Culture and identity

Every culture is a remarkable and unrepeatable body of values that gives a unique identity to the group of people that upholds those values.

Mass media, broadcast media and online social media has opened the gateway to other cultures around the world.

Whether culture needs protection or not – both can be attributed to factors such as influence of other cultures and modernization – making the question more debatable.

Cultural protection measures are practiced in a number of countries including Bangladesh.

Debate: Does culture need protection?

Protection of cultural environment is needed to preserve diversity, uniqueness, and to prevent moral and ideological decay.

External influence can taint the uniqueness and plurality of the identities and cultural expressions.

External influences are like temporary fashions most of which do not survive long.

Cultural exchange can enrich the host culture. Protection on the other hand can stop cultural enrichment and development.

Noted external influences on Bangladesh

Arabization
Arabization is NOT Islamization. It’s the intake of Arab rituals and Arab identity by non-Arab areas.

Because of Islam’s origin in Arab, non-religious elements of Arab culture also gets promoted in Bangladesh.

Westernization
Western culture particularly movies, music, fashion trends, language and social events are quite popular in Bangladesh.

Both historical impact of western colonization, and easy access to western media through modern technology have fueled westernization.

Indianization
Indian culture has strong influence in Bangladesh.

A close similarity between language and culture of the two countries has facilitated Indianization.

Broadcast media is the single largest contributor of Indianization in Bangladesh.
Existing legal and policy instruments in Bangladesh for cultural protection

- National culture, heritage and zeitgeist should be reflected in broadcast.

- Contamination of Bangla language, and pronouncing Bangla in distorted or foreign accent must be avoided.

- Broadcast of national or foreign programs must not go against national cultural values.

- Advertisement that goes against or distorts the culture of Bangladesh should be avoided.

Information on broadcasting:

- Public and private TV channels be discouraged from broadcasting anything that is in conflict with national interest, heritage, history and culture.

- Policies and acts will be enacted to protect local culture and to stop cultural degeneration through cable TV channels.

- Limited importation of high quality foreign movies may be allowed for overall development and healthy competition in film industry.

National Broadcast Policy 2014

- Bangladesh Telecommunication Act, 2001

Information on the Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh:

- The State shall adopt measures to conserve the cultural traditions and heritage of the people, and so to foster and improve the national language, literature and the arts that all sections of the people are afforded the opportunity to contribute towards and to participate in the enrichment of the national culture.

- The State shall take steps to protect and develop the unique local culture and tradition of the tribes, minor races, ethnic sects and communities.

Information on laws:

- Programmes or advertisements need to be in line with the laws, customs, heritage and culture of the country.

- Production, publication, promotion and broadcast of data and information should follow the Censorship of Film Act-1982, ICT Act 2006, copyright, trademarks, patents-design and GI laws and others conventional laws.

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