



## DIVERSE CULTURES-CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT

There are trillions of plants and breathing species to be seen all over the world. Land comes with diverse features on its terrain. We have the mountains, deserts and marshy lands. Some places are covered with dense forests, while others are barren. Water runs through rivers, streams and rivulets. There are the seas and oceans to be found on the hydrosphere. Diversity exists in nature. Cultural Diversity encompasses all walks of life, be it a life of a man who is a nature lover or a doctor in a metropolitan city. And this diversity can be found in a country, state, town, village or even a household. India as a country can be taken as a prime example for talking about on an issue like Diversity. Metropolitan cities of India are a colourful kaleidoscope of people with different skin tones, different physical appearances, different languages, different customs, traditional values and different outlook towards life. Envision and existence of a global village has done away with diverse issues to a large extent. People are exposed to same type of food, clothes, working culture and living style. More and more people have lost trace of their original roots. Cultural values have received a severe setback. But still there is hope. And this hope is revived time and again by some serious author or the other. Existence of culture breaks monotony of everyday living. It brings a breath of fresh air to work weary soul and man who wants to pack his bags and run off to his homeland, away from money minded society to a simple community that is full of warmth and brimming with as we say "milk of human kindness."

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Bible Verses about Cultural Diversity:-

Romans 14:10 So why do you condemn another believer {a}? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember we will all stand before the judgement seat of God.

Colossians 3:11 In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

Revelation 7:9-10 after these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could

number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

### 2. RESEARCH

Cultural Diversity is not something that creates disharmony among people if taken and understood for what it stands. A child is always curious to know about why one thing/person looks different from another. William Blake's "The Little Black Boy" is

perhaps the best answer to resolve a child's dilemma. Philosophy of Blake is best seen in "The Little Black Boy":

For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear,  
The cloud will vanish...

When I from black and he from white cloud free..

Blake is referring to the difference between white skinned children and dark skinned children. India as a colony under British, suffered a lot due to this colour differentiation.

"The Defence of Lucknow", a much read poem by Alfred Tennyson is a glaring example of what the British felt for Indians:

Keep the revolver in hand! You can hear him-the murderous mole! ...

...dark faces who fought...

For this poet, Indians who fought for English were like their brothers and rest were traitors. This poem written on 1857 Mutiny is a glaring example of British Imperialism at its height.

Cultural Diversity can be found within a community or different groups of people. Differences can create tension or one can simply forget these differences and learn to live in harmony as Poet William Blake says:

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;  
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:  
He is called by thy name,  
For He calls Himself a Lamb.  
He is meek, and He is mild,  
He became a little child.  
I a child, and thou a lamb,  
We are called by His name.

Instead of ignoring the child's curiosity, his curiosity should be appeased in some way or the other. All that we need to remember while doing so is that whatever the explanation might be, it should not create hatred for other things/persons in the child's mind.

Diversity is not uncommon among brothers and sisters. To hope all mankind to tread on one path would certainly not be possible. Furthermore diversity is spice of life.

Diversity is seen in nature. Different poets have used nature as theme for their poems. But each time some word or expression used differs because there is a need to do so. Style of writing too matters while

a poem is being composed. John Keats immortalizes nature in his "Ode On A Grecian Urn":

...A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme  
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape...

....ah, happy, happy boughs! That cannot shed  
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
And, happy melodist, unwearied,...

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,-that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

He captures nature on a Grecian Urn. The creativity celebrates the evergreen nature of God's creation.

William Wordsworth on the other hand took nature for his true guiding spirit. He believed that all good comes from nature. Nature provided him solace and he always felt at his best when he was amidst mountains and green dales. Both he and Keats are considered as poets of nature, but there is vast difference in how they bring nature closer to their readers.

Indian culture has been influenced by many things. Considered to be one of the oldest civilizations of this world, the great Indus Valley Civilization, gave to Indians its first civilized society, its first religion and dress sense. Though Hinduism came up probably as the first religion of this country, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism can be found in almost every part of this vast hinterland.

### 3. FINDINGS

India's earliest religious books, epics, scriptures and hand written records on a variety of topics have been translated into English. Since English has become a communicating language between people conversing in different languages, the old stories are read with enthusiasm and jest all over the country and abroad. Each writer writes in his own style and perception of all that he perceives from the written records. It's for this reason that one might find a new angle or a twisted turn in the universally popular story like that of Ramayana or Mahabharata.

Learned Brahmins were writing ideal stories about people of India. These came as moral stories for races to follow. Rishi Valmiki wrote Ramayana about 300 BC. And Mahabharata was written by Vyasa Rishi around the same time. These stories have been

written and re-written innumerable times. Though original story stays the same with Rama and Krishna as their main characters, much is changed here and there to suit the needs of the writer and his targeted readers. Caste system in India has always been ridiculed by many. But this very caste system and regional tribes have given rich diversity to cultural influence in these epics.

According to some scholars, people who seem to be strewn across the pages of these two popular epics come from the North-West of Indian Sub-Continent and they are a mixture of Kambojas, Rishikas, Sakas and Pahlavas etc. We have a mention of these people from Central Asia in the Bala Kanda, the first section of Ramayana. Kamdhenu, holy cow of Rishi Vasishatha, helped in forming up of a mythical community constituting of people related to above mentioned tribes. It is but obvious that some cultural traits of these people would be reflected in the writing itself. In Mahabharata too is a mention of tribes from Trans-Himalayan region and Central Asia.

Horse sacrifice mentioned in Ramayana is possible because horses were imported from Central Asia. Horses were not known to people of Indus Valley. Valmiki lays emphasis on Rama as a normal human being. But Tulsidas's Ramayana idolizes him as divine incarnation of Lord Vishnu on this earth. Though consort of Rama, Sita, was found by Raja Janak while ploughing a field, DasarataJataka came up with a new theory regarding Sita's family. Buddhists believed in keeping their dynasty pure by marrying within a community. Hence, this Ramayana says that Ram and his wife were siblings married off to retain the purity of their own race.

Cultural values of a particular sect influences even the most read literature. According to Paumachariyam version of Jain religion, all characters present in Ramayana are mere mortals and only Ravana seems to be endowed with some super human powers. Places visited by husband (Rama) and wife (Sita) are pilgrimage places related to Jains. Contemporary version of this old epic is interesting. Ravi VenuVenugopal is an NRI and he narrates the epic from Rama's view point. There is scientific touch given to the mythological tale.

According to Eugene M. Makar, diverse culture in Indian society has influenced almost every wake of Indian Society. This is what is reflected in writings of Indian English Literature. Different approaches lead to different answers as to what cultural diversity in India actually stands for. According to Exoticist approach, India is "a country that has existed for millennia in the imaginations of the Europeans." James Mills thought that primitive culture existed in India.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Culture of this whole world demands one popular language that can reach readers far and wide. English comes as the only solution. More and more literature of the world is being translated in English. We can read about life styles, viewpoints, problems, benefits being enjoyed by a global society and about particular traditional and cultural values that are dear to people belonging to a particular region via these translated books.

Cultural Diversity keeps a race alive with all its glorious past and people from other parts of the world get to read something new and enthralling almost each day of the year.

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