Research Report

General Assembly

Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural)

Measures to conserve indigenous culture despite the increasing effects of globalization

MUNISH

Forum	GA3: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural
Issue:	Measures to conserve indigenous culture despite the increasing effects of globalization
Student Officer:	Aslesha Kumar
Position:	Deputy President

Introduction

As we progress towards the future of humanity, we see the effects that globalization has on the world around us. The influence of globalization on cultural diversity and its preservation is a controversial one, as while it holds way to opening new doors to the integration of various cultures into our daily lives, it can also be a method of diluting indigenous culture around the world.

Through the effects of globalization, we see its various elements such as the progress of technology dissolve international boundaries such as communication blocks or information barriers, allowing for freer access to information regarding the various cultures of the world. Globalization can be used to interconnect the world and spread international understanding, proving that it can be an empowering entity.

The paradoxical dichotomy is that through the rise in globalization, we see an inherent decrease in cultural diversity, particularly in cultures indigenous to the countries they pertain to. Globalization and a free access and flow of information can lead to misrepresentation as more often than not, the culture is not wholly represented which then in turn gives way for stereotypes and propel the loss of individualism and self or group identity.

In a world where globalization is a growing phenomenon over which we have little to no control, it is important to understand the parameters that must be set up in order to prevent the nullification of individuality towards indigenous cultures.

Definition of Key Terms

Globalization

The process of international integration constituting in an interchange of things such as world views, products, ideas and various other physical and theoretical elements.

Indigenous Culture

Indigenous culture is the culture of people who are considered indigenous to a certain country. These people are granted a set of very specific rights based on their ties to a particular territory, as well as their historical or cultural distinctiveness from the rest of the population.

Misrepresentation

Misrepresentation is the act of giving a false account of the nature of a certain person or group of people.

General Overview

Dating back to the days of colonization, the western ideals of individualism have continuously promoted a homogenous set of values and beliefs, thus canceling the beliefs of cultures that differ from them. Western culture tends to fall into the category of the culture propagated by the colonial powers of the west such as west Europe and North America.

In a society where the dominant western culture is considered the norm, the minorities of the indigenous people feel the grasp of their own individuality slipping away. Such minorities often consist of groups of people indigenous to countries that were later taken over by western colonies. These groups include various tribes of Native Americans all over both North and South America, tribes in Africa that are prosecuted against such as the Pygmy people and the aboriginals of Australia and Oceania in general just to name a few.

The constant and increasing access to technology based services further allow for the exploitation of large parts of the world that had previously been untouched by western society in order to be exploited for the benefit of global entities and tourism. Through this the indigenous people are no longer considered people but are dehumanized to the point where they come off as simply "quaint relics" for the purpose of photos and observation. Countries where this tends to happen also tend to be nations that are in need of more economic aid resulting in the very government of the country encouraging such tourism as a form of national income. An example of this and how it harms the well being of the indigenous people would be that in many African countries, tribes are moved from their territories in order to make way for western tourists so that they can enjoy the greatest possible safari experience as it result in an influx of tourist dollars to the nation.

The main fear is that the exploitation of such indigenous societies would be further and further pushed into the margin of society. The effects of this form of colonization impact

the intellectual property and cultural rights of these people. The mentality of "If it's out there then it's free for the taking" have a dire effect on the acquisition of information regarding indigenous people and their icons of culture such as their native songs, dances, costumes, rituals or signs. An example of this is during the time of Halloween, where people in abundance "dress up" as Native Americans or Geishas, thus misappropriating these people's cultural icons.

Even so, there are examples of globalization having a positive effect on the representation of indigenous cultures. Through the media the actual people of certain cultures are able to portray their opinions and represent themselves in a true and honest manner. A recent example of this would be regarding the Middle East and North Africa during the Arab Spring, where people were able to overcome political and geographical boundaries through the use of technology in order to gain international support for democracy, health, and environmental and developmental issues.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNFPII)

The permanent forum was created by the UN as a response to the demands made by indigenous people for representation of a high level as a permanent body of the UN. They are one of the most prominent parties regarding the issue of indigenous people and their culture. This advisory body works with the Economic and Social Council and provides expert advice on issues regarding indigenous people. They also work to raise awareness on the integration of such activities within the UN. They also actively prepare and disseminate all kinds of information regarding indigenous people and the issues that might pertain to their lives. The members consist of people from Africa, Asia, the Arctic, Eastern Europe/Russian Federation/Central Asia/Transcaucasia, Central/South America and the Caribbean, North America and the Pacific.

Inter-Agency Support Groups

The inter agency support groups are upheld to provide an opportunity for information regarding indigenous issues to be exchanged, to strengthen the wellbeing of the indigenous people in states and to help mainstream the issues of indigenous people into the UN system in order to strengthen the mutual collaboration. Their main objective is to help spread the message of the UNPFII to various branches of power and they succeed in doing so by rotating their chairmanship annually between organizations such as The World Bank, the

World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nation's International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and many more.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
May 2000	The first of the soon to be annual two-week sessions by The Permanent Forum is held in New York
September 13th, 2007	The UN General adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The primary objective of the UNPFII is to raise recognition and awareness on people of indigenous culture and the problems they face. While these efforts are admirable, there is no actual action being taken in order to further prevent the problem from spreading. Furthermore, when more information is tried to be made public, there is a higher likelihood that the information presented would be misrepresented and interpreted in ways they should not have been, giving way to stereotypes.

Possible Solutions

Furthering the use of technology in a positive light would help the situation to the highest degree possible, as it would factor in the effects of globalization but use such influences in a positive light. By using the media to further promote culturally sponsored events, the awareness as well as understanding and education would be presented in a way where misconceptions and stereotypes could be greatly diminished.

Through the implementation of action geared towards indigenous people focusing of self-determination and the preservation of their language and culture, they can attain higher global recognition and decrease marginalization. More often than not, aboriginal communities share and pass on information orally through means such as stories and fables. Although this is still a legitimate manner of preserving ones culture, more permanent measures can be taken in order to maintain the history of the indigenous people. Through physical or even

electronic documentation through recordings, videos, photography, music and language materials, indigenous people are able to uphold their traditions.

A possible solution that deals more with the actual placement of such indigenous tribes and groups would be to encourage member states to protect the territories that are historically and culturally of importance to the native people. To promote this type of security, UN bodies should subsidize governments that are at risk or are actively being exploited in order to get funds through tourist attractions so that they may work towards protecting the welfare of their native people without experiencing too great of an economic loss on their part.

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Appendices

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http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP_chapter2.pdf