

Cultural Issues in Development

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Culture and Development

Culture is encompassing and in a sense a reflection of nature. Culture has been defined by Herskovits (1952) as a Man made part of the environment. Contact of technology created by Man, whether primitive or advanced with nature creates culture. In other words, technology conditions environment and is also conditioned by the environment and the contact of the two, that is, technology and environment, leads to the development of culture.

The term culture as used by sociologists has a much broader meaning than it is usually given. In the conventional sense, it refers to the 'higher' things in life—painting, music, poetry, sculpture, philosophy etc., but in the sociological usage, culture is referred to as the totality of what is learned by individuals as members of society. It is one's way of life and includes the aspect of thinking, acting and feeling. Sir Edward Tylor (1871) defines: 'Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'. The emphasis here is to consider culture as a social heritage. In other words, it is the gift of society to an individual. Malinowski (1994) considers that this social heritage may be said to consist of both the material and non-material intangible part. Alternatively, it may be viewed as a total way of life based on instruments, mental, social and material of which this may be constituted.

Regularities in human behaviour occur because men possess culture and have common standards of good and bad, right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate. Men share beliefs concerning the nature of the World and of Man, because they have similar attitudes and concerns towards the environment—social, biological and physical—in which they live. Culture, according to George

Murdock, is to a large extent 'ideational'; it refers to the standards, beliefs and altitudes in terms of which people act.

Ralph Linton pointed out that the recognition of the significance of culture is 'one of the most important scientific developments of modern time'. He continued: 'It has been said that the last thing which a develler in the deep sea would be likely to discover would be water. He would become conscious of its existence only if some accident brought him to the surface and introduced him to air. Man, throughout most of his history, has been only vaguely conscious of the existence of culture and has owed even this consciousness to contrast between the customs of his own society and those of some other with which he happens to be brought into contact. The ability to see the culture of one's own society as a whole to evaluate its patterns and appreciate their implications, calls for a degree of objectivity which is rarely if ever achieved.'

The important facts about culture with which we must begin are that it is learned and that it is shared. The things men learn during the course of their lives come primarily from the groups into which they are born and in which they live. The habits acquired by an infant are patterned on those of its family and its tribe. Parents in the process of rearing children inculcate their own patterns of behaviour transmitting to each new generation, the knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and attitudes of the old. Thus, children learn, in a number of ways from their environment. These characteristics have led to the definition of culture as man's social heritage and it is believed that behaviour which is universal but unlearned or is peculiar to the individual, is not a part of culture.

There has been a lack of correspondence between scientific and technological changes on the one hand and social development and value changes on the other. This has influenced the direction and rate of development and has resulted in creating different kinds of problems in different socio-cultural milieu. In the context of developing societies as a result of varied forms of social structure and value-orientations, the techno-economic directionality of development could not show positive results. As a result, in most of the developing societies, the socio-structural arrangements and values assert themselves and produce predictable, as well as, unpredictable consequence for development (Dube, 1987).

Culture of a nation acts both as a promoting as well as retarding factor in the development process. We can positively employ our cultural values and traditional knowledge related to our arts, literature,

dance, music and folk practices for development. Even the technological innovations can be related to the needs and values of the people. There is also a need to promote value such as honesty, toleration, cooperation etc. for building of group solidarity. It has also been observed that some of the traditions and values embedded in our culture such as superstitions, fatalistic attitude, caste norms and religious biases, etc., have affected the development process adversely. Besides faulty perception about development activities, direct inadequate communication, vested interests and factionalism also impede the development process. A case in point is change in our nation as a result of onslaughts of modernisation through industrialisation and urbanisation. This has resulted in the erosion of our cultural roots and heritage. There is an increase in the volume of consumerism, crime, sex, violence etc. Even the way of life of the people has changed and people have started adopting western lifestyle and mannerism to a certain extent. Our educational system, based on western pattern, appears to be responsible for this. We also observe a generation gap between the youth and the old and it has affected our cultural ethos negatively. Besides children showing disrespect to their parents, we are also witnessing assertion of women in our society. This has resulted in having both positive, as well as negative consequence for social development. There is a need to preserve our culture and make development relevant to our way of life. The development process needs to handle values prevalent in our social system with dynamism and focus on idioms, images, themes and symbols that bring progress, happiness and harmony among people in addition to employing cultural items that reflect the existing state of a society (Mehta, 1992).

One important aspect is whether we can conceive of development in a universalistic sense or do we have to consider it as culture specific. Anthropologists have provided us the concept of cultural relativism and sense of ethnocentrism attached to each of the cultural groups. This help us to be better aware and knowledgeable about the ways of living of the people across a culture and within a culture. Notwithstanding many differences and similarities within and across nations, each society has conceived of development in its cultural framework, in relevance with its value system. As such, cultural imperatives, causes and consequences of development need to be taken up seriously. This will also include the moral and non-material dimensions of culture (Mehta, 1999).

Contact of technology created by man with nature creates culture.

There is an emergence of groups to regulate their behaviour patterns through the establishment of certain norms and values. Any perceptive understanding of culture will demand examining 'Culture for the people' as well as 'Culture by the people'. In the former sense, culture plays a deterministic role in establishing behaviour pattern of people through the indoctrination of norms and values, while in the latter sense, Men are seen as rational human beings, creating meaningful responses out of the available alternative stimuli and generating patterns conducive to emerging settings, situations and contents (Hannel, 1990).

As a consequence of modernisation process, culture by the people was limited to a small section of the population, while culture for the people accommodated all those who got marginalised, alienated, disprivileged and discriminated by the market economic forces. Many of them, because of cultural sensitivity, found human symbols and codes created for them for their social existence and survival, as more security prone. In the above context, grassroots socio-political movements and popular culture through the involvement of NGOs may be a suitable strategy for national development (Mehta, 1992).

Value change can come about in a society through a change in information or through political, economic and technological change. After World War II, development was viewed as a process of extending modern, technical know-how and social arrangements of the industrialized nations to urban centres in developing nations and from there into the backward rural areas. However, the modernisation paradigm had many negative consequences for the development of the developing nations. First, the transnational western education uprooted the young people from their culture. They were trained as modernists with various professional labels in isolation from their even cultural heritage. In this process, they lost their ability to understand their own way of life. Secondly, mass-media through consumer-oriented advertisements have destroyed local art and culture. Besides, consumerism, crime rates, ethnic conflicts, sex, violence and corruption are becoming a way of life. Cultural conquest rather than cooperation appears on the world scene. Thirdly, a large majority of people in developing nations find themselves a mismatch with the industrial economy. They are alienated with and marginalised from the modernisation process. As a result they have a tendency to get back into their traditional way of life, thus, strengthening the ethnic identities and culture of their respective groups (Mehta, 1992).

Currently, the development theorists are seized with the model of

communication policies that should promote political, economic and socio-cultural negotiations and integration to form a common national culture as a basis for development. In this context, mass-media can play an instrumental role for negotiating cultural conflicts and agreeing on certain values (Serves, 1986, 1986, white, 1990).

Further, it has been realized that one has to move beyond economics and look for new indicators for culturally specific sustainable development. There is a need felt by the leaders of the nations to have a shift in the entire belief system that promoted the industrial revolution. Such a shifting in the belief system pertaining to a culture assumes significance because of a shift in perception of what is important, what is valuable, and the goals to be pursued and the ways to measure collective progress towards these goals. It is in this context that in the development of a nation, it is argued that there is a need to decode specific cultural patterns, ideals and goals in different societies and to define basic human needs for a sustainable cultural development (Henderson, 1990). This would warrant a re-thinking on social indicators beyond economic parameters of development.

The present study is an attempt to delineate the cultural dimensions of sustainable development as viewed by university youth. The United Nations' definition of youth includes any person between 15 and 24 years (both males and females). Of this group, the most significant is the educated university youth, who are soon going to enter the mainstream of social life and play a decisive role in the development process. In other words, the youth can play a significant role in promoting sustainable cultural development in our society.

Objectives of the Study

Keeping in view, the nature of the study, the following objectives were set:

(i) To analyse the socio-cultural and economic profile of university youth, that is, a general profile of students in terms of gender, family background, income, caste etc.

(ii) To elicit the views and social outlook of university youth towards selected topical issues related to sustainable cultural development.

(iii) To relate the views of university youth on selected issues with their background, especially sex and academic courses attended by them.

Methods of Data Collection

The following procedures were followed in the collection of data:

The locale of the study was the Panjab University campus. In all, there are ten different faculties pursuing various subjects. Out of these, the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Business Management and Commerce and the Faculty of Laws were chosen. The Faculty of Arts and that of Science, have 13 departments each. In order to have a comparative view of university youth towards cultural issues in development, it was thought best to select three departments each from the Faculties of Arts and Science besides the Faculty of Business Management and Commerce and the Faculty of Laws. Accordingly, three departments from the Faculty of Science and three from the Faculty of Arts were chosen randomly. These departments in the Faculty of Science were Zoology, Anthropology and Statistics and while in the Faculty of Art we had Geography, Psychology and Political Science. In the Faculty of Business Management and Commerce, students attending Master in Personnel Management and Industrial Relations and Master of Commerce were included in the study while other students studying in the Department of Laws were chosen to represent the professional group along with them.

A quota of 90 students, 30 from science departments, 30 from social science departments, 20 from the department of Business Management and Commerce and 10 from the department of law were chosen. A list of students attending the various courses in these departments at the post graduation level or honours school level was obtained separately for boys and girls. This was done with a purpose to further classify views of students on sex-basis. An equal preparation of male and female students, that is, 5 each was chosen randomly from the selected departments. The questionnaire developed for the study was filled in by the students.

Findings

I

An attempt is being made here to examine the demographic, social, cultural and economic factors likely to affect the views of the youth towards cultural issues related to development.

(i) *Sex and Different Courses Attended by the Respondents*

All the 90 respondents selected for the study purposes were analysed according to their sex and different courses attended by them. In the science group, 25 out of 30 students were attending M.Sc. courses, out of which 15 were males and 10 were females. However, 5 female respondents belonged to B.Sc (Hons) courses. Sex-wise, the males and the females represent an equal member. Further, out of 30 respondents in the Social Sciences an equal proportion of them, that is, 15 each, were males and females. On the other hand, in the Professional group, 5 males and 5 females were chosen from the Department of Law, while 10 males and 10 females were taken from the University Business School (Masters in Personnel Management and Industrial Relations and Masters in Commerce).

(ii) *Age of the Respondents*

Age is another important factor which may influence the views of the respondents. However, since the majority of them were at the post graduation level, there were not many variations observed in this regard. The majority of the students in all the three groups, that is, Science, Social Science and Professional groups were in the age group of 20 to 23 years.

(iii) *Socio-Cultural Characteristics*

(a) *Religion*: Religion also influences the outlook of an individual. The majority of students in all the three groups, that is, Science, Social Science and Professional group belonged to Hindu religious group (75, i.e. 83.33%). The second pre-dominant religious group of students was that of Sikhs (21, i.e. 23.33%). There were only 2 Christians, these were two females in the social science group. One male respondent belonged to Muslim religious group and another male belonged to the Buddhist religion in the Social Science group. The pre-ponderous of the Hindus and Sikhs may be due to their higher representation of population in this area.

(b) *Caste*: Caste is an important institution which regulates the interaction of people in our society. Castes have always been assigned hierarchical positions to constitute a caste system.

Most of the students belonged to the Khatri/Arora community (28 i.e. 31.11%). The other significant group was that of Brahmins, that is, 19 (21.11%). Jats also constituted a higher proportion, that is, 16

(17.77%). Banias/Jains made up 11.11% of students' representation. There were as many as 6 Rajputs (6.66%) as well, while 11 (12.22%) belonged to the lower castes comprising Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes. Two Christians and one Muslim had also been categorised along with them. It is clear from the above analysis that the majority of the students, that is, 79 (87.78%) belonged to upper castes while only 11 (12.22%) represented the lower caste group. This distribution pattern of caste depicts the urban social structure in favour of upper castes besides demonstrating the fact that it is persons from these castes who go in for higher education.

(c) *Family Type*: Family structure is significant for socialisation of children to acquire various roles. Broadly, we can classify family structure as nuclear type generally comprising spouses and their unmarried children while the joint family type was made up of a number of married males, their spouses and children along with their parents using a common hearth, residence and worshipping place. The majority of the university youth, 73 (81.11%) belonged to the nuclear families, whereas 17 of them (18.89%) belonged to joint families. More males than females in social science and professional groups had reported belonging to joint family. The above analysis again confirms a typical urban social structure where nuclearisation of family has become a way of life.

(iv) *Economic Characteristics*: Economic level of the family is generally judged from their monthly income. Income is always an indicator of the status of the family and is correlated with the educational and occupational level of its members.

More number of students, that is, 29 (32.23%) had monthly income of the family in between Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 10,000 whereas 19 of them (21.12%) were in the monthly income bracket of Rs. 10,000 to 15,000 while as many as 21 (23.33%) fell in the monthly income group of Rs. 15,000 to 20,000. There were only 5 of them (5.5%) having monthly income of Rs. 20,000 to 25,000, whereas a fairly good number of them 13 (14.44%) were having monthly income above Rs. 25,000. By and large, most of the students belonged to middle and upper income categories as only 3 of them were having monthly family income of Rs. 5,000.

(v) *Type of Schooling Done*: The type of school attended by the students may be indicative of their socialisation in the early years of life, besides family influence.

As many as 12 of the students had attended private school

(13.33%). However, it is interesting to observe that quite a large number of students 38 (42.22%) had studied in public/convent schools. If we combine students having studied in public/convent and private schools, they outnumbered (50) students having attended who government schools (40), which is indicative of better school educational facilities in Chandigarh.

(vi) *Rural-Urban Background*: The rural-urban background of the students is also important in shaping their opinion and social outlook towards various aspects of life. The majority of the students, 72 (80%) were having urban background whereas only 18 (20.00%) were drawn from rural areas. In the science group, all the persons belonging to rural background were males (7). A higher proportion of students in the professional group belonged to urban background. However, sex-wise, there appeared not much difference between social science and professional groups. The above analysis is in relevance with the urban social structure and is indicative of the fact that the students as a group belong to the emerging middle class structure of our society.

II

An attempt has been made to elicit the views of the youth on the issues related to sustainable cultural development.

Perception of University Youths about the Concept of Development

The respondents, that is University youths were asked to express their views in regard to their perception about the concept of development. Based on multiple response, in the overall analysis, out of 90 respondents as many as 60 (66.6%) perceived development in terms of economic growth while another 44 (48.89%) considered industrialisation and urbanisation as key dimensions of development. As many as 42 (46.66%) considered personality growth of individuals as significant while 36 (40.00%) viewed socio-cultural change as an important aspect of development. Only 24 (26.66%) considered democratisation of political system as important for development. Although the economic dimension seems to have been highlighted by the majority of respondents belonging to science, social science and professional groups, the factor of personality growth of individuals was considered significant only by respondents in social science (18) and professional group (17). Again, the socio-

cultural change had been stated by a higher proportion of students in the social science group and the democratisation of the political system had been mentioned by more students in social science and professional group, than in the science group. These varied responses may be due to different levels of exposure these students may have to mass media, their personal interactions and their interest in various subjects.

Positive Role of Culture in Development

The respondents were then asked to state whether culture could play a positive role in development. Out of 90 respondents, all except two (both in the science group), replied in the affirmative.

Further, those who replied in the affirmative were provided with a set of factors related to the role of culture in development and they were asked to rate these on a four-point scale of importance. A factor rated most important was assigned a score of 4, a factor rated as important was given a score of 3, a factor rated as less important was given a score of 2 while a factor rated as least important by the respondent was allotted a score of 1. Apparently, there was not much difference observed in regard to responses of respondents from three faculties. As such, the mean score values were worked out in respect of both male and female respondents. An overall mean score value was worked for each of these factors and these factors were arranged in the descending order on the basis of the overall mean score value. The factor with the highest mean score value was rated as number one, while the one with the least value was considered as the last important factor, on the role of culture in development. This procedure has been followed consistently in all questions related to rating of factors on the scale of importance.

Table 1

Distribution of Views of the Respondents on the Role of Culture in Development

Sl. No.	Views of the Respondents	Male Mean Score Value (N=43)	Female Mean Score Value (N=45)	Overall Mean Score Values (N=88)
1.	Relating education to the needs of the people	3.43	3.56	3.49
2.	Promoting moral values such as honesty, toleration, cooperation, and brotherhood	3.20	3.09	3.15
3.	Introducing appropriate technology	2.69	3.25	2.97
4.	Utilising appropriately, economic gains towards creative uses	2.70	2.70	2.70
5.	Utilising appropriately, our traditional knowledge based on folk practices	2.25	2.25	2.25

An examination of Table 1 shows that in the overall analysis, the factor 'relating education to the needs of the people' had been rated as the most significant one (3.49) while 'utilising appropriately our traditional knowledge based on folk practices' (2.25) had been rated as the least important factor. 'Promoting moral values such as honesty, toleration, cooperation and brotherhood' had been assigned second position in the rating order, while 'introducing appropriate technology' had been given a third position. 'Utilizing appropriately the economic gains towards creative uses' had been given the fourth place. The sex wise analysis shows that the factors 'relating education to the needs of the people' and 'introducing appropriate technology' had been assigned higher mean score values by females than males. As such, these factors are more significant from the females' point of view. This variation in their responses may be attributable to their different socialisation or exposure to the mass media besides personal interest.

Cultural Barriers to Development

The respondents, 30 in each of the three groups, that is, science, social science and professional, were asked to state their views on

whether tradition and values act as barriers to development or not. Out of 90 respondents, as many as 63 (70.00%) agreed to the above statement while 27 (30.00%) disagreed.

All those who agreed that traditions and values act as barriers to development, were provided with a set of factors and they were asked to rate these on the scale of importance in regard to their role as barriers to development. An examination of Table 2 on the rating of these factors course wise (science, social science and professional group), shows that on the basis of over all mean score values; 'superstitions' had been considered as most important factor (3.12) while 'lack of communication due to language difficulty' (1.66) had been rated as the least important factor acting as barrier to development. The other factors in order are 'religious biases and prejudices', 'vested interests and factionalism', 'rigid following of caste norms', 'fatalistic attitude' and 'faulty perception about development activities'. It is further observed that the science students had rated 'faculty perceptions about the development activities', higher than the social science and professional students, whereas

Table 2

Distribution of Views of Respondents on the Ways Traditions and Values Act as Barriers to Development

Sl. No.	Factors acting as barriers to Development	Science	Social	Professional	Overall
		Mean Score Value	Science Mean Score Value	Mean Score Value	Mean Score Value
1.	Superstitions	3.04	3.14	3.20	3.12
2.	Religious biases and prejudices	3.00	3.14	3.15	3.09
3.	Vested interests and factionalism	2.63	3.09	3.00	2.90
4.	Rigid following of caste norms	2.04	3.19	3.30	2.84
5.	Fatalistic attitude	2.06	3.14	2.70	2.63
6.	Faculty perceptions about development activities	2.86	2.45	2.20	2.50
7.	Lack of communication due to language difficulty	1.09	2.24	1.65	1.66

social science and professional students had rated 'rigid following of caste norms' as a factor higher than 'superstitions', 'religious biases and prejudices' and 'vested interest and factionalism'. Science students had also given a lower rating to the factor of 'fatalistic attitude' than social science and professional students. Even the factor of 'rigid following of caste norms' had been assigned a lower mean score value by science than social science and professional students. This shows that science students are comparatively more scientific in their outlook than the other students. Again, the social science students seem to be obsessed with the caste syndrome in our society.

Modernisation Processes Responsible for Erosion of our Culture

The respondents were asked to give their opinion on the notion that modernisation processes were responsible for the erosion of our culture. Out of 90 respondents, as many as 73 (81.11%) replied in affirmative while 17 (18.89%) responded negatively. Interestingly enough, a higher number of students from science and professional groups (7 each) replied in the negative. Again, more females than males in the science group responded negatively to the question.

Those who had replied in affirmative were provided with a set of factors and were asked to rate these on a four-point scale of importance. In the overall analysis, as shown in Table 3 it is clear that the factor 'uprooting of young people from their cultural heritage' was rated as the most important one while the factor 'satellite communication leading to increased crime rate' was considered least important. The other factors rated in order of importance in between these were 'conflict of traditional and modern values resulting in personality distortions and unclear pathways of action', 'increased mass media exposure raising expectations leading to frustration due to their non-fulfillment', 'growing socio-economic disparities', 'promotion of consumerism', 'migration of people from rural to urban centres causing cultural adjustment problems' and 'disruption of people from cultural roots'. However, the science students, especially females had given a higher mean score value (2.99) to the factor of 'disruption of people from cultural roots' and to the factor 'satellite communication leading to increased crime rates' (2.74) than some of the other factors stated above.

Further, in the science group, it was observed that more female than male students considered 'conflict of traditional and modern values', as well as 'uprooting of young people from their cultural heritage' as more important factors than the others. But in the social science group, the factor of 'satellite communication leading to increased crime rate etc.' was considered more important by males than females while it was vice-versa in the case of the factor 'increased mass-media exposure raising expectations'. Again more males than female students seemed to be giving more importance to factors such as 'growing socio-economic disparities' and 'migration of people from rural to urban centres'. This may be due to the fact that they are well exposed to these problems. In the professional group, more females than males were suggesting factors such as 'conflict of traditional and modern values', 'growing socio-economic disparities', 'promotion of consumerism', 'disruption of people from cultural roots' as more important than others. However, in the case of 'satellite communications leading to increased crime-rates', more males than female students were considering it important than other factors. These differences in views may be attributed to their socialisation, as well as, to their perceived interest in these areas.

Modernisation Process in Changing the Way of Life of the People

The respondents were asked to express their views whether due to modernisation processes, people have changed their way of life or not. Almost all the respondents, 86 (95.55%) replied in the affirmative to the above question. Only 4 of them (4.44%) thought it otherwise.

All those respondents (86) who replied in the affirmative were asked to state the ways in which modernisation processes have changed our way of life. On the basis of multiple responses received, it was observed that out of 86 respondents as many as 56 (65.41%) had felt that due to modernisation processes there was an increase in individualistic, rather than collective approach. This is followed by factors such as 'diminishing importance given to traditional while adopting modern practices (47.67%)'; 'more intake of junk food, beverages and liquor (46.5%)', 'breaking up of family ties (46.5%)', 'adopting western dresses and mannerisms (45.34%)', 'more use of English than native languages (33.72%)' and 'less sanctity to the institution of marriage due to living together of couples by mutual consent' (23.2%). Among the students belonging to the three different faculties, it was observed that science students had given more

importance to 'adopting western dresses and mannerisms' next to 'individualistic rather than collective approach'. The social science students also seemed to be considering this factor more important than 'breaking of family ties'. However, the professional students considered 'breaking of family ties' as a factor to be included along with 'individualistic rather than collective approach' as a consequence of modernisation process. These varied perceptions of science and social science students from that of the professional students may be due to their different exposure to these subjects.

Generation Gap between the Youth and the Old

As a result of modernisation processes, it is observed that there is a generation gap between the youth and the old. The respondents were asked to mention whether they thought there was a generation gap between the youth and the old. As many as 81 (90%) out of 90 respondents replied 'yes' while only (10.00%) replied 'No'. Some of the students in science group, that is, 5 out of 30 (1 male, 4 females), stated 'No' to the question.

Those (81) who replied in the affirmative were asked to mention the ways this gap between the youth and the old had affected our cultural fabric. On the basis of multiple responses received, as many as 65 (80.24%) respondents mentioned the factor of 'limited communication between parents and children' as affecting our cultural fabric whereas 52 (64.20%) selected 'attitude of defiance and disobedience towards parents'. Again 34 (42.00%) mentioned that the 'parental control and guidance over children' had become weak. As many as 33 (40.73%) pointed out that there was 'increased insecurity between parents and children' whereas only 9 (11.11%) referred to 'physical abuse of parents by children' affecting our way of life. Among the respondents belonging to different courses, a higher proportion of students of science group had chosen 'attitude of defiance and disobedience towards parents' than 'limited communication between parents and children'. The students belonging to social science group did not show any difference with the overall analysis of the factors. However, among the professional students, a higher number of them had mentioned the factor of 'physical abuse of parents by children' affecting our cultural fabric. Again, a slightly higher number seemed to be suggesting 'increased insecurity between parents and children' as more important than the factor 'parental control and guidance has become weak.' These

differences in views, in between different groups of students may be based on their personal information, exposure to mass media and experiences in the social circles.

Assertion of Women in our Society

As a consequence of education and employment opportunities due to development initiative in our society, women are allegedly acquiring almost an identical status with men in our society. The respondents were asked to state whether they were in favour of assertions of women or not in our society. Out of 90 respondents, 81 (90.00%) were in favour of assertion of women whereas 9 (10.00%) did not favour it. Most of them who did not favour it (5) were in the science group (4 males 1 females). Interestingly, one female each in social science and professional group also did not favour it. All those respondents who were in favour of assertion of women were asked to state how it would affect our way of life. On the basis of multiple responses given by respondents as many as 71 (87.6%) had stated that the 'enhanced social status of a woman will increase her participation in development work' while 61 (75.30%) had mentioned that 'equal distribution of resources will enhance her role in decision making.' Further, 27 (33.3%) had mentioned that freedom of expression would lead women to have personal choices in marriages, whereas 13 (16.04%) had also stated that assertion of women might result in disturbing 'norms of modesty in our traditional culture'. Only 9 (11.11%) had stated that assertion of women in our society might result in 'conflicts in our social life due to competing familial and occupational roles'. This is reflective of their traditional social outlook. The students belonging to science and professional groups seemed to have given the same order of importance as represented by factors in the over-all analysis. However, a small proportion of students (4) in the science group were giving more importance to the factor of 'conflicts in our social life due to competing familial and occupational roles'. This may be indicative of their sense of commitment to the profession.

Possibility of Preserving our Culture

Changes in our way of life have been observed as a consequence of modernisation processes and development initiatives. Some of these changes have affected our way of life adversely. As such, the students were asked to express their views whether there could be

possibility of preserving our culture. Out of 90 respondents, 80 (88.89%) replied 'yes', whereas 10 (11.11%) stated 'no'. All those who stated 'no' in the professional group were males while in science and social science group; an equal number of males and females indicated so. All those respondents (80) who mentioned 'yes' to the above question were asked to indicate their views in regarding ways of preserving our culture. On the basis of multiple responses, as shown in Table 4, fifty-two (65.00%) respondents stated that strong family socialisation of children about values could help us in preserving our culture whereas 50 (62.5%) mentioned that 'integration of cultural heritage with formal education in school' could help us in this direction.

As many as 48 (60.00%) respondents had stated 'Promotion of cultural values through mass-media' while 30 (37.50%) respondents had mentioned promotion of art and cultural activities. As many as 30 (37.50%) had also stated that 'increased participation in fairs and festivals related to our way of life' could help us in preserving our culture. Students in the science group seemed to be considering 'promotion of cultural values through mass-media' and integration of cultural heritage with formal education in school' more important than other factors whereas students in the social science group placed

Table 4
Distribution of the views of respondents on the ways of preserving our culture

Sl. No.	Respondents	Science (N=26)	Social Science (N=28)	Professional (N=26)	Grand total (N=80)
1.	Strong family socialization of children about values	15	17	20	52 (65.00)
2.	Integration of cultural heritage	16	16	18	50 (62.00)
3.	Promotion of cultural issues through mass media	18	12	18	48 (60.00)
4.	Promotion of art and cultural activities	12	12	6	30 (37.50)
5.	Increased participation in fairs and festivals related to our way of life	7	14	9	30 (37.50)

* Multiple Responses

'increased participation in fairs and festivals to our way of life' next to 'integration of cultural heritage with formal education in school'. Even, professional students seemed to be favouring 'increased participation in fairs and festivals related to our way of life' more than 'promotion of art and cultural activities' for the preservation of our culture.

The differences in their views are to some extent in relevance with their academic background as science students seemed to be stressing on the 'role of media and education for preserving our culture' vis-à-vis social science and professional students who were in favour of 'increased participation in fairs and festivals as a way of preserving it'.

CONCLUSIONS

The university youths, by and large, represent a homogeneous group in terms of age distribution and socio-economic background as they are mostly drawn from the urban setting. However, it was observed that there were divergent views of the students on cultural issues related to development on the basis of their belonging to different faculties, that is, courses attended as well as on the basis of their sex. To illustrate the point, in response to whether modernisation processes are responsible for the erosion of our culture or not, course-wise and sex-wise analysis suggests that the science students, especially females have rated disruption of people from cultural roots and satellite communication leading to increased crime rates etc. higher than other factors. Further within this group, more female than male students considered conflict of traditional and modern values as well as uprooting of young people from their cultural heritage more important than other factors. But in the social science group, the factor of satellite communication leading to increased crime rate etc., was considered more important by males than females while it was vice versa in the case of the factor, 'increased mass-media exposure raising expectations'. Further, more males than females were giving more importance to factors such as growing socio-economic disparities and migration of people from rural to urban centres. However, in the professional group, more females than males were considering factors such as conflict of traditional and modern values, growing socio-economic disparities, promotion of consumerism and disruption of people from cultural roots as more important than others.

These differences on certain aspects of cultural issues of development may be mainly due to differentials observed in gender socialisation, extent of exposure to mass media and interaction with the peer groups, personal interests and motives to acquire knowledge on certain aspects of development and on the perception of youth towards cultural issues. Notwithstanding, these differences based on sex and faculties attended by the students, one can however make an attempt to draw some inferences based on the analysis done of the views of students towards such issues.

It is observed that the majority of youths studying in various departments of the Panjab University and forming part of the sample come from middle and upper middle-income groups. They have had good schooling and to a large extent their parents are well-educated and holding fairly good occupational positions. Their pursuits for higher education are indicative of the fact that coming from good socio-economic background, they are well motivated to secure better occupational positions for themselves, after acquiring their post-graduation degrees.

By and large, the university youths are well aware of the fact that culture is significant in promoting development of our society. Education has to be related to the needs of our people and this may go a long way in promoting cultural harmony among our population. However, they are also aware of the fact that certain traditions and values in our society are detrimental for our development. Apart from the religious biases and prejudices, fatalistic attitude and rigidity of caste norms acting as barriers to development, they strongly feel that modernisation processes in terms of western influences have uprooted our younger population from their cultural heritage and created frustrations among them. Besides, there is an increase in individualism and acquiring of western lifestyle. These have created distortions in the thinking of our youths and they are easily given in to various vices. Perhaps, the most corrective measure is the right type of education for them. This can help in bridging the generation gap between the youth and the old as well. As a consequence of this gap, it is observed that the youths are becoming less responsible to their older generation. As regards assertion of women in our society, the opinion appears to be divided. Some are in favour of the emancipation of women in our society while others say that this will create conflicting familial relationships and affect adversely the family solidarity. They also feel that strong family socialisation of

children about our values can help us in preserving the culture of our society. We need not totally reject our traditional values as a part of the development process but we should simultaneously evaluate them along with modern values and together, those that are significant for promotion of cultural harmony in our society, should be given preference over others, for sustainable cultural development of our nation.

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