

Being the largest democracy India is a good case for rest of the world in setting agenda of 'unity in diversity' at both level national as well as international. India is a Place of Reunion of many Religions. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jews, Buddhists and Parsi communities live alongside each other. - **Dr Zafar Alam***

Custom, belief, art, law, knowledge, morals and any other habits acquired by people as a member of society are the dominant attributes of culture or civilization. It is argued that culture belongs to 'soft' aspects of life like Philosophy, Religion, Art, Music, Literature etc. and these domains belong to philosopher, saints, poet and other artists. It has nothing to do with the hard-core realities of politics, industry, commerce, economics and society.

The conventional exponents of culture confront this egotism of modernism and argue that culture provides mechanism and spirit for any organization to sustain for a long time. Without a well-accepted philosophy, based on social traits, organizations cannot get acceptance in the society, hence sustainability is shortened. The latest development in administrative thought and practice, view culture as the source of long-term organizational stability and effectiveness. Thomas Watson Jr., the former CEO of IBM, writes in his book "Business and its Beliefs":

"Consider any great organization-one that has lasted over the years. I think you will find that it owes its resiliency not to its form of organization or administrative skills, but to the power of what we can call beliefs and the appeal these beliefs have for its people. This then is my thesis: I firmly believe that any organization, in order to survive and achieve success must have a sound set of beliefs on which it premises all its policies and actions. Next, I believe that the most important single factor in corporate success is faithful adherence to these beliefs. And finally, I believe that if an organization is to meet the challenges of a changing world, it must be prepared to change everything about itself except those beliefs as it moves through corporate life. "

Keeping in mind the commercial purpose of organizations if the move towards state we will see that state is, in fact, the custodian of society. Therefore state should acquire a higher level of responsibility of protection of culture and tradition.



Being the largest democracy India is a good case for rest of the world in setting agenda of 'unity in diversity' at both level national as well as international. India is a Place of Reunion of many Religions. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jews, Buddhists and Parsi communities live alongside each other. They all celebrate religious festivals with great enthusiasm. Aborigines having their distinctive religious and cultural practices are well protected in the country. Not only this, in India as many as 780 different languages are spoken while 86 varied scripts are used in writing. This fact surely must be celebrated in the account of 'unity in diversity' of the country.

As far as diversity in Somalia is concerned, it is rooted in its clan system. "The clan, in Somalia, is above everything else, above political parties, religion and any ideology". The Somali society is divided into six major groups. These are Hawiye, Dir, Darood, and Isaaq who are overwhelmingly nomadic and speak the 'Mahaa tiri' language, and Digil and Mirifle who practice agro-pastoralism and speak the 'Maay' language.

Additionally, there are smaller clans and sub-clans that include Bantu, Arab and Persian descendants with others. Clanism in Somalia characterizes cultural crumbling and the primordial cleavages within the Somali society. It is almost unanimously agreed that at present in the recent crises Clanism is one of the major sources for numerous political and social problems. The ongoing crisis in the country leading the nation to be characterized as a failed state could also be related to the clan politics. Ignoring clannism and cultural diversity has played a major role in the Somali conflict compared to any other causes. In fact, Clannism is considered to be a uniting force and at the same time a great dividing vigour.

There are 13 living languages in Somalia [including Jiddu, Dabarre, Boni and Garre. Maay and Mahaa languages are the largest spoken languages in the country.](#) Somalis are generally considered as a monolingual, yet speakers from each of these two languages are not explicable to each other. The government of Siad Barre (1969-1991) made its farewell exit with the tag of 'divide and conquer'.

During his ending years, he gave minimum space to the diversity and created highly centralized and dictatorial state. In fact, in the beginning, he gave a good amount of acceptance and attention to the diversity of clans, languages and indigenous cultures of respective tribes, he sustained for a long time in power. His approach towards different

cultures was substantially neutral. However, by 1975, Siad Barre's popularity started declining as it failed to maintain the previous position of being neutral as a government. Consequently, he lost his neutral image, by the end of the Ogaden war in 1978, several clans started to voice their disappointment about their status under the Siad Barre regime. After 1978 coup attempt, Siad Barre started to ally himself with people from his clan and the Marehaan-Ogadeen-Dulbahante clan-based coalition known as MOD.

Islam is one of the very strong sources of integration in the country almost whole population is Sunni Muslim. Mawlid al-Nabi, Lailat al Miraj, Lailat al Bara'a, Ramadan, Lailat al Kadr, Quds Day, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Al-Hijra/Muharram and Ashura are the Islamic holidays generally celebrated around the country at varying levels.

Somalia has rich resources of diversity and good potential of exploitation of sentiments of the people as Siad Barre had done in his long rule in the country. In fact, this is high time for the federal government and other international actors involved in 'state-building' and 'peacebuilding' in the country to look into and respect, accommodate and celebrate the cultural diversity of Somalia.

In this regard, a study of Indian success story of 'unity in diversity' could provide considerable resources and support in maintaining and accommodating diversity in Somalia. It is evident in several Indian endeavours of Unity in diversity that India has successfully accommodated a huge number of people with varied identities and varied cultures. India, for example, had demonstrated recently very bold step towards 'international integration' by proposing at the UN to dedicate a day to Yoga. It was rightly highlighted that "We collect for war, for protests. At least the International Yoga Day will make us come together for silence." Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address during the opening of the 69th session of the General Assembly, talked about it he said: "Yoga is an invaluable gift from our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies the unity of mind and body, thought and action ... a holistic approach [that] is valuable to our health and our well-being. Yoga is not just about exercise; it is a way to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and nature."

Around 47 Islamic nations among the 177 countries of the United Nations General Assembly officially co-sponsored with India the resolution to establish June 21 as "International Day of Yoga". Finally, The draft resolution ascertaining the International Day of Yoga was endorsed by a record 177 member states.



The state should engage its citizens in different sorts of traditional and cultural activities to create belongingness among the people. Whatever the case may be nations cannot afford to survive in the absence of due consideration of discussed traits as their foundations. Their constitution is most respected, most followed and most accepted by its people when it reflects a true picture of their aims, aspirations and general traits of society as a whole.

There have been bad and outdated practices in many civilizations which are no more in practice. Similarly, with the impact of globalization, there have been clear and visible impacts of global culture on local practices, in this sense at the same time when people focus on their indigenous attributes they cannot ignore international or global culture too. The recent uprising in the middle east, with many other factors, had one of its main causes, global culture of modern liberal democracies. Developed nations at present are more accommodative to international diversity than the others. Here it could be highly useful for any emerging state to preserve, to accommodate, to own, to practice, to propagate and highlight the cultural aspects with a full and complete diversity of the people of the land to the extent that masses start believing that it is the civil society which exists everywhere in the government.

Cultures should be owned officially and owning culture means owning sentiments. People in any nation feel associated when they are officially recognized. Official recognition is reflected when the attributes of those group of people reflecting on official activities of the state. National integration is one of the most challenging issues at present when the national/ political self-determination in the current forceful re-emergence of ethnic and cultural nationalism is being experienced.

Also, read: [An analysis of the Middle-Eastern Policy of the Narendra Modi Government](#) by Ambassador Anil Trigunayat



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