**NAME: Pyarrap D.V Biplang**

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**DEPARTMENT: Sociology Dept.**

**Discuss the cultural changes that have taken place in your local community upon the advent of westernization.**

Westernization has been a growing influence across the world in the last few centuries, with some thinkers assuming Westernization to be the equivalent of [modernization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernization_theory), a way of thought that is often debated. The overall process of Westernization is often two-sided in that Western influences and interests themselves are joined with parts of the affected society, at minimum, to change towards a more Westernized society, with the putative goal of attaining a Western life or some aspects of it, while Western societies are themselves affected by this process and interaction with non-Western groups.

Westernization traces its roots back to [Ancient Greece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece). Later, the [Roman Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Empire) would take on the first process of Westernization as it was heavily influenced by Greece and created a new culture based on the principles and values of the Ancient Greek society. The Romans emerged with a culture that would lay the new foundations of Europe and grow into a new Western identity based on the [Greco-Roman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greco-Roman_world) society.

Westernization can also be compared to [acculturation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acculturation) and [enculturation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enculturation). Acculturation is "the process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between cultural groups and their individual members." After contact, changes in cultural patterns are evident within *one* or *both* cultures. Specific to Westernization and the non-Western culture, foreign societies tend to adopt changes in their own social systems relative to Western ideology, lifestyle, and physical appearance, along with numerous other aspects, and shifts in culture patterns can be seen to take root as a community becomes acculturated to Western customs and characteristics – in other words, Westernized. Westernization can include [Christianization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianization), [Americanization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Americanization) and [Europeanization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europeanisation), with historical versions including [Romanization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization_(cultural)), [Hellenization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenization), [Francization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francization), [Russification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russification) and [Germanization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germanisation).

The phenomenon of Westernization does not follow any one specific pattern across societies as the degree of adaption and fusion with Western customs will occur at varying magnitudes within different [communities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communities). Specifically, the extent to which domination, destruction, resistance, survival, adaptation or modification affect a native culture may differ following inter-ethnic contact.

The socio-cultural evolution in Africa in one way or the other has provoked development and crisis as well. Most of the time, the crisis generated are intolerable at the extreme, antagonistic and provokes war. The various conflicts which greeted the coming of white-man in many parts of Africa were eloquent enough to this.

Western Culture ‘Westernism’ is a coinage from the word westernize which refers to the act of bringing ideas or ways of life that are typical of Western Europe and North America to other countries. Therefore, western culture connotes the knowledge, belief, morals and way of life of the Western world.

Types of Culture is divided into two broad categories, using such terminologies as Material and Nonmaterial to depict its distinctiveness.

**Material Culture**: Examples of material culture include artefacts’, such as farm implements such as hoes and machetes, hunting and fishing implements such as guns and traps of different kinds, cooking utensils like pots, knives, tripods plates; these are physical tangible and noticeable culture artefacts of any society. Thus material culture consists of those objects which people have invented to meet their needs in society.

**Nonmaterial Culture:** The Nonmaterial aspect of culture, on the other hand, is intangible but is noticeable through the psychological state of the mind and manners of a people. These include such aspect as language, attitudes, morals, values, habits, philosophy, knowledge, principles and conventions. The material and non-material aspects of culture together form the totality of the way of life of a people.

**Characteristics of Culture**

Culture is Learned, not a Biological Inheritance.

“Culture is learned by growing up with it the process of cultural transmission from one generation to the next is called enculturation.” Culture is a social heritage because it is hereditary and transmissible from one generation to another.

**Culture is symbolic;** it described it as “the most symbolic elements of language functioning in this case as the substitution of words for objects; with language, humans are able to transmit culture from one generation to another.” Language is a very important index of culture. Once one speaks one's native language, it is easy to identify where he or she comes from.

**Culture is Dynamic;** Culture is dynamic because all cultures change overtime, changes take place in response to such events and phenomena as environmental pollution and crisis, intrusion of migrants and cultural diffusions, or modifications in behaviours and values within the social system.

Cultural dynamism takes place alongside acculturation, which is the emulation of the objects of one culture by another culture. Acculturation takes place simply by a person or a group of persons beginning to adopt another culture. The people of the culture being imitated may even be unaware of their being imitated. Therefore, cultural dynamism is the changing of a culture. This change can be by absorption of new ideas into a culture. It can be by the removal of old ideas or ways of doing things from a culture. For instance, Mary Slessor, a foreigner who lived all her life in Calabar stopped the killing of twins in Nigeria.

**Culture is a set of Shared Ideals, Values, and Standards of Behaviour**: It is the common factor that makes the actions of individuals intelligible to the group and its members. It can be shared and has the capacity to influence the any individual knowingly or unknowingly. Values are important ingredients in the content of culture. They are aspects of cultural practices, objectives or actions that a society holds in high esteem or consider important for its members. They are the goals that make the norm meaningful within the cultural context. For example, norms of a particular society ensure that life which is a value is preserved.

**Culture is Continuous and Comprehensive:** Members of a culture may die but the cultural patterns subsist in time from one generation to another. Also, the impact of culture on its members is comprehensive, without exception. As humans cannot escape death, so they cannot escape cultures' influence and direction of life course.

Causes of Culture Change is an inherent aspect of culture. No culture remains static. Currently, we are experiencing social and cultural changes on a global. It is very clear that the traditional ways of worship has drastically changed and modernized. The local or traditional drums that makes the music of the people very significant and meaningful has greatly being replaced with band-set and English songs. Africans should return back to their heritage and revive the locally made drums and music which makes them distinct in their nature of worship. The acrobatic dance of the Africans when drums and music are played is far richer than the Western pattern of worship which has gradually turned African worshippers into iroko trees that stand very erect in the place of worship.

**IMPACT OF WESTERN CULTURE ON TRADITIONAL AFRICAN SOCIETY: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

Cultural practices were abolished and Africans were given formal education. The existence of culture is aimed at meeting the needs of the physical and social environment. Virtues and values are important and indispensable aspects of culture. The rate of cultural advancement in a given society depends on the level of that society's moral value or virtues of consciousness. A critical look at the Western influence on African culture shows both good and bad influences. This has made much of African native culture give way to the European culture. Either by design or accident, Africans have imbibed the Western culture and have appropriated it so much that it now becomes almost part and parcel of their lives. Rodee (1983) saw African social problems which emanated from Western influence as one-crop economies, pervasive corruption, spiralling inflation, massive unemployment, over-crowded cities and destitute villages. Obviously, the culture of African people is still undergoing contacts and conflicts which results to a healthier life of the society resulting in an improved social system. However, in the light of the present state of African culture which Nigeria is included, mismanagement, greed, embezzlement, bribery, tribalism has downplayed the influence of culture on the social system. Culture should act as a watchdog to African social system. This is a clear indication why modern method of birth control as abortion has been rebuffed in many cultures despite the enormous efforts of its proponents to give it the best recognition. Other examples include:

1. **Communication Barrier**: it is a means by which interpretation and transmission of ideas between individuals or groups are made because of cultural change. Vast number of Nigerians today which speak English instead of their ancestral language has caused a barrier in communication between the young ones who migrated to the Urban Areas, some people living in the rural areas, and old men and women. As native African societies continue to do this, most communities will be experiencing a corresponding loss of their traditional culture. There is a need for Africans to teach and educate their children in the midst of acculturation so that the local language of the people will not be completely lost to Western languages. Government should see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or language of immediate community and at a later stage, English language.
2. **High Rate of Divorce:** In the old Igbo set up, a young man or woman does not tell his/her parents who to marry. It was the full right of the parents of the girl and the man to begin to find a wife for their son, and give their daughter to anybody of their choice. The next was for him to wait for them to tell him where and when the marriage would take place. According to Ubani (2007), the work of doing the investigation, finding money and other things is not in the hand of the man. Investigation here means finding out whether the girl's people can give birth without difficulties, a trace of rampant adultery, stealing, and premature death and so on. Due to cultural change, men find their wives on their own without the consent of their parents. They are not willing to know or investigate things about who to marry; they make decisions on where and when the marriage will hold. Which has often times resulted to regrets, abandonment and even quarrel between the two parties. In Africa, both the living and the dead gather during marriage. It is a conglomerate that no single individual must stand alone. In order to avert frequent divorce cases in Africa, it is imperative for young men and women going into marriage to listen to their parents especially when there is a sense of danger.
3. **Indecent Sexual Behaviour:** This is an unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men. Due to cultural change, women especially go along the road, school, and churches and so on half-naked. Putting on sexy clothe that reveals special part of their body all in the name of fashion which negatively leads to sexual harassment, raping etc. which at times opens way for divers Sexually Transmitted Diseases in our society is rampant. All hands should be on desk to stop this deadly practice in our society.
4. **The Challenge of Education and Technology**: Westerns accompanied by advanced technology stepped down the pace of African local technological development and oral tradition. In fairness however, Western technology has tremendously improved the lifestyle of Africans in various areas such as Medicine, Communication, Transport, Agriculture, Sports, Education, Clothing, and so on. However, we should not keep basking in the euphoria of Western technological achievements and forget to improve on our local technology. We should appreciate the products of our local art works of painting, sculptures, and moulding just for what they are and it will encourage development.

**CONCLUSION**

All cultures change through times. No culture is static. However, most cultures are basically conservative in that they tend to resist change. Some resist more than others by enacting laws for the preservation and protection of traditional cultural patterns, while putting up barriers to alien ideas and things. E.g. the French government forbids the commercial use of English words for which there are French equivalencies. It is now, abundantly clear that we are in an accelerating culture change period all around the world regardless of whether we try to resist it or not. African culture should act as a means of checking, adopting and transmitting such changes as technological development, political development and social development. In order to avoid cultural extinction, there is an urgent need for cultural restoration in Africa owing to erroneous impression or Western indoctrination. This is very necessary because a people without a culture are a people without an identity.

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