

Cultural Re'sume'

Dermot A Robinson

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Professor Peggy Jones

Cultural re'sume' can be defined as the summing up of cultures studied or experienced. From a biblical stand point humanity is wonderfully created but is uniquely different in more than one ways. In spite of these differences there is no difference in the sight of God. (Galatians 3: 26-29) Humanity was exclusively created by God to exist on earth and reign dominion over everything that is created. Though we are scattered all over this planet it is incumbent on us to find ways and means to live and coexist here on earth, disregarding some of the vague advices that those who sometimes feel that they know more than God in their false perpetuations about existing on other planets. Donald W. Klopf states in his book titled: International Communication Encounters: "Since the late Pleistocene or early Holocene periods of human history, the times when people first roamed the earth, cross cultural connections took place. Isolated groups happened upon each other and interacted, sometimes in trade, often in conflict occasionally for romantic and sexual reasons" (pg. 6)

United States of America is one of the most multi-cultured countries on earth. It is called the country of immigrants, noting that its success here on earth is mostly based enormously on their input. In my opinion every nation on earth is represented here in America and it's amazing that they are able to practice their varied cultures with little to no resistance. Some of my best friends came directly from India to live here in America. In short, their experiences were like horror stories and extremely difficult to deal with at first, but with much determination they soon overcame the communication and cultural barriers.

The Anglo-Saxon Culture that breeds individualism is dominant in America. It allows Americans to strive for individual freedom to think that nothing can be done successfully without their input. Their interpretation and understanding of things are the best. The Indians along with the other Asians are from a Collective Culture that breeds priority of group interests over individual

interests. So one can imagine that seeing and experiencing the American culture drove some of them into a “self-shock” state. Though humanity is scattered all over this planet it is incumbent on us to find ways and means to live and coexist here on earth, disregarding some of the vague advices that those who sometimes feel that they know more than God in their false perpetuations about existing on other planets.

For several years I worked with Indians, mostly in hotel settings and became very good friends with some of them. The proud ways they spoke about their country helped me to do the research and in some ways compare literary with my physical experience working with them in addition to prayer to prepare me to one day travel to India. Even though I am no longer working I continued to research India. I have chosen India as my topic for my Cultural Re'sume'. This assignment is my opportunity to share or give a synopsis of the different areas, such as its history, people, language, population, religion, food, clothing, customs and celebrations, marriage, politics, medical system, and education, I have studied. I have also tried to compare some of their systems with some of our own here in America.

I never knew anything about Cultural Antipathy until I read it in my Text book titled: *Intercultural Communication Encounters authored by Donald Klopff*. In this book he stated that “Cultural Antipathy” can be defined as: “*the deep seated repugnance or dislike for other cultures appearing in the form of negative beliefs or attitudes aren't solely an American phenomenon*” other cultures are guilty also. Cultural Antipathy is also the breeding ground “*for prejudice, racism, discrimination, ageism, heterosexism, classism, stereotyping*” (Klopff pg. 111) Ethnocentrism is one of the subheads of “Cultural Antipathy” and it is defined as “*the inability to believe that other cultures offer viable alternatives for organizing reality.*” (Klopff pg. 111) The other subhead that pops-up at me is: “Cultural Relativity” which is defined “*as a principle to*

*live by recognizes there are many ways to reach a final goal and all may be equally valid depending on the mix of people involved.” (Klopf pg.113)*

**History:** India is a diamond shaped country that extends from the Himalayan mountains. It is the largest region of the Subcontinent that stretches through the north and south. It has a population of approximately 1.221 billion, according to 2013 governmental estimates.

“Its history begins some 500,000 years ago as early hominids graced the land, and from 3300 to 1300 BC the Indus River Valley Civilization flourished. The sophisticated and technologically advanced Mature Harappan period followed, lasting around 700 years before collapsing and giving rise to the Iron Age Vedic Civilization during the second millennium BC. India and much of [Asia](#) were conquered by Cyrus the Great of Persia in 530 BC and Alexander the Great in 326 BC. Together the Persian and Greek’s invasions, left a lasting impression on Indian civilization, with the Persian's influencing, future forms of government.”

*<https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/in.htm> (Accessed April 22, 2019)*

**The People:** “The people of India are among the warmest and the most hospitable people in the world. They take pains to make their guests feel at home. Even today, Indian people believe in their age-old traditions and make sure the same values are passed onto future generations. The rich traditional background of our country fascinates the current generation. Even though they wear the latest fashionable accessories and flaunt the best cell phones, when it comes to respecting elders and following the religious practices, they make sure that there is no chance for complaints..” *<http://www.bharatonline.com/travel-tips/people.html> (Accessed April 22, 2019)*

**Language:** There are 28 states and seven territories and there is no official language, although Hindi is regarded by the government as the official language sanctioned by their High Court in

2010. On the other hand the Indian Constitution regards twenty three languages officially. “In the south of India there is a greater diversity of languages and you will have difficulties getting along with *Hindi*. Languages differ even between the important industrial centers Bangalore, Madras and Hyderabad. English proves to be helpful here. However, you may have problems understanding Indian English (*Hinglish*) as there are peculiarities in grammar and vocabulary. So if someone in India says he passed out of school it doesn't mean that it knocked him unconscious, just that he finished successfully. The main languages in South India are *Malayalam*, *Tamil*, *Telugu* and *Kannada*. They are all *Dravidian* languages and, therefore, share structural aspects. Much of the vocabulary was borrowed from languages such as *Hindi*, so there are often only different pronunciations and slight shifts in meaning.”

*<https://www.justlanded.com/english/India/India-Guide/Language/Languages-in-India> (Accessed April 22, 2019)*

**Projected Population:** “Demographers expect India's population to surpass the population of China, currently the most populous country in the world, by 2030. At that time, India is expected to have a population of more than 1.53 billion while China's population is forecast to be at its peak of 1.46 billion (and will begin to drop in subsequent years).

India is currently home to about 1.21 billion people, representing a full 17% of the earth's population. India's 2011 census showed that the country's population had grown by 181 million people in the prior decade.”

*<https://www.thoughtco.com/indias-population-overview-1435263>(Accessed April 22, 2019)*

**Religion:** “India is identified as the birthplace of Hinduism and Buddhism, the third and fourth largest religions. About 84 percent of the population identifies as Hindu, according to the

"Handbook of Research on Development and Religion," edited by Matthew Clarke (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013). There are many variations of Hinduism, and four predominant sects — Shaiva, Vaishnava, Shakteya and Smarta. About 13 percent of Indians are Muslim, making it one of the largest Islamic nations in the world. Christians and Sikhs make up a small percentage of the population, and there are even fewer Buddhists and Jains, according to the "Handbook."

The CIA cited similar figures. According to its World Factbook, around 80 percent of the population is Hindu, 14.2 percent is Muslim, 2.3 percent is Christian, 1.7 percent is Sikh and 2 percent is unspecified". <https://www.livescience.com/28634-indian-culture>. (Accessed April 23, 2019)

**Food:** When the Moghul Empire invaded during the sixteenth century, they left a significant mark on the Indian cuisine, according to Texas A&M University. Indian cuisine is also influenced by many other countries. It is known for its large assortment of dishes and its liberal use of herbs and spices. Cooking styles vary from region to region.

Wheat, Basmati rice and pulses with chana (Bengal gram) are important staples of the Indian diet. The food is rich with curries and spices, including ginger, coriander, cardamom, turmeric, dried hot peppers, and cinnamon, among others. Chutneys — thick condiments and spreads made from assorted fruits and vegetables such as tamarind and tomatoes and mint, cilantro and other herbs — are used generously in Indian cooking.

Many Hindus are vegetarian, but lamb and chicken are common in main dishes for non-vegetarians. Much of Indian food is eaten with fingers or bread used as utensils. There is a wide array of breads served with meals, including naan, a leavened, oven-baked flatbread; and

bhatoora, a fried, fluffy flatbread common in North India and eaten with chickpea curry.” <https://www.livescience.com/28634-indian-culture> (Accessed April 22, 2019)

**Clothing:** Traditionally all dress attires are untailed, usually wrapped or pinned tightly to prevent looseness that can be embarrassing, but when properly put together look amazing. The materials are of good quality and very colorful. There are basically two types the dhoti, similarly to a table cloth and worn like a skirt and the lungi a tighter fitting worn in some southern and eastern areas of the region. Both the dhoti and the lungi are worn above the waist exposing bare skin except in winter and summer. However, the rich and influential men wear tailored suits mostly western styled.

**Customs and Celebration:** The most important holiday in India is the Diwali. It is the largest and it lasts for about five days. In India they believe that the light represents their protector against spiritual darkness and so they also called the Diwali the festival of lights. They celebrate Holi, which is the festival of love during spring, the Republic Day in January; Independence Day in August and Mahatma Gandhi's birthday in October.

**Indian Marriage:** In comparison to some Americans who in spite of a solemn vow before God to respect the “Holy Sanctity” of marriage, seem to publicly defy it in the name of modernization, which excludes true love, integrity, humility and respect for each other, Indian marriages are not based on feelings; instead, they are based on commitment. Indians believe in arranged marriages. Here in America this is unimaginable, because its culture is grounded in individuality. To believe that arranged marriage is a fallacy is a joke in the eyes of some people, because young Indian couples are enjoying the fruits of their labor, they not only prefer the arrangements, they accept and practice them. The misconceptions that westerners have about

arranged marriage is that the couples involve do not have a say. The truth is they do have the final say! “An Indian woman described it as “Here, we get married without having feelings for the person. We base our marriage on commitment, not on feelings. As our marriage progresses, the feelings develop. In America, you base your decision to marry on feelings, but what happens when the feelings wane? You have nothing left to keep the marriage together if you get married according to feelings and then the feelings go away.”

*<http://www.indiamarks.com/the-culture-arranged-marriages-india/> (Accessed April 24, 2019)*

**Politics:** India consists of 29 states and six union territories. It is a Federal Republic that governs under a parliamentary democracy that functions under the 1950 constitution. It has two legislative chambers, the appointed Senate and an Assembly appointed via popular votes. There is an Upper house named the Rajya and the Lower house named the Rajya Sabha “The Lok Sabha has 545 members, 543 representing the states and union territories – 79 seats are reserved for scheduled castes and 40 for scheduled tribes – and two additional seats reserved for the Anglo-Indian community. Members are elected, on a first-past-the- post system in single-member constituencies, every five years or less, based on universal suffrage. The Rajya Sabha has 245 members, 12 of which are presidential appointments and 233 are elected indirectly by the assemblies of the states and union territories for a six-year term, with one-third retiring every two years. Legislation may be introduced in either house, but the Lok Sabha has final say in financial matters. The Prime Minister is elected by the members of the Lok Sabha and appoints and heads the Council of Ministers. The President is elected for five years by an electoral college consisting of members of the federal parliament and state assemblies.”

*<http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/india/constitution-politics> (Accessed April 24, 2019)*

**The Education:** System in India: Before the school system was modernized India had a Gurukula system of education. This system allows for prospective student to be trained by the Guru. A part of the training was to be physically involved domestically during their stay in the house. During this time they were taught Mathematics and Metaphysics.. Modernization put an end to this system. This new system was introduced Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay in the 1830's. "The National Policy on Education, 1986 and the Programme of Action (POA) 1992 envisaged free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality for all children below 14 years before the 21st Century. The government committed to earmark 6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for education, half of which would be spent on primary education. The expenditure on Education as a percentage of GDP also rose from 0.7 per cent in 1951-52 to about 3.6 per cent in 1997-98.

The school system in India has four levels: lower primary (age 6 to 10), upper primary (11 and 12), high (13 to 15) and higher secondary (17 and 18). The lower primary school is divided into five "standards", upper primary school into two, high school into three and higher secondary into two. Students have to learn a common curriculum largely (except for regional changes in mother tongue) till the end of high school. There is some amount of specialization possible at the higher secondary level. Students throughout the country have to learn three languages (namely, English, Hindi and their mother tongue) except in regions where Hindi is the mother tongue."

*<http://www.gnu.org/education/edu-system-india.en.html> (Accessed April 25, 2019)*

**Medical System:** India has poor medical systems that affect the poor and the so called middle class who live in the urban areas. There is approximately seventy percent of the population in the rural, who have little or no access to medical facilities like hospitals and clinics. As a result these

people have to depend on alternative medical care. Although medical expenses are extremely high the program the government has in place provides for the people to pay up front and they will be reimbursed. In the meantime the rich and powerful that live in the urban areas have access to the best hospitals, clinics and doctors. "For primary healthcare, the Indian government spends only about 30% of the country's total healthcare budget. This is just a fraction of what the US and the UK spend every year. One way to solve this problem is to address the infrastructure issue... by standardising diagnostic procedures, building rural clinics, and developing streamlined health IT systems, and improving efficiency. The need for skilled medical graduates continues to grow, especially in rural areas which fail to attract new graduates because of financial reasons. A sizeable percentage of the graduates also go abroad to pursue higher studies and employment."

*<http://www.forbesindia.com/blog/health/5-things-to-know-about-the-indias-healthcare-system/>  
(Accessed April 25, 2019)*

Prior to doing this course I never really seriously looked deeply into how vitally important intercultural communication encounters is. The more I search, the more I am convinced that God has designed it this way, for us as humankind to communicate. Origin, Cultures, Regions, Ethnicities are not acceptable excuses, because we are all messengers of the "Good News" and we are commissioned to spread it across the whole wide world. Specifically, from a Biblical stand point, this design is deliberate and awesome. Only our complete trust in the Holy Spirit to empower and guide us will make our journey succeed. There will be many difficulties, because there are many forms of communications and cultures and these are unique to the people involved. Languages differ, body language similar in execution, but differ in meaning; food and drinks taste similar, but different in both ingredients and preparations. It is therefore incumbent

on each of us to study and if possible travel among each other in order to love and appreciate each other to the Glory and honor of our Heavenly Father.

I have never been to India, but I can personally relate to some of the conditions that are illustrated both in my text book and the internet. This summation or Cultural Re'sume' is largely based on my interactions with Indian friends, former co-workers; text book: "Intercultural Communication Encounters" by Donald W. Klopf and the Internet. It is absolutely ridiculous and suicidal for any person to travel to live in another culture, without proper preparations and foreknowledge of the country, people and region.

Reference:

Klopf AW, 2007 Intercultural Communications Encounter, Permission Department, 75 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116.

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