CHAPTER II

INDIAN CULTURE - ITS DEStABILITY AND STABILISERS - AN ANALYSIS

2.1.1 Indian Culture-The 'Living Example' of a living Culture

Right from the beginning till now the world has encountered various cultures like Greek, Egyptian, Roman. Almost all of them could not survive the ravages of time as they were basically material.

If there is one culture in this world that has withstood the onslaughts of time, since its inception, dating back to 4000 B.C.¹ it is Indian Culture which bears ample testimony to its strength and vitality for survival. It is on account of this spirit of survival that it is described as a 'Living Example' of a living culture.

2.1.2 Indian Culture - The vanguard among 'World Cultures'

Though Indian Culture is antique in nature, it still bears relevance to the contemporary world. Hence this has been baptized as the messiah of world culture and has remained in the vanguard for so many years.

Over its long years of existence Indian culture has faced many crises that threatened to destroy it by its very roots. But because of its adaptability and flexibility to changing conditions, it faced all the upheavals without succumbing to these challenges. In this context, one may ask as to what contributed to its vitality and spirit and survival? Cryptically, it may be answered in one word "Spiritualism".

2.1.3 Spiritualism - defined

Concept of Spirit

Dictionary of Philosophy defines Spirit as, "Spirit may be used, in distinction from mind, to denote exclusively the subject of some particular form of consciousness, with an implication that such form is 'higher' or better than others."\(^2\)

Indian Philosophy equates spirit with 'SELF' or 'ATMAN'. That which remains unchanging in the midst of change is called spirit. In this sense, Indian Philosophy in general and vedānta in particular equates spirit with SELF OR ATMAN.

2.1.4 How does Indian Philosophy arrive at the concept of Spirit?

Vedas in general and upanishads in particular form the foundation head of the Indian Philosophy. That being so, upanishads and Indian Philosophy are used as synonymous terms here. 'Non-contradictoriness' is the criterion used in arriving at the concept of SPIRIT or SELF. That whichever changes can never be real. Conversely, that which never changes alone can never be real.

That means, "Unchangeability" or "Non-Contradictoriness" alone is the criterion to be employed in arriving at the concept of spirit. Hence the famous dictum "Truth alone Triumphs" (Satyameva Jayate). Conversely, this criterion only suggests that impermananence alone is the permanent factor in the world.

2.1.5 The Two-pronged employment of this criterion

This criterion is employed in two ways, both by means of an objective and subjective analysis.

2.1.6 Analysis Explained

When we look at ourselves and the world outside we find that there is a continuous change both within the individual self and outside it, viz., the world change always
implies something unchanging which changes. This leads us to conclude that there is some permanent, everlasting, principle which remains unchanging in the midst of change, and which gives relevance to this change. This underlying principle the everchanging world and individual self is called the spirit or Ātman.

2.1.7 Reality identified

However, there cannot be two realities one underlying the human beings and the other, the world. For, if there are two realities then there is a possibility of one limiting the other. Further, the question of assessing the relative superiority will arise which will go against the very nature of Reality or Spirit. So, with a view to avoiding this confusion, the upanishads identify the principle that underlies the individual self with the principle that is underlying the word and call, It "NON-DUAL" and "ONE ONLY WITHOUT A SECOND" positively.

To quote Swami Ranganadananda, "Our ancient seers discovered that behind the finiteness of the body-mind, there shines the 'infinite' soul, pure and ever-free. The cosmic soul (Ātman) is the absolute Reality and it is non-dual. The proof of our existence is consciousness which is always
singular. 'Thou art that' though being the truncated little ego of which we are aware and 'that' is the ultimate Reality which is indivisible and integral. Discovering and experiencing the essential identity of 'Thou and that' is realisation. It is not an intellectual appreciation but an indubitable, intuitive experience, which can come only when the animal instinct is destroyed to enable man to emerge."³

The upanishads bring out this basic non-difference by means of such great saying as "That thou Art" (Tat Tvam Asi) "I am Brahman" (Aham Brahmashmi) etc.

2.1.8 Only Spirit

It now follows that whatever that exists is spirit or Reality only.

2.1.9 What is spiritualism? Definitions Recapitulated

Encyclopaedia of Religions defines Spiritualism means strictly a belief either that soul or spirit is the only reality, or that spirit, if not the only reality, possesses a real existence apart from matter. It denotes the opposite to materialism.⁴

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³ The Hindu, dt.25.02.1993.

To express it in a simple language, it means "That which recognizes a basic spiritual element underlying all creations is called spiritualism."

Aurabindo, however would define spiritualism as "the attempt to know and live in the highest self, the divine, the all embracing unity and to raise life in all its parts to the divinest possible values," highlighting thereby its practical aspect.

2.1.10 Its Features

From the above definition, certain important features of spiritualism follow.

Spiritualism is not sensory. It is super sensory. Being super sensory it is eternal. That is why it is said that the values having a spiritual basis are eternal. Spiritual values as their very name suggests recognize a basic spiritual element underlying not only human beings but also the entire creation. That is why, adherence to spiritual values are said to promote lasting characters.

2.1.11 Spiritual Values

Any value that derives its genesis, strength and sustenance from 'SPIRIT' or 'SELF' is a spiritual value.

The following may be cited as a few examples of spiritual values, by virtue of their being unchangeable and eternal in nature.

1. Truth - speaking (Satyam)
2. Non-violence (Ahimsa)
3. Honesty (Arjavam (or) Daksinyam)
4. Non-stealing and (Asteya)
5. Self-Discipline (Brahmacharya)

2.1.12 Spiritual values - Their off-shoots - "Three A-s" and the 'Three R-s"

Spiritualism which upholds the fundamental non-difference of everything in the world on the basis of an everlasting, permanent spiritual principle on which hinges Indian Culture then forms the bed rock of Indian Culture. The base being permanent, any change and challenge that Indian culture has encountered did not affect its growth and development. On the contrary, they only helped it to grow, what with its capacity to Accept, Accommodate and Assimilate
the good. These three qualities, in their wake brought out three other off-springs. They are Re-orientation, Re-juvenation and Re-interpretation.

2.1.13 Indian Culture and Spiritual Values

These three 'A-S' and 'R-S' strongly rooted in spiritualism, have helped Indian culture face the obstacles and pitfalls, very easily thus earning a name Living culture. In other words, spiritualism and spiritual values, have formed the foundation of the citadel of Indian Culture.

2.1.14 Spiritualism - The basic alignment of Indian Culture

A perusal of history of Indian Culture, not from a mere historical point of view but from a valuational perspective as well reveals a strong, unbroken connecting link, dating back to the days of the veda. When the vedic period got destabilised, Gauthama Buddha appeared to strengthen it. When Buddha was misunderstood, Sankara tried to set things right. When the Philosophy of Sankara could not be understood properly Ramanuja rose to the occasion. When Indian culture was threatened with disintegration by the Muslim invasion, it necessitated the birth of a Guru Nanak to stem the tide. When due to the influence of western culture and science, Indian culture was struggling for survival, Messiahs like Ram Mohan Roy, Dayananda Saraswathi,
Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo rose to the occasion, who by giving a new orientation to the eternal ideals, served "the eternal nectar in a new vessel".

In this story of epic struggle for survival, what strikes us at once is that these stabilisers are neither statesman, nor warriors, nor merchants, nor politicians, but messengers of spirit\(^6\) as Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan chooses to describe them, who having their foot-hold in spiritualism' ventured to revitalise Indian culture.

2.2 The various Challenges met

2.2.1 Exposure of Indian Culture

In its long years of existence, stretching over centuries, Indian culture has come across many alien cultures and religions. But it has never hesitated to keep its doors and windows open, and allow the wind to pass through its room. In the process, it never allowed itself to be blown off by the wind. With Acceptance, Accommodation and Assimilation providing the necessary cover, it has reoriented itself according to the needs of the age, without in anyway disturbing its basic alignment viz., spiritualism.

2.2.2 Major Religions that exerted influence

Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity influenced Indian Culture considerably. Buddhism and Jainism are indigenous in nature while the other two are alien. They have also exerted enormous pressure over Indian culture.

2.2.3 The De-Stabilising tendencies their periods and Stabilisers

To find out the intensity of impact on the people by these destabilising tendencies and how they were surmounted by the plethora of dedicated chosen 'spiritual' stabilisers, it will be helpful if the history of Indian Culture is subdivided into four broad periods.7

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2.2.4 Certain Classifications in regard to this classification

This classification does not conform to any chronological order. For the sake of convenience, this division has been designed on the basis of the personalities who set right and stabilised the tottering Indian culture from time to time.

2.2.5 Four-in-One

On the contrary, they are like the various phases of a telescope, the one issuing out from the other. Like a telescope, it elogates. The mediaeval is a continuation of the ancient and a continuance of the modern, leading to the contemporary.

To employ a more modern Phraseology, the Ancient, Mediaeval, Modern and Contemporary phases of Indian Culture are a "Four-in-One". 8

2.3 The First Phase of Challenge - The Destabilising Excrences - Internal and External

2.3.1 Excrences - Internal

Internal signifies cultures and religions, that is, those that had their roots in Indian soil, that exercised their influence on Indian culture. Buddhism and Jainism belong to this kind.

8 Ibid., p.8.
2.3.2 Buddhism

a. Culture in India prior to the advent of Buddhism

Culture in India prior to the advent of Buddhism dates back to vedic age. Vedas are broadly classified into Rituals oriented (karma) and knowledge oriented (Jñāna) portions. The former is called "Karma-Kanda" and the latter, "Jñāna-Kanda". The ritualistic portions insisted on the performance of rituals for prosperity, here and hereafter.

Upanishads, otherwise called Vedānta, as they form the concluding portions of the vedas, "Vedānta" attempts at providing answers to various fundamental philosophic questions relating to man, his nature, the universe around him, the creator, his relationship with the world around him and with his fellow human beings, the ultimate purpose of his existence etc.

In the earlier periods, rituals, which were originally simple and ostentatious, to secure the favour of natural forces here and hereafter, became so much complicated with the march of time that they began to increasingly involve animal and human sacrifices. The obscenity, vulgarity and abuse of sex also became part and parcel of the rituals. All these contributed to the destability of vedic culture.
b. Birth of Buddhism and its non-vedic temperament

It was to stem this tide of destability of vedic culture that a person of the stature of Buddha was required, who could not only react and rise in revolt against these evil practices committed under the guise of sacred vedas, but also give a sense of direction to vedic culture. Usually, Buddha, is associated only with revolt against the vedas and hence branded as 'anti-vedic'.

2.3.3 The sense of directions

Eventhough Buddha was against the malpractices perpetrated in the name of vedas, his intention not to demolish the vedic culture. On the contrary, his intention was to put the vedic culture back on the rails. Towards this end, the instead of resorting to destruction, gave a positive direction to the vedic culture by exhorting the people to strive for the eradication of suffering and attain 'Nirvana'. Actually it was to give a positive and practical orientation that he tried to desist people from indulging in verbal jugglaries and futile metaphysical speculation in regard to the existence of God, soul etc. Once again it was his refusal to talk about metaphysical entities like God, soul, immortality etc. that he was mistaken to be an atheist.
2.3.4 After Buddha

After Buddha, followers went far away from the teaching of their master. Though Buddha refused to speak about God he himself was made God and came to be worshipped in the form of an idol. Though Buddha was against speculation, metaphysical and otherwise, many speculative schools of Buddhism sprang up. Though Buddha rose in revolt against rituals, Tantric schools of Buddhism, extolling obscene and obnoxious rituals came into the fore.

2.3.5 The Emergence of Tantrika Buddhism

An ominous sign for the Decline of Buddhism

The onset of Tantrika Buddhism

"Buddhism lost itself in the maze of mysticism and was engulfed by a host of mudras (finger-gestures and ceremonies), mandalas (mystical diagram), kriyas (rites and ceremonies) and charyas (meditational practices and observances for external and internal purity).  

The teaching of one of the noblest minds were thus deformed into a system of magical spells, .....exorcisms, spirit-beliefs, and worship of demons and divinities."  

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10 Ibid., p.353.
2.3.6 **The factors that contributed to the Decline of Buddhism**

The causes of the decline of Buddhism in India and also the period when its decline commenced have been a matter of controversy.

**a. Internal**

One of the most important causes for the decline of Buddhism was its moral decadence. Chinese pilgrims Yuan Ch Wang in his travelogue to India refers to the moral degradation of Buddhist monks. In Sindh, it is reported that monks killed animals and had wives and children. A lot of instances could be quoted from cultural history to prove this moral decade. Mrchchhakatika of Sudraka, the Malatimadheva of Bhavabhuti and the Dasakumaracharita of Dandin the Buddhist nuns appear as the 'go betweens' and experts in procuring lovers. In the mattavilasa prahasana of Pallava Mahendravarman (a contemporary of Harsha) the Buddhist monks are criticised for their lack of self-control. In the Chaturbhani, the Buddhist bhikshus are described as going to the houses of courtesans.

The Rashtrapalapariprchchhasutra (usually assigned to the 6th century AD) describes the lax morals of the Buddhist monks. For eg. in the form of Buddha's prophecy it states:
"My monks will be without shame and without virtue, haughty, intoxicating themselves with alcoholic drinks."¹¹ Non-religious activities of the monks and nuns are also found mentioned in the accounts of the early Arab invasions on India.

According to Charles Eliot, "it was to the corruptions of the Mahayana rather than of the Hinayana that the decay of Buddhism in India as due."¹²

Thus Buddhism incorporated many folk beliefs and stressed the emotional aspects some Buddhist monks were even accompanied by female partners when they attended religious discourses.

b. External

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, R.C. Mitra and R.C. Majumdar are agreed that the important factors for the decline, is a gradual assimilation of Hinduism in Buddhism.¹³ Buddhism started making a nearer approach and emulated Hinduism in many ways. This process tended to remove the distinction between the two religions. Slowly the difference between Viṣṇu and

¹¹ Ibid., p.365
¹² Ibid., p.365
¹³ Ibid., p.369
Buddha began to vanish among the people, resulting in considering Buddha as one among the ten avatars of Vishnu.

Complete avoidance of animal sacrifices, relaxation of caste rules and organisation of mutts on the lines of Buddhist Sangha by Śaṅkara, almost made Buddhism merge with Hinduism.

Buddhism, developed after Buddha, thus drifted far away from Buddha's teachings and branched off in different ways, causing destability to Indian culture, and in the process lost its credibility and currency among the people of India and had to leave the shores of India.

2.3.7 Split in Buddhism and preference for Hinduism

In the beginning, Buddhism was strong and a united force. But the monks during the latter periods, started nurturing jealousy and rivalry among themselves. The sangha was finally split into Hinayanism and Mahayanism. Obviously, the religion in spite of its prodigious past, was unable to fight the opponents from a divided house. Consequently, the people lost faith in Buddhism and were looking for something better.
2.3.8 Revival of Vedic Religion

During the latter periods of Gupta Vedic religion began to flourish. Brahmins were given respect and many Hindu temples were constructed. Thus revival of vedic religion completely ousted Buddhism from India and in this respect Śāṅkara stood in the vanguard of stabilisers.

2.3.9 JAINISM - Non-Vedic

Like Buddhism, Jainism also was non-vedic, because it did not accept the authority of Vedas. It must also have arisen as a reaction against the rigidity of vedic orthodoxy.

2.3.10 Causes of Limited success of Jainism

Jainism depended upon the missionary activities of its monks whose rigorous ascetic practices culminating in self-mortification such as plucking one's own hair, emphasis upon extreme form of non-violence, nudity etc., could not attract many people in the country. Jainism also failed to attract great kings of the category of Asoka, Kanishka and Harsha towards itself. All the factors appear to have been responsible for the limited success of Jainism.

The habit of practising Ten points (dasa vatthuni) were regarded as un orthodox.
2.3.11 The ten rules

1. Carrying salt in a horn for use when needed.
2. Taking food after mid-day
3. Over eating by taking a second meal in a neighbouring villages.
4. Taking sanction from the Sangha for an act after it has been done.
5. Observation of uposatha in different places within the same parish (simā).
6. Using customary practices as authority for an act.
7. Drinking of butter-milk after meal.
8. Use of rug without a border.
9. Drinking of toddy and
10. Acceptance of Gold and Silver.

2.3.12 Jainism, its popularity and Decline

Though Jainism had a lot of noble ideas it began to decline very fast for the following reasons.
1. Lack of effective machinery to propagate the messages at the grassroot level.
2. Many discipline were lethargic and cared hardly for the spread of Jainism.
3. Though a few rulers like Bimbisara, Ajatasatru, Kharavela patronised Jainism, their assistance was much less.
4. Jainism's rigorous hard penance, austerity, self immolation were too difficult for the common man to practice. Such rigidity kept the lay man away.

2.3.13 The effects of the influences of Buddhism and Jainism on the then Vedic Culture - An Analysis

Buddhism and Jainism have considerably influenced Indian Culture in many ways. It has improved the Indian culture bringing a new dimension to the concept of social welfare. They have also negatively influenced it. Let us analyse both these aspects.

1. Positive effects

The ways prescribed by Buddhism and Jainism for the world welfare (Logha Sangaraha) show that both of them stressed moral, more than the ritual aspect which led to an emphasis on the practice of human values.

2. Negative effects

Negatively it has done more harm to Indian culture, Both of them did not accept pantheistic Gods and belief in rituals. But the disciples raised their Gurus to the status of Gods which their masters were reluctant to speak about, and even started offering them ritual worship. Amidst all these
wrong notions the great thoughts that are vital to the human beings were lost. And thus it led to the disturbances among the people and their cultural destability.

3. Other than Buddhism and Jainism

They were also internal difference among various gurus claiming allegiance to vedas and for supremacy. Karma Mīmamsakas, insisted on the ritualistic element more than that of moral habits. To them rituals are the summum bonum of human existence. God was completely combated. However, worship of personal God still remained in the minds of lay men.

Human sacrifices of Kapalikas (worshippers of Siva) the promiscuous cohabitation of the two sexes in Vāmachāra (worshipping sākthi) need special mention here.

2.3.14 The plight of Indian Culture

People hardly understood the inner significance of Vedas. Outward, Ritualistic elements were given importance. Neither Buddhism nor Jainism was understood and followed in right sense. Thus Indian culture was completely disintegrated because of the said reason. This was the real challenge that Indian culture had to face. In short, "Not being able to understood the import and significance of the vedas, their rituals and the vedic God-heads, nor of Buddhism or Jainism,
and not being able to decide which is right and which is wrong. People became very much confused and the atmosphere, then in India, was very much vitiated with scepticism, a situation very much similar to the one prevailing in India today.  

B. External

Among the impacts that had their sway on Indian culture from outside Indian soil, some were "Esoteric" while others were "Exoteric". Islam and Christianity were the chief among the esoteric influences.

i. Islam

The origin of Islam is Judaism. It was founded by Prophet Mohammed in the beginning of 7th Century A.D.  It is also said that it is a improved version of Judaism. 'Islam' means 'peace'. It also means 'surrender' to the will of God. It gained entry in India with the invasion of Mohammed Gajini


and Gori. The then rulers who professed Islam, ironically
used force to propagate its ideals. In other words, it was not
propagated in a peaceful way. Actually, the progress of Islam
in India was due to the fact that it was a religion of
dominant power which more often enforced itself at the point
of sword. Forcible conversion then was the order of the day to
spread Islam rapidly. In the process, that Hindu religious
monuments and temples were destroyed is a part of history.

Chief doctrines of Islam
1. God

   The aim of Islam is to establish the religion of one
God. God is referred to by the name 'Allah'. There is no God
but Allah and Mohammed is the messenger of 'Allah' is it's
fundamental teaching.

2. Islam believed in the following
   a. the last day, b. the resurrection from the dead
c)predestination of God. d. Good and Evil, e. the judgement,
f. the Balance, paradise, Hell-fire g. the Divine Inspiration
h. the future state.

3. The Five cardinal Tenents

   The following are the five cardinal tenets of Islam,
which are also regarded as the five pillars of Islam.
a. Oneness of God and the revelation prophets, the last of the series being Mohammed.
b. Prayer (salat)
c. Fasting
d. Alms - giving or charity (zakat)
e. Haj (pilgrimage to Mecca)

4. brotherhood of man
5. the immortality of the soul.

4. Impact of Islam over Indian Culture
a. Positive

Islam, as the protagonists of that religion claim, is the religion that cares for welfare of human beings. According to Quoran, the holy book of Islam, Islam is not only a religion but also a way of life, as it stresses the need for human values and universal brotherhood. It draws no distinction between religious and secular affairs. It preaches equality and hence does not make division in the society as slaves and masters, Lords and beggars. Thus Islam is said to advocate religious socialism.

b. Negative

Islam influenced Indian Culture negatively to a larger extent. It vehemently tried to convert all the people into their faith by force. Mohammed Ghazni plundered many
Indian temples with the ill intention of bringing the Indian culture to its knees. The temple of Somanath was demolished by this arrogant ruler.

2.3.19 How did it destabilise Indian Culture

Islam hindered the smooth flow of Indian culture. The nobles led a luxurious life whereas peasant led a very low standard of living. In the wake of muslim invasion many social ideas came into vogue. However, the Indian culture was so assimilative that it accepted all the good points and left all the backgrounds. Hindus were subjected to social degradation by the Muslim rulers. They were looked upon as enemies. They were overtaxed and treated with Severity. Conditions were such that they should not ride on a horse, wear fine clothes and enjoy luxury. Added to this, they had to pay a special tax called 'Jeziya'. Thus muslim community dominated the Hindus. They monopolised the higher officialdom, with a shortcut towards prosperity and power.

2.3.20 How did Indian Culture Survive, then?

Inspite of all this external pressures to destabilise Indian Culture indulging in mass destruction, it faced all these with courage and perseverance and could survive because of its basic alignment, viz., 'Spiritualism'. That is, it
gained strength to face such evil forces and drew its sustenance only from its recognition of a basic spiritual element underlying all creation. It was because of this, that Indian culture accepted, accommodated and assimilated the best from Islam into its facts. For example, many people embraced Islam, they retained the native mode of life to great extent. The festival of Shabi-i-Barat was celebrated like Sivaratri of Hindus, with a night-long vigil, bustle and noise. The ceremonies of Aqiqa and Bismillah were observed in the same way as the Hindu Mundan and Vidyarambh Sanskar. Hindu marriage ceremonies were influenced by the marriage ceremonies of the Muslims, especially the decoration and dowry of the bride but only outwardly. The haft-o-nuh is only another name of the Solah-Sringar of a Hindu bride.\textsuperscript{16}

Even though the influence of Islam could be felt and seen in north India, it was only superficial for, the inner basic identity of Indian culture remains intact.

2.3.21 Guru Nanak - The stabiliser

Guru Nanak, a reformer saint, the founder of Sikh religion condemned vehemently formalism of both Hinduism and Islam. His mission was to bring an end to the conflict of

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p.325.
Hinduism and Islam. He felt that barriers of caste and race must give way before the name of God to transcend them all. He did not believe in outward renunciation but advocated asceticism of the heart. Till his death he tried at the unification of Hinduism and Islam. In addition, there were many others who devoted stability to Indian culture, then.

Datu, a strong supporter of Muslim – Hindu unity deserves special mention. Similarly, Roidas in Varnasi, Jainiswar in Maharastra tried his level best to unite Hindu – Muslim.\[17\]

2.3.22 b. Christianity

Christianity like Islam has its origin in Judaism. It was founded by Jesus Christ who is said to be the incarnation of Hebrew God Jehdrah. Jesus Christ had 12 disciples. There were sent all over the world to preach his teaching. It was imported into India in 1499 by Portuguese. In the beginning, they established seminaries to train the Indian priest at Verapoly. This was followed by the advent of English in the year 1600. The 19th Century witnessed movement of christian missionary from Europe and Canada with the idea of reviving christianity came to India.

Christianity reached majority of the population very easily and swiftly, because it stressed very much on compassion and love emphasising thus the upholding of ethical standards.

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17 Ibid., pp.341-342.
1. **Trinity in Christianity**

Trinity means three powers. Christianity admits the existence of three powers. They are 1. God or Father, 2. Son 3. Holy Christ or Holy Spirit.

God is referred to as father. Christianity speaks of a personal God. God is the Father of All. He is Omnipresent (All pervasive), Omni-potent (All Powerful), Omni-felicity (All Love) both transcendent and immanent. He love his creature with infinite love.

All men are the children of God. That is all men belong to the family of God. This means that all men are brothers.

Christianity, therefore believes in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men.

2. **Influence of Indian Culture**

Many Christian missionaries came to India to spread the religion through the education and other philanthropic movements. They started hospitals and schools in India. They taught western education and styles. They not only taught a free secular knowledge but began to preach that the christianity is the only religion in the world. The local
conditions in India, then, what with the division of society, caste-wise, and otherwise also helped Christianity in achieving its objective, what was required then was a total reinterpretation of the basic tenets of Hinduism suited to the needs of the age. And it was given to Aryasamaj, Brahma Samaj and Ramakrishna Mission to protect Hindu Indian from drifting towards Christianity.

2.3.33 iii) Science and Technology

In the west, in the ancient period, culture formed a part and parcel of Philosophy. In the mediaeval period though in the beginning were interlinked, were later segmented into three independent entities. During this period the church ruled the west. Even the kings, sers and the nobles were not so powerful as the church. They had the absolute authority over every aspect of life. These greedy power conscious priests misused powers to such an extent that whoever spoke against the tenets of the church, even though the tenets were absurd, were persecuted. The priests were so materialistic and cruel that not only scientists like Galeleo and Copernicus but also religious men, like Martin Luther were condemned to death. In the East particularly in India, on the contrary, culture, Philosophy and Religion were and are totally interdependent and complimentary.
No doubt, Science and Technology has given mankind lots of convenience and has made this period a "Push-Button" age. It has also emphasized the importance of developing rational spirit. Consequently in India there is a prudent but misconceived notion that progress should be linked and assessed only in relation to the culminative achievements of Science and Technology. This attitude has relegated religion to the background dismissing it as a set of dogmas and superstitious and side tracked the way of life of the people, focusing the importance of science as 'the' factor determining the cultural pattern of a society. But the one disadvantage is that science sans spiritual attitude will lead a culture in an abyss, denying thereby its rightful place. If spiritually based culture is replaced by materially based culture, as Science and Technology tends to do, then it destroys the very life itself. For, culture is co-extensive with life. This fact is being uneasily stressed by leading scientists world over. It is that progress will be impeded without the support of material aspects. But accepting industrialisation which is nothing but and application of science will not lead to progress. Also undue stress on materialism will bring economic barbarism in the absence of mental and moral ideas.
1. **Science and Technology - a boon to Humanity**

The achievements in Science and Technology have shortened the earth. In other words people can now reach any part of the world in a matter of day or two. Thanks to the improvement in transport. This has facilitated the entire human being to come under one roof and people now talk about world religion, world government etc.

2. **Also a bane**

Still consumeristic things have made the man lead a sedentary life. Man wanted to get all these consumerable and luxurious goods by any means. This has led to multiple disharmony, jealously, greed among the people.

Science and Technology has multiplied our needs and in the scramble for acquiring more and more material passions. This has eroded the cultural values and obstructed spiritual development.

People lost their interests in arts and other subtler form of cultural activities and lost their basic human element also.
3. The Vital Questions

The vital question that faces man today is whether his progress has to be governed by the modern materialistic mind or by a noble pragmatism, guided by spiritual culture and knowledge. The following lines from Sri Aurabindo's Vision of Science state beautifully the crisis that confronts the modern man:

Thou hast forgot
The Sphinx that waits for man beside the way
All Questions thou mayst answer but one day
Her Questions shall await thee for reply.
As all we must; for they who cannot, die
She slays them and their mangled bodies lie
Upon the highways of Eternity.\(^{18}\)

4. Answer

And Aurobindo's answer to disarmament this crisis is that an equilibrium has to be established between man's internal and external worlds.

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\(^{18}\) As quoted by Prof Gokak, V.K., in *India and World Culture*, Sahitya Akademi, Delhi, 1972, p.22.
2.3.24 iv. Western Culture

Science and Technology, brought in its train the western way of life into India. Western culture brought profound changes in society. Increasing 'molecular family' instead of a Joint family, urbanisation were some of the influences that Western culture exercised over Indian Culture.

Due to the impact of west, people slowly avoided following old, traditions and customs and failed to adhere to traditional social norms. No doubt, western education helped man to advance in many spheres of life in moulding the destiny of the country. Western culture has shown us the various dimensions of freedom, sans one important aspect, and that is, "Internal". And this has caused mass frustration.

2.3.25 Survival of Indian Culture

A big question that remains unanswered is will Indian Culture survive? The answer is certainly 'yes'. Events that are happening now had a precedence even in the past. Such discrepancies have been rectified by the Indian Culture. So the key to set-right a present confused state lies only with us and not elsewhere. Any rejuvenation of Indian Culture is possible only in the background of our traditional culture may be with some adjustments. We can either mar it or nurture it
with great care as we have done in the past. Thus harnessing and unearthing potentialities for integration of a peaceful society lies in our hands.

2.4.1 Indian Culture contrasted with other cultures of the World – Greek and Roman

Even as the shade enhances the beauty of a picture, the greatness and grandeur of Indian Culture, as a "Living Example" of a living culture will be apparent only when contrasted with other cultures of the world, which have come and gone. In this long list, Greek and Roman stand out predominantly. Eventhough dead, they were really great.

Greek and Roman Cultures were also ancient like the Indian, if not earlier. The ancient Greek and Roman Culture and their expression of civilization had their unique features which are worth remembering.

2.4.2 Their Salient Features

1. GREEK

No cultural philosophy would deny that the achievements of Greeks in the field of Philosophy, science and architecture made their land mark in these respective fields and enabled this culture to carve out a place for itself, in the annals of world culture. It succeeded in developing a higher and more varied civilization. How they achieved could
be seen from the words of Robert E. Lerner in his book *Western Civilization*, "It seems reasonable to conclude also that the Greeks achieved a more normal and rational mode of living than most other peoples who strutted and fretted their hour upon this planet. The infrequency of brutal crimes and the contentment with simple amusements and modest wealth all point to a comparatively happy and satisfied existence." They excelled in Philosophy, Science, Mathematics, arts and sculpture. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were some of the forerunners in Philosophy. Their works include on logic, metaphysics, ethics and politics. Aristotle was also an empirical scientist with interest in Astronomy, medicine and Biology. Pythagoras developed a elaborate theory of numbers such as odd, even, prime, composite and so on. Greeks are the first to discover that the blood flows to and from the heart. Greek epics *Eliot* and *Odisey* were put into written from. Elegy developed only during the age. The supreme achievement of the Greeks was the tragic drama. His purpose was not to depict human sufferings but to interpret human actions and to purify the emotions of the audience. Sophocles was considered the greatest. Greeks temple architecture assumed new characteristics.

only during this periods. Different architectural style corinthian, Ionic, Dornic prevail during the Greek periods. Parthenon was the best example of Greek architecture. Phidia, Myron were some of the noted architects. Thus Greek civilisation flourished.

2. Rome

Roman achievements in architecture have rarely been matched. They built bridge, constructed, big Gallary called collosseum which seated 50,000 peoples. The realistic portrait sculpture have never been equalled. However, the greatest achievement of Roman culture lies not in art, or in architecture but in the realm of day to day life. Law, Military order and Civil administration were the most truly Roman.

2.4.3 Why they failed

1. Greek

We must not assume that Greek culture is without any defects. It permitted the exploitation of the weak especially of the slaves. Racial exclusiveness was there. There was also repression of the family members of the society. Socrates was put to death. And they failed in solving the problem of political conflicts.
2. Rome

Roman civilization declined due to the following reasons.

The political and administrative machinery of Roman are very weak. The kings were very much interested in collecting taxes. There were also economic reasons for its extinctions. Slaves, worked very hard and gave majority of their income to Landlords.

3. Their failure to Survive

In spite of these noteworthy features they could not survive the revages of time as, in this case, the balance tilted towards materialism. Total banking on acquiring material possessions, brings in its wake all negative tendencies such as envy, greed, anger resulting in self-deception.

Even in Indian Culture, though there were and are times which exhibit materialistic tendencies, it could not take hold of Indian culture totally, as even this materialism did not get divorced from spiritualism. It can even be said that materialism and spiritualism were regarded as the two phases of a coin. The classification of human ends as
'Dharma' (Righteousness), Artha (Wealth), Kāma (enjoyment) and Mokṣha (Release or Freedom) and regarding 'Artha' and 'Kāma' as subservient to Dharma, bear ample testimony to this fact.

As Swami Vivekananda was very fond of repeating Indian Culture could not have survived and cannot last long and is bound to be destroyed the moment it becomes totally materialistic.

Indian culture is a 'mosaic' culture. For example, after the exist of Lord Krishna from the world arena, the yādava clan, due to lack of proper leadership, got itself submerged totally in material pursuits, that it dug its own grave.

2.5 Greek and Roman Cultures - Non-Living or Dead

Spiritual pursuits were not given due importance. Greeks and Romans avoided facing realities to sensitive issues and thus played hide and seek with them, and this attitude made them cowardly and disunited.

The human soul has no enemy other than lazyness. It makes one's mind a devil's workshop. It is this enemy that produces anger, jealously, lust, ignorance and all other vices that impede one's spiritual surge. If this lazyness, lethargy and indolence, consequent on their adherence to material values, had been taken out of these two cultures then, perhaps
the course of events would have been different and history would have to be written differently. In addition, they had their streak of exhibitionism, lack of inner devotion and their total involvement to show and display quickened the pace of their death and earned the name 'Dead Culture'.

2.6 Indian Culture in relation to other Cultures

The one point of distinction between India and other cultures such as Roman and Greek is that while the former is 'Living' the latter are 'Dead'.

Greek, Roman and other world cultures showed only superficial life concern for human sufferings. The rules formulated for the alleviation of human agonies were not based on spiritual Humanism as was found in Indian culture. Actually, Indian cultures relation to other cultures, is very much akin to the relation that obtains between "Exemplifier" and the "Exemplified", that one who deserves to be an example worthy of emulation.