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Courses » Globalization and Culture Announcements **Course** Ask a Question Progress Mentor

Unit 4 - Week 3

Course outline

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- Lecture 11: World Music I : Tabla
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WEEK 3 ASSIGNMENT 3

The due date for submitting this assignment has passed. **Due on 2016-08-13, 23:30 IST.**

Submitted assignment

Backerwals - Gentle as the Sheep

The sturdy-looking yet gentle people who migrated from Afghanistan to the western Himalayas, lead a pastoral life that they are unwilling to relinquish even in light of education and other developmental facilities made available to them. It was Tagore's Kabuliwala who came immediately to mind the moment I met Farid, Namaste he said flashing a warm smile in reply to my *Adaab*. Tall and handsome, Farid belongs to the Backerwal tribes that migrated to India from Kaagan in Afghanistan, some 300 years ago. Sensing out interest he informs, in chaste Urdu, how his ancestors, covering high-mountain passes, would travel all the way into India during the winter and get back to their *vatan* (home-town) for the summer months. But that was until they decided to make this *mulq* (country) their own and, the Backerwals today, residing in the mountainous regions of Jammu and Kashmir, number about 14,00,000. Driving towards the idyllic environs of Lake Mansar, near Jammu, one comes across several of the Backerwal tribe who seem to almost revel in their existence with nature. And as we get off occasionally to exchange a few words with them and take photographs, they pose bemusedly for our cameras arranging their turbans, straightening their kurtas and standing proudly next to their flock. But it is towards Farid's *dear* (settlement) that we head, since his invitation for us to come and visit his home and family seemed too tempting to resist. We spot him easily from a distance as he stands waiting for us. A cobbled path on which we walk balancing ourselves precariously, courtest our city shoes, takes us into his world. With no land to claim as their own, the Backerwals are *khanabadosh* (landless wandering tribe) who believe that the entire world is theirs. An existence that they allege has not only been dated back to about 101 BC, but also mentioned in the Mahabharata. Referred to as the blood brothers of the Gujjars, the Backerwals are different from their well-settled brethren in that they eke a living out of a pastoral way of life. In fact, it is because they look after sheep and goats (*bakris*) that they have come to be referred to as the Backerwals.

Boasting a martial sportsman-type physique, the Bakerwal men may, at first glance, appear rather rugged and perhaps aggressive. But only a few moments after meeting them, one realizes that they, on the contrary, are a very simple, peace-loving lot, who have over the centuries, carved a romantic, pastoral existence for themselves. And it is their unquenchable appetite for a life of adventure and of course fun and laughter that keeps them going even in the face of adversity. Many of the Backerwals have given up their summer home Kashmir, so for now, the idyllic areas around Jammu serve as their summer abode. Often the long journey takes about two months, for the Backerwals have to move slowly, cautiously, since they carry with them their entire home, its belongings and their huge herds. Camps are setup for the night that serve as sleeping apartments for the ladies, while the men prefer sleeping under a natural star-studded canopy. However, upon once reaching their destination, the Backerwals live in simple huts called *Kullas* made of straw, mud and stone. Spacious enough, these, besides

allowing enough sleeping space or women and children, also have a special corner with its *chullah* and some seating space close to it where the family sits together for meals that generally comprise rice, corn-bread, dal or a simple vegetable. Meanwhile, a nod from Farid and steaming hot makki-ki-roti appear for us to be had with huge glasses of milk—a combination that incidentally forms their staple diet. We believe in simple eating and living, says Farid, adding that it is this diet together with lots of fresh air and exercise that enables them to keep absolutely fit and healthy. That is why perhaps, he reasons, about 85 per cent of the Backerwals have no health problems. We can even unhesitatingly fight tigers should a chance arise he says recounting his own encounter with a feline recently. This sher had eaten some of our animals and was on the verge of attacking the children when, with the help of two of my brave, ferocious dogs, I intervened and after quite a scuffle threw him down in a deep ditch.

As mentioned earlier, looking after sheep and goats forms the mainstay of the Backerwal way of life. Their herds are their most precious possession providing sustenance for everyone. Besides providing milk and its products, they also help bring in sufficient money and give the Bakerwal a unique profession. At an appropriate time, the entire herd is taken to a river for a thorough bath and washing. Once dry, their clean, gleaming hair is sheared and sold to the Government Shearing Board. While men remain busy with all this, the women also chip in their bit-by working on the *charkha*, spinning wool, knitting rugs and embroidering them in gay colours. Despite the vicissitudes of life, the Backerwals remain a simple, god-fearing lot for whom following the rules of the Shariaat comes naturally. Come what may, the Namaz has to be read five times a day. Even little kids, trained right from an early age, do so with devotion writ large on their faces. Rozas (regular fasting-period before the festival Id) have to be observed by everyone. Anyone found missing them has to pay a *jurmana* (fine) by giving food and clothing to 60 poor people! And then, as the day dawns for Id, the Backerwals rejoice celebrating the festival with *saiviyan*, sweets and other exotic meals. Besides the festivals, it is at weddings that the Backerwals enjoy themselves thoroughly. The applying of *mehndi* holds much significance since its bright colours signify luck and good fortune. And as traditional songs are sung, the bride gets ready for the big event of her life in a beautiful dress and hair plaited in numerous braids. Then, as everyone waits for the *baraat* to arrive, a procession is seen in the distance, accompanied with lots of lights, music—especially the dhol and sword and stick dances. Upon reaching the bride's house none is supposed to enter—until somebody, the groom's brother or friends, the groom's brother or friends, volunteers to first pick up a huge boulder (deliberately placed) that lies blocking the passage, on his back. This show of strength earns him much accolades and of course money, for after all, it was a matter of *izzat* (prestige) of the entire *baraat*. Married according to Islamic rites, the groom has to fix a *meher*-price, at the time of the *nikaah* itself. The bride's parents in turn offer many precious gifts (not dowry, says Farid) given only for their daughter's security—to fall back upon in times of need. Most of the young men and women choose their own life partners from any of the *deras* around and the parents just give their consent. But the Backerwals are rather conservative about divorce. A lot of time is given to the estranged couple to come to a reconciliation but if all efforts fail then the utterance of the word *talaq* thrice in front of a Qazi annuls the wedding. Remarriage, on the other hand, especially for widows is encouraged. Men who give *sahara* to such women by marrying them, are believed to earn merit in the name of Allah.

Life, till recently, was one big compromise for the Backerwals, who sometimes have had to even share the same drinking water with their animals. But now with the Government's intervention, clean, filtered water is being made available. Besides this, mobile schools for the Backerwal children upto the primary level have been introduced. For grown-up children, both boys and girls, hostel facilities and education in various subjects and languages like Hindi, Urdu, English and Arabic is provided that makes them ready to face the world. But it must be reiterated that despite this awareness and exposure, the Backerwal children do not seem keen to give up their pastoral way of life—they want to continue living as their ancestors did—in the lap of nature.

1) Name the place in India where the tribe from Afghanistan migrate to ?

1 point

- a. western himalayas
- b. uttarakhand
- c. shimla
- d. darjeeling

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

a. western himalayas

2) In which fiction did we come across the tribe which migrated from Afghanistan ? **1 point**

- a. malgudi days
- b. the guide
- c. untouchable
- d. kabuliwala

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

d. kabuliwala

3) Name the place in Kashmir which surrounds the maximum population of the Backerwal tribe **1 point**
?

- a. lake mansar
- b. lake chilka
- c. dal lake
- d. sukhna lake

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

a. lake mansar

4) Name the other name given to the tribe which migrated to India ? **1 point**

- a. Abors
- b. Baiga
- c. Chakma
- d. khanabadosh

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

d. khanabadosh

5) Point out the mode of settlement used by these tribes ? **1 point**

- a. nomads
- b. bangri
- c. banjara
- d. kullas

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

d. kullas

6) Where do the Backerwals sell the hair of their herds ? **1 point**

- a. department of health
- b. autonomous agencies
- c. government shearing board
- d. ministry of human resource development

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

c. government shearing board

- 7) What is that one occupation which is closely associated to the life of Backerwal ? 1 point
- a. pastoral way of life
 - b. business
 - c. academician
 - d. industrialist
- No, the answer is incorrect.**
Score: 0
- Accepted Answers:**
pastoral way of life
- 8) What is the appearance of the Backerwals at first glance ? 1 point
- a. gentle one
 - b. that of a businessman
 - c. sportsman physique
 - d. that of an industrialist
- No, the answer is incorrect.**
Score: 0
- Accepted Answers:**
c. sportsman physique
- 9) What is remarkable about the pastoral life style of the Backerwals? 1 point
- a. They can undertake many hardships unlike the modern men and women
 - b. They assiduously follow the lifestyle of their ancestors
 - c. Their idyllic life is far from the corruptions of modern civilization
 - d. They are leading a nomadic life despite exposure to development
- No, the answer is incorrect.**
Score: 0
- Accepted Answers:**
d. They are leading a nomadic life despite exposure to development
- 10) Backerwals are characterised by what patterns of migration at present? 1 point
- a. Movements from Afghanistan to India
 - b. Movements from the mountains to the plains
 - c. Movements across Jammu and Kashmir
 - d. Movements from the villages to the cities
- No, the answer is incorrect.**
Score: 0
- Accepted Answers:**
c. Movements across Jammu and Kashmir
- 11) Why do the Backerwals believe that the entire world is theirs? 1 point
- a. It is the characteristic mentality of the nomadic people
 - b. Backerwals are legally allowed to move and settle in any part of India
 - c. Backerwals own land in various parts of Jammu and Kashmir
 - d. Backerwals are given protection by the Government of India
- No, the answer is incorrect.**
Score: 0
- Accepted Answers:**
a. It is the characteristic mentality of the nomadic people
- 12) Why do the Backerwals claim that their origin may be traced to the times of Mahabharata? 1 point
- a. They know their history better
 - b. They are referring to an alternative historiography
 - c. They mythify their existence to strengthen their ethnic pride

- d. It makes them exotic

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

c. They mythify their existence to strengthen their ethnic pride

13)What is the status of the women in Backerwal society?

1 point

- a. They are oppressed
- b. Women play important roles although it is a traditional, patriarchal society
- c. Backerwals are a matriarchal society
- d. Men and women are considered equal

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

b. Women play important roles although it is a traditional, patriarchal society

14)What does the physical strength of the Backerwals signify?

1 point

- a. They are genetically strong
- b. The physical strength is a signifier of their closeness to nature as opposed to the society
- c. They exaggerate their physical strength
- d. It is a direct result of their lifestyle and habits

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

b. The physical strength is a signifier of their closeness to nature as opposed to the society

15)What value does Islam have for the Backerwals?

1 point

- a. They are radical Islamists
- b. Islam is responsible for their nomadic lifestyle
- c. They follow the tenets of Islam in a simple minded manner
- d. They use Islamic laws to oppress women

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

c. They follow the tenets of Islam in a simple minded manner

16)What has the government done for the Backerwals?

1 point

- a. It has forced them to change their lifestyle
- b. It has provided various developmental facilities to the Backerwals which have modified their lifestyle
- c. Government has declared the Backerwals as backward
- d. Government has ensured that the Backerwal children go to schools and colleges

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

b. It has provided various developmental facilities to the Backerwals which have modified their lifestyle

17)What does the passage aim to do?

1 point

- a. It aims to tell the story of Farid
- b. It aims an ethnographic profiling of the Backerwals for the general reader
- c. It is a personal account of a meeting with the Backerwals
- d. It is a tourist's impression of the life of the Backerwals

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

b. It aims an ethnographic profiling of the Backerwals for the general reader

18)What is the tone of the passage?

1 point

- a. Scholarly
- b. Journalistic
- c. Romantic
- d. Informative

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

b. Journalistic

Globalization as Americanization? Beyond the Conspiracy Theory

Globalization and its major engines (growing human capital, free markets, increasing cross-border interaction) have created a new world order that has incited passionate debate, pro and con. In recent culture studies, one of the foremost explorations concerns the influence globalization has upon culture. In fact, one of the most common criticisms we hear about the globalization of today's world is that it is producing mainly one culture, it is destroying diversity, and it is bringing everyone into the same global culture. Actually, much of the sociological hype about cultural globalization, defined as the diffusion of cultural values and ideas across national borders, sees it as synonymous with homogenization. Cultural globalization is, thus, one of the major concerns of academics, journalists, political activists and leaders of "cultural preservation" movements who despise what they see as the trend toward cultural uniformity. They usually regard global culture and American culture as synonymous and, thus, express serious concerns about their cultural distinctiveness. The United States dominates the current global traffic in information and ideas. American music, American movies, American television, and American software are so dominant, so sought after, and so visible that they are now available literally everywhere on Earth. They influence the tastes, lives, and aspirations of virtually every nation. But how "American" is American culture? Has not the US been as much a consumer of foreign cultural influences as it has been a shaper of the world's entertainment and taste? Has not the US been a recipient as much as an exporter of global culture? The impact of globalization on culture and the impact of culture on globalization deserve discussion. Therefore, this article tries to assess the global impact of American culture. It addresses the following issues: How "American" is globalization? How real is the Americanization of global culture? And, most importantly, has the American mass culture transformed the world into a replica of the US or has America's dependence on foreign cultures made the US a duplication of the world? With the development of the satellite dish and more recently, the Internet, distance no longer seems a limiting factor for the flow of culture. Common global norms about conduct, consumption standards and cultural practices are spreading everywhere. This globalized package has been challenged by several intellectuals who despise what they see as the trend toward cultural uniformity. They regard global culture and American culture as one and the same. In fact, in the dark shadow of globalization, the most widely held description of culture is that of homogenization; the convergence toward a common set of cultural traits and practices. Those who consider culture to be persistently directed toward homogenization hold the belief that the so-called global culture follows the global economy, and this has led to such phrases as "Coca-colonization" and "McDonaldization". The notion of "McDonaldization" refers to the worldwide homogenization of societies through the impact of multinational corporations. McDonaldization is viewed as Americanization of the entire globe.¹ Essentially, uncomfortable with the global impact of American culture, critics insist that

Hollywood, McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Coca-Cola, Nike, Levis, Disneyland and, more recently, Yahoo!, Microsoft, Google, and Motorola are eradicating regional and local eccentricities. Anti-globalism activists often depict the McDonald's, Disney, and Coca-Cola corporations as agents of globalism or cultural imperialism. According to this view of world power the control of culture is seen as far more important than the control of political and geographic borders. Due to the perceived threat of Americanization and that of the transnational corporation, fears exist that a homogenization will wipe out national distinctiveness. Accordingly, Europeans, Latin Americans, and Arabs, left-wingers and right dread that local cultures and national identities are dissolving into an unsound American consumerism. These critics maintain that globalization is nothing more than the imposition of American culture on the entire world. The argument that globalization is destroying culture comes from people across the political spectrum, liberals and conservatives. America's primacy is hardly surprising. Superpowers have, throughout the ages, sought to perpetuate their way of life: from the philosophy and mythology of the Greeks to the law and language of the Romans; from the art and architecture of the Renaissance Italy, to the sports and systems of government of the British. "Most empires think their own point of view is the only correct point of view," says Robert Young, an expert in postcolonial cultural theory at Oxford University. "It's the certainty they get because of the power they have, and they expect to impose it on everyone else".⁵ So, as the unrivaled global superpower, America exports its culture on an unprecedented scale. From music to media, film to fast food, language to literature and sport, the American idea is spreading inevitably, not unlike the influence of empires that preceded it. The difference is that today's technology flings culture to every corner of the globe with blinding speed and, thus, in a far more efficient way. Concerns that local cultural and national identities are dissolving into a cross-cultural American consumerism are widespread. In fact, a large number of international voices has joined in denunciations of the American culture; a culture that they charge is pushing out all others and taking over the world. They lament the loss of local language, local habits, and local social life in the global rush to be just like the United States. Fearing globalization and cultural imperialism, many countries have created protectionist policies to maintain control over local cultural content and to foster a type of "nationalism" among their own entertainment producers. French producer Martin Karmitz noted that "sound and pictures have always been used for propaganda, and the real battle at the moment is over who is going to be allowed to control the world's images, and so sell a certain lifestyle, a certain culture, certain products, certain ideas". Many nations, mainly in Europe, having concluded that their native producers face an uphill struggle, now subsidize filmmaking, and many place quotas on the importation of foreign films, especially American ones. It is France that provides the most revealing case of cultural protectionism. France has not only built a bureaucratic barrier against American culture, it has constructed a notorious intellectual case against it as well. For the French cultural and intellectual elite the issue is not just a matter of who watches which films, but rather it is that Hollywood is a Trojan horse bringing with it Disneyland Paris, fast-food chains and free advertising for American products from clothes to rock music. In a certain sense, the present human world is more tightly integrated than at any earlier point in history. In the age of the satellite dish, the age of global capitalism, the age of omnipresent markets and global mass media, various commentators have claimed that the world is rapidly becoming a single place. Although this slightly exaggerated description has an important point to make, a perhaps even more striking aspect of the post-Cold War world is the emergence of identity politics whose explicit aim is the restoration of rooted tradition, religious fervor and/or commitment to ethnic or national identities. For a variety of reasons, then, globalization creates the conditions for localization, that is various kinds of attempts at creating bounded entities -countries (nationalism or separatism), faith systems (religious revitalization), cultures (linguistic or cultural movements) or interest groups (ethnicity).

19) Point out one of the major engine of Globalisation ? 1 point

- a. Free markets
- b. Unity
- c. Language
- d. Religion

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

a. Free markets

20) Point out one recent domain on which we can see the influence of globalization ? 1 point

- a. Community
- b. Culture
- c. Reservation
- d. Nation

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

b. Culture

21) Point out the issue that has been on of the major concerns of academics, journalists, political 1 point
activists ?

- a. Cultural Globalisation
- b. Community
- c. Nationalism
- d. National security

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

a. Cultural Globalisation

22) Identify the aspect that is considered to be synonymous with Global culture ? 1 point

- a. American Culture
- b. Western Culture
- c. Indian Culture
- d. South Asian Culture

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

a. American Culture

23) Name the country that currently dominates the current global traffic in information and ideas 1 point
?

- a. India
- b. United States of America
- c. Africa
- d. Australia

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

b. United States of America

24) Does the notion of MacDonalidization exist ? 1 point

- a. no

- b. yes
- c. may be
- d. cannot say

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

b. yes

25)Is there a fear which exists that a homogenization will wipe out national distinctiveness ? **1 point**

- a. no
- b. yes
- c. cannot say
- d. may be

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

b. yes

26)According to the critics is it right that globalization is nothing more than the imposition of American culture on the entire world ? **1 point**

- a. cannot say
- b. yes
- c. may be
- d. no

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

a. cannot say

27)Name the French producer who pointed out that sound and pictures have always been used for propaganda ? **1 point**

- a. Michel Foucault
- b. Martin Karmitz
- c. David guetta
- d. Daft punk

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

b. Martin Karmitz

28)Which country provides the most revealing case of cultural protectionism ? **1 point**

- a. United States of America
- b. West Indies
- c. France
- d. Australia

No, the answer is incorrect.

Score: 0

Accepted Answers:

c. France

Test

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