Culture and Sub-Culture of Youth in Nagaon District of Assam and its Impact on the Contemporary Society: a Sociological Overview

Mon Mayur Bora
M.Phil Research Scholar, Assam University Diphu Campus, Department of Anthropology.

ABSTRACT: Youth is not just a biological category; it’s also a societal invention. This may sound like socio-babble but as we have changed from an agricultural to post-industrial society our definition of youth has evolved. Young people used to be parental property; nurtured by domestic folk practices then forced into work and afforded no legal rights. Youth today is a public institution; objectified by the state, preserved in law by business and studied and monitored by rational, scientific expertise. Two trends emerged during this time; the sentiment of childhood and the construction of a new category to describe the transition from childhood to adulthood: youth. Younger people began a transformation from a domestic economic resource to objects which embodied the public institution of pure childhood to be protected and nurtured. Youth, beyond school, were given over to apprenticeships to learn the roles and responsibilities of adulthood this paper seeks to throw light upon the life of youth generation, their culture, sub culture influenced by globalization, westernization and the way they want to live and how it’s impacts on the contemporary society.

Keywords: Culture, Globalization, Sub-Culture, Youth generation, Westernization.

I. Introduction:
Youth culture is the way they live and the norms, values, life style and practices they share[1]. Culture is the shared symbolic systems, and processes of maintaining and transforming those systems. Youth culture differs from the culture of older generations[2]. Elements of youth culture include beliefs, behaviors, styles, and interests. An emphasis on dress, popular music, sports, language and dating set youths apart from other age groups, giving them what many believe is a distinct culture of their own[3]. Within youth culture, there are many distinct and constantly changing youth subcultures. These subcultures' norms, values, behaviors, and styles vary widely, and may differ from the general youth culture. Understanding what youths think and do is fundamental to understanding the relationship between structure and agency, social patterns and individual action[4]. The current situation or problem is simply born out of choice. There are many lifestyle choices available to Nagaon district youth today, mainly in urban area. Added to this problem of choice, is the handicap of ignorance. Today’s youth are not making a well- informed choice. It is not that they have
examined the pros and cons of the lifestyles they choose or reject, it is simply a herd mentality which all youth grow up with. They follow blindly whatever the other peers do. The youth generation of Nagaon basically in urban area is obsessed with the latest trends of globalization, which is new cool and fashionable and all that is old is not even worth trying. Whether it is the latest fashion in clothing, be it a low rise jeans or a trendy jacket, or a major lifestyle choice such as a ‘live-in’ relationship, the young Indian says newest is the best.

Therefore, it is important that we create a system within the family, in the schools and colleges and in our local societies, which can impart knowledge of the foundations of traditional culture to the youth and engage them in a dialogue to address their doubts, so that they can make a wise choice based on a clear understanding of the stakes involved. Today education in school is stressing western culture in each and every thing, right from speaking in English, to learning about foreign countries and preaching what the western world has written in history about us. Most of the youth of Nagaon district even do not know our history, ancient glory and achievements. History should be covered in every book. Current youngsters are may the second generation who have entirely lost Indian culture and values. It has been a long-standing complaint that Indian youth are highly influenced by American and European cultures. With India fast becoming a truly global environment in terms of economy, food and culture, what does it take to make sure our youth do not forget the richness of being Indian? West is copying Indian way and we are copying theirs. Perhaps we have lost the cultural war and only a miracle can change mindset of Indian people Westernization has greatly affected our traditions, customs, our family and our respect and love for others. The concept of joint families is fastly decreasing everyone wants to remain aloof from others. Nobody now bother about others and only cares about himself which is totally contradictory to our Indian culture which teaches to be a part of each other joy’s and sorrows to celebrate the moments together and share the grief together. Slowly all our value for which India has the pride is vanishing & western culture is taking its place. People are blindly following the western culture without knowing its consequences.

CULTURE AND YOUTH OF ASSAM

Culture is the main concept in Anthropology and a fundamental one in Sociology. The study of human society immediately and necessarily leads us to the study of its culture. The study of society or any aspect of it becomes incomplete without a proper understanding of the culture of that society. Culture and society go together. They are inseparable. Culture is a unique possession of man. It is one of the distinguishing traits of human society. Culture does not exist at the sub-human level. Only man is born into a society is the same as saying that every man is born into a culture. Culture is a unique quality of man which separates him from the lower animals. Culture is a very broad term that includes in itself all our walks of life, our modes of behavior, our philosophies and ethics or morals and manners, our customs and traditions, our religious, political, economic and other types of activities. Culture does not exist
in isolation, neither is it an individual phenomenon. It is a product of society. It originates and develops through social interactions. It is shared by the members of society. No man can acquire culture without association with other human beings. Man becomes man only among men. It is the culture which helps man to develop human qualities in a human environment. Deprivation of company or association of other individuals to an individual is nothing but deprivation of human qualities. Culture defines social situation for us. It not only defines but also conditions and determines – what we eat and drink, what we wear, when laugh, weep, sleep, love, to make friend with, what work we do, what God we worship, what knowledge we rely upon, what poetry we recite and so on.

Culture is defined as “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 objections to America are about liberal values. Young people in India do not mention the word “sex” but what they believe is that sex is easily available in America, and that of course makes the country so un-cultural. Indian Culture, which is one of the oldest & richest cultures, is now days posing a serious threat as western culture is establishing its strong base in India and slowly and gradually wiping the Indian culture. It had already made its presence in Metro’s & now slowly heading towards other parts of India.

II. Objectives of the Study:
The study has been conducted keeping in view of the following objectives –

1. To study about the youth generation culture.
2. To study about the socio-cultural environment of the youths.
3. To examine the westernization, Globalization and its impacts.
4. To study about the new youth culture and sub-culture.

III. Methodology:
The study relies on secondary data. A numbers of research techniques like descriptive survey method, participant observation and questionnaire and interview method has been applied to the proposed study. The secondary data have been collected from the research works on youth generation and from other published books, journals, souvenirs and articles.

IV. Result and Discussion:
There is a debate about whether or not youth culture exists. Some researchers argue that youth’s values and morals are not distinct from those of their parents, which means that youth culture is not a separate culture. Just because people see the presence of what seems to be a youth culture today does not mean that this phenomenon extends to all generations of young people. Additionally, peer influence varies greatly between contexts and by sex, age, and social
status, making a single "youth culture" difficult, if not impossible, to define[5]. There may also be pluralistic ignorance on the part of youth regarding how their attitudes compare to peers and parents. Despite the attitudes of many adults, there is not a consensus among researchers about whether youth subcultures hold different beliefs than adults do. Some researchers have noted the simultaneous rise in age segregation and adolescent adjustment problems such as suicide, delinquency, and premarital pregnancy[6].

WESTERNIZATION

Westernization has given rise to single families. The most affected are our new blooms, which have sprouted they find themselves stressed and isolated in this new atmosphere as there is no one to take care of them. They will not get the care and love of their Grandparents and they find themselves in crutches were some others will take care of them. It is very unfortunate that the new sprouts remain untouched and cut off from our moral values and sanskaras. In today’s Scenario were both husband & wife are working there is no one at home to look after them to inherit the sanskaras in them as our elders who gives these sanskaras to their grand children are not with them. To many cases it is not deliberate but in majority of case the children prefers to remain away from their parents which is very unfortunate. It is very unfortunate that today’s generation has very little knowledge about their culture, traditions & their roots. This is not their mistake but the mistake of their parents who does not enlighten their children about their roots about their rich cultural heritage. Westernization’s effect not only limited in negative impact but it strong enough impact on daily basis which mast needed to rectify.

Contradictory to it parents feel proud in giving the western Sanskaras to their children. Children are brought up in this atmosphere. They are thus kept miles away from their culture. There is no harm in giving the knowledge of other cultures and traditions as Indians have made their presence in every part of world and it is very necessary that we should have knowledge of their culture, traditions and their language. We should do but to the limit, which is really needed, and also take care that our new sprouts are well versed with Indian culture and its values. It is the responsibility of parents to inherit the same and for this it is very necessary that parents should also be well versed with Indian culture and traditions.

GLOBALIZATION

Many commentators argue that globalization is primarily an economic process, but it is one that clearly has profound social implications. In Nagaon youth are growing up in a world of globalization and inequality, taking part in a development process that is simultaneously bringing people closer together and widening the divisions between them. Globalization is a hotly debated issue within the social sciences. There is a broad consensus in the literature that some of the old certainties of the modern world have been undermined or invalidated, and that young people’s life experiences are increasingly tenuous as a result. It is important to
understand that globalization has a direct and powerful influence on youth lives insofar as it actively extends the kinds of social division to which young people are all too often subjected. Young people in the region have benefited from the positive aspects of these developments, but many have been left vulnerable to the negative repercussions of modernization. Below are the actions of government regarding the globalization that occurred to youth. Globalization can intensify social divisions, and as young people are struggling to establish themselves in a new social context the sometimes intimidating adult world they may be perceived as being particularly vulnerable to the threat of segregation or exclusion. However, in any analysis of young people’s relationship with globalization, two key points must be borne in mind. First, there is a tendency to assume that the effects of globalization are unstoppable, and that globalization is a process young people react to rather than actively negotiate. Below are the responses of youth regarding the globalization.

SOCIAL WEBSITE CULTURE

Social networking sites where individuals with similar interests converse and connect with one another through their phone, laptop or tablet. Much like web-based social networking, mobile social networking occurs in virtual communities. A current trend for social networking websites, such as Facebook, WhatsApp are to create mobile apps to give their users instant and real-time access from their device. In turn, native mobile social networks have been created like Foursquare, Instagram, and Path, communities which are built around mobile functionality between the youth.

SMART PHONE CULTURE

Mobile phones and technology have come a long way over the years, people’s lives have become more demanding and they rely more and more on technology, it has had a big impact on our everyday life: our relationships, social movements and education. The mobile phone has become one the most widespread and popular pieces of technology of the past few decades. The adoption of the mobile phone by young people has been a global phenomenon in recent years. It is now an integral part of adolescents’ daily lives and is for the majority, the most popular form of electronic communication or technological culture. Disruptions to lessons, incidences of cheating and bullying are some of the negative impacts, while texting parents of truants seems to be the only positive for the school. The rate at which young people have adopted the mobile phone in many parts of the world is even more impressive. The mobile phone had been in existence for about a decade before young people really adopted this technology. The reduction in the cost of the handsets, their smaller size and the introduction of the 4G mobile technology contributed to the surprisingly rapid adoption rate by young people. Not only do young people own mobile phones, they have a “symbolic and affective investment” in them. Indeed, even the ownership of a smart phone indicates that one is socially connected, accessible and in demand. The ability of the smart phone to directly contact
a person allows youth even more flexibility and spontaneity in their lives. Many individuals believe that they cannot imagine not having their a smart phone even a mobile phone with them on a daily basis and this is exaggerated in younger generations as they think that they cannot imagine themselves without their phones. This shows how younger generation senses of self are tied up with this technology. Individuals are attached to their smart phones, which enables them to think that they cannot function without their mobile phone on a day-to-day basis. There are situations where children especially youngsters neglect food, parents, relations, kith and kin while using their smart phones specially while texting or using social sites like what's app facebook, hike and this drastically affects their personal life. On the other hand there are many health hazards to which youngsters and children become target.

SUB CULTURE

A youth subculture is a youth-based subculture with distinct styles, behaviors, and interests. Youth subcultures offer participants an identity outside of that ascribed by social institutions such as family, work, home and school. Youth music genres are associated with many youth subcultures. such as-


The study of subcultures often consists of the study of the symbolism attached to clothing, music, other visible affections by members of the subculture, and also the ways in which these same symbols are interpreted by members of the dominant culture. Socioeconomic class, gender, intelligence, conformity, morality, and ethnicity can be important in relation to youth subcultures. Youth subcultures can be defined as meaning systems, modes of expression or lifestyles developed by groups in subordinate structural positions in response to dominant systems — and which reflect their attempt to solve structural contradictions rising from the wider societal context[7]. The term scene can refer to an exclusive subculture or faction. Scenes are distinguished from the broad culture through either fashion; identification with specific (sometimes obscure or experimental) musical genres or political perspectives; and a strong in-group or tribal mentality[8].

EMO SUB-CULTURE THE SELF-DESTRUCTIVE TEEN

The emo subculture sprouted from fans of emotional hardcore, or emocore, a style of punk rock in the 1980s. Emocore music is known for its loud, confessional, expressive and emotional characteristics. It's generally associated with youth who are dispirited and angry with society, other people or themselves. The emo subculture is widely followed by youth who identify with emocore music--they may not feel like they fit in, have negative emotions and dress in dark, eccentric apparel. Many of the hardcore punk bands, such as Velvet Monkeys and Iron Cross, came out of Washington, D.C., in the late 1970s and 1980s. But the emo
subculture sprouted from a fan base who were not only attracted to the hardcore punk bands, but a newer genre of hardcore punk bands whose lyrics were more expressive and emotional. Youth in the emo subculture typically wear dark clothes. They are known to wear graphic T-shirts and often have studs, spikes or skulls & crossbones on their clothes. Males in the emo subculture sometimes wear a casual striped or polka dot tie on top of a T-shirt or collared shirt. In fact, stripes are a big style for the emo subculture. Males may spike their choppy dark hair, and they often have a side-swept bang covering one of their eyes. Females often have dark hair as well and may have eccentric colors added to their hair, like hot pink or neon green highlights. Emo youth, no matter their sex, often have pale white skin and wear dramatic eyeliner, which they sometimes smear below their eyes. Eyeliner may be the only makeup that people in emo subculture wear. This western emo sub-culture impacted on the youth of Nagaon district 2-3 years ago and now days it is a ongoing process between the age of 15-20 yrs old both male and female.

PUNK SUBCULTURE

The punk subculture is centered on a loud, aggressive genre of rock music called punk rock. It is usually played by small bands consisting of a vocalist, one or two electric guitarists, an electric bassist, and a drummer. The punk subculture, which centers on punk rock music, includes a diverse array of ideologies, fashions and forms of expression, including visual art, dance, literature and film. The subculture is largely characterized by anti-establishment views and the promotion of individual freedom. One part of punk was creating explicitly outward identities of sexuality. Everything that was normally supposed to be hidden was brought to the front, both literally and figuratively. The punk subculture emerged in the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States in the mid-1970s. Early punk fashion adapted everyday objects for aesthetic effect: ripped clothing was held together by safety pins or wrapped with tape; ordinary clothing was customized by embellishing it with marker or adorning it with paint; a black bin liner became a dress, shirt or skirt; safety pins and razor blades were used as jewellery. In Nagaon the youth also use leather, rubber, and ripped clothing to focus them as a part of that kinds of sub-culture.

HIP HOP CULTURE

In the late 1970s, Hip Hop as a youth subculture emerged from the Bronx in New York City. Its roots are widely credited to the African American community; however, contributions also are credited to Jamaican American and Latino American communities. The Hip Hop lifestyle gained widespread and global popularity in the 1980s and 1990s. Today, the lifestyle, music, lingo, and more have been so incorporated into the mainstream that hard-core adherents suggest the need to differentiate Hip Hop from Hip Pop. The term Hip Hop is used both for a musical style and a sub cultural movement. Both positive and negative influences of Hip Hop
are acknowledged. With the emergence of commercial and crime-related rap during the early 1990s, however, an emphasis on violence was incorporated, with many rappers boasting about drugs, weapons, misogyny, and violence.” The youth of Nagaon are highly influenced by this sub-culture. They chose English rap songs rather than Assamese songs or traditional folk songs or any other kinds

VI. Conclusion:

Despite major structural changes in credit institutions and forms of rural credit in the post-independence period, the exploitation of the rural masses in the credit market is one of the most pervasive and persistent features of rural life in India. In most developing countries, a large segment of society, particularly low-income people has very little access to financial services, both formal and semi-formal. As a consequence, many of them have to necessarily depend either on their own or informal sources of finance and generally at an unreasonably high cost. In this context, microfinance has emerged as a financial innovation tool to serve the millions of poor households that are out of reach of the formal banking and financial institutions. Microfinance has become, in recent years, a fulcrum for development initiatives for the poor, particularly in the Third World countries and is regarded as an important tool for poverty alleviation. In India microfinance has been operating through the two models of Self Help Group and Microfinance Institutions. Both these delivery models have penetrated deep into various regions of the country; but interestingly the Southern region has almost reached the level of saturation in terms of concentration of microfinance activities. While the North-Eastern region, which remains backward in terms of coverage by formal financial institutions, has still a lot remaining unexplored even for the microfinance sector. Access to safe, easy and affordable credit and other financial services by the poor and vulnerable groups, disadvantaged areas and lagging sectors is recognized as a pre-condition for accelerating growth and reducing income disparities and poverty. Access to a well-functioning financial system, by creating equal opportunities, enables economically and socially excluded people to integrate better into the economy and actively contribute to development and protects themselves against economic shocks. Therefore it is of utmost necessity for the microfinance delivery models to reach out to the hitherto unreached, excluded areas from the purview of formal financial system in order to alleviate poverty, reduce regional disparities, reduce inequalities and focus on skill building of the otherwise neglected sections of the society.

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