

COLONIAL IMPACT ON INDIAN SOCIETY: TRANSFORMATIONS IN CULTURE, SOCIAL STRUCTURE, AND IDEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This summary is a brief synopsis of a chapter that examines the tremendous effects of colonisation on the social structure and cultural norms of Indian culture. It starts by talking about how colonisation brought about urbanisation and industrialisation, which altered people's living and working situations and resulted in substantial shifts in cultural norms, beliefs, and even body language. The chapter places emphasis on how crucial it is to comprehend the structural changes brought about by colonisation in order to fully understand the ensuing cultural changes. The next section of the chapter explores two related colonialism-influenced occurrences. First, it looks at the social reformers and Indian nationalists who actively worked to end discrimination against women and lower castes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Second, it examines how colonialism's effects led to unintended but important modifications in cultural norms via the processes of sanskritization, modernisation, secularisation, and westernisation. Drawing on both conventional and modern Western concepts, the social reform movements in 19th-century India sought to address problems including caste inequality, child marriage, widow remarriage, and sati. The chapter emphasises how various reform movements have been made possible through communication channels, organisational structures, and developing conceptions. It emphasises the crucial significance that new ideas, liberalism, education, and discussions of tradition vs modernity had in influencing how Indian culture evolved. The chapter also points out that social reform movements addressed both the injustices experienced by marginalised castes as well as the worries of middle-class and upper-caste people. The chapter's conclusion emphasises how India's social development has been complexly affected by historical and cultural factors. It draws attention to how tradition and modernity interact intricately and how Indian civilization is constantly reinventing them. Last but not least, it prepares the ground for the next chapter, which will explore India's democratic experience within this vibrant setting.

KEYWORDS: Culture, Sanskritization, Secularisation, Social, Westernisation.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines two connected phenomena that were both intricate byproducts of colonial influence. The first discusses the purposeful and intentional attempts undertaken by nationalists in the early 20th century and social reformers in the 19th century to modify societal practises that discriminated against women and "lower" castes. The second involves less conscious but yet significant modifications to cultural norms that may be generally categorised as the four phases of sanskritization, modernization, secularisation, and westernisation. Sanskritization began before colonial control began. The other three processes may be best understood as intricate reactions of the Indian populace to the changes brought about by colonialism[1], [2].

You have already seen the extensive effects of colonisation on our way of life. The obstacles that colonial Indian society encountered led to the social reform movements that appeared in

India in the 19th century. You are undoubtedly well aware of the societal ills that afflicted Indian society. The well-known problems include caste discrimination, child marriage, widow remarriage, and sati. It's not like efforts to combat social prejudice in pre-colonial India did not exist. They played a crucial role in the Bhakti, Sufi, and Buddhism movements. The contemporary setting and eclectic mix of ideas distinguished these 19th century efforts at social change. It was a clever fusion of contemporary western liberalism with a fresh perspective on classic literature. Sociologist Satish Saberwal explains the contemporary setting by outlining three components of colonial India's contemporary framework for change:

1. Communication channels
2. Organisational structures, and
3. The character of concepts

Different modes of communication were accelerated by new technology. New ideas were spread quickly thanks to the printing press, telegraph, and subsequently the microphone, as well as the transportation of people and commodities by ships and railroads. Social reformers from Punjab and Bengal shared ideas with those from Madras and Maharashtra inside the country of India. In 1864, Bengali Keshav Chandra Sen paid a visit to Madras. Pandita Ramabai visited several locations around the nation. Some of them left for foreign lands. Modern-day Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya's remote areas were reached by Christian missionaries[3], [4].

New concepts of liberalism and independence, homemaking and marriage, motherhood and daughterhood, and self-aware pride in culture and heritage all arose. Education's value grew significantly. A country was thought to need to become contemporary while preserving its old past. Women's education was a hotly contested topic. Notably, the first school for women in Pune was founded by social reformer Jotiba Phule. Reformers claimed that women must have an education if society is to advance. Some of them thought that women were educated in ancient India. Others disputed this, arguing that only a select few were able to enjoy such privileges. Thus, both traditional and contemporary concepts were used to try to legitimise female education. They engaged in lively discussion about what tradition and modernity meant. Thus, while others, like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, accentuated the splendour of the Aryan era, Jotiba Phule remembered the splendour of the pre-Aryan past. In other words, reform in the 19th century sparked a time of reflection, reinterpretations, and intellectual and social development.

There were some similar themes throughout the many social reform movements. However, there were also notable disparities. Some people's worries were restricted to the issues that middle-class and upper-caste women and men confronted. Others' main concerns were the injustices experienced by the castes that were subjected to discrimination. For a fall in the fundamental essence of Hinduism has led to the emergence of several societal ills. Others said that the religion had inherent caste and gender inequality. Similarly, Muslim social reformers engaged in a lively discussion over what polygamy and purdah meant. At the All India Muslim Ladies Conference, for instance, Jahanara Shah Nawas sponsored a resolution denouncing the sins of polygamy. She stated that the kind of polygamy that is practised by certain Muslims goes against the genuine spirit of the Quran and that educated women have a responsibility to use their influence within their relationships to abolish this practice [5], [6].

DISCUSSION

There was a lot of discussion over the resolution that forbade polygamy in the Muslim press. The prominent publication for women in the Punjab, Tahsib-e Niswan, came out in support of the resolution, although others were not as enthusiastic. During this time, community debates were frequent. For instance, the Brahmo Samaj rejected sati. Creating the Dharma Sabha group, conservative Hindus in Bengal petitioned the British, claiming that reformers had no authority to interpret holy scriptures. Another viewpoint that Dalits are increasingly expressing is a full rejection of the Hindu religion. For instance, in 1852, Muktabai, a 13-year-old pupil at Phule's school, writes the following utilising the resources of contemporary education:

Each of the four concepts Sanskritization, Modernization, Secularisation, and Westernization is covered in separate portions of this chapter. But as the conversation goes on, it will become clear to you that they often overlap and frequently coexist. They function in many circumstances extremely differently. It is not unusual to find the same individual to be traditional in certain situations and contemporary in others. Many non-western nations, like India, see this coexistence as normal.

However, you are aware that sociology does not limit itself to naturalistic explanations. Colonial modernity has its own contradictions, as the previous chapter shown. Western schooling is a good example. A middle class of English-educated Indians developed as a result of colonialism. They studied the writers of the Western Enlightenment and the liberal democratic philosophers, and they had dreams of bringing about a liberal and progressive India. Despite this, they proclaimed their pride in conventional learning and scholarship, humiliated by colonial control. This pattern was already present in the reform movements of the 19th century[7], [8]. As this chapter will demonstrate, modernism signified not just fresh perspectives but also a reconsideration and reinterpretation of the past. Tradition and culture are both dynamic forces. People acquire them and then alter them. Consider the commonplace manner in which the sari, jainsem, or sarong are worn in India nowadays. The sari, a loose, unstitched piece of clothing, was traditionally worn in various ways depending on the location. Modern middle-class women often wear it in an innovative fashion that combines a traditional sari with a western "petticoat" and "blouse."

The structural and cultural diversity of India is obvious. This variety influences the various consequences or lack thereof that modernization, westernisation, sanskritization, or secularisation has on various groups of people. The pages that follow attempt to illustrate these variations. A further detailing out is not possible due to space limitations. It is up to you to investigate and pinpoint the nuanced effects that modernization has on individuals across the nation as well as on various castes and classes within the same area. even amongst genders within the same class or society[9], [10].

Sanskritization is the first idea we discuss. The justification for doing so is because it alludes to a social mobility mechanism that existed prior to the advent of colonisation. and continued thereafter in a variety of ways. As we'll see in a moment, the other three changes emerged in a setting characterised by those that colonialism brought about. Direct exposure to contemporary Western concepts of freedom and rights was part of this. As was already noted, this exposure made the feeling of unfairness and shame more acute. This often sparked a

want to return to one's traditional roots and history. We may interpret India's attempts at modernization, westernisation, and secularisation within the context of this mixture.

Sanskritization is a concept that was created by M.N. Srinivas. In a nutshell, it may be described as the process through which a "low" caste, tribe, or other group adopts the traditions, beliefs, ideologies, and way of life of a "high," and particularly of a "twice-born caste." The effects of Sanskritization are extensive. Language, literature, ideology, music, dance, theatre, way of life, and ritual may all be considered as examples of its impact.

Although Srinivas said that it was evident in sects and religious organisations outside of Hinduism, it is largely a process that occurs inside the Hindu arena. However, research in several regions reveals that it functioned differently in various regions of the nation. The culture of the whole region experienced some Sanskritization when a caste with a high degree of Sanskritization predominated. It was their effect that was more pronounced in areas where non-Sanskritic castes predominated. This is referred to as the "de-Sanskritization" process. Other regional differences existed as well. Sanskritic culture never had a big effect on Punjab. Persian influence dominated for several centuries up to the third quarter of the 19th century.

"The Sanskritization of a group usually has the effect of improving its position in the local caste hierarchy," Srinivas said. However, in a highly unequal society like India, there were and still are barriers to any easy taking over of the customs of the higher castes by the lower. Either an improvement in the economic or political position of the group concerned, or a higher group self-consciousness resulting from its contact with a source of the "Great Tradition" of Hinduism, such as a pilgrimage centre, a monastery, or a proselytising sect. In fact, historically, the low castes who dared to do it were punished by the ruling caste. The issue is shown by the anecdote below.

In her memoirs, Kumud Pawade describes how a Dalit lady ended up teaching Sanskrit. She is lured to studying Sanskrit as a student, maybe because it would allow her to break into an area that she was previously unable to pursue due to her gender and caste. She could have been attracted to it since doing so would allow her to read the texts' descriptions of women and Dalits in their entirety. As she continues her investigations, she encounters a variety of responses, from astonishment to animosity, from cautious acceptance to scathing rejection.

Sanskritization refers to the practise of adopting the names and traditions of socially superior groups in an effort to elevate one's position. 'Reference model's' financial standing is often superior. In both cases, it takes money for individuals to have the aim or want to be like the more privileged group. Different degrees of criticism have been levelled against the idea of Sanskritization. One criticism is that it overstates social mobility or the ability of "lower castes" to rise in society. Because it just affects certain people's positions, it has no structural impact. In other words, inequality still exists, even if some people may be able to advance within the unfair system. Two, it has been made clear that the sanskritization ideology considers the methods of the "upper caste" as superior and the ways of the "lower caste" as inferior. Therefore, it is considered normal and good to emulate members of the "upper caste".

Third, 'sanskritisation' seems to support a paradigm based on inequality and exclusion. It seems to imply that believing in the impurity and purity of certain groups of people is acceptable or justified. Therefore, it is a sign of privilege to be able to look down on certain people, much as the "upper castes" did with the "lower castes." It becomes difficult to

envision an equal society in a culture where this worldview is prevalent. The research on the next page demonstrates how the concepts of purity and pollution are seen as valuable or good concepts to have.

Our caste laws forbid us from receiving food or drink from Goldsmith-castes, despite the fact that they are castes higher than me. We hold the opinion that greedy goldsmiths wash faeces to extract gold. They pollute more than we do while having a higher caste. We also avoid consuming food from higher castes that engage in harmful activities, such as washermen who handle unclean laundry and oilpressers who kill and crush seeds to produce oil.

It demonstrates how these prejudices may take root as a way of life. Exclusion and prejudice aim to make their excluded position its own significance rather than pursuing an equal society. They want to be in a position where they can look down on others, in other words. This displays a fundamentally undemocratic worldview. Fourth, since sanskritization results in the adoption of rites and rituals from higher castes, it encourages behaviours like the seclusion of girls and women, the use of dowries as bride prices, the practise of caste discrimination against other groups, etc.

Fifth, this approach has the consequence of eroding the essential elements of dalit culture and society. For instance, the work performed by "lower castes" is devalued and made to seem "shameful." The industrial period considers identities founded on employment, crafts and artisanal skills, knowledge of medicine, environment, agriculture, animal husbandry, etc., to be meaningless. In the 20th century, there was an effort in numerous Indian languages to eliminate Sanskrit terms and phrases as the anti-Brahminical movement grew and regional self-consciousness emerged. The Backward Classes Movement's focus on the relevance of secular elements in the ascent of caste groupings and individuals was a key outcome. There was no longer any desire to impersonate the Vaisyas, Kshatriyas, or Brahmins in the case of the ruling castes. On the other hand, belonging to the dominant caste was an honour. Similar claims made by Dalits who now take pleasure in their status as Dalits have been witnessed in recent years. But sometimes, as one of the dalit caste groups that is the poorest and most excluded, caste identification appears to make up for its marginalisation in other spheres. In other words, they continue to be excluded and subjected to discrimination despite having developed some pride and confidence.

Earlier, you read about our country's colonial history in the West. You have seen how often it resulted in contradictory and odd changes. M.N. According to Srinivas, "westernisation" is the word used to describe the changes that have occurred in Indian society and culture as a consequence of more than 150 years of British rule. These changes may be seen in technology, institutions, philosophy, and values. Different forms of westernisation existed. One kind discusses how a limited group of Indians who first encountered Western culture gave rise to a subcultural pattern that was more westernised. This featured the intellectual subculture of Indians who not only embraced several cognitive patterns, or ways of thinking, and lifestyles, but also promoted its growth. They made up a large portion of the reformers in the early 19th century. The many forms of westernisation are shown in the boxes.

Consequently, there were only a few groups of people that embraced western lifestyles or were influenced by western ideas. In addition to this, there have been changes in people's general habits and styles due to the general spread of Western cultural elements including the usage of modern technology, clothing, and cuisine. A significant portion of middle class

households nationwide have a television, a refrigerator, a couch set of some kind, a dining table, and a chair in the living room. It is true that Westernisation involves emulating other cultures. People may not automatically absorb contemporary principles of democracy and equality.

Indian art and literature were affected by the west in addition to lifestyles and thought processes. Artists like Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, Abanindranath Tagore, Chandu Menon, and Ravi Varma also struggled with the colonial encounter. The box below illustrates the many ways that indigenous and western traditions have influenced the style, technique, and overall topic of an artist like Ravi Varma. It covers the picture of a matrilineal family in Kerala, but one that remarkably resembles the patrilineal nuclear family in the contemporary west, which typically consists of the father, mother, and children.

According to Srinivas, 'high castes' desired Westernisation while 'lower castes' attempted to become more Sanskritized. This generalisation is difficult to sustain in a varied nation like India. Studies of Thiyyas in Kerala, for instance, reveal deliberate attempts to westernise. To live a more cosmopolitan existence that criticised caste, Elite Thiyyas copied British culture. Similar to this, Western education often suggested opening up to new options for various North Eastern tribes of people. Read the account below.

The history of the word modernization is extensive. The phrase started to be connected with desirable and good ideals in the 19th and especially the 20th centuries. People desired to live in contemporary communities. Modernization was first used to describe advancements in technology and manufacturing methods. However, the term's use expanded throughout time. It made reference to the course that most of western Europe or North America has followed in terms of growth. Furthermore, it was stated that other civilizations should and must follow the same course for growth.

Colonialism was a factor in the emergence of capitalism in India. Therefore, the tale of our modernization and secularisation is rather different from their development in the west. This was made clear previously in this chapter when we spoke about westernisation and the efforts of the social movements of the 19th century. Here, we examine modernization and secularisation together since they are related phenomena. They both belong to a group of contemporary concepts. What precisely comprises the modernization process has been attempted to define by sociologists.

In other words, it implies that circumstances, both local and global, have an impact on individuals. Your family, tribe, caste, or group no longer determines how you act or think. The kind of employment you want to pursue is determined by you, not by the work your parent does. The basis for employment is choice, not birth. What you accomplish determines who you are, not who you are. Gaining ground is an attitude of science. A logical approach is important. Is this fully accurate? In India, our jobs are often not our choices. Scavengers don't choose their profession. We often wed someone from the same caste or community. Our lives are still dominated by religious ideas. We do, however, have a tradition of science. We also have a dynamic, democratic, secular political system. We are simultaneously mobilising on a caste and communal basis. How are these processes understood? This chapter has attempted to explain this mixture.

To simply refer to the intricate mixtures as a blend of tradition and modernity, as if tradition and modernity were unchanging concepts, would be oversimplified. Or as if there were just

one set of traditions in India. As we've previously seen, India's "traditions" have been defined by their multiplicity and long history of dispute. In actuality, they are often reinterpreted. This has previously been seen with social reformers from the 19th century. But this procedure still exists today. Such a procedure is described in modern-day Arunachal Pradesh in the box below.

Secularisation in the contemporary west has often indicated a period of declining religious dominance. All modernization theorists have made the premise that secularisation in contemporary cultures would continue to increase. The extent to which individuals hold religious views as well as their level of affiliation with religious organisation have all been mentioned as indicators of secularisation. However, religious strife and awareness have grown to unprecedented levels in recent years all throughout the globe.

However, it hasn't always been fair to assume that adopting contemporary lifestyles would always result in a fall in religious practises. You will remember how new categories of religious reform organisation first appeared as a result of western and contemporary ways of communication, organisation, and ideas. Additionally, a significant portion of ritual in India is directly related to the achievement of secular goals.

In addition to secular purposes, rituals also include secular aspects. They provide both men and women opportunities to socialise with their coworkers and superiors and to flaunt the family's money, attire, and jewels. The economic, political, and status dimensions of ritual have drawn more attention recently, and indicators of a household's standing in the neighbourhood include the number of cars parked outside a wedding home and the VIPs who attended the nuptials. There has also been a lot of discussion regarding what some people see to be the secularisation of caste. The caste system in ancient India functioned inside a religious framework. Its practise was heavily influenced by belief systems about purity and contamination. These days, they often serve as political pressure organisations. Caste groups and caste-based political parties have formed in modern India. They try to impose their demands on the government. Caste has been referred to as being secularized as a result of this altered position. This procedure is shown in the box below.

The goal of this chapter was to illustrate the many ways that social transformation in India has occurred. The colonial era had long-lasting effects. Many of them included paradoxes and were inadvertent. Indian nationalists' imagination was affected by Western notions of modernity. It also led some people to reexamine classic literature. It also resulted in others rejecting these. The influence of Western cultural forms may be seen in areas as diverse as how families function, what standards of behaviour men, women, and children should uphold, and creative expression. The nationalist and reform movements are two examples of how the concepts of equality and democracy had a significant influence. This resulted in the active questioning and rewriting of tradition in addition to the incorporation of western concepts. The next chapter on India's democratic experience will once again demonstrate how a Constitution built on radical notions of social justice and equality operated in a profoundly unequal country. It will further highlight the nuanced ways in which tradition and modernity have been and continue to be reinvented.

CONCLUSION

A thorough analysis of how colonisation changed Indian society, notably in terms of its social structure and cultural standards, is offered in this chapter's conclusion. Indian society has

undergone a complex web of changes as a result of the effects of urbanisation and industrialisation, the diffusion of Western ideas, and the interaction of numerous social reform groups. The chapter opened by highlighting how crucial it is to know the structural changes brought on by colonisation in order to fully understand the cultural transformations covered later in the chapter. It emphasised how the social environment of colonial India was shaped by organisational structures, communication routes, and the development of notions. In conclusion, this chapter has given a thorough account of how colonialism and later social reform movements have influenced Indian society, resulting in significant changes to its social structure, cultural norms, and the continuous interaction between tradition and modernity. It provides an important framework for comprehending the intricate dynamics of modern India.

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