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**An Expedition of Creation and Transformation of Cultural Identities.**

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In order to deal with the identity crisis first we need to consider the term identity. Identity is a social construct and it is largely determined by the relationship between the self and the others. Its through our identity we recognize ourselves as members of various ethnic groups or religious as well as social classes which provides us with a sense of social belongingness. Like this, cultures are communities which provide a sense of belonging through the individual feelings of connectedness to his/her fellow men. In other words , individuals as they are a part of one collective body namely a community known as nation , which is in *ipso facto* an idea, defined by Benedict Anderson as “imagined political community” (*Imagined Communities*;6). The survival of the nation depends upon invention and performance of tradition, histories and symbols which help people sustain their Identity. However this mostly depends upon tradition and narration of history, which are central elements. It creates one particular version of the past and identity of any given community. The tradition and practices of a country can be associated with the Identity of Individuals as mentioned in the introduction. Tradition and practices are the first things which bind and form an identity of the Self.

This paper is an attempt to understand the idea of the creation and transformation of cultural identities. As we all are acknowledged that Yagyopveet (sacred thread) ceremony is very significant in the life of a hindu man. This ceremony initiates the child into an intellectual and spiritual journey. The mother gives birth to the child, this is natural birth. However,

when the Guru initiates him by giving Gayatri mantra, this prayer for Buddhi is considered a second birth of the child. This ceremony is also known as Upanayan, 'the sacred vision' or 'new vision' the vision to see things in a proper way and to know wrong and right. Therefore, Upanayan is essential to handle household life. Yagyopveet indicates that the child is qualified to perform all the traditional vedic rites including Pitra Kriya and Tarpan for his forefathers.

This ceremony and sacred thread was completely symbolic, but after practice of so many years, it has taken place as a cultural identity, so it is supposed that every hindu will bear compulsorily. When this was started, we were not so civilized and surroundings were very rough and covered with bushes/plants and the ground was not so clean, so we started to put on this sacred thread to round over our ear just to save from earth and bushes whenever to attend nature's call or to urinate.

Again a cultural identity called 'Haldi ceremony' that 'ubtan' made from haldi (turmeric) chandan (sandalwood) powder and some oils were used at ancient times SPA treatment to clean the barbaric or savage like bride or groom at the time of marriage but after centuries it has occupied a position of cultural identity. A longer driven identity becomes the part of religion. Again an ornament called mangalsutra, mangal means holy, auspicious and sutra means thread is a sacred necklace that a hindu groom ties around the bride's neck in a marriage ceremony.

Moreover a sari plays a vital role in a life of woman as Vaidehi expresses her feeling in her poem, 'My mother's sari'. How a woman fantasizes even about a single thought of these desires?

‘My mother’s sari’s tucked-in eagerness

Coupled with the jingling of bangles

is the zest to get down to work’

What is the significance of these female ornaments? Yes, these ornaments are associated with certain kind of identity, to differentiate between a married and a widow woman. As Vaidehi expresses:-

My mother’s sari

of voile or handloom,

with a small dream of silk

when the dream came true,

fathers was no more.

she wears it now

but the dream is gone.

How a dream of sari is identified? That all these ornaments and the colour of a sari determines a woman either is Suhagan(married woman) or a widow. Now see, the transformation of a woman’s life where she loses only her husband, all other things remains the same, but she has to abstain from all kinds of pleasure. Now deprived from all the ornaments and colours of life and even not allowed to participate in any religious or cultural

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performances. If a woman fails to follow these established identities, she must be considered like a sinner as if she has committed a heinous crime.

I would like to share one more interesting identity transformation in this paper. Have you heard the name of ‘Jugni’? A very beautiful and crazy girl singing and dancing. No, Jugni(Tasbih) was an ornament worn by Sufi saints around neck made by white pearls and white thread known to be holy.(Wiley & Shannon)

Moreover Jugni song was also a part of our independence struggle.In 1906 this was sung by young singers Manda and Bishna in Punjab at the time of golden jubilee of Victoria Regina.

Koi ran na chakki peethe

Put gabru mulak vich mare

Rovan akhiyan par bulh si seete

Piir mereya oye Jugni ayi aa

Ehnan kehrihi jot jagae aa.(The Tribune2011/12/04)

This Jugni song describes that, where no woman grinds corn, young men of the country were killed, eyes wept but lips are sealed, My Master the Jugni has come here, what kind of flame is it? A kind of hope or blessing of god. But most of our generation identifies Jugni as a crazy girl.

So all these identities were created for any particular purpose but later on transformation takes place and becomes the part of culture and lastly inherited into religious identity. Nowadays our traditional cultural identities are about to transform in a new era called

‘Cosmopolitan Culture’. Thus at the conclusion of this presentation, I want the world to recognize, with me, the open door of every consciousness.

My Final prayer

O My Body, make me always a man who questions

*(Black Skin White Masks, 220)*

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