

Pub Culture-Should it be curbed?

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Abstract: *The culture in India with its classic tradition tries to keep the ostensible western culture like dating, consuming alcohol and drug, orotund dancing and sordid attires at bay. A Pub is an inn where people can relax, have a healthy camaraderie with fellow men and women and enjoy nonetheless a little bit of stress-free session in this arduous world. But then as years rolled on without any embargo, immoral lifestyle of the western folk drifted into the land of our holy and sacred culture leading to a separate culture as pub culture. It is very evident that the family ethics are gradually vanishing in Indian society because of the evils of pub culture. The regime needs to adhere to this so called culture before it is too late that would pave way for a happy life ever after.*

Key words: *modernization, schizophrenic split, rehabilitation.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Birds and animals that set out at early dawn in search of food come back before sun down. There is no need for them to stop on the way back and look back for something other than the food and the drink which nature provides. But man cannot come home without visiting his favorite elixir. As it goes down his throat, a sense of well-being settles down his mind. This is not very bad after at all. What is bad is that he gets a kick and falls into a drunken stupor. Whether he walks home or sits behind a wheel and drives, is immaterial. Either way he becomes a problem to the traffic officer. But the problem will not end here. He becomes an addict. The addiction makes him a derelict. There is no come back for him. The more he drinks the more he needs. His downward journey does not end until he breaks down financially, socially, physically and mentally. Misery mocks at him and death threatens him.

2. PUB CULTURE:

Indian culture has given way to western culture sans its positive aspects. The term 'pub culture' when decoded, really stands for women drinking and socializing with men in public places. Bars and pubs have been for decades. And men have their steady clientele. So long pubs were a male bastion: there wasn't a hint of protest about this being anti "Indian culture". But as women have started visiting pubs, mostly in male company conservative India has been feeling uncomfortable, betraying their strong gender bias. Blindly aping the West without imbibing its values of hard work, personal honesty, hygiene, education, etc, could well end up with Indians having the worst of both worlds, it is argued. Due to growing exposure to television and Bollywood films and due to envy of the English-speaking upper classes, modernization has come to be equated with westernization in the popular mind.

IN THE PAST.....

For ages, women activists argued, men had treated women as their chattels, denying them equal rights in property and above all, the right to dignity and decency. Traditionally, women had been denied the right to education, were confined to the four walls of their parental house, and on the onset of puberty given away in matrimony as bonded cattle and as fierce warriors.

THE PRESENT PICTURE:

"This issue [India against pub culture] has never been raised before. Go out to villages and everyone knows our women are free to smoke beedi and hookah and drink," says activist Jyotsna Chatterji. The girls in Mangalore were attacked as they sat in a pub quite a few years ago. It was alleged that they were dancing and taking drugs by the hooligans.

In contrast to certain rightist radicals objecting to young girls for frequenting the bars to chill out as witnessed in Mangalore, the pub culture in India gets a fillip, as youngsters become regular tipplers at the pubs and lounge bars. Of course, until a couple of years ago, there was hardly any nightlife in India whereas of late, the scenario is different, literally, one short of the adage about the sun never setting. The bar culture in India is seeing a reversal of trend with late night pubs having come up in the city. As for girls lounging in a bar with a glass of drink was almost a taboo in

the past, but today, it is a different scenario with many girls visiting the bars to unwind over a few drinks after a hard day's work.

The Mangalore and many such heinous incidents touched off a huge controversy, pitting westernization against the traditional way of life, modernization and globalization against orthodoxy, alleged decadence of the West versus an old fashioned Hindu Value system. Gender equality activists saw in the Mangalore attack, a reflection of the alleged male bias against women. The attack on the Mangalore pub was not so much in defence of Indian culture as it was an assault on the dignity of women. "These men were angry at the sight of women imbibing liquor with their male friends..... It was all right if boys drank, but it was sacrilege if women did", said one battle axe of a woman on a television channel. The collective mind-set associates women who drink with either privilege or poverty and the urban young women's asserting her individual right to drink becomes unacceptable.

Sociologists spoke of a schizophrenic split in society, with the haves and have-nots feeling envious and resentful.

'PUB' - TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

Drinking, therefore, is not an individual problem. It becomes the problem of the society and the nation at large. It is from this point of view, that its solution should be looked at. It is true that the government drives a big chunk of revenue from the sale of liquor. But it is the money that an unfortunate derelict pays. It becomes a mockery, if this money goes to finance for his rehabilitation or restoration. Cannot the government think of other means to fill their coffers than by wet law? Cannot the industry do something to improve the health of the society than manufacture these liquids of death and disaster? But who will save a man determined to drown but himself. Thus, it is an economic divide with the poor bereft of a decent livelihood and the rich having surplus income to eat in fancy restaurants patronize West-inspired fashions in clothes and housing and imbibing liquor in beer-bars and pubs.

"May your glass be over full. May the roof over your head be always strong? And may you be in heaven half an hour before the devil knows you're dead".

Old Irish Toast.

3. CONCLUSION:

Hence, the query posed "pub culture -should it be curbed" has an answer in itself. I would say that it should be curbed; and I'd like to conclude with one of the wise sayings of the great wise king Solomon, "look not you upon the wine when it is red, when it gives its colour in the cup, when it moves itself aright. At last, it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder"².

Hence, Let's Ponder!

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