

Globalization, Mass Media, and the Social Changes of India

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Abstract

Globalization is now a universal term that is conventionally accepted throughout the globe. It tries to suggest a common global civilization and a unified world. Globalization spread its wings and touched almost every corner of the globe. However, in India, it has also shown its existence in various fields. The touch of globalization has a wide impact on Indian society and the mass media enhances the pace of the impact. Globalization brings a wide range of foreign cultures and mass media continuously propagates those cultures among the Indian society. After the amalgamation of the foreign cultures with the Indian one, social change are taking place and developing a hybrid culture. The article entitled ‘Globalization, Mass Media and the Social Changes of India’ makes a thorough analysis and shows how globalization with the help of mass media developed a hybrid culture and how hybrid cultures dominate the Indian social system.

Keywords: Culture, cultural hybridisation, Foreign Culture, Globalization, Mass Media social changes

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Introduction

Globalization is a central concept that helps to convert the entire globe into a common global civilization. The concept began in the early twentieth century and matured in the twenty-first century. Now a day it is a common term that spread all around the globe. In the opening part of the book ‘Globalization’ Gary J. Wells, Robert Shuey and Ray Kiely described the concept and the term globalization as “ Globalization is a widely and somewhat loosely used term intended to describe the recent and rapid process of intercontinental economic, social and political integration.” – (Wells, et al., 2001, p. 37).

The concept of globalization is derived as multi-dimensional as it plays significant roles in various fields like politics, economy, education, science and technology, mass media and information dissemination, culture, etc. It enters almost every nation of the globe and shows significant impacts in diverse fields. India is not lagging behind the touch of globalization. In India, it has also shown its wide impacts on diverse fields; among them its significance in mass media, information dissemination and culture reached the zenith. Mass media, information dissemination and culture all are closely related to each other.

The mass media presents information from across the globe along with entertainment and foreign cultures. The foreign culture presented through mass media slowly entered Indian society amalgamating the foreign culture with the Indian one and developing a hybrid culture. The process is called cultural hybridization. The Indians are adopting the good values of foreign cultures and mixing them with the Indian social system. However, in the age of globalization, it can be said that mass media has now become a tool of cultural hybridisation and an active agent of social change.

Globalization is a broad concept that is used in various fields across the globe. India also came in touch with globalization. In India, the role of globalization is significant in the fields of mass media, information dissemination and culture. Mass media disseminates various news and information along with entertainment and foreign cultures. These foreign cultures blend with Indian cultures and develop a hybrid culture. However, it is necessary to research to find out the answer to the various questions that are related to globalization, the role of Indian mass media, hybrid cultures and the social changes in India. The article entitled ‘Globalization, Mass Media and the Social Changes of India’ tries to reveal the answers of the following objectives:

- ❖ To find out how mass media disseminates global information and foreign cultures and supports the changes in Indian society.
- ❖ To find out how cultural hybridization impacts Indian society.
- ❖ To find out the changes taking place due to the foreign cultures disseminated through mass media.

Literature Review

The article entitled ‘Globalization, Mass Media and the Social Changes of India’ is mainly focused on the process of globalization and its impact on Indian society along with it the article also focuses on the significance of mass media in the process of globalization. For constructing the background concept and for composing the article a wide variety of literary works were used. Among them ‘Globalization in India: Contents and Discontents’, ‘Culture Change in India: Intellectual Traditions, institutions and Regions’ ‘Globalisation and the

Challenges of Development in Contemporary India and 'Mass Communication in India' play a vital role. The book 'Globalization in India: Contents and Discontents Briefly' discusses the term Globalization through an evaluation of the social, political, economic and cultural contexts in which globalization exists and influences society. The book 'Culture Change in India: Intellectual Traditions, institutions and Regions' provides a thorough discussion about the different dimensions of cultural changes in India that took place in various periods. It focuses on the wide areas of the ancient and modern intellectual tradition of India and the socio-cultural changes that India underwent during the colonial, post-independence modernization and globalization periods.

The book 'Globalisation and the Challenges of Development in Contemporary India' discusses the analyses of contingent issues that helping to change India in the 21st century or the age of globalisation. The book 'Mass Communication in India' highly focuses on various forms of Indian mass media and globalization. The book provides a detailed description of the impacts of mass media on Indian society during the colonial and post-colonial era of globalization.

Methodology

The article entitled 'Globalization, Mass Media and the Social Changes of India' is based on a thorough analysis of various contents and documents related to the impacts of globalization, the roles of Indian mass media and the social changes in India. It analyses several articles and chapters published in journals and books, along with several statements and contents published and projected on various websites and web portals.

Discussion

Globalization and the Indian Mass Media

Globalization is a modern concept that tries to highlight a unified globe or a global civilization. The term globalization is a topic of discussion in diverse fields. In the introduction of the book 'Globalization in India: Contents and Discontents' the term was described as "Globalisation is one of those extraordinarily protean terms that seem to be relevant, and is increasingly accepted as meaningful, everywhere" (Gupta, et.al, 2010, p.1). The twentieth century has exhibited in front of the entire globe rapid technological growth, dissemination of information, cultural exchanges and the coordination between various nations for mutual benefits. These affairs brought the nations closer to one another and they started to collaborate in various fields. It seems as if the entire globe has turned into a small village, several social scientists named it 'Globalization'. The concept has shown a wide dimension and provides a broad scope in the progress of the economy, sharing of technologies, dissemination of information, propagation of culture, growth of language, etc. Indra Gandhi National Open University in their book defines globalization as

The term globalisation gained wide currency in the last quarter of the 20th century more emphatically in the 1980's and 1990's. It is a term which is, on the one hand highly considered indispensable and on the other, criticised as the return of Western exploitation of the developing countries. It refers to a process by which the earth planet is considered to be one single unit or a global village where social and economic interaction among the people are guided and conditioned accordingly" (IGNOU, eGyankosh, 2017, p. 5)

The diversity of its definition was mentioned and highlighted by various scholars "In recent years the terms of globalization has been used enormously by media and academics however, it

is not a new phenomenon. The concept of globalization has many definitions. It can be defined in political, social and economic terms,” –(Awdel, et.al, 2020, p.998). The definition of globalization varied from field to field or from sector to sector. In the field of economy and marketing, it was defined by Wolf (2001) as:

It is merely the extension of the market across frontiers and it is true of any market process, what one obtains from the international market depends on the value of what one can offer. It is not a question of a desert or intrinsic worth. It is a question, rather, of opportunities and incentives. If a country is unsuccessful in obtaining as much as it desires from its integration with the world economy, it is because its people are either unable to offer what those elsewhere desire or are prevented from doing so by barriers, at home or abroad. (p. 36)

The concept of globalization started to develop in the early 20th century and has a major role in global progress and sustainable development. In the Policy Brief of UN DESA it was mentioned:

Globalization has significantly influenced global growth and sustainable development over the past decades. Driven by the mobility of goods, services, capital, labours and technology, it has unleashed a wide array of opportunities - as well as new challenges – for realizing sustainable development. (UN DESA Policy Brief, 2017, p.1)

In the field of mass media and communication, the term globalization is different. It tries to explain the transmission and dissemination of information, data, ideas, knowledge, beliefs, etc worldwide whereas in the field of culture, it can be defined as the exchange of cultures among various nations. Globalization has a wide relation with culture and society. In the opening chapter of the book ‘Globalization and Culture’ John Tomlinson stated the relationship between globalization and culture as “Globalization lies at the heart of modern cultures; cultural practices lie at the heart of globalization” (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 1).

However, in India, globalization spread its wings in multiple fields and played a significant role in the world of mass media and culture. The process of globalization accelerated during the early days of the nineties and the arrival of satellite television brought pace to it. They entered with a great motive of serving the Indian audience by providing a wide range of information, entertainment and culture. It begins with Ted Turner’s Cable News Network (CNN), the American satellite channel that telecast the entire First Gulf War in 1991 in India on the other side the bombing of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein in the First Gulf War raised the demand for satellite dishes. The demand for dishes and the significance of information in an audio-visual mode put the light on the Indian media business and encouraged various groups to enter into the new form of business. Rupert Murdoch in a very short period of time launched his STAR Group with only four channels and in October 1991 the group launched its fifth satellite channel BBC. STAR is followed by India’s private satellite network group ZEE launched in 1992 by Subhash Chandra and within a couple of years SONY arrived during the early days of 1995.

The presentations of these television channels are different and attractive attracting a major section of Indian audience from various sectors and gaining popularity within a very short period. These channels presented a wide range of information from across the globe along with entertainment and foreign cultures. The foreign cultures that arrived through Indian mass media, spread over the Indian society blended with Indian cultures and tried to establish a new style of hybrid culture. The process is called cultural hybridisation. The hybrid culture which is

a fusion of cultures and became popular in India within a short period. In the introduction of the book *Culture Change in India: Intellectual Traditions, Institutions and Regions* Culture, hybrid culture, globalization and mass communication were wonderfully linked and stated:

There are observed ever-increasing cultural interactions and societies are becoming culturally diverse like never before. Through interregional to intercontinental migration, people carry their cultures to new settings in which they settle. Such interactions give rise to hybrid cultures, cultural innovations and changes in behaviours and lifestyles. Cultural diversity is becoming an important feature of most of the contemporary societies all over the globe. The force of modernity, the movement of people, professionals and labour, globalization of the economy and mass communication have intensified between cultures across the globe. (Nagla & Choudhary, 2024, p. 21)

Whereas Marwan M. Kraidy in the book 'Hybridity or the Cultural Logic of Globalization' described hybrid culture or Hybridisation in the context of globalisation as:

Hybridity is one of the emblematic notions of our era. It captures the spirits of the times with its obligatory celebration of cultural differences and fusion, and it resonates with the globalization mantra of unfettered economic exchanges and the supposedly inevitable transformation of all cultures. (Kraidy, 2005, p. 1)

Globalization and Cultural Hybridisation in India

India is a land of cultures and diversity. India depicts a history of several thousands of years and the society has a huge social background. It shows several ancient books, highly designed stone sculptures, artworks, ancient literature and languages, ancient history and monuments, customs and traditions, etc. The gathering of culture, tradition and customs begins from the early ancient Indian civilization and with time several rulers and dynasties came and also delivered their customs, traditions and values. At every stage of history, India bagged several cultures and traditions and its cultural history became richer day by day. During the British or colonial rule, the British people also show their customs and traditions in front of the Indian society. All these customs and traditions blend and strengthen the roots of Indian culture.

Cultural Hybridization began from the very early days of Indian civilization but the post-colonial era became highly significant. After independence, India showed rapid growth in all sectors and in the field of mass media, television arrived in 1959 whereas satellite channels arrived in 1991. However, with the arrival of satellite channels, India came in touch with media globalization. Several channels from around the globe were presented in front of the Indian viewers and these channels bring with them several news, information, entertainment and foreign cultures. Indian viewers started to watch those channels regularly and get foreign information about their cultures. The programmes based on foreign culture which the satellite television channels regularly broadcast slowly started to push the foreign cultures into the Indian society. Foreign culture started to blend with the Indian culture and Indian society gradually started to adopt a culture that is hybrid in nature. These hybrid cultures show their dominance in the food habits of Indian society, dress codes, talking or verbal words, music and song, plays and games, etc. They enter into the lifestyle of Indian society and change several earlier traditional values and habits.

❖ *Changes in the Food Habits of the Indian Society*

Indian from the very beginning used rice, wheat, dal, jowar, bajra, barley, legume, fish, meat, milk, ghee, fruits, vegetables, etc as their main diet which they cooked and prepared in a

homely manner for their daily diets. These homely cooked foods are highly balanced and full of nutrition. Each family makes their foods healthily and hygienically but with the arrival of globalization and modernity, there is a massive change in the style of food habits. Several retail grocery shops and shopping malls started to showcase packed and preserved foods, foreign diet items like cornflakes, noodles, pasta, pizza breads, etc along with various flavoured soft drinks to quench the thirst. It was also seen several restaurants are opened with continental and foreign foods. Foreign restaurants and fast food industries like KFC, Domino, Pizza Hut, etc opened their shops and counters in various parts of the country. Several younger men and women became their regular customers and moved regularly to get the taste of several delicious fast foods and for casual lunches and dinners. It has become a regular habit for them to eat in restaurants rather than to eat homely foods cooked in their residence. It shows the presence of cultural hybridization in the field of food habits in Indian society.

❖ *Changes in the Dress Codes or the Pattern of Clothes of the Indian Society*

The influence of globalization and foreign cultures has had a tremendous impact on the dress code or the pattern of clothing of Indian society. It was seen from the early days of Indian civilization till the pre-independence era, men and women mainly used relaxed cotton cloths. Men mainly prefer kurta, dhoti, and pajamas whereas women mainly use sarees but with the arrival of globalization and foreign cultures, the dress codes of Indian men and women changed a lot. Men instead of kurta, dhoti and pajamas mainly started to use shirt, t-shirt, trousers, pant, short pant, blazers, suit, tie, etc as their main formal and casual dress and occasionally used kurta, pajama, dhoti, or sharwani whereas women started to use a variety of clothes along with traditional sarees. The pattern of shoes also changes with time and with the arrival of foreign cultures, instead of traditional leather slippers, men and women are now using various protective and comfortable items like formal shoes, sneakers, etc. Men and women now wear dresses according to the occasion and session. The changes in dress codes are mainly due to the impact of globalization and the adoption of foreign influences. Along with this the change in the dress code of the Indian society also put a mark of cultural hybridization.

❖ *Influence of Foreign Languages on Indian Vocabulary*

India has a huge colonial history. The colonial impacts and the impacts of globalization have shown a massive effect on the vocabulary of the Indian vernacular languages. Along with the colonial impacts, the impacts of globalization bring foreign cultures and languages to Indian soil. The foreign languages that are used and propagated through mass media bring massive changes in the vocabulary of the Indian vernacular languages. Among all the foreign languages English took a vital place within Indian society. English is now become a global language through which the entire globe communicates and understands each other's.

English slowly entered into the vocabulary of the Indian language and made a huge place within the heart of Indian society. It enters from the days of the British colonial period but globalization and the propagation of English programmes and movies through Indian mass media bring pace to it. In India, English has become a vital and influential language. Several English words blend and enter into the vocabulary of the national and regional languages. There are several English newspapers and news channels which broadcast news and information in English throughout the day and night.

English satellite movie channels also telecast several English movies and entertainment to Indian audiences. Most Indian celebrities and various eminent personalities feel comfortable using English for communication. A significant number of Indian parents prefer English

medium schools for their children. In India, even most of the examinations are conducted in English version. The influences of English upon Indian society are gradually increasing day by day. These influences are a symbol of the dominance of cultural hybridization in Indian society.

❖ *Changes in the Art of Songs and Music of the Indian Society*

In India, the art of music and the use of various musical instruments have been reflected from the early days of Indian civilization. Archaeological evidence proved that music was a part of Indian culture from the early ancient days. Several ancient Indian musicians developed numerous genres of music in multiple varieties. The early introduction of raga and raginis show their wonderful roles in the development of classical Indian music. Several tones and rhythms were developed to produce pleasant harmonic sounds for classical music. Indian classical music easily touches the hearts of the listeners and can take them into the world of romance and fantasy. However, with the rise of globalization and mass media, various Western musical systems were introduced and blended with the Indian musical system. The blending of Eastern and Western systems generates a modern hybrid musical system. It shows several new tones, music, and musical instruments to the Indian musical world. The hybrid musical system gave rise to hip-hop musical cultures and influenced several musical bands to create rap songs. The hybrid musical cultures also influence several Indian musicians to create remixes of the old songs. These styles are totally new to the Indian musical world and are mainly due to the influence of globalization and cultural hybridization.

Globalisation and Socio-Economical Development of India

In India, globalization and mass media are not only responsible for cultural hybridization but also responsible for various socio-economic developments. It has had a wide impact directly on the economic, and social system of India. Economic development is vital for every developing nation as it provides financial security, peace and stability. It is usually the process of progress which improves the standard of living by providing monetary gains, creating jobs, and supporting innovation. Economic development is necessary for the national progress and the social changes of India. However economic development can be achieved when the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is higher. The GDP of India mainly depend on the agriculture, macro and micro level industries, service sector, Advertisement, income from fixed capital etc. If these sectors succeed in surviving and gaining profit, GDP will become higher. Globalization and mass media play a supportive role in the development of these sectors. Globalization brings various foreign investors and opens foreign markets whereas mass media helps to gain popularity and goodwill which attract consumers from various sections of the society.

Conclusion

Globalization is a broad concept or term that is globally accepted and it has shown immense significance in various fields from several dimensions. In India, mass media highly supports the propagation of the aura of globalization. Mass media helps to decentralise various foreign news, information, instruction, entertainment, culture and foreign trends throughout India which creates a wide impact on Indian society. The impacts on the society led to the formation of cultural hybridization which dominates the Indian society from various dimensions. The impacts of globalization through mass media have changed the food habits of Indian society; it changed the dress code or the pattern of clothing, blended the Indian songs

and musical system with foreign ones and highly influenced the vocabulary of the Indian vernacular languages.

While discussing the nature of food habits of the Indian society it can be assessed that globalization had a wide impact upon the food habits of the Indian society. The foreign food items and the style of foreign food receptions blend with the Indian systems and form a new hybrid style which the Indian society widely adopted with a huge momentum. The dress code or the pattern of clothing also changed due to the arrival of globalization. The Western styles highly dominated the dress codes of Indian society and marked the influence of Westernization.

Most of the Western styles are presented in front of Indian society through various forms of mass media. Mass media helps to generate interest among the men and women of Indian society and influences them to adopt the Western pattern of clothing. The foreign culture also had a huge impact on the world of Indian songs and music. The foreign songs and musical system blend with the Indian system and form a new hybrid style of musical system. Several Western musical instruments are now getting used to create a new musical aura in the world of Indian songs and music. Globalization and foreign influences made a significant impact on the vocabulary of the Indian vernacular languages. It has given several words to the stocks of Indian languages. English has entered and become one of the main languages of the Indian society. However, it can be depicted that globalization creates a hybrid culture within the Indian society and the hybrid culture shows several dramatic impacts on the Indian society from various dimensions.

About the Author

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