**The Power Of Culture To Create A Better Future**

**SOURCE:** https://indiafellow.wordpress.com/2016/11/24/the-power-of-culture-to-create-a-better-future/

[Deepika Pandita](https://indiafellow.wordpress.com/author/deepikapandita2/) / [November 24, 2016](https://indiafellow.wordpress.com/2016/11/24/the-power-of-culture-to-create-a-better-future/)

India is most probably the most diverse nation in the world. Its geographical limits stretch from the great Himalayas in the north to the tropical peninsular south, and there is a dizzying variety of languages, ethnic groups, beliefs and lifestyles that a few countries possess. The most fascinating part is the combination of a young nation and an ancient country rolled into one, where the past and present constantly collide. India’s *culture*, like its people, is a rich mosaic, whose myriad elements have evolved themselves from its ancient roots, foreign influences and its regional variety. In the words of Sir Herbert Risley, “Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom and religion which strike the observer in India, there can still be discerned a certain uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin”.



The amalgamation of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists and Christians, along with the plethora of languages and dialects, make this biggest democracy, a unique example of unity in diversity. The Hindus may dominate most of the country, but over time, there has been the formation of a secular Indian society who largely follow a live-and-let-live philosophy. From his long and firsthand experience in India, Vincent A. Smith says that the civilization of India “has many features which differentiate it from that of the other regions of world, while they are common to the whole country in a degree, sufficient to justify its treatment as a unity in the history of human, social and intellectual development”.

It is this underlying tolerance that has enabled India to remain a unique tapestry of varied cultures and notwithstanding periodic spells of strife. It has been the pious lands of sages and seers, who have left behind a tradition of piety, penance, spiritual greatness and conquest of passion. The holy Hindu scriptures, the Vedas, aptly described as the storehouses of spiritual wisdom, continue to inspire generations with their philosophic depth and natural conservation. The following verse from Rig-Veda describes the elements of nature as the supreme power:

*“Fire is Him, the Sun is also Him*

*The wing is Him, the Moon also Him*

*Light is also Him, the Mind is also Him*

*Water is Him and the King is also an embodiment of Him”*

This fervor of natural conservation is prevalent in day-to-day lives of Indians. People worshipping trees of Peepal (Ficus Religiosa) and Tulsi (holy basil) is a proof  of this kind of moral imprinting. The “Chipko movement”, in which the villagers hugged trees, in order to protect them from getting axed, or the revolt of Bishnoi tribesmen to ban hunting in the Rajasthan forests are some inspiring examples of human commitment towards nature.

In several Himalayan states like Uttarakhand ecology is highly synonymous with the religions practised. In the nine districts in Uttarakhand, there are 168 sacred natural sites including 75 sacred forests, 74 sacred groves, 10 water bodies and 9 pastures. In some cases, entire forest areas are dedicated to deities. Thus, the forests flourish, as mere trespassing is considered as a taboo. The firm beliefs center on worship of the natural elements like air, sun, water and fire form the principles of various rituals and ceremonies. The complete abstinence from eating meat in the Jainism underlines the respect for animals, which are considered at par with humans in the religion.

The major challenge lies in the continuance and adoption of these moral values. To this young people can contribute, provided a sense of pride is imbibed in them. The youth of the nation uphold an important and inevitable responsibility of preserving this Pandora of cultural and natural heritage .With the increasing distance between man and nature due to escalating urbanization and modernization there is a threat looming for the country’s future. This delicate strand of *cultural unity and natural reverence* is to be held on to strongly, in order to sustain a better tomorrow, a future for which our ancestors have laid down their lives. Now, it is in the hands of  the younger generation to uphold this torch of cultural unity for the rest of the world to share, follow and emulate, and not get dazed by the superficial prosperity and material achievements of the west, where man sets foot on the moon in his quest for space travel, but finds himself isolated in his own society and community.