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ECOLOGICAL APPROACH IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS AND CEREMONIES

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Abstract

Where there is a healthy environment, there is a healthy life. When we feel proud of our technological and scientific rapid advancement, at the same time the ecological crisis is alarming and becoming hazardous day by day in our contemporary life. It is we who ought to decide how eco-friendly patterns of life are necessary to be introduced to whole humankind. In the era of twenty first century all classes of people wish to establish their status symbol by actively participating, organizing or enjoying a very stunning and grand 'get-together' at various festivals, rituals and social occasions which reflect cultural snobbery. This research paper tries to find out some eco-friendly mediums that can help us to celebrate and enjoy ourselves on different festivities and get-together in an eco-friendly manner. During religious and matrimonial occasions, a number of people seem to proclaim their status by organizing various types of social occasions, ritual programs, extraordinary decorations, and using fire-crackers and many more; and all of these mediums leave pernicious impact on our environment. Today there is a dire need to accept the challenge to bring change very sagaciously in our contemporary patterns of life without degrading it. The proper use of science is not the victory over nature but to stay proper with nature for longer and longer without harming it.

Keywords: Ecological humanities, Cultural trends, Festivities, Pollution, Digitalization

Ecological approach is feasible in our contemporary culture, society, and daily routine work that take place and occur in our day-to-day lives. Human nature and human conduct remain strongly deep with environmental concerns, and above all, cultural celebrations and ceremonies, which are of pivotal importance to us and our society, play significant role in environmental issues. Such environmental issues are necessary to be dealt

by eco-critics and ecological practitioners very sagaciously, analytically and seriously. The ecological approach is a framework of ideas which reveal manners to reduce the pollution caused by the celebration of different kind of festivities irrespective of region, religion and caste. My outlook on ecological approach focuses on adopting some new cult and methodologies for cultural celebration

and ceremonies to reduce the use of firecrackers during festivities.

India is a land of festivals which beautify the life of its people as festivals are celebration of the changing seasons, harvest, reconciliation and the birth anniversaries of saints, gurus, prophets, humanists and the gods and goddesses. Epigraphically evidences prove that festivals have been celebrated in India since Vedic times but by the passage of time the modes of celebration keeps changing and foregrounding themselves against our environment. In contemporary society one may experience various types of cultural ceremonies and cultural celebrations in India; and during these occasions cult of celebrations take place across the nation. This research paper strives to unveil and disclose that how preventive and eco-friendly steps can be introduced by us during such occasions in order to protect our environment for the betterment of life as well as to keep relevant our age old cultural celebrations, ceremonies and rituals. If one does not incline to accept eco-friendly steps within time, the coming generation will have to witness and experience the hazardous impact of environment in the form of deterioration of health and decline of life. Through the impact of culture, native people are celebrating festivities and ceremonies, and even more expensive, especially urban-dwellers are spending more on these cultural occasions. Along with such celebrations, people are making more pollution in terms of air, sound, water, soil, and so on. Paul Sears, at the University of Oregon, in his lecture titled "The Ecology of Man," mandated "serious attention to the ecology of man" and demanded "its skillful application to human affairs", and such eco-friendly and skillful application can protect our environment to a great extent.

Marriage, one of the socio-ritual ceremonies, stands as an outstanding example which takes place in each class and society across the nation. It defines, reflects, and symbolizes different societies and its contemporary practices of prevalent cultures and cultural trends. It takes place in variety of manners across the nation with especial reference to different sects and strata of society. The most common thing in all kinds of marriage ceremony is the act of 'invitation' which is generally and vastly

done by printed paper cards in the era of technology. During different types of events, Fredline et al., finds, "several indicators to evaluate the environmental impact of an event: energy use, transport, water consumption and recycling, and waste generated and recycled. However, while these indicators may relate to event activities that are most resource intensive, they use different units of measurement and so present difficulties in identifying which generate the greatest impacts, or where to focus efforts in order to reduce any negative impacts." (P. 15) Therefore, now-a-days an eco-friendly step is required and necessary to be introduced in the act of 'invitation' by bringing a little change in the conventional pattern of invitation. There are options to avoid the waste of papers, which can influence and reduce deforestation in huge amount. People and lovers of environment should adapt, popularize and propagate the use of digital mediums for invitation at maximum time of such occasions.

E-Invitation Wedding Cards: It is necessary to be brought in the mind of ruling government to authenticate and promote the digital mediums for invitation at each kind of occasion, at matrimonial or wedding occasion. The ruling authority should take initiative to introduce and manage 'E-Invitation Wedding cards' for marriage ceremony and it should be hassle free, convenient and easy to avoid unnecessary expenditure. Instead of pompous invitation cards, 'E-Invitation cards' can be introduced and used during various cultural celebrations and ceremonies including tonsure, tilkotsav, matrimonial, birthday, anniversary, etc. If this cult of invitation and registration for such occasions is opted and promoted by government, it can prove an important move for economical as well as environmental concerns. It will definitely reduce the consumption of paper and burden to our pockets up to a certain amount for all classes of people and society. Digital invitation will also reduce the discrimination between the rich and the poor created by the means of rich and cheap invitation cards to a certain level in the contemporary society. The 'digital' method of invitation should be legalized, acknowledged and promoted in order to stop deforestation and protect our environment

from numerous pernicious factors. E-Invitation is an urgent eco-friendly step in the present scenario for all classes of people in the whole country. However, the wastage of papers undermines our environment and quality of life, and digitalization can be used as a tool to handle the wastage of paper.

Print on Cloth: An Alternative Invitation Cards: If we are bothering about environmental concerns truly, we should adapt and promote the usage of cloth in the size of handkerchief whereupon the complete details about the occasion for the invitation can be printed similarly as on paper. Such invitation cards, after the ceremony or ritual is over, one can store, reuse at home for different purposes and it will never go waste in the manner of pompous and costly invitation cards printed on papers. During the countless ceremonies like marriage, tilkotasav, tonsure, and many more occasional celebrations, costly and pompous invitation cards are frequently seen, and, however, such kind of invitation cards seem to be neither good for our pocket nor for our environment. They are harmful to all of us because such invitation cards printed on papers are hardly seen to be recycled, instead, they are almost seem to be torn and thrown unintentionally and uselessly. But the cards printed on cloth will surely be reused by the receivers or must get recycled and can be resold to proprietors very easily.

Eco-friendly approach in Cultural Celebrations: When one wants to draw attention towards environmental concerns during different types of cultural celebrations, one comes to acknowledge and experience cultural festivals like Dipawali, Dussehara, Ganesha Puja, Christmas, etc., which involve people of all walks of life and their cult of celebrations. The cult of celebrating these festivals keeps changing by the passage of time, and today it has developed to such an extent that turned into a shocking trend of celebration against our environment. The awakening towards environment and eco-friendly initiatives of government can play very important role during such cultural celebrations and occasions across the nation. Eco-friendly methods can be devised to celebrate all cultural ceremonies. The preaching of Dussehara can be organized and presented in the form of painting competitions at various levels to avoid fire-crackers

and burning effigies of sin and evil. During such occasions painting-competitions can reveal the instinctive zeal of art of our youth generation over the battle of truth and false, good and evil, goodwill and ill-will, morality and immorality, justice and injustice. This new cult of painting competition at Panchayat level, block level, district level or state level can be introduced and organized during such cultural celebrations, festivals and occasions. This new cult of celebration by painting can reduce air pollution which is caused by blind usage of fire crackers. Immersion of Ganesh idols after the Ganesh festival in various cities is causing severe water pollution which leads to the death of tones of fish and many aquatic creatures across the nation. Hence, by coming out of our traditional pattern of celebration, we can reduce pollutions by practicing eco-friendly trends in cultural festivals and ceremonies.

In contemporary cultural celebrations human ecology appears to be an important factor as an ecological systemic approach towards the society and its organization. For human ecology, it "...is not man, but the community; not man's relation to the earth which he inhabits, but his relations to other men that concerns us most" (Park 2). Hence, for the protection of nature and environment people need to become cautious and eco-friendly at every step of celebration.

E-Invitation for Convocation Ceremonies: Nowadays when different educational and administrative bodies are promoting digitalization almost in every department, hence, during the important occasions like convocations, the digital method for invitation, instead of using printed invitation cards, can be utilized very smoothly and successfully. All the Indian academic institutions including IITs, NITs, central and state universities keep organizing orientation program and convocation ceremony regularly to enhance and promote academic actualization and activities. On this occasion the intellectuals should promote digitalization at every step of the event in order to avoid consumption of papers, printed invitation cards, etc. If all academic institutions begin to devise and use digital mode of invitation and conducting program, the consumption of papers surly be

reduced to a certain extent. It will be boon of technology in the form of eco-friendly step to protect our environment. On the occasion like Republic Day and Independence Day the national flag in the plastic print should be strictly banned for two reasons, first to save our environment by controlling the use of plastic, and second it protects our sentiments from being victim by watching our national flag lying in the heap of garbage very next day. Our blind snobbery and mindless consumerism started to demonstrate pernicious effects on Mother nature through various natural calamities which are caused by the blind and rapid selfish development of human beings. In the present scenario the cult of digital invitation can play a pivotal role in the field of environmental issues and it will be two times more beneficial to the whole humankind, because it will simultaneously reduce paper consumption and mercenary burden on pockets. In his book *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* Jared Diomond inculcates twelve environmental problems facing humankind in the present scenario. The first eight have historically contributed to the collapse of past societies: Deforestation and habitat destruction; soil erosion, water management problems, overhunting, overfishing, effects of introduced species on native species, overpopulation and increase per capita impact of people.

Green Wall: The change and development occur on behalf of the progress of science and technology but this concept of 'Green Wall' does not dependent on scientific and technological development. Instead, we need determination and commitment towards our responsibility in our contemporary cult of living style. The rapid construction of buildings reduces the area of Nature; and all types of pollution increase day by day from our city-pattern and flat-culture of modern life. In the time of environmental crisis we must think to protect our environment at every step of life and everywhere. We all know that all aided and self-financed degree colleges and schools need and build a fence to administer different kind of activities. These fences usually are seen built of bricks in the form of boundary walls at all academic institutions. These boundary walls can be converted into 'Green

Wall' by plantation under an authentic policy and scheme started and acknowledged by governing system or authority. If appropriate authorities wish, they can introduce the concept of green wall next to the fence at all types of academic institutions. The concept of 'Green Wall' should carry weightage in earning grades and accreditation by NAAC and funds from Government bodies. The concept of 'Green Wall' can attract attention towards plantation for various purposes.

District Garbage Plant (DGP): The concept of 'District Garbage Plant' should hold attention of the government and it should be built in each district due to several reasons. First of all the concept of District Garbage Plant will create a lot of job opportunity which is the dire need in the present scenario. The concept of 'D.G.P.' will play a pivotal role in handling the burning issue of pollution, a major problem in our environment at present. It will reduce the air pollution as well as enrich the purity of air and quality of soil and land. The plastic glasses and plates, which are used during any celebration or ceremony, can be sent for recycling and can fetch mercenary advantage too. Environmental humanities aim to use humanistic paradigms about meaning, culture, values, ethics, and responsibilities to address environmental problems and its decline. The environmental humanities strive to bridge traditional divides between the sciences and the humanities and it can play a significant role by directing to manage and recycle the worn out and used plastic articles. Chatterjee opines that, "Waste management, waste segregation and control have to be initiated at all levels and the public must be made aware of how to dispose domestic wastes. A total ban on all festival extremities is not the answer. Rules and regulations should be imposed on festive activities which have drastic impact on our environment. This will help us to address an ever growing problem of pollution in and around our cities and localities" (2010), and such eco-friendly and ecological systems should be devised and developed for the sustainable development; and such efforts will create paths that can prove milestones in handling environmental issues because the environment of our life is dependent on the life of our environment.

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