

Block 2 Role of Translation in a Multicultural Society

Unit 4

Multiculturalism: An Introduction

Unit 5

Indian Multiculturalism in Global Context

Unit 6

Development of Translation and Transcultural Competence

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Introduction to Block 2

The second block of the present course deals with **The Role of Translation in a Multicultural Society**. In the presented section, the total number of units is three. A brief description of them is being given below.

Title of Unit 4 is **Multiculturalism : An Introduction**. In this unit, the concept of multiculturalism has been discussed in detail with its various dimensions. What is multiculturalism as a point of view of human life, along with various arguments given in favor and against this concept have been discussed in this unit. Multiculturalism is not only an idea but also a policy which is also implemented in America and various European countries and from time to time it also receives various challenges. All these points have been discussed in detail in the present unit.

Unit 5 is titled as **Indian Multiculturalism in a Global Context**. In the present unit, an attempt has been made to look at Indian multiculturalism in a global context by considering multiculturalism in the Indian context and its various dimensions such as history and ethnography, language, cultural identity etc. In this, the position of India in the global context, India's multiculturalism in the post-colonial period and its place in the world and the role of translation in the promotion of multiculturalism, etc. have been considered, as well as important points such as the question of representation and identity have been discussed.

Unit 6 is titled as **Translation and the Development of Transcultural Competence**. As we all know that we are a part of the globalized world. The biggest need of this world is our identity with different cultures. In such a situation, translation is a very important medium to communicate with all cultures. In the present unit, we have pointed to this role of translation, how translation plays an important role in the development of transcultural competence.

UNIT 4 : MULTICULTURALISM: AN INTRODUCTION

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objective
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 What is Multiculturalism
- 4.3 Multiculturalism as a view of Human Life
- 4.4 Pros and Cons
 - 4.4.1 Arguments in favor of Multiculturalism
 - 4.4.2 Arguments against Multiculturalism
- 4.5 Role of Translation and Translator in Multicultural Societies
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Exercises
- 4.8 Suggested Readings

4.0 Objective

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Explain what is multiculturalism;
- Summarize the arguments in favor and against of multiculturalism, and
- Understand the role of translation and translator in the context of multiculturalism that why translation is such a responsible job.

4.1 Introduction

There will hardly be any country in the world where people coming from the same cultural, religious and linguistic background live. We have been meeting people of different ways of living, thinking and seeing the world on this earth since very old times. In any region, if one culture has been in a position of supremacy, then along with it, other cultures have also been present, sometimes by joining shoulder to shoulder and somewhere by accepting the position of subservient. As the movement of people around the world increased with the development of science and technology, so did the cultural diversity in each region. Today Multiculturalism is the reality of all societies of the world. It means that the recognized society of every country is a society made up of a combination of different cultural groups in some proportion or the other. Multiculturalism is the acceptance of this reality at the policy level.

4.2 What is Multiculturalism

Multicultural refers to cultural diversity or cultural plurality. In other words, respecting all cultures at the same time and constitutionally giving them equal status is the basis of multiculturalism. Any country is called multicultural only when it gives equal importance to almost all the cultures present here. But in order to give equal importance, it is necessary to take special care that no one culture dominates the other, nor should it become a giant culture vanishing all other so-called small cultures. It can be clearly said that a multicultural nation is one within whose limits all the available cultures remain with their full existence. In the last few decades, this multiculturalism has emerged as a political idea, which is called Multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is an idea that many countries have adopted as their state policy. It first began to be discussed in Canada and Australia in the early 1970s. After that gradually it spread like a movement in America, England, Germany and other western countries. According to government documents from Canada, which first adopted multiculturalism as a state policy and has the largest number of immigrants in the world, Canadian multiculturalism is most fundamental to our belief that all citizens are equal. Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can preserve their identity, be proud of their ancestors and have a sense of belonging.

This view emphasizes that the different ethnic cultures present in a society should be recognized by the state and given adequate opportunities to practice their own beliefs, customs and way of life that are distinct from the majority culture. Facilitation should be made main. Recognizing, protecting and promoting the values of a particular ethnic religious cultural community as central and pushing others to the margins is unfair. All such groups should get the status of equality and they should not feel that anywhere from school curriculum to various institutions, from court to administration and business, their values and beliefs are being disrespected or glorified. This is the basic formula of multiculturalism. This belief emphasizing the importance of cultural diversity is actually against the policy of assimilation, that is, going together. The policy of equalization tries to create a mainstream and merge all others into it. In it, the identity of minority cultural groups does not get independent recognition and respect. This process ultimately strengthens the supremacy of the majority culture. Similarly minority cultures are also suppressed in the name of social solidarity. Where they are discriminated against explicitly (for example, laws that restrict the freedom of certain groups) and where this discrimination occurs in an implicit form (for example, historical, no space for artistic contributions etc.) Multiculturalism is a call against all these attitudes.

As noted, many nations have officially adopted multiculturalism in an unstated form since the 1970s. Under this, freedom has been given to hold citizenship of more than one country in many places; special help is given to minority languages on newspapers, television and radio; Special arrangements are made for the celebrations and holidays of the minorities, recognition is given to wearing traditional and religious clothes in schools, army and society in general. The music and arts of minority cultures get government support. Different laws apply to members of each ethnic group. Many such efforts are reflected in the policy of multiculturalism at the state level.

4.3 Multiculturalism as a View of Human Life

In his article titled 'What is Multiculturalism', Bhikhu Parekh described multiculturalism as a way of looking at human life rather than as a philosophical school or a program-oriented political

principle. They believe that the multiculturalist perspective is made up of three important and mutually complementary insights. The first is that every human being is rooted in their culture, in the sense that they grow up and live in a world that is culturally constructed. They organize their lives and social relations according to the time given to them by their culture regarding what is meaningful and what is meaningless, what is important and what is unimportant. It does not mean at all that a person cannot get out of the thinking given by his/her culture and cannot look at its value system in a critical way, it just means that he/she can transcend some of the influences of his/her culture, but not everyone.

Second, different cultures have different beliefs about what a good life is and what life should be like. Since each of these states rests within a limited range of human capacities, feelings and emotions and draws from within itself only a fraction of the totality of human existence, it needs other cultures to support itself. It helps you to better understand yourself, to broaden your intellectual and moral horizons, to expand your imagination, and to guard against the innate temptation of thinking of yourself as the ultimate truth. This does not mean that it is impossible to lead a good life by living within the confines of our culture only. It only means that contact with other cultures can enrich our way of life and also that in today's more dynamic world it has become almost impossible for most people to live within their own culture.

Third, every culture is intrinsically pluralistic and within you there is a constant dialogue between different traditions. Cultures develop by consciously or unconsciously interacting with each other. That is why they are at least partially multicultural in their origin and in their construction. No culture is completely 'pure' and it definitely contains parts of other cultures.

The thing related to this is that the culture which does not take a positive attitude towards the pluralities within it, its attitude towards other cultures is also not positive. No culture is sensitive to external differences unless it is spontaneous to its internal differences.

These three insights, according to Bhikhu Parekh, constitute the whole vision of multiculturalism. They consider these to be mutually complementary insights. According to him, when we look at the world from the space created by the convergence of these insights, our attitude towards ourselves and others changes greatly. Our claims that a particular institution or a particular way of thinking and living is the most correct or according to the needs of human nature, seem inconsistent and redundant because it goes against our well-conceived belief that all systems of thought and life are limited in themselves and cannot contain the full range of the richness, complexity and vastness of human existence. We are naturally suspicious of attempts to unify a culture and impose a singular identity on it, because we are well aware that every culture is intrinsically plural and differentiated. At the same time, we are skeptical of all attempts to present it as a pure culture growing from within itself, because we feel that all cultures develop themselves through interaction with others. It is born taking influence and shaped by larger economic, political and other forces. This belief demolishes the basis of all types of centrality like Afrocentrism, Eurocentrism, Indocentrism, Sinocentrism etc. (Here is the centrist view which) disconnects the history of the culture concerned from the history of other cultures and gives full credit for its achievements to its own special talent.'

To put these words of Bhikhu Parekh in simple words, multiculturalism is an approach that brings a kind of openness within us to the question of culture. We do not believe in considering any one as the best among all the cultures, including our culture, believe that all the cultures have developed only due to mutual interaction and further living in their own limited scope, they can't understand and realize the completeness of diverse human existence. At the same time, we adopt an open-minded attitude toward the cultural characteristics of others, which implies that no one value system or way of life is exclusive, nor is another inferior or inappropriate. Thus the multiculturalist approach inculcates in us an inclination towards diversity against homogeneity. The values that we have grown up with cannot be destroyed. Even if we are not able to fully embrace the new cultural mix, our receptivity definitely reads and the bigotry is left behind.

4.4 Pros and Cons

Multiculturalism is not an uncontroversial idea. Today, if many nations accept it as a state policy and recognize the uniqueness of different cultural identities, on the other hand, it is also opposed from many angles in many circles. Many opposing thinkers oppose its basic idea itself, while many others propose critical multiculturalism in place of liberal multiculturalism, while recommending a replacement of its coercion. We will see both of these as opposition to the prevalent form of multiculturalism.

4.4.1 Arguments in Favor of Multiculturalism

The things that have been said while explaining the meaning of multiculturalism are the essence of the arguments given in its favor. We know that in the current era of globalization, the regional boundaries of cultures have been broken down more than in any previous era of history. The representation of different cultural groups in the population of any place has increased in an unprecedented manner. Along with this, the process of democratization has also created a different kind of awareness about the rights of minorities. Therefore, today, looking at both the objective conditions and the general ideological trend, the need is being felt that different cultural groups living in the society should be allowed to maintain their cultural identity. Considering a particular culture as the mainstream of a particular society, presenting the history of the whole society in the light of its history and keeping others on secondary status or not giving legitimacy to their values, beliefs and customs - this is fatal for social harmony. That is why the proponents of multiculturalism see it as a better system which provides open opportunity for people to live connected with their roots and at the same time makes them more tolerant towards others. They believe that till date there has been a tendency in the writing of history to exaggerate the contribution of the dominant groups and minimize the contribution of the minority groups. Multiculturalism negates this and demands multiple histories and hence it is the most effective idea and policy in the world that is getting more and more attention.

4.4.2 Arguments Against Multiculturalism

From parochialist thinkers to left-radical intellectuals have opposed multiculturalism in their own way or have questioned its prevailing form. The thinkers opposing it completely believe that multiculturalism is fatal for national unity and social solidarity. They consider a single cultural identity as the basis of national unity, which means that even if many different religious-cultural

languages are found within the boundaries of a particular nation, in fact there is only one religious-cultural-language. It is the basis of the existence of the nation. Ignoring this, when we start giving equal place to all kinds of cultural identities, then the identity of the nation as a nation is in danger. Then it becomes a strange conglomeration, for which there was no solid reason to remain united. Thus multiculturalism actually promotes separatism. Expressing this notion, Australian Prime Minister John Howard said in 1988, 'My argument with multiculturalism is not that it shows respect and tolerance for diversity, but that it in many ways emphasizes division. Such measures against multiculturalism have been raised on a large scale in almost all countries. The report of the commission under the chairmanship of Bhikhu Parekh, referred to earlier (also known as the Parekh Report), was opposed in Britain and people said that this report which expresses Britain as a community of communities is actually about balkanization of our society. Similarly, in America also, the Clinton administration was given many arguments against the cultural policies. Samuel P. Huntington, in his famous book, *The Clash of Civilization and The Remaking of World Order* (1997), emphasized that attempts to make America a multicultural nation are very dangerous. To understand why they believe this, it is necessary to take a quick look at their original setting.

Huntington believes that since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the number of conflicts arising out of cultural causes in the world is very large and the trend of groupism on cultural grounds can also be clearly seen. The largest form of any culture is called civilization. The role of this greatest form of culture at the international level is now becoming very important, because in global politics, the trend of countries uniting on the basis of civilization, mobilizing in war situations is clearly visible. In this way, if the next world war happens, it will be a war between civilizations; it will not be a war between groups (fascists and anti-fascists) divided on ideological grounds like the Second World War. Right now there are seven or eight civilizations, whose existence is decisive for the times to come. Western, Orthodox Slavs, Confucius, Japanese, Islam, Hindu, Latin American and perhaps African. Huntington, with reference to America, says that it is basically a part of Western Christian civilization, but instead of identifying itself in this form, it is becoming identity less in the name of multiculturalism. This is a dangerous situation, as affirming one's membership within a particular civilization is essential to secure one's existence in today's world. By blurring out its cultural identity, America is isolating itself from the forces united with it. Due to this, it will not be able to escape the target of attack of other civilizations, especially Islam, on the contrary, while being the target of that attack, it will be deprived of the strategic cooperation of other countries of its civilization. It will not take long to become a victim of the combined anger of the Muslims and especially the violent attacks of Islam. Therefore, as an international relations analyst and defense consultant, Huntington advised America to move out of the dangerous idiom of multiculturalism and to recognize the socio-cultural mainstream of Western Christianity as the basis of its nationhood.

Multiculturalism has been criticized from a different angle by leftist thinkers. They consider the prevailing multiculturalism as a state policy, a principle that instead of running a transformative union against racism or white supremacy, celebrates diversity. Under this policy, exhibitions etc. related to ethnic cultures are organized on behalf of the state and while suppressing the possibility of any contact running for real equality, it presents culture as an object of show, consumption and celebration. That is why these thinkers would have recommended critical multiculturalism instead of the prevalent liberal culturalism. It is a culture that has scope for

cultural criticism and a deep commitment to social justice. It is also through critical multiculturalism that the freedom granted to a cultural group to follow its own practices and values is not limited to any subgroup or group within that group. It should not become the reason for the violation of universal human rights of some persons. It has a great deal to do with the prevalent form of multiculturalism. It gives great importance to the variations between different cultures, but it does not talk about the variations within a culture. Because of this, if the ways of a culture are undemocratic at a very deep level in themselves, then by giving them exemption, the universal modern value of democracy of relations is put on the stake. This aspect has been discussed in great detail by Susan Moller Okin in her paper 'Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?'

Okin begins her article with the question that what should be done when there is a conflict between the assertion of minority cultures or religions and the notion of civil equality, which is at least formally recognized by liberal states? She believes that multiculturalism's commitment to the group rights of minority cultures runs counter to the concept of chauvinism or the human rights of women. In all cultures, if we look at the rules of marriage, the concept of rights and responsibilities of women, the power structure of relations within the family, etc., then it will be known that everywhere women are kept under control, kept completely under male domination. Everything is planned for the purpose of her suppression. This means that in the name of multiculturalism, women can be taken back to mutual slavery by depriving them of the legal equality enjoyed by the modern secular state. Okin writes that this simple criticism of group rights has not been adequately addressed by minority group rights advocates within the liberal state for at least two reasons. First, they view cultural groups as a single whole. This means that they pay more attention to differences between groups than differences within groups. In particular, they ignore or pay little attention to the fact that within minority cultural groups there is a wide gap in power and prestige between men and women. Second, group rights advocates also pay little or no attention to the realm of privacy. Some of the best liberal arguments in favor of group authority state that one needs a culture of one's own and that it is within such a culture that people can develop a sense of self-esteem or gain the ability to decide what kind of life is best for them. But these arguments completely ignore two things, one, the different roles that a cultural group expects of its members, and two, the context in which individuals' self-perceptions and capacities are first shaped and in which culture is first transferred to that i.e. the sphere of domestic or family life.

Notice that this criticism of Okin (absolutely not paying attention to the scope of privacy) is also an indication of the shortcomings of Parekh's analysis. The two things she talks about being ignored really matter. If a cultural group expects its women to play the role of efficient and obedient housewives, then should this recognition in the name of group authority be considered binding beyond the will and reluctance of the individual woman?

In fact, to apply multiculturalism in an absolutely uncritical way is to approach it from the side of cultural relativism. Cultural relativism means giving validity to each culture's own values and beliefs by not considering any core as universal. This extremism would, of course, justify all kinds of power relations that exist within a culture. If Dalits are treated with untouchability in Hindu culture and women are given subordinate status to father, husband and son according to status, then it is correct according to that cultural relativism. Wherever multiculturalism reaches this end, it is to be discarded. In it there should be a place for universal values like equality of

human being, respect of individual and according to them there should be scope for criticism of culture-specific. Culturalism endowed with such critical capacity will be as much aware of the differences between cultures as it will be about the differences within the culture. If such multiculturalism would ensure that by recognizing the supremacy of one culture within the boundaries of a nation, others are not given secondary status, it would also ensure that human rights are not violated in the name of cultural distinctiveness.

4.5 Role of the Translation and Translator in Multicultural Societies

In the present global scenario, when immigration and emigration are increasing within almost all the nations and different life-values and life-styles are bound to settle near each other, the utility of translation has increased enormously and hence the role of a translator has increased. Therefore, the role of translator is extremely responsible.

When people coming from different cultural background are living in the same society, then translation work is very useful at two levels. 1. At the administrative level, where due to the policy of multiculturalism, many official documents are required to be made available in different languages, and 2. At the societal level, where the role of translation comes to the fore as a means of exchange and intimate acquaintance between cultures.

Of these, the second point is worth considering. This basic understanding of culturalism, that there should be a healthy co-existence of different cultures in a society and it should be tolerant towards the other and aware of its goodness while maintaining its own uniqueness, providing a vast field and clear direction for translation work. That is, there is understanding. The unfamiliarity causes fear, apprehension and doubt. To remove such fear and suspicion among the communities, it is necessary to introduce them deeply among themselves. For this, among many other things, literary, ideological and other types of texts should be translated from one language to another on a large scale. Due to this, there is mutual alienation, we are introduced to the ways of living, thinking and behaving of others and the validity of each method at its own level slowly seeps into us and makes a place within us. For example, what we learn about the customs and manners of Latin American literature through English or Hindi does not allow Latin American societies to remain alien to us and thus makes us comfortable with them. If there is no such introduction, there remains discomfort in the relationship, which causes many misunderstandings between the communities. Isabel Pascua, who teaches at the University of Las Palmas in Spain, has underlined the importance of her project on the translation of Judaic children's literature, saying that she does not want the two children in Julie Lawson's *The White Jade Tiger* (1993) faced the opposite situation, be it with more children. She quotes this passage from *The White Jade Tiger*.

Jasmine was taken aback by the nasty slander about her and her friend Kiyung. Struggling to control herself, she took a deep breath. She wanted to rebuke them, wanted to defeat them with the power of her words. But there was more to her than anger.

'I know it hurts to hear this'. After the people left Kiyung said.

But why do they talk like this? I don't understand. They don't even know us.

That's why they do this because they don't know us.

This passage very clearly outlines the need for the communities to introduce themselves. Of course, the role of translation can be very important in fulfilling this. Another factor related to multiculturalism in the context of translation is that a translator cannot be a good translator unless he or she has a thorough knowledge of the cultures associated with the source language and the target language. It is the task of the translator to understand (decode) the text present in the Source language along with its cultural contexts and to make a new code-creation (encoding) for it according to the target language-speaking society. If he/she him/herself is not able to understand the cultural references, then it is obvious that he/she will not be able to explain them even in target language. Similarly, even after understanding the cultural barriers, if the translator does not have such a deep knowledge of the culture of the target language speaking society that he/she will not be able to translate well, especially in such a situation. This means that good translators are not only polyglots or at least bilinguals, they are also rich in multicultural temperament. They are curious people who are deeply concerned with culture. Due to having such an aim, they are able to understand the heart of the text in the right perspective and work as a bridge to reach it to other language-speaking communities. Thus we can say that for good translation this basic belief of multiculturalism is and must be present as a driving force that cultural diversity is also beneficial for the society and for this it is necessary to create such a suitable environment in the society that different cultures can flourish giving respect, importance and support to each other.

4.6 Let Us Sum Up

In the present unit you have read that the discussion of multiculturalism started in western societies in the decade of 1970s. Gradually, the governments of many countries accepted it as a state policy, which meant that it was recognized at the state level for the beliefs, values, customs, etc. of all kinds of cultural groups that inhabited it. And it was ensured that they were not shunned or postponed at any level, from law to everyday social life. The thinkers who propose multiculturalism as a life-view believe that the personality of every human being is shaped by its culture, so it should have the right to live with the way of life provided by its culture. Also, since every culture is incomplete in many ways by itself, the more cultural distinctiveness a society has the more that society is enriched by cultural exchange.

The critics of multiculturalism have advised to avoid it saying that it is dangerous for the unity-integrity of the nation, and somewhere it has been rightly pointed out that stressing on maintaining cultural specialties in a critical way, many times can go against human rights. From this point of view, the talk of critical multiculturalism has been coming up for discussion.

The basic beliefs of multiculturalism are also useful for translation work. Translators work across cultures. They also draw inspiration from the multiculturalist vision and seek to fulfill multiculturalist objectives because translation is not just linguistic transfer.

In the next unit, you will study in detail about Multiculturalism in the Indian context.

4.7 Exercise

1. Are the policies of multiculturalism and assimilation similar or opposite? Please clarify.
2. What insights have formed the multiculturalist outlook on life?
3. What can be called a narrow view of the criticism of multiculturalism?
4. How increasing acquaintance among different cultural groups is necessary for social harmony and in this what role can translation play?
5. 'Translation is essential for any multicultural society'. Justify the statement.

4.8 Suggested Readings

- For Bhiku Parekh's article see: Seminar No. 484, December 1999. It is also on the Internet [http:// www.india-seminar.com/](http://www.india-seminar.com/1999/484/20/parekh.htm) 1999/484 20/parekh.htm
- <http://www.bostonreview.net/BR22.5/okin.html> for Office articles
- Kymlicka, Will : 1995, Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights, Oxford. Oxford University Press

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UNIT 5 : INDIAN MULTICULTURALISM IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Unit Structure

5.0 Objective

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Multiculturalism in the Indian Context

5.2.1 Ethnography and Historiography

5.2.2 Language

5.2.3 Cultural Identity

5.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Transactions

5.3 Indian Multiculturalism in the Global Context

5.3.1 Situating India in the Global Context

5.3.2 Role of Language, Culture & Translation

5.3.3 Multiculturalism in the Post-colonial India

5.3.4 Multiculturalism in a 'Global' Perspective

5.3.5 Globalisation and Cultural Dissemination

5.3.6 Questions of Representation and Identity: Literature & Culture

5.4 Let Us Sum Up

5.5 Exercise

5.6 Suggested Readings

5.0 Objective

After reading this unit, you will be able to understand:

- What does it mean by multiculturalism in Indian context.
- What does it refer to cultural identity;
- What does it mean by Indian multiculturalism in global context;
- What form of multiculturalism is practiced in other countries and how do they take it;

- Relation between question of representation & identity and translation; and
- Role of literature and translation in dissemination of multiculturalism.

5.1 Introduction

Multiculturalism is a body of thought primarily associated with political philosophy and located in studies in and around Literature, Translation and Cultural Studies about the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity. Multiculturalism is closely associated with concepts such as “identity politics,” “the politics of difference,” and “the politics of recognition,” all of which share a commitment to revaluing disrespected identities and changing dominant patterns of representation and communication that marginalize certain groups. Multiculturalism is also a matter of economic interests and political power; it demands remedies to economic and political disadvantages that people suffer as a result of their minority status. In the Indian context, it is defined by the country’s heterogenous ethnic identity.

In an international frame while multiculturalism has been used in the last few decades as an umbrella term to characterize the moral and political claims of a wide range of disadvantaged groups, including African Americans, women, gays and lesbians, and the disabled, most theorists of multiculturalism tend to focus their arguments on immigrants who are ethnic and religious minorities for example Latinos in the U.S., Muslims in Western Europe, minority nations such as Catalans, Basque, Welsh, Québécois and the indigenous peoples such as Native peoples in North America, and Maori in New Zealand. In India it is characterised by many religious and social minority communities, their socio-cultural histories and their living vis-à-vis the mainstream ‘others’.

Thinkers of multiculturalism take for granted that it is ‘culture’ and ‘cultural groups’ that are to be recognized and accommodated. Yet multicultural claims include a wide range of claims involving religion, language, ethnicity, nationality, and race. Culture is a notoriously overbroad concept, and all of these categories have been subsumed by or equated with the concept of culture. Language and religion are at the heart of many claims for cultural accommodation by immigrants. One of the key claims made by minority nations is for self-government rights. Race has a more limited role in multicultural discourse. Anti-racism and multiculturalism are distinct but related ideas: the former highlights ‘victimization and resistance’ whereas the latter highlights ‘cultural life, cultural expression, achievements, and the like’.

An almost similar kind of political hegemony can be found in the Indian context as well. Multiculturalism in India is at times associated with marginalised societies or communities and their persistent struggle for survival, justice, equality, belongingness and sometimes representation too. This phenomenon in the Indian scenario is characterised by a duality or a binary in terms of social classes, religious hierarchies, cultural roots and peoples’ contribution in

the nation's political history. Dalits, Tribals and other such categories of people living in many parts of the country have always grappled with their rights, identity, freedom and a sense of belongingness to the nation called India and its historiography through continuous marginalisation by their respective dominant classes.

5.2 Multiculturalism in the Indian Context

India is a land of many languages and cultures. It contains vast trajectories of linguistic and cultural roots traced down to the ancient times. India's cultural identity is defined by its association to its historiography, mythology, and cultural practices. Cultural identity in the Indian context is heterogeneous and therefore a 'pan-Indian' culture or cultural identity is quite illusive in the sense that such an identity is almost impossible to be defined. India's cultural practices are as wide ranging as the history of its people and represent a plethora of social value systems cherished and nurtured for ages. These value systems practiced by different groups or communities of people or rather societies living in various geographical territories are material that define their identity and existence and are in reality lived-in experiences of the people.

These multiple cultural practices prevailing across regional boundaries include people's food habits, dress codes, religious and cultural rituals, societal norms and all those values that societies call and practice as their own. India's multiculturalism comes from the distinct region wise variations or classifications such as the central-northern, north-eastern, western, southern belts and so on. All these regions have their own distinct cultural practices, religious beliefs and societal norms and they do not necessarily follow state-demarcated distinctions. Instead, they mostly remain loyal to a region-demarcated distinction and have their respective roots in peoples' ancestral history and cultural and traditional past.

An identification of India's multicultural heritage and a location of its unique specificities are possible through accounts of the peoples' history and ethnography. Language too plays a crucial role in the formation of these identities and therefore the study of India's multiculturalism also incorporates (along with history and ethnography) an investigation into the linguistic heritages of different societies.

Multiculturalism in the Indian context is reflected along two distinct trajectories: the religious plurality and a wide-ranging socio-cultural historiography. India is the most religiously diverse country in the world, with significant Hindu (80.5%), Muslim (13.4%), Christian (2.3%), Sikh (2.1%), Buddhist, Bahá'í, Ahmadi, Jain and Parsi populations. Along socio-cultural lines, on the other hand, India's population fall into many categories all of whom practice and identify themselves with specific social/cultural/mythical clustering of value systems.

5.2.1 Ethnography and Historiography

Any study around the identity of a nation is characterised by accounts of its history and ethnography. History engages us with accounts of socio-political evolution, the given systems of societal norms, practices, political administration and the people's wide-ranging cultural history. Ethnography, in other words, gives us access to and accounts of the people's varied ethnic past, dogmas and principles that communities relate to by virtue of their birth and belongingness to their respective roots.

Multiculturalism in India is predominantly attributed to its historiography and ethnography. India's political history, comprising of invasions and colonial rule, has contributed a great deal to the formation of its historiography and cultural past. A large amount of the share of India's cultural identity today is a result of the two major colonial invasions of Indian territory—the Mughals and the British—that have influenced Indian culture in a significant way which made monumental shifts in the history of India's political administration and offered alternative critiques to the study of the accounts of India's ethnography.

History and ethnography thus function as important markers of India's multicultural identity. The former has, in a major way, contributed in giving consolidated shapes to various communities of people settled in different parts of the country especially after a time of political chaos or turmoil or historical event such as migration or settlement/re-settlement. The Parsi and the Portuguese communities in different parts of India are few examples of this kind of alternate identity formation within Indian multiculturalism. The latter i.e. ethnography, on the other hand, represent plural images of Indianness in the understanding of Indian culture in a global context. However, ethnicities of India have met with new challenges to sustain their cultural plurality in the wake of economic developments and found new ways of assimilation in the globalised culture(s).

5.2.2 Language

India is a multilingual country. It has more than two dozen of major languages and a host of minor ones as well. India's multilingual background is an attribution of its linguistic history passing through crucial points of origin and stages of evolution—the latter sometimes coinciding with the country's political upheavals.

The linguistic history of India is usually read and assessed in two modes of construction. On the one hand, there are linguistic roots such as Dravidian and so on that constructed a certain image of India in terms of its linguistic identity both at the level of speech as well as script. This process (of the formation of linguistic identity) gave way towards the formation of India's national identity and is a process which is defined by a consolidation of literary-academic practices such as translation, seminars/conferences among others.

The other aspect of the recognition of India's linguistic identity is marked by the arrival of the English in the country. The Englishmen not only brought intents of religious 'mission', of the

establishment and proliferation of commerce for bigger colonial enterprise; but also imposed a language which was made a language of power in many different ways.

With the arrival of English in India, there came about a spectrum of power structures that swayed the mind of the educated Indian and offered him pluralistic prospects in the areas of the usage of language. The English language, in other words, brought forth new vistas in areas such as work/service, living standard, human interaction and literary and cultural transaction. Indian educational institutions offered courses on English language and Translation which opened up newer professional opportunities for the native learners. Literary boundaries too were extended to incorporate texts by English authors. There was a tremendous and speedy growth in the spread of the popularity and also usage of the English language among Indians which resulted in multifarious transactions of cultural material between the British and the Indians primarily mediated through appointed experts such as oriental scholars and munshis. This mediation process took a long time to be consolidated into recognised forms of transaction and it happened through institutionalised mechanisms of exercises such as translation, interpretation, teaching and other mediums of learning.

5.2.3 Cultural Identity

What is known to be cultural identity can be understood in various realms, depending on the context it is applied for. The debates on culture in the past few years, have gained impetus with the focus on identity issues, opening new areas of study vis-à-vis multi-cultural nations where hierarchies suppress certain groups, on the basis of their subdued position carried over by centuries of past. It is in the apparatuses of various social structures that cultural identity is interrogated as a ‘construct’, organised within historically contingent categories.

To further explore the notion of cultural identity as a construct, it is significant to overrule the norms that are laid before any given society, questioning the hierarchies, subverting them and creating opportunities for the ‘oppressed’. Within such a study, it becomes plausible to address several identities that have stood as marginalised entities vis-à-vis dominant cultural practices. Academically speaking, there has been a shift from disciplines like that of comparative literature to cultural studies, indicating how important issues of identity have become. In addition, disciplines such as Translation Studies is now frequently approached from a renewed perspective. Even a translator’s choice of translating a peculiar text seems to be governed by the potential of text that highlights problems of cultural identities.

In the Indian context, several discourses became a site for understanding the binaries that prevail in the society like those of Dalit/ Brahmin, male/female, agrarian masters/ bonded labours, etc. Many movements in the domain of social/economic/ political and cultural propelled the ideas of identity. The Mandal commission was one such initiation that propagated the debate on

reservation in the education policy and thereafter opened avenues on the discussion of Dalit identity. Gender issues, too became culture-specific in such context, reassessing patriarchal structures. These movements found place in the literary manifestations, in the form of self-representation by the writers who themselves belonged to marginalised sections.

5.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Transactions

Language is a basic component of communication which represents cultural identities and mediates information and knowledge forms among multiple communities. Language is culture specific in its nature and has a potential to build structures of perception in a given society. It is governed by principles of structure that are developed arbitrarily within historical conditions.

It is imperative, thus, to understand that language is a locus where developments and the growth of various cultural and sub-cultural trajectories intersect. There can be no depth in a study on the linguistic plurality of a nation without understanding the cultural diversity that exists in a given time. The paradigmatic shifts in a language are rooted in ever changing applications by old and new cultural forms. With rapid technology change in the cultural forms, there is a constant revision of linguistic categories such as lexicon in both literal and symbolic sense. It is however debatable that urban experience of language might appear more susceptible to change than in a rural landscape because of consumption of change that is apparent in cultural forms.

It is these discursive changes that literary expressions absorb with the time, and after a repetitive use of new applications, they are acknowledged as a norm. Such a potential of language is exploited as a site of cultural difference in many literatures, heavily drawn on identity issues. For instance, Indian writing in English introduced repertoire of strategic changes in the languages that are realised as a resistance to British English, and well acknowledged as Indian English now.

5.3 Indian Multiculturalism in the Global Context

India's multicultural identity has been a subject of scholarly investigation in the domains of political/historical, literary/aesthetic and interdisciplinary studies both within India and beyond. More specifically in the last few decades or so, India's cultural and linguistic plurality has been subjects of various historical and literary discourses taking place in and around the academia. There are courses offered in universities outside India that contain subjects/issues on this plurality. There are conferences and symposia held within and outside India on this subject. There has been a phenomenal shift in the recent decades in the traditional academic curricula or canons in History, Literature and Anthropology worldwide which resulted in an inclusion of a perspective on Indian multicultural identities in the traditional canons. There have been numerous publications too on the subject that have enabled discourses on Indian multiculturalism to have wider and more comprehensive dimensions.

5.3.1 Situating India in the Global Context

It is argued in the earlier sections that being a multicultural nation, India ingrains much complex situations at the level of language and identity vis-à-vis other nations. With different regional states practicing their vernacular languages and exercising local cultural forms, it is seen as a multidimensional economy in the global context. This amalgamation of cultures is perceived as a national strength, propagated through various apparatuses across decades of literary production and visual forms.

Although, the idea of multiculturalism is essentially reduced to certain protocols and thus representation remains dissatisfactory. For instance, Hindi as a national language has been largely promoted in the post independence era by constituting many funding bodies for the promotion of this language. A body like the Sahitya Akademi is one of the very few government institutions that foster the promotion of Indian vernacular languages and give them representations at bigger (national) platforms. Such possibilities of giving India's art and literature wider representative platforms should be made viable wherethrough Indigenous cultural sites could be made more accessible offering wider prospects of assimilation of the indigenous with the mainstream.

Apart from literature, other forms like theatre, dance performances and cinema have acquired new means of distribution in the wake of globalisation. Other art forms such sculpture, music and painting too have, in the last few decades, represented images of India in the global front. Different regional versions of these forms are well circulated in the global art circles such as cultural festivals, film festivals, and so on. The changes in these forms are affected by global dissemination of cultures, thereby producing newer versions of representing Indianness. Urban youth experience captured by these forms is a response to changing scenario at various planes of daily life. A shift from representing tropes of Indian culture to a complex negotiation between global and local nuances is quite notable. *Rang De Basanti* is a cinematic example of such negotiation of Indian patriotism with a global expression. Contrary to a rural representation of Indian nationalism depicted in films as seen in many previous works such as *Mother India* or *Lagaan*, *Rang De Basanti* is a narrative on the uprising of India's youth experiences combined with the nationalistic zeal seen through the eyes of a westerner.

5.3.2 Role of Language, Culture & Translation

Language, culture and translation all play crucial roles in representing India both at home and abroad. India's linguistic plurality and cultural heterogeneity unfold spaces of India's national identity which besides performing a task of representation also offers alternate critiques of Indian nationalism, its cultural heritage and its unique linguistic plurality. Language is an

important component within a culture and involves a vast plethora of items comprising of idioms and proverbs, structures and lexicon etc which are mostly language-specific and at times are diverse even at the levels of dialects within a language. India's linguistic diversity, thus, in a major way manifests the country's multiculturalism. The English language, as has been discussed earlier, has functioned in the Indian context as a language of power. English, both in the pre-Independence and post-independence periods, has generated probably the most attractive, profitable, interesting, intellectually stimulating and progressively adequate means, mediums and avenues of human power including work, living, creativity and so on. It has offered probably the most convenient portals of communications among Indians and between Indians and people from other countries, between all kinds of institutions in India and abroad.

Culture has a strong potential for representing national identity. The post-Independence India has most often represented itself, its national identity in the global arena by means of its cultural heritage constituting of a heterogeneous body of cultural histories and practices. What followed was a recognition of India's cultural heterogeneity in the global edge which led to an acceptance and assimilation and even at times an adaptation of this cultural plurality in/into the foreign or non-native realms of politics, life, art and visual cultures.

Translation holds a vital significance in such a linguistically and culturally diverse site. It works as a potential mediator between the source culture and the culture into which a text is translated. It has been said by many Translation scholars that while we translate a literary text, we translate a culture (i.e., the source culture). The cultural content of a literary text comprising of all the (source) culture-specific details are transferred into the target (cultural) domain where these details must somehow appropriate. Translation, thus, is a task of appropriation, a task of mediation, a task of 'bridging the gap' between the source and the target cultures.

Translation in the Indian context has always played a key role in creating possibilities of socio-cultural and literary transactions. In general, translation as a literary/linguistic activity has made communications between people easier, has brought forth more accessibility in people's getting to know of cultures other than their own. In the Indian context, translation has offered many authors, their writings, and all other kinds of reading material a wider readership thereby creating newer platforms and discourses for readers and thinkers alike. Tamil or Bengali texts are now accessible through translation to the non-Tamil and non-Bengali readers respectively. Such an endeavour can also be seen being taken in other mediums of art such as theatre and cinema. English translations of texts written originally in Indian vernacular languages are now being chosen as part of the English syllabi content in Indian universities and if translated by an internationally renowned translator, a text has found a place in the course curriculum of universities outside India. Canons of disciplines in Humanities are thus being expanded in order to add newer dimensions to the existing canons.

5.3.3 Multiculturalism in the Post-colonial India

Multiculturalism in a broad sense thus has always argued *for* liberalism. Some philosophers however have looked beyond liberalism in arguing for multiculturalism. This is especially true of theorists writing from a postcolonial perspective. The case for tribal sovereignty rests not simply on premises about the value of tribal culture and membership, but also on what is owed to Native peoples for the historical injustices perpetrated against them. Reckoning with history is crucial. Proponents of indigenous sovereignty emphasize the importance of understanding Indigenous claims against the historical background of the denial of equal sovereign status of indigenous groups, the dispossession of their lands, and the destruction of their cultural practices. This background calls into question the legitimacy of the state's authority over aboriginal peoples and provides a *prima facie* case for special rights and protections for indigenous groups, including the right of self-government.

A postcolonial perspective also seeks to develop models of constitutional and political dialogue that recognize culturally distinct ways of speaking and acting. Multicultural societies consist of diverse religious and moral outlooks, and if liberal societies are to take such diversity seriously, they must recognize that liberalism is just one of many substantive outlooks based on a specific view of man and society. Liberalism is not free of culture but expresses a distinctive culture of its own. This observation applies not only across territorial boundaries between liberal and non-liberal states, but also within liberal states and its relations with non-liberal minorities. As Bhikhu Parekh argues, liberal theory cannot provide an impartial framework governing relation between different cultural communities. He argues instead for a more open model of intercultural dialogue in which a liberal society's constitutional and legal values serve as the initial starting point for cross-cultural dialogue while also being open to contestation. James Tully surveys the language of historical and contemporary constitutionalism with a focus on Western state's relations with Native peoples to uncover more inclusive bases for intercultural dialogue.

These are some of the theoretical articulations made in the late decades of the 20th century along the study and understanding of multiculturalism in the postcolonial Indian context. In the light of the observations, one finds that it is imperative to study the role or influence of what could be called probably the most significant movement in the history of our times: globalisation and together with it, the study of the 'dissemination' of 'culture' happening alongside the former.

5.3.4 Multiculturalism in a 'Global' Perspective

Culture in the global context functions through tokenistic paradigms for the purposes of representation. The 'global' multicultural urban space is a home for millions of migrants who

live 'exiled' lives in their efforts towards accommodation and settlement, away from their native roots yet actively engaged in cultural practices that both represent as well as somehow substantiate their 'being' in the 'alien' territory. The closing of the twentieth century marked significant influx of migrant population from hugely populated countries of the world occupying 'global' urban spaces that offered them substantial resources for growth and opportunity. Institutions of various kinds play a crucial role in attracting this huge influx of people and offering 'global' exposure. Diasporic communities thus got created in those 'global' centres of growth and prosperity such as Indian diasporas in the United States, United Kingdom and so on or Afro-American communities or Arab-American Diaspora—all of which have grappled, in their own ways, with the issue of asserting their own identities and thus through historical phases have been able to get political and cultural recognition, or equality in terms of 'individualism'. Such communities though initially are regarded as 'strangers' in the multicultural space, carry along with them their own markers of identity and cultural practice. Their living in these 'greater' spaces is maintained with a conscious effort to recreate and mimic the original markers of identity and cultural practice from back home. Multicultural communities in these urban 'global' spaces, thus, live in a mid-zone—neither belonging truly to the homeland nor to the geography, people and culture of the territory of their settlement—however they do represent their own respective cultural identity a great deal for the purpose of imaginary replication of the same in their mid-zone and also as representative cultural identities for the foreigner.

Discourses such as Diaspora Studies, Postcolonial Theory and Cultural Studies have articulated all such concerns in various ways and have recognised the components of the 'global' cultural space and complexities of 'subjects' living 'in-between' lives in such spaces. There have been literatures written by these migrant communities that reflect upon various orthodox and radical perspectives viewed and experienced by the migrant individual. Reflections of the multicultural population have also been made subjects of scrutiny in areas such as Anthropology, International Politics and Globalisation.

Multiculturalism has always been an affair of cities, as it involved travel, diasporas, mutual adaptation, and long-distance exchange between people. Multiculturalism is probably the most enterprising phenomenon of the 21st century, seen from perspective of human settlement. No matter what opponents of multiculturalism may say, people will always cherish their differences, especially in a global, urbanized society which is often fragile and vulnerable to serious disruptions. In the midst of all these differences, however, accommodation is necessary, because the modern world cannot afford long-term conflict. As history has shown, cultures whose ways of life are most attractive to others will prevail. Multiculturalism, in a 'global' sense, is a creation of international politics, media, the technological revolution of the new age and the continuous changing paradigms of human growth and accomplishment of dreams. The

formation of 'city' in the previous century and the new expansions of technology, capital and media of the 21st century have made multiculturalism a realistic state and a crucial attribute of modern times.

5.3.5 Globalisation and Cultural Dissemination

In the wake of globalisation, the process of cultural dissemination has crossed over traditional obstacles. With its renewed economic and ideological mechanism, it has lend power to the economic forces, administered by a dominant agent/ruler, that intend to prevail over all that is 'regional' or 'local' in a community or market. With an increased telecommunications and mass media, market dynamics has widened the extent of the norms of transaction, creating fluidity in the proliferation of indigenous material.

The categories of the 'universal' and the 'local', with reference to language, dressing, food habits, festivities, etc have become blurred. The indigenous cultural sites and their material have been able to find place in non-native global platforms whereas the 'foreign' material have got distributed and circulated in the local realm. The demarcating line between 'global' and 'local', in other words, hardly exists. Consumers at the local level are now conscious of 'brands' as are the consumers in cities or 'global capitals' now consciously seek for the indigenous, the ethnic and the cultural.

A Eurocentric outlook (towards life, living, and all kinds of representation) has been frequently associated with the understanding of multiculturalism. Like globalisation, Eurocentricism too occupies a key position in the culture-oriented debates in postcolonial studies. The term 'Eurocentricism' connotes to the discourses around the ideas of/applications of ideas around/a perspective of the Euro-centric (West-centric, in a simplistic sense). It has been argued by postcolonial thinkers that the studies or discourses around our arts, literatures, cultures and histories have in the past been mostly Eurocentric and therefore the postcolonial offers a critique of the Eurocentric idealisations, mind-sets and approaches and in this process relates cultures with their negotiations with globalisation and cultural dissemination.

5.3.6 Questions of Representation and Identity: Literature and Culture

To study questions of 'representation' and 'identity' in the Indian context have become an important part of intellectual inquiry in the past few decades. It has become evident with the rise of certain movements that have taken place in the Indian literary conventions and the trajectories of cultural formations. It is equally significant to understand how these literary and cultural representations are, to a large extent studied under a classified category such as post-colonial studies.

The post-colonial studies emerged as a discipline, evoking issues of ‘representation’ and ‘identity’ against the Eurocentric world order. Very soon it became a vast area of scholarship in the wake of investigations of the ‘Third World’ with respect to literary and cultural studies. Issues that witnessed most of the debates in this discipline have been gender, class, race and language. It is within these realms that the Marxist and Feminist approaches have been considered while we study post-colonial literatures. In this connection, ‘language’, too became an essential component of the reading discourses on marginal literatures.

While this discipline became part of syllabi in Indian universities, and other intellectual areas, it paved the way for other marginal discourses in India to address power structures that were pertinent to the culture/class/gender in Indian context. A whole new trajectory of Subaltern Studies emerged to address class consciousness. Dalit Literature too appeared with a compelling language, reassessing issues of identity in the Brahminical order.

The post-colonial studies developed into two directions: criticism/theory and literature both of which complement each other in the understanding of the marginal discourse. Post-colonial literatures developed as a resistance to the Eurocentric representations of the colonial cultures. It is the very act of self-representation that drove writers of the ‘Third World’ to engage with the issues of cultural identity in their works. Likewise marginal literatures such as Dalit literature challenged the notion of mainstream literature and exercise the issue of identity both in theory and practice. A huge body of Dalit literature consist of fiction and autobiographies that engage with the suffering and the caste discrimination of Dalits in both rural and urban experiences.

Dalit and other subaltern historiography and discourses on literatures addressed the unexplored areas of cultural history that largely remained subjugated in the master narratives of Indian history. These discourses not only paved ways for questioning ideological structures existing in the Indian society but also brought forth the fact that it is because of this supremacy of these narratives that their alternate possible histories have never been given voice.

Thus, we have seen how the notions of ‘representation’ and ‘identity’ are interlinked. This linkage is not only visible in the social demography of India but also came into function as a complex phenomenon in the wake of globalisation and cultural dissemination. Technology opened myriads of job prospects in the developed nations and there was huge migration of Indian professionals, for example, in the 90s which complicated issues of culture and identity vis-a-vis NRIs living in these nations. A huge body of literature emerged called as ‘Indian Diasporic Literature’ which explored this complex dichotomy of living in two cultures—one which they literally live in and the other which remains ingrained in the memory. It is interesting to see that even in these nations they have to live with hierarchies of cultures consistently trying to sustain their own identity.

5.4 Let Us Sum Up

Thus, it is observed that there are multiple spatial and temporal trajectories in which multiculturalism is situated and studied. Culture is not a singular entity, rather it engages with ever changing conditions in political, economic and technological sites and has the potential to exhibit its plurality. In this unit, you have learnt in detail about multiculturalism in global context. In the next unit, we will discuss translation and transcultural competence.

5.5 Exercise

1. What do you understand by ethnography? Clarify in Indian context.
2. What do you mean by cultural identity? Discuss with suitable examples.
3. 'Language is culture relative in its nature.' Rationalise this statement.
4. Why Indian multiculturalism is more complex in comparison of other multicultural countries?
5. 'Language, literature and translation play an important role in cultural dissemination.' Clarify.
6. Did Globalization play any significant role in cultural dissemination? Answer rationally.

5.6 Suggested Readings

- Cronin, Michael; 2003, *Translation and Globalization*, London, Routledge.
- Cronin, Michael; 2003. *Translation and Identity*, Oxon, Routledge.
- Bhattacharya, H. 2003. *Multiculturalism in Contemporary India*, IJMS: International Journal on Multicultural Societies. Vol 5. No. 233

UNIT 6: TRANSLATION: DEVELOPING TRANSCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Unit Structure

6.0 Objective

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Transcultural Competence

6.3 Concept of Identity in Multicultural Societies

6.4 The Role of Translation in Developing Transcultural Competence

6.5 Relevance of Transcultural Competence in The Contemporary World

6.6 Relevance of Transcultural Competence in The Contemporary India

6.7 Let Us Sum Up

6.8 Exercise

6.9 Suggested Readings

6.0 Objective

After reading this unit, you will be able to state:

- Concept of cross-cultural competence
- Relevance of cross-cultural competence in contemporary society
- Role of translation in developing cross-cultural competence

6.1 Introduction

This unit introduces you to the concept of Trans cultural competence and the role of translation in acquiring the Trans cultural competence. It explains the relevance of trans-cultural competence in the contemporary globalized world, in both, global and Indian context. It will also

educate you with the concept of **identity** and **perception** in developing Trans cultural competence. Finally, it ends with a conclusion of our learning about all aspects of Trans cultural competence.

6.2 Transcultural Competence

Trans Cultural competence is the ability to understand, interact, and communicate across different cultures, other than one's native culture. It is the acquaintance with, or knowledge of, cultural norms and practises of the alien culture. Trans Cultural Competence is a holistic concept which is much more than Trans linguistic Competence. While Trans linguistic Competence places the value on the ability to operate between languages, on the contrary trans cultural competence signifies the ability to reflect the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture (www.greekbuffet.worldpress.com). All individuals are product of one culture that is groomed in one language, one type of cultural norms, and one type of cognitive communication style. Although this notion is debatable, as there are many societies which are melting pot of many languages and cultures, but still for the purpose of this chapter the emphasis is on the fact, that individual has a finite boundary of linguistic and cultural influence. This makes them a unique product of a particular type of culture. Human societies do not exist in a vacuum, rather they share time and space with other societies which are product of different cultures.

The need to coexist, and the need to share the resources of survival and living, makes the interaction between different societies inevitable. In the past societies have interacted and communicated with each other to fulfil their needs. Every form of intercultural communication such as verbal; nonverbal, translation or interpretation has to be mutually sensitive and respectful, to facilitate a meaningful communication. In the past this intercultural communication was limited to a small section of society ranging from travelers, traders, religious scholars and academicians who were engaged in any meaningful intercultural communication. These people were well versed in trans-cultural norms and practices and reflected these norms in their communication styles. Their acquaintance with the foreign cultural norms and practices were more due to their frequent travelling in distant territories and less due to reading translated foreign texts. The contact and interaction between alien cultures was limited to a very small section of society, therefore Trans cultural competence never evolved as a discipline. The demands of modern life, which is influenced with the fast-paced speed of globalization, there by resulting an enhanced interaction between henceforth alien cultures, has resulted in the need for trans cultural competence. Trans cultural competence means that an individual is acquainted with the cultural nuances of the other culture and is able to reflect this understanding in any form of intercultural communication. It is to say that the individual is well equipped with, and informed about, the cultural traits of other cultures, and has the ability to reflect it in their communication.

Translation is one of many other forms of intercultural communication. Culture and communication are two important aspects of the intercultural communication. Culture can be explained as a "way of life", a code of conduct, belief, behavior, ideals and practices which a group of people follows to make their life meaningful (Collier, M 1992). Communication is a

way of associating with, and connecting to, other people (McDaniel, E, Samovar, L and Porter, R, 1992). Communication is an integral part of the culture, as human beings learn and adopt culture after their birth, that is to say they do not inherit culture biologically. To facilitate a meaningful intercultural communication, there has to be some minimum awareness and acceptance of cultural norms of different cultures. These cultural norms travel across different cultures through various means, such as media, radio, travelling, and translated literature. The acquaintance with different cultural norm equips and educates the individual with ability to communicate effectively with natives of foreign cultures. This acquaintance with foreign cultural norms is called Trans cultural competence. It is to say that when a “Marwari trader”- a famous trading community of West India travel to remote Northeast India for business needs, he is well acquainted with spoken language, verbal, and nonverbal communication style of the targeted culture. In the present phase of globalization, the modern communication technologies such as media, cinema, telephones, television, and internet contribute to developing Trans cultural competence. For this unit we will emphasize on the role of translation in developing Trans cultural competence.

Trans-cultural Competence requires functional language abilities, interpretation, translation, historical and political consciousness, social sensibility, and aesthetic perception. It is not just a modern need of a rapidly globalizing world where there is an enhanced pace of interaction between different cultures and civilization. Also, this competence is not mere an individual attribute providing better alternatives and options to individuals to sustain themselves in a multi cultural environment. Rather it is a societal need to ensure sustained existence and continuity of human societies. It is to say that societies and cultures which have lived in isolation have perished with the time. The intercultural communication amongst different cultures and societies ensures exchange of resources, both tangible and intangible, needed to ensure their sustained existence. Therefore, smoother and healthier intercultural communication will ensure longevity of the society. For a smoother intercultural communication, there has to be effective Trans-cultural competence among the members of the society.

6.3 Concept of Identity in Multicultural Societies

Human societies are increasingly becoming multicultural due to enhanced flow of people across the national and cultural boundaries. More and more mono cultural societies are opening up their borders for people of different cultural backgrounds owing to forces of the globalization. These societies are accommodating, or attempting to accommodate, the foreign cultural norms, resulting in emergence of the multicultural societies. Well honed trans cultural competence among the members of such multi cultural societies has become an essential corner stone for their harmonious existence. The concept of “identity” plays an important role in developing trans cultural competence. Identity serves as a bridge between culture and communication, as we communicate our identity through communication, and we learn through communication who we are and who others think we are. (Martin, J and Nakayama, T, 2004). Communication is all about conveying our identity and personality to the other and in the process interacting with the identity of the others. When the communication is trans cultural or between different cultures,

then the need to communicate and understand the identity of the individuals involved in communication is paramount, for a harmonious intercultural communication.

Some scholars have explained the concept of identity in terms of avowed identity and ascribed identity, while avowed identity is how an individual portrays themselves, the ascribed identity is how others identify them (Martin, J and Nakayama, T, 2004). For an intercultural communication to be meaningful, it is important that it affirms that identity which is most salient in any conversation (Collier and Thomas, 1988). Mumbai is an example of multicultural society where migrants from different parts of India as diverse as UP and Bihar in North India, to Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in South India, lives together. Gradually these migrant communities begin to identify themselves as “Mumbaites”-resident of Mumbai, and it becomes their avowed identity. However, conflict arises sometimes when the avowed identity of migrant communities does not conform to their ascribed identity. This friction between the avowed identity and the ascribed identity is prevalent in every multicultural society of the world in more or less extent. An effective trans cultural competence aims at minimizing the differences in the avowed and ascribed identities. Therefore, the concept of identity plays an important role in developing trans cultural competence.

6.4 The Role of Translation in Developing Transcultural Competence

Translation is an important form of intercultural communication. In fact, translation has been one of the oldest forms of intercultural communication, which has been responsible for the proliferation of ideas, knowledge, religious thoughts and practices, literature, and cultural norms, and scientific knowledge across the geographical boundaries (Montgomery, S. 2002). It was through the translation of literary and religious text in the earliest phase of human civilization, that the cultural norms and practices were introduced in hitherto unknown territories. The translation of a literary work is considered as a literary pursuit in its own right. Translation is a decision-making process, and its social, cultural, political context influences the decisions at all stages. From the selection of the source language, source language text, author, period of its composition, its poetics, to the selection of linguistic strategies and aesthetic techniques, all the decisions are influenced by the literary system of the translating culture. (Ketkar, Sachin.2003). The access to translated text in the targeted language provides the reader firsthand information about the prevailing cultural norms in the culture of source text. The people of target language were introduced with new religious concepts, practices, and cultural norms through translated texts.

In ancient India Buddhism travelled across Indian borders to Northwest Asia, Central Asia, Northeast Asia, and Southeast Asia through translated religious text. Translation of religious text gave rise to lexicography and creation of bilingual dictionaries, which were highly accurate renderings and contributed substantially to the growth and development of Asian languages (Pathak, S. and Mukherjee, B.N, 1978). It was through translated religious texts such as Mahasanghika Vinaya, Tripitaka, that the people in these new territories of Central Asia and China, which had different religious beliefs and culture, were educated about the beliefs and practices of Buddhism.

Such an education was responsible for developing Trans cultural competence among the travelers, which played an important role in effective intercultural communication. When travelers and monks travelled across geographical frontiers in the distant lands, they were well educated and informed in advance about the prevailing cultural practices in the foreign territory. This ability to pre-empt and prepare oneself about the prospective cultural norms gave them an unprecedented advantage to accomplish their desired objectives. The Chinese travelers like Fa Hien and Xuan Zang who travelled extensively in ancient India were well versed in Indian cultural practices and therefore widely received among local rulers. They took large number of original Buddhist text and translated in Chinese language which resulted in proliferation of Buddhism in their homeland. The Trans cultural competence developed by translation and several other factors in first millennium was responsible for the thriving trade through ancient silk route across vast region of Central Asia and China.

This thriving trade, facilitated by a gradually evolving transcultural competent trader community, was not limited to India's external neighbors; rather it was also responsible for the trade and cultural relations within the vast subcontinent landmass. The period from sixth century B.C to sixth century A.D witnessed opening of new trade routes and dynamic trade between distant communities. These trading communities travelled and interacted with foreign linguistic and cultural communities. There were established trade relations between Sanskrit language centers in Northern India with Dravidian linguistic centers at South. The literary works of classical Sanskrit ranging from epics such as *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, commentaries called *Teeka*, *Bhashya*, to dramas like *Meghdutam*, *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*, etc were translated in various regional languages. The translation was more an adaptation and imitation of the original work and resulted in cross cultural integration. The translated literature was responsible in proliferation of cultural practices across the Indian subcontinent. The story of *Ramayana* and festivals of *Dussehra* and *Diwali* were translated and adapted in regional cultures. It will not be an exaggeration to say that translation has played an important role in developing trans-cultural compatibility and integrating the vast landmass of mutually different cultures in Indian subcontinent. It has been a tool of national integration.

In the pre-industrial societies, translation was a primary source of proliferation of ideas and knowledge resulting in gradual breaking of cultural barriers. People having access to translated text has not only been mere Transcultural competent who could engage in effective intercultural communication. But instead, they have been forces of social change in their otherwise conservative societies. The Medieval India witnessed the spread of *Bhakti* movement through the translation of *Bhakti literature* into several regional languages. These rewritings were more of adaptations and imitations than just faithful renderings. The primary aim of such renderings was not to produce "faithful copy" of the originals but to empower the illiterates and oppressed. The modern India social reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar, Keshab Chandra Sen, VishnuShastri Chiplunkar etc were exposed to the translated literature from the west which introduced them to modern ideas of equality and justice. It was their ability, and of many others, to interact across different cultures and civilization, which unleashed a wave of social awakening and social change in the modern India. It is hard to imagine the trajectory of the path of development of Indian society in the absence of social awakening witnessed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

6.5 Relevance of Transcultural competence in the Contemporary World

We are living in a globalized world where application of information and communication technologies (ICT) have facilitated an unprecedented pace of interconnectedness between different cultures and national boundaries (Wolf, M. 2004). There is a free flow of people, capital, technology, knowledge, goods, services and market across the national frontiers. Increasing number of urban centers are transforming from a monoculture city to a heterogeneous, globalized metropolitan. This enhanced pace of interaction between different cultures at the globalized urban centers, has reduced the “cushion time” to adjust with the impact of interaction with the foreign cultures. The needs of the market, and the changing nature of the businesses, have exposed ordinary people to the difficult task of communicating with people of foreign cultures. It is very strange to imagine the cultural and linguistic shock for a village farmer in Europe or America who makes a phone call to his local telecommunication provider and find himself speaking to some alien operator sitting in Mumbai or Manila. It is even harder for people to share and discuss their personal details such as credit cards and finances, with people of alien cultures sitting in remote regions of the world. The harmonious intercultural communication at these global urban centers, or even the larger global society, has become the most pressing need of the contemporary times. The intercultural communication in this globalized world is not limited to few scholars, monks, travelers, and adventurers rather it has emerged as a pressing need for every ordinary member of human societies. Increasing numbers of people are challenged to demonstrate effective trans-cultural competence to facilitate a meaningful and harmonious intercultural communication.

The “market” has emerged as an important platform of interaction between peoples of different nationalities and cultures. It has matured in the developed countries of west and is rapidly expanding in the developing countries of the world. Businesses are operating across national boundaries, employing multicultural work force, and attempting to lure peoples of new cultures, to sell their products and services. Cross cultural sensitivity among the market leaders, strategists, operators, and the customers has become the most important asset for the businesses. Translation is playing an important role in accentuating and propagating the trans-cultural competence. Large amount of consumer goods being produced in industrial nations such as America, Britain, Japan, Taiwan etc, attempting to capture new markets, are providing subsidiary literature in several local and regional languages. An electronic camera or mobile manufactured in Japan or South Korea provides the subsidiary literature in four or five different languages such as English, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Arabic etc, depending upon their target market. This has created huge scope for the translation within the market. Translation has emerged as vital marketing tool to reach out to prospective customers and is providing large scale employment to the working people. This vast section of people being trained and educated in translation, are not mere linguistic experts, but are cross-cultural experts, who are expected to understand the pulse of the targeted culture, so as to successfully reach to their potential customers.

The increased interconnectedness among nations has not only created an interconnected market, rather it has created an increasing urge for regulation and governance of behaviors of individual

nations. The desire for global peace, stability, and sustainability of the present world order is manifested in the global governance. Nation states have collaborated and created global institutions such as UN, WTO, IMF, etc, to cooperate and coordinate on different political, social, economical, and environmental problems of contemporary times. These institutions have also emerged as a prominent platform of frequent intercultural communication. The vast literature of public policies and drafts generated at institutions like UN are simultaneously translated in its six official languages. In institutions like European Union, there is need to translate the literature in twenty-three different languages. With the advent of internet revolution all this translated literature is further available on web portal. It suggests emergence of translation as a new service sector which is providing employment to a large number of people. Another emerging area of translation industry is the area of linguistic assistance being provided to ever growing number of immigrants in the developed world. There is increasing number of people from the non-English speaking background, migrating to the predominantly English-speaking countries like Australia, Britain, Canada and USA. The department of immigration in these respective countries are providing interpreter and translating services to these new migrants (www.immi.gov.au).

Translators, as explained above, are not mere linguistic experts, rather they are individuals with capacity to break the cultural barriers. The changing realities of the contemporary world have created new reasons for harmonious intercultural communication. Among many other factors such as media, telephony, internet, and tourism, translation has emerged as a prominent facilitator of trans-cultural competence.

6.6 Relevance of Transcultural Competence in the Contemporary India

India is a multi-lingual and multi cultural country where diverse cultures and linguistic communities have learned to coexist together. The Indian Constitution serves as the source of state policies which can be said to be a basic multicultural document, in the sense of providing for political and institutional measures for the recognition and accommodation of the country's diversity (Bhattacharyya, H. 2003). It recognizes twenty-two languages as official language of the Indian union, with many more languages and dialects still outside its official recognition. Each language has a rich tradition, history, and dynamism, and has been flourishing since hundreds of years. Translation has played an important role in inter lingual and intercultural communication in India. The rich cultural heritage of each linguistic community has been translated in different regional languages, in the process enriched both the source and target culture. Translation in India has not only contributed to linguistic development but has even been an important tool of national integration. The translated literary works such as short stories, novels, poetry etc has educated millions of Indian people about their shared heritage and culture. The people living in North, South and Northeast part of India has been educated about the mutual cultural practises of *Pongal*, *Bihu*, and *Lohri* through access to the translated literature. The literary works of great scholars such as Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyaya, in Bangla, Akhilan in Tamil, U R Anantmurthy in Kannada, Indira Goswami in Assamese, M. T Vasudevan Nair in Malayalam, Sitakant Mahapatra in Oriya etc, have travelled across the boundaries of their respective regional cultures, through the medium of translation. Translation in India has not been limited to mere a literary exercise; rather it has been an important tool of national integration. Translated literature has trained and educated millions of

Indians in the ability to understand, if not operate in, different languages, and reflect the nuances of different cultures in their respective communication style.

Since independence India has been continuing its journey towards modernization and development. This journey is being pursued along with a simultaneous attempt to integrate the regional linguistic and cultural communities into the national culture, where all the regional identities are fully appreciated. Ever since the decade of nineties of previous century when India officially adopted the policies of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization, the pace of this modernization and development has been expedited. There has been a gradual breaking of rigid organizational barriers which have been hampering the path of our growth and development. Translation in this regard has to play a very important role in facilitating India's growth and development. It has to play an important role in breaking the cultural barriers and integrating the people across their regional frontiers to facilitate our modernization.

India of the twenty first century strives to be a knowledge society. The key component of a knowledge society is a greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources (www.knowledgecommission.gov.in). The trans-cultural competence is an important aspect of this intellectual capability. The liberalization of economy has created a free market which is promoting entrepreneurship, creating new opportunities, and bringing prosperity in different regions of the country. The businesses and work force are increasingly working in diverse cultural environment. More and more businesses are operating outside their native cultural boundaries and attempting to reach out to vast customer base in new cultural communities. The companies based in predominantly Hindi speaking Delhi are trying to market their product in non-Hindi speaking regions of South. The places in South such as Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Chennai etc have emerged as popular destination for employment in service sector and are attracting the work force from distant regions of the country. The harmonious intercultural communication within the market has become an urgent need to facilitate an unchecked growth and development. The need for an effective trans-cultural competency has never been felt so urgently. There is a need to educate and up-skill large number of people to demonstrate an understanding and reflect a mutual appreciation of different cultures in their workplace. Translation, along with many other mediums such as cinema and media, will have to contribute in developing cross cultural competence. It is in the light of this emerging challenge for the future of our society that the National Knowledge Commission (NKC), an agency created by the central government to steer India's evolution as a knowledge society, has recommended the promotion of translation as an important tool of development as a knowledge society. According to NKC projections there is a potential to provide employment to about 500,000 youths in the field of translation, and these translation activities should be seen in tandem with the plan to increase access to English language training across the population, and the promotion of the English in school education at the primary level. Both are aspects of the goal of increasing access to knowledge (www.knowledgecommission.gov.in).

The role of translation in promoting trans-cultural competence is not limited to printed literature only. The advent of internet and the new concept of "web journal" have galvanized the world of translation and its subsequent effect on developing cross culture competency in India

(www.thehindu.com). A Web journal is literally “global” due to the internet, and it easily spans national and geographical boundaries. It is fast emerging as a cheap and powerful medium which is getting far quicker access to its readers, thus facilitating faster dialogues and discussion between the readers across the world. In a country like India where accessibility to the printed text and literature is still a big hindrance in acquiring the knowledge, these Web journals are an important tool of promotion of the knowledge. These Web journals such as *Muse India*, *Pratilipi* etc are not only publishing the literature in one language but are also translating the literature in many regional languages and vice versa. The literature being published in such Web journals are being translated in different regional languages and the regional literature in turn is being translated in English. It has emerged as a new platform for translation and facilitating the breaking of cultural barriers in propagation of knowledge in Indian society (www.thehindu.com). Although in a nascent stage of its development this medium of Web journal holds a promising potential in expansion of translated literature in India.

6.7 Let Us Sum Up

In this chapter, you were introduced to the concept of Trans cultural competence, and its importance in the multicultural societies, both in global and Indian context. Also, you have been educated about the fact that Trans cultural competence is not mere Trans linguistic competence, rather it signifies the ability to reflect the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture. The concept of identity is also an important determinant of harmonious intercultural communication. Translation – an important mode of intercultural communication has played, and continues to play, an important role in developing the Trans cultural competence in the multicultural competence. Translation has been responsible for the proliferation of ideas, knowledge, religious thoughts and practices, literature, and cultural norms across geographical boundaries. Even in the contemporary phase of globalization where there are more advanced mediums available for intercultural communication, translation continues to play a dominant role in developing Trans cultural competence in different forms such as business literature or web journals.

6.8 Exercise

1. What do you understand by transcultural competence? Why is it required?
2. What is the difference between accepted and imposed identity?
3. Write a note on the role of translation in the development of transcultural competence.
4. What could be the role of translation in developing transcultural competence in globalized society? Clarify.
5. Highlight the significance of transcultural competence and role of translation in a multilingual and multicultural society like India.

6.9 Suggested Readings

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