



Crucial Impact of Globalization among Lepchas of Village Ranka, North Sikkim, India

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ABSTRACT

Globalization can be explained as a process by the means of which any idea, goods, traditions or customs becomes international or simply we can say it becomes “global” and reaches people spread across whole world. Globalization puts an impact on every society. Hence, this paper highlights the Crucial Impact of Globalization among Lepchas of North Sikkim. Lepchas are the original inhabitants of Sikkim. The Lepchas are of mongoloid stock and some anthropologist trace their origins to Mongolia or Tibet. However, the Lepchas themselves have no such history of migration in their traditional knowledge. They believe themselves to be the natives of the Sikkim and even consider Mt. Kanchenjunga as the abode of their ancestors. Globalization has put an impact on every aspect of Lepcha people. They were followers of simple tradition but due to globalization and modernization (Modernization is a by-product of Globalization) their traditions are changing and they are adapting the global ways of life which is endangering their own traditions, knowledge and values. As they have accepted several fruits of globalization with open arms hence their social life has changed a lot along with economic and political life. The change is so observable that number of traditional Lepchas has reduced significantly and they can be seen only in few areas. This paper highlights the both positive and negative impact of globalization and tries to present the factors promoting globalization among Lepchas.

Keywords: *Crucial, Globalization, Modernization, Endangered, Impact, Change Lepcha.*

1. INTRODUCTION

“Globalization” can be explained as a process by the means of which any idea, goods, traditions or customs becomes international or simply we can say it becomes “global” and reaches people spread across whole world. Globalization puts an impact on every society. The concept of globalization is at present the most debated concept as scholars around the world don’t agree to a standard definition and criteria which is why the definition of this concept is very vague in itself. This term is widely used by economist to denote the liberalization, privatization and trade policies of commercial sector with the countries of whole world. As long as the door of any nation is open for other nations for allowing flow of trade without severe restrictions then we can say that nation is involved in globalization. The impact of globalization at present is multi-faceted. From providing avenues of employment to raising awareness about environmental issues, the impact of globalization is observable in one way or another. It is acting as an intrinsic factor in every nation hence every other process of development seems to be connected with Globalization. As it influences every society coming in direct or indirect contact so it will be very intriguing to know what impact has been left by globalization on a tribal society like that of Lepchas who live Sikkim which is considered one of the most beautiful city of India and is a tourist site which is visited by people from all over the world.

1.1 The Lepchas

Lepchas are the original inhabitants of Sikkim, formerly an independent kingdom situated in the Himalayas between Nepal and Bhutan. Lepcha is the name given to this group by their Nepali neighbors and is interpreted by some as a derogatory word meaning "nonsense talkers." The Lepchas call themselves Rong. The Lepchas are of Mongoloid stock, and some anthropologists trace their origins to Mongolia or Tibet. However, the people themselves have no traditions of past migrations and place the home of their ancestors (Mayel) near Mt. Kanchenjunga. The early history of the Lepchas is obscure, their isolation no doubt limiting contacts with the outside world. The Bhutias began moving into the region from Tibet in the 14th century ad. Sometime before the beginning of the 17th century, Sikkim became subject to Tibet. Internal upheavals in Tibet early in the 17th century led to three "Red Hat" lamas (monks) fleeing to Sikkim, where they converted the population to Buddhism and created a

Sikkimese Tibetan king. For the next three centuries, the Lepchas of Sikkim were dominated by the Bhutias, the Nepalese, and later the British. In 1950, although it remained independent under its ruling chogyal (king), Sikkim became a protectorate of India. Following a plebiscite in which Hindu immigrants from India made the difference in the voting, Sikkim became the twenty-second state of the Indian union in 1975.

1.2 Nomenclature:

The name 'Lepcha' is an exonym given by outsiders; in this case it is commonly believed to have derived from the Nepali words lap and che, which is supposed to mean 'vile speakers',

2.0 THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION:

2.1 Life Style of Lepchas

2.1.1 House: Lepcha traditional house is called “Li”: A Lepcha dwelling is rectangular in plan, with a circular or rectangular roof made from straw. The floor is made of wood, raised 1 m or so (3 or 4ft) above the ground, with the space underneath used to keep domestic animals. Walls are built of thatch covered by clay. The entire structure is built without nails or screws. A house typically contains three rooms: a bedroom, guest room, and kitchen/store room. Furnishings may include low wooden stools, or built-in wooden benches padded for comfort. Water is drawn from streams, waterfalls, or natural reservoirs. But now we can see the changes in their life style there are very few traditional houses are left in Ranka village . They are adopting global life style day by day. now we can see modern houses their build of bricks and cement

2.1.2 Kitchen Granary: All the traditional utensils are replaced with the global one. Before they used hand-made hearth with religious values but now the due to impact of globalization & Modernization their life styles are getting changed all the utensils which are globally famous can be seen in their kitchen and in their houses.

2.1.3 Clothing: The Lepcha of Ranka had quit weaving even much earlier. The traditional clothing for Lepcha women is the ankle-length dumdyam or gada. It is one large piece of smooth cotton or silk, usually of a solid color. When it is worn, it is folded over one shoulder, pinned at the other shoulder, and held in place by a tago (waist band), over which excess material drapes. A long-sleeved blouse may be worn underneath. The traditional Lepcha clothing for men is the dumptra. It is a multicolored, hand-woven cloth pinned at one shoulder and held in place by a waistband, usually worn over white shirt and trousers. Men wear a flat round cap called a thyaktuk, the traditional cone-shaped bamboo hats are worn. Which is now can be seen very less in fashion. People also find the modern clothes very much comfortable, work friendly and fashionable because Ranka is a tourist place the impact of tourism, modernization and globalization can be clearly seen there.

2.2 Family & Marriage

2.2.1 FAMILY LIFE: Lepchas are divided into patrilineal clans known as ptso. There is no ban on marriage within the same clan, although the rules of incest clearly define the closeness of the blood relationship acceptable between spouses. Uncles play an important role in matchmaking and the negotiations preceding a wedding. Marriages are arranged by the parents, and usually occur when the boy is around 16 and the girl 14 years of age. Following the betrothal ceremony, the boy is allowed to remain in the girl's house and little attention is paid if she conceives during this period. The actual wedding takes place anytime from a few days to several months later, on an auspicious day of the month. Both muns and lamas are required to officiate at the marriage ceremony, which is accompanied by the presenting of gifts to the bride's family, feasting, and other rituals. The bride returns to live with her husband's family. Divorce or separation. The Lepcha trace their descent Patri lineally.

The marriage is negotiated between the families of the bride and the groom. If the marriage deal is settled, the lama will check the horoscopes of the boy and girl to schedule a favorable date for the wedding. Then the boy's maternal uncle, along with other relatives, approach the girl's maternal uncle with a khada, a ceremonial scarf, and one rupee, to gain the maternal uncle's formal consent. The wedding takes place at noon on the auspicious day. The groom and his entire family leave for the girl's house with some money and other gifts that are handed over to the bride's maternal uncle. Upon reaching the destination, the traditional Nyomchok ceremony takes place, and the bride's father arranges a feast for relatives and friends. This seals the wedding between the couple.

Lepcha marriage is tribe endogamous and clan exogamous. Marriage within the clan is prohibited but marriage within the tribe is widely accepted, especially since marriage outside the tribe is being practiced today. One cannot marry a member of either the father or the mother's clan. Polyandry is not recognized by Lepcha custom and tradition but might have taken place in some cases due to 'contact with Tibetans. Divorce is rare and is not permissible, but can happen either in case of 'barrenness and immortality'. However, it is the person seeking divorce who usually pays the penalty. 'A Lepcha woman can divorce her husband on grounds of cruelty, injustice and misconduct. When husband seeks divorce, he has to pay a very huge penalty. Similarly, if the wife seeks divorce, she has to return all the presents given to her at the time of Nongcheyong.(marriage) The structure of family and marriage has been changed among Lepchas from joint and extended families now all are preferring only nuclear families. Inter caste marriage & love marriage are organized now a days like it is done all around the world. Now this change in the structure of family and marriage can be viewed as adaptation of global culture too where the conservativeness is not considered ideal and such a rational thought processing is bound to leave impact on any culture which is open to adaptation of new ideas and reforms and from this view Lepchas has well adapted to this global culture, now giving weightage to more rational thoughts.

2.3 Economic System

2.3.1 AGRICULTURE: Principal crops raised by the Lepcha include wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat , maize, cardamom (their cash crop), and several varieties of millet. In the subtropical river valley, sugarcane and manioc are also grown. Fresh vegetables such as tomatoes and chili peppers are grown in backyard gardens and near the fields; wild vegetables and fruit are also collected. Hunting, once more common, is now seldom done, because of the time taken from working in the fields. The Lepchas have herds of cattle, which are generally kept for their dairy products and for plowing the fields; cattle are also occasionally slaughtered for meat. Goats are kept but never for their milk, only for their meat and for sacrifice. By far the most popular and numerous of the domesticated animals are pigs, kept for food and sacrifice.

The agricultural implements used by the Lepcha is mainly Plough (longkung or halkung) -Plough drawn by a pair of oxen or bullocks is the most important one. Due to the hardness of the soils they use a plough much heavier than the one used in the plains of West Bengal. The angle formed in the body of the plough is much more, obtuse than that of the ploughs used in the plains. The plough consists; of a horn shaped piece of wood (kung), which is tipped by the iron share (Pansing). The wooden beam goes up from the centre and above is the plough handle (acham) to steer the plough. The beam (pathing) is fixed to the wooden yoke (thokbiyal) which is drawn by a pair of animal. The average plough weighs 17 to 18 kilograms and is heavier than that is used in the plains. The beam is tied to the yoke by a leather thong (rope). Other important agricultural implements are -spade (thakchu), pointed hoe (kakthu), sickle (behur), ridge making implement (kanta), leveller (fauri) and mortar and pestle (dhokiamu). With the growing needs Lepchas has started using hand tractor in performing settled terrace cultivation.

As at present technological innovation are reaching each and every corner of the country hence Lepcha people too has begun adapting new innovations for doing things more efficiently. Lepchas traditional economy was agriculture and pastoralism but now they are connected to the global market. Ranka, Sikkim is a tourist place and had a huge global market in the center of town (MG Margh Gangtok , Sikkim) where you can buy any product and Lepchas also use that market as global market to sell their traditional clothes, their hand made products, utensils, traditional jewelry souvenir etc. which is bought by different people from all around the world. This market plays an important role to connect Lepchas with the global world which has become a reason for change in them and their culture.

3.CONCLUSION

Impact of globalization among Lepchas of North Sikkim can be viewed mostly in economic sector where tourism sector has proved to be the medium. The Ranka Monastery located in Sikkim and several other tourist spots which attracts people from all around the world has opened up new avenues of employment for the Lepchas. Now some Lepchas are working as a guide and others provide accommodation to tourists on rent at affordable rates. Some households also accommodate paying guests in their home. Also the main market at MG Margh, Sikkim which is in the locality of the Lepchas also allows Lepcha people to sell their products to tourists hence adding further gain to their economy. Also, we can't disregard the fact that due to culture contact with visitors, the modern culture has prevailed in Gangtok which is the representative of globalization if seen alternatively, as several times modernization is considered as a by-product of globalization. schools are being run by missionaries and education is a priority to Lepchas. Change in dressing pattern, adaptation of rational thinking, opening of new health centers and sub centers and now the growing economy which involves tourism are some aspects of Lepcha life which reflects globalization either directly or indirectly. As the globalization is a process that encompasses various aspects of society hence the scope is still very high which remains to be achieved by tribes like that of Lepcha.

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