forever but AIDS replaced them and is still incurable. These are the good and bad signs of sociocultural evolution. There are more examples to be discussed.

The technology affected the habits and health factors of the common man. Fast food, alcohol, late-night working etc. have adverse effect on the health. Fast spreading diseases like diabetes and cardiac-arrest are the demons created by the high-speed life style of our age. The life expectancy is increased and also the risk to the life. Outdoor games are replaced by indoor games and affecting the health of the society itself. It is ridiculous to know that more people are dying by gastronomie than malnutrition.

The children are the future of India. But it is a pathetic scene in every house to see the children sitting before television set or playing computer games, instead of playing on the ground. By playing cricket game on a computer we cannot expect another Sachin Tendulkar. Imitation of the television advertise is a common thread among the children and they prefer to

meet their hunger in ‘..bus do minutes’ (‘within two minutes only...’). Parents are also not far behind of their children. The television serials like ‘Buniyad’, ‘Hum Log’, ‘Bharat Ek Khoj’ are replaced by *Saas-Bhavu* serials. It is affecting the collective consciousness of the Indian society. These serials are foregrounding artificialities in relationships and unfortunately they are treated as the truth by our society.

The matrix of industrialization has dismissed the cottage industry and mishandling of technology is misleading the society. Our typewriting institute was almost on the way of extinct in the tsunami of computerization. Families either dispersed or migrated to cities. It divested and dispersed family system and the earning members have to migrate to metropolitan cities in search of employments. Once, joint family was the place for well-breeding. Now the policy of small family (*Hum Do, Humare Do*) augmenting the isolation of the kids. Once Western World experienced the hollowness of the small family system and honored the joint family unit of Indian society. Now Indian society is stepping in their shoes and replicating. Despairing results are inevitable. It is a great defeat to the Indian culture and tradition to read the posters on a road and advertisements in a newspaper about *Vrudhashram* (shelter house for older people) and *Palanagraha* (cradle house for children). Workaholic generation is contribution for the materialistic development but running away from their responsibilities. It is heartbreaking to see the young generation giving priority to Social Networking than society and Rave Parties are magnetizing them for social gathering. Even kids seem busy with the mobiles phones at home and sparrows prefer to build their homes (nests) away from mobile towers. Telecommunication reduced the distance of communication but cannot be replaced by face-to-face interaction.

Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization boosted the economy, but it also brought three monsters with them: Population, Pollution and Global Warming. Now they are the prior issues in the survival of the civilization. Undue exploitations of natural resources are leading the earth to its doom. Growing population is swallowing the growth. Season Cycle has been changed drastically. The word ‘progress’ is replaced by ‘pollution’.

The materialistic means are boosted to facilitate the mankind, but we are using it for destructive purposes. A balance between progress and utilization of natural resources can be maintained. Environment, education, agriculture, health etc. are the sensitive areas for

sociocultural survival. They should be handled properly. Use of non-traditional energy sources like solar energy and wind power can reduce the risk of pollution. Even nuclear energy, if used properly, can prove useful to reduce the pollution problems. Priority should be give to the research in fuel efficient vehicles. Tie up of agriculture and bio-technology can create the great miracles in the health section. It is not a dream to see anti-diabetic banana and cardio supporting cucumbers in the market. Merely producing high-class technician is not useful for social stabilization. Value education should be made obligatory part in every curriculum. Contribution from Arts and Humanities Faculty should be tested in the well-breeding of the society.

I end the article with quoting another example. I and my brother opened the official site of Government of Maharashtra to download a G.R of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013 in PDF format. The G. R. was about Computer Typewriting. It quoted: ‘...in every office, computer is replaced by typewriting machines. Although the employees have casual knowledge of computer, they don’t possess proper skill of typing. It is time consuming and affects the day-to-day affairs. So, to motivate the agenda of ‘Paperless Office’ and ‘E-governance’, computer typing is made compulsory to the employees in all Government offices.’(tr.) It is the resurrection of our typewriting institute. The traditional and individual talent tied to new technology. Can it happen to other segments also? How will it contribute to the sociocultural evolution? Or will we let us flow directionless as per the need? Immediately, the lines from T. S. Eliot’s poem ‘The Rock’ started to linger in my mind:

*Where is the Life we have lost in living?*

*Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?*

*Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?*

### **Works Cited:**

The Hindu. 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

www.wikipedia.org