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## **Indian Culture: A Revolution of Indian Diversity**

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India is a vast country. Nature has made India into a distinct geographical entity. It extends for nearly 3000 km from Kashmir in the north to Kanyakumari in the south and for the same distance from its western-most parts to its eastern-most parts. The Himalayan ranges in the north and the sea in the East, West and South separates it from the rest of the world. Since the old Stone Age people from neighbouring as well as distant regions having coming into India and making it their home.

India is a country of rich culture where people of more than one religious cultures lives together. Culture is the mixture of several things like fashion, music, artistry, behavior, social norms, architecture and even food and dress sense. Indian cultural history has been derived by the absorbing customs, traditions and rituals from both invaders and immigrants. Many Indian customs, cultural practices and languages are examples of this co-mingling over centuries. It was the birthplace of many religious systems like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism which influenced not only this country but also the neighbouring countries. With the following invasion of the Islamic rulers the culture of India was heavily influenced by Persian, Arabic, Turkish cultures.

The country has twenty eight states and each one has its own mother tongue, religion, culture and tradition but the music is the one thing which makes all the country together. However, there are many types of music in the country. Music is the soul of the nature; it may be present everywhere in the crackling of trees, in the sound of birds, in the flow of river etc. From the eternal snows of the Himalayas to the cultivated peninsula of far South, from the deserts of the West to the humid deltas of the East, from the dry heat and cold of the Central Plateau to the cool forest foothills, Indian lifestyles clearly glorify the geography. The food, clothing and habits of an Indian differ in accordance to the place of origin.

India of dance encompasses a broad variety of dance and dance theatre categories, starting from the very old temple or classical dance to contemporary and folk dances. Dance has traditionally been an important part of religion and culture in India. According to Indian legend, the gods invented dance. Dancing is one of the most revered Hindu arts because it incorporates melody, drama, form and line. Gestures, body positions and head movements are emphasized in Indian dance. The use of the hands, fingers and eyes are of primary importance. There are almost a thousand specific hand movements and signs (*mudras*). Often bells are worn around the ankles.

The customs followed by Indian people vary across length and breadth of the country. Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, and Christianity, are some of the major religions people believe and follow. Not only the religion affects the way people think, live and dress but also the region or the state they belong to has great influence. Men and women in India are draped and wrapped according to tradition, history and location. A dhoti or lungi, which is a loose skirt- or shorts-type wrap for men, is common in rural areas and in high heat, and most often it is worn alone, without a shirt. Women also wear these garments and went topless until Muslim conquerors overtook large parts of India in the 12th century and ordered women to cover their bodies and heads. In urban areas men often wear

long, buttoned shirts and loose pants called Sherwanis or kurta pajamas. Women throughout India wear traditional saris made of cotton.

India is a country of different and contrasting cultures and its linguistic chart is just as diverse. There is no such thing as the 'Indian language' as there are 17 (recognised) major regional languages in India, however, the different dialects in India number several hundred and the number of actual spoken languages reach over 2500. Similarities in people's mother tongues are easy to find making language classification a difficult issue since it is hard to prove which just dialects of the same language are or which make separate languages up.

According to the Constitution of India, there are 22 recognized national languages at the moment. The Eighth Schedule, which contains the official list of the Indian languages, originally included 14 acknowledged languages but since the 71st and the 92nd Amendments, a further 8 were added to this list. The 22 recognized languages are as follows: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri (sometimes called Meitei), Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. The official languages of the Union of India are Hindi and English.

For Food, Indian food is as diverse as the Indian culture with as many cuisines as the number of states. India is a large country where diverse cultures converge and a rich culinary heritage has developed. India is divided into four regions, with the cuisine varying from area to area based on climate and agriculture.

A very important aspect of India in the recent past is the emergence of the New Age woman. Women in India are predominantly homemakers, though this perspective is changing. In many places, especially metros and other cities, women are the bread earners of the house or are at par with their male counterparts. The increase in the cost of living/economy has also contributed to the rise in this aspect. Cultural heritage often brings to mind artifacts (paintings, drawings, prints, mosaics, sculptures), historical monuments and buildings, as well as archaeological sites. But the concept of cultural heritage is even wider than that, and has gradually grown to include all evidence of human creativity and expression: photographs, documents, books and manuscripts, and instruments, etc. either as individual objects or as collections. Today, towns, underwater heritage and the natural environment are also considered part of cultural heritage since communities identify themselves with the natural landscape.

All people make their contribution to the culture of the world. That's why it's important to respect and safeguard all cultural heritage, through national laws and international treaties. Illicit trafficking of artifacts and cultural objects, pillaging of archaeological sites, and destruction of historical buildings and monuments cause irreparable damage to the cultural heritage of a country. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), founded in 1954, has adopted international conventions on the protection of cultural heritage, to foster intercultural understanding while stressing the importance of international cooperation.

To sum up Cultural heritage passed down to us from our parents Since hence, it must be preserved for the benefit of all. In an era of globalization, cultural heritage helps us to remember our cultural diversity, and its understanding develops mutual respect and renewed dialogue amongst different cultures.

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