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## Homogeneity or Heterogeneity? An Insight into the Dilemma that exists in Cross-Cultural Management Research

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### **ABSTRACT**

Values, beliefs, traditions, attitudes and behavioural patterns of a group of people together form the culture of that group that differentiates it from other groups. The objective of the research paper is to express the significance of cultural heterogeneity that exists within a nation for investigating national culture in an adequate and more explanatory manner rather than only focusing upon cultural homogeneity. This paper is based on the review of previously available secondary data in the domain of cultural studies. This paper argues that research studies focusing upon the intra-national cultural variations are important to recognize the culture of a country as a whole, and play a dominant role. The presence of heterogeneity in the Indian cultural system shall facilitate in deliberating upon the phenomenon of sub-cultural heterogeneity within a nation appropriately and efficiently enabling future research in the domain for more consistent outcomes. Majority of the cross-cultural management research studies conducted in the domain exclusively emphasized upon the cross-country cultural variations considering the entire nation as a single entity that lead to incorrect outcomes. It has been identified that there is a great need to acknowledge the importance of cross-cultural management research focusing upon intra-national cultural heterogeneity prevailing in a nation to achieve more accurate results.

### **Key Words:**

Cultural Heterogeneity, Cultural Homogeneity, National Cultures, Sub-Cultures, Cultural Diversity, Cross Cultural Research.

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## **BACKDROP**

Culture is a complex of values and beliefs, objects, attitudes and behaviors embodied by the members of a community that distinguishes it from other socially prevalent communities. In fact, culture is a dynamic phenomenon that keeps on changing continuously with the passage of time and moves from one generation to its successor generations through symbolic cues. Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1952) provide that “Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as the products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action.” This and several other definitions of culture focus upon determining the similarities that are prevalent in the group that it represents. However, the question that arises here is in the purview of defining a nation in particular context of the group. Can this group be called the as the nation or is it the several sub-groups or cultures that constitute the nation?

Interestingly, the culture of a region comprising of a set of values, beliefs, customs, traditions, attitudes and behavioural patterns demonstrated by its members lead to its distinctiveness from other cultural groups. Such distinctiveness in cultural variations exists as a consequence of the differential climatic and weather conditions, type of land, geographical features, availability of natural resources, political institutions, demography, culture, science and life style patterns of the group members (Allen, 2008; Van de Vliert, 2008). Whilst much of the attention in cross-cultural and international management research has determined ‘nation’ as a homogeneous entity for the purpose of determining the cross-country differences, there exists a dilemma in terms of comprehending the role of ‘sub-cultures’ in shaping the true essence of the national culture. Hofstede (1997) defined national culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.” Hence, national culture is the collective mental programming of a group of people of a particular country wherein people of that country usually share the common goals with similar values, beliefs and behavioural orientations (Hofstede, 1980).

The culture of a group may partially or wholly be different from others depending upon its own history and institutions (Papademetriou & Masouras, 2014). In a community, subcultures reflect distinctive groups of people who share similar cultural definitions for successful and cognitive responses (emotional reactions, opinions, values, and objectives), behaviors (customs scripts and practices, behavioral standards) and environmental factors (living conditions, geographical conditions, essential objects) (Peter & Olson, 2005). Whilst the discussion flows from national cultures to sub-cultural orientation and from homogeneity to heterogeneity, the interpretation of cultural differences must facilitate in offering clarity and scientific discussion in contrast to merely putting forth the differences amongst nations (Haj Youssef, & Christodoulou, 2018). When most researchers look at the concept of national culture in totality and ignore the prevalence of intra-cultural variations, it simultaneously draws attention towards determining why the domain of intra-cultural variation is overlooked (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003; Steensma, Marino, Weaver, & Dickson, 2000).

Previously, most cross-cultural management research has considered only the generalised approach to understanding national culture and building on only few prime characteristic features that define the dominant feature of a national culture. This is sometimes also referred to as a 'central tendency' of the members that is used to understand the typical features of a national culture (Haj Youssef, & Christodoulou, 2018). Most global researchers while deliberating upon the context of national culture consider eminent works by Hofstede (1980, 2001) and dwell upon a homogeneous conceptualisation of national cultures. Ignoring the context of intra-cultural variation certainly leads to a gap in the understanding of culture as a whole. Rather, with a view to understand culture more comprehensively, the domain of intra-cultural variation and sub-cultural orientation must be given due consideration.

Even though the current research is bringing out the relevance of intra-cultural variation, still majority of the cross-cultural management researches are conducted with country-level investigation and analysis that seeks to undermine the impact of intra-cultural differences (Lenartowicz, Johnson, & White, 2003). Infact, greater adoption of the shared perspective of national cultures in taking up cross-cultural research (Ralston, Holt, Terpstra, & Kai-Cheng, 1997) has subsequently led to an inaccurate way of addressing the practice, research and study of cultural differences.

Insufficiency and inadequacy of cross-national cultural research work have generated the need and urgency to conduct research that emphasizes upon the significance of intra-national cultural variations representing cultural heterogeneity prevailing within national boundaries (Dheer, Lenartowicz, & Peterson, 2015; Tung, 2008). In accordance with the above arguments, the present piece of research work seeks to explore the significance of cultural heterogeneity that exists within a nation for investigating the national culture in an adequate and more explanatory manner by supporting it with the case of the Indian culture which is so widely diverse in nature but treated as a homogenous entity by global researchers.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Culture**

Culture is a complex term particularly in terms of its definition. For the first time, the term 'culture' was included in Oxford Dictionary in 1430 with meaning 'cultivation' (Tharp, 2009) or simply meaning farming/growing/tending of land. However, the concept was entirely ambiguous in nature as it had numerous dimensions which were unexplored and remained unclearly defined. Subsequently, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the concept of culture gained considerable attention when Matthew Arnold (1867) in his book titled *Culture and Anarchy* defined the term 'Culture' for the first time as "... special intellectual or artistic endeavours or products".

The term 'culture' was redefined by Sir Edward B. Tylor in the late nineteenth century (Ilesanmi, 2009) and succumbed its modern technical and anthropological meaning (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). He is considered as the pioneer in defining the term culture. The definition given by him is considered as the foundation that shapes the conceptual framework for 'Culture' (Ilesanmi, 2009). Tylor (1870) dwelt upon the definition of culture as '... that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'.

The definitions by Arnold (1867) and Tylor (1870) got wide acceptance and gained immense popularity for quite some time and were used for few years. However, both the definitions were insufficient to define culture in a holistic manner. On one hand while the definition provided by Arnold (1867) focused on materialism, the definition given by Tylor (1870) emphasized upon the universal feature of a single culture rather than emphasizing upon the distinctiveness of the variety of cultures or different societies.

In the mid of the twentieth century, a more refined and comprehensive conceptualization and definition of the term ‘culture’ was developed by Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1952). It concluded that culture is a combination of three aspects: 1. invisible, 2. visible & 3. behaviour of a society, where the invisible aspect represents a combination of values, assumptions, beliefs and attitudes, the visible aspect represents artefacts while the behavioural aspect represents the behavioural patterns of members of a group (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). This re-conceptualization of the term ‘culture’ brought new trends in the domain and led valuable contributions for defining the term culture in the late twentieth and early twenty first century by numerous researchers and anthropologists especially from multiple dimensions.

The broad contribution in the development of the concept of culture can be drawn from Kluckhohn & Kelly (1945) who referred to culture as “all the historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational and non-rational, which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behaviour of men”. It is that part of the environment which has been created/developed by man (Herskovits, 1955). Culture is learned (Lustig & Koester, 1999; Ferraro, 1998); and dynamic while being interconnected with its different parts upto some extent (Ferraro, 1998); common, generational, symbolic, structured/integrated and adaptive (Hodgetts, Luthans, Doh, 2006); culture is an integration of learned behavioural patterns, attributes as well as characteristics that are shared by its members (Hoebel, 1960). It has been asserted that it is a shared collective mental programming of mind (Hofstede, 1983, 1984, 1994, 1997), having both etic and emic elements (Triandis, 1994).

### National Culture

Table 1 brings forward the explanations/definitions of national culture as defined by researchers in varied ways:

**Table 1:** Definitions of national culture

| <b>S. N.</b> | <b>Author &amp; Year</b>       | <b>Definition</b>   | <b>Characteristics</b>   |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 1.           | Agourram & Ingham (2007)       | “National culture is a concept that helps to determine similarities and differences between the culture of countries”   | Emphasizes on country level cultural similarities and dissimilarities.   |
| 2.           | Pavao, Couto, & Natario (2019) | “Culture is the set of norms, behaviours, beliefs, customs and values shared by the population of a sovereign nation. Also refers to specific characteristics | Stressed that culture is an amalgamation of shared norms, behaviours, beliefs, customs and values held by a nation’s |

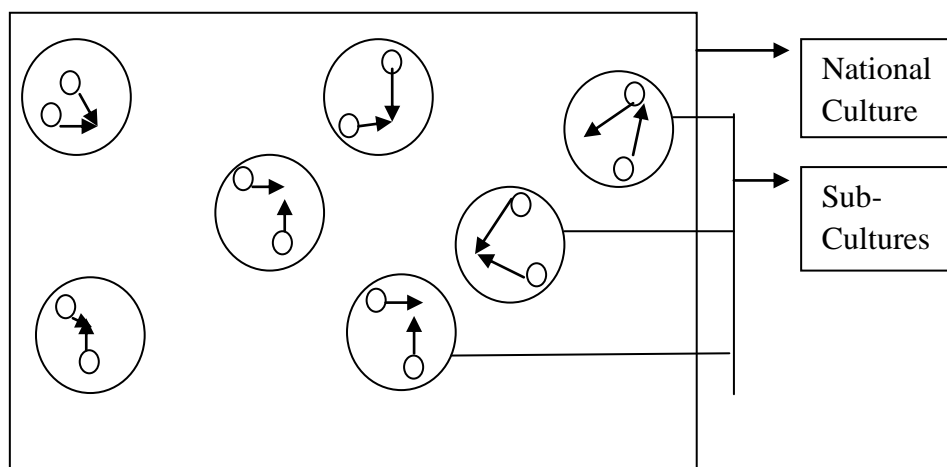
|    |                                  |   |  |
|----|----------------------------------|---|--|
|    |                                  | such as language, religion, ethnic and racial identity, and cultural history and traditions”.                 | population and refers to the several components of culture.                            |
| 3. | Ramraj & Amolo (2019)            | “It refers to a set of behaviours, norms, customs, and beliefs in a sovereign nation’s population.”           | Focused upon behaviours, norms, customs and beliefs as the core of a national culture. |
| 4. | Puck, Holtbrugg e, & Mohr (2009) | “National culture is the combination of symbols, beliefs, and artefacts typical for members of one nation.”   | Focused upon interrelation of symbols, beliefs and artefacts particular to a nation.   |
| 5. | Parker, & Tazhina (2012)         | “The culture associated with geographical/political region and its inhabitants.”                              | Focused upon the regional geography, polity and inhabitation.                          |
| 6. | Ford, Connelly, & Meister (2009) | “National culture is the shared values and assumptions held by individuals in the nation.”                    | Stressed upon he values and assumptions shared by people of a nation.                  |
| 7. | Wall, Minocha,, & Rees (2010)    | “National culture is determined by mainly two factors. They are religious background and ecological factors”. | Stressed upon religion and ecology as main determinants of a national culture.         |

Hence, national culture is the culture possessed by its residents and represented through their behavioural patterns. If appropriately seen, in all of the abovementioned definitions and several others, national culture is basically defined as a composite whole without considering the cultural nuances that exist within a national research framework. Accordingly, most of the definitions consider national culture of a nation to be a homogeneous entity. None of the definitions, even beyond the ones stated above, talk about the essence of sub-cultural orientation/frameworks or differences.

However, more recently a trend that has emerged in the literature in the domain of cultural studies, has brought to focus the sub-cultural heterogeneity in a universal culture of a nation. The presence of diversity within a nation is inevitable. Still, the focus of the cross cultural researches remains towards considering a nation as a single entity without taking any cognizance of the diversity prevalent within a nation. Studies are bringing out evidences to demonstrate that the culture of a nation varies from region to region. As these variations are major in nature and not ignorable, therefore, these variations/differences hold immense significance and relevance in studying the culture of a nation. Such an identification of national culture brings out its wider implications and facilitates in understanding how the outcomes can affect several industries and also reflect upon understanding the behavioural patterns of individuals within that nation (Haj Youssef, & Christodoulou, 2018, 2017; Dheer, et al., 2015; Tung, 2008; Peter & Olson, 2005; Schaffer & Riordan, 2003; Steensma et al., 2000).

Based upon the variations that are prevalent within a nation, we define national culture as “a cluster of many distinct sub-cultures that, within themselves demonstrate homogeneity, but may vary from one another. These distinct sub-cultures together make-up the national culture that broadly possesses a general characteristic orientate representing the nation at large. However, the sub-cultural diversity brings out the true essence of the national culture”. This definition is probably the first of its kind that imparts the heterogeneity perspective of intra-national variations prevalent within a nation and describes it in a more comprehensive manner. The composition of these sub-cultures may be dependent upon the values, beliefs, norms, attitudes, behavioural patterns, and religious structures etc. that define sub-cultural orientation. Diagrammatically, it can be seen as:

**Figure 1:** Prevalence of sub-cultures within a national culture.



As demonstrated in Figure 1 “a subculture is a segment of a larger culture whose members share distinguishing values and patterns of behaviour” (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, & Best, 2007). The concept of sub-culture is used to refer towards a subdivision of a national culture and also represents the composition of several factors such as class, ethnic background, regional or rural residence and religious associations that has a significant influence upon its participating members in an integrated manner (Arnold, 1970).

### **Cross-Cultural Research**

Cross-cultural research is a systematic and scientific methodology that focuses upon making comparisons between different cultures with a view to extract the similarities and variations among them at societal as well as national level. There are numerous frameworks available in the field of cross-cultural research that provide strong foundation to cross-cultural research work focusing upon cross-national cultural differences. These significant frameworks are associated with famous researchers including Murdock & White (1967, 1968, 1980, 1981); Hall & Hall (1976); Hofstede (1980, 1991, 1994, 2011); Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck’s Framework (1961); Schwartz Value Study (2012); Inglehart (1990); Trompenaar’s and Hampden-Turner’s Dimensions (1993) and GLOBE Study by House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, (2004). In the field of international business, numerous researchers and scholars have tremendously concentrated on evaluating the cultural differences at the national level and used the terms ‘culture’ and ‘nation’ as synonymous while conducting their cross-cultural research studies (eg: Egan & Bendick, 2008; Panda & Gupta, 2004; Schaffer &

Riordan 2003; Adler, Doktor, & Redding, 1986; Adler, 1984). Continuing with the same thoughts, trends and direction of research, majority of the research work at the international level adopted are still using nation as a homogeneous entity to describe the differences across nations. In contrast to the above understanding of national culture, few eminent researchers posit a dilemma particularly in terms of describing what is meant to be 'national culture'. Their research clearly explicates that the domain of intra-national or intra-cultural diversity within a nation is not explored yet leading to a gap in our understanding of the basic concept of national culture (Haj Youssef, & Christodoulou, 2017; Dheer et al., 2015; Peterson, Arregle, & Martin, 2012; Steel, Taras, & Kirkman, 2010; Au & Cheung, 2004). Carpenter (2000) and Uz (2015) pointed out that there exist significant differences among people of a single country as they belong to different heterogeneous sub-groups. Thus, conducting research at an intra-national-level for examining the characteristics of the national culture of a country would enable in providing a more holistic and comprehensive yet elaborative and explanatory explanation of national culture (Richter et al., 2016; Fischer, & Schwartz, 2011; Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen, Lowe, 2009; Tung, 2008). As research emphasizing upon intra-national cultural heterogeneity helps in providing better and enhanced understanding of national cultures, hence, intra-national research pertains to all the characteristics of a good research work (Tung, 2008) in the field of cross-cultural management.

### **INTRA-NATIONAL CULTURAL DIVERSITY: THE WORLD AT A GLANCE**

According to the Fearon's Analysis proposed by Fearon (2003), almost every nation is culturally diverse and their cultural diversity varies based on Ethnic Fractionalization Index (EFI) score between 1 (Most diverse) to 0 (Least diverse) on Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Index (CDI). This analysis only considers linguistic diversity but does not consider genetic diversity or other forms of diversity. As per this analysis, Papua New Guinea (0.564) is most culturally diverse and highly fractionized (1.00) nation across the globe followed by Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda & Liberia whereas least diverse nations are Japan (EFI = 0.012 & CDI = 0.012), South Korea (EFI = 0.004 & CDI = 0.004) and North Korea (EFI = 0.002 & CDI = 0.002). India is at the seventeenth rank with 0.667 score in Cultural Diversity Index (Fearon, 2003).

Another cultural diversity analysis was provided by Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly, Kurlat, Wacziarg (2003) that indicates the fractionalization score of ethnicity, religious and linguistic diversity. This analysis also focuses upon diversity that exists within nations. African nations including Chad, Togo, Argentina, Hatiti, Nigeria and Republic of Congo are the most diverse and heterogeneous nations across the globe, whereas Japan and Korea are the least diverse countries. US is also culturally and ethnically heterogeneous whereas European countries are comparatively less diverse (Wee, 2018; Morin, 2013; Fisher, 2013).

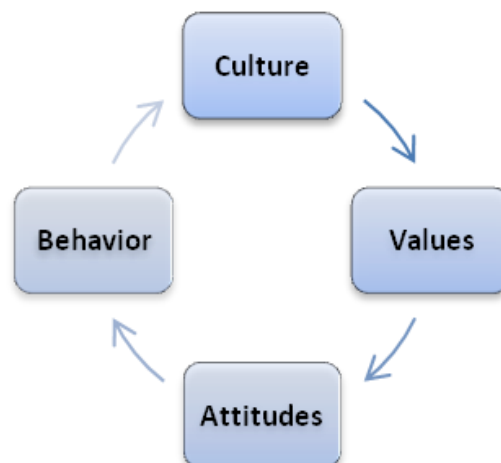
Out of the all nations of the world, Canada, United States, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Kenya, India, Belgium, United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Iraq, Malaysia, Nigeria, England, Singapore, Brazil, Turkey, Netherlands, Morocco, Greece, Trinidad and Tobago, Sweden, South Africa, New Zealand, Bahrain, France, Philippines, Israel, Norway, Switzerland, Colombia, Portugal, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Poland, China, Thailand, Madagascar, and United

Arab Emirates are amongst the top most countries across the globe that demonstrate cultural heterogeneity (Wee, 2018)

Apart, from the above aspects, heterogeneity amongst the nations, can be seen in terms of the existence of multiple tribes, communities and religious groups and sub-groups within a nation (Wee, 2018; Morin, 2013; Fisher, 2013). Within a nation, the existence of such differential communities is not new and has been framed for a complete historical set-up that shapes over years together imparting the kind of value systems, beliefs, cultural orientations and practices that are well established and deeply rooted with them (Wee, 2018; Morin, 2013; Fisher, 2013).

A complex and intense interaction of values, attitudes and behaviours of a society provide the foundational grounds to its cultural set-up (Adler & Gundersen, 2008) and building its cultural orientation framework. Building upon the theoretical underpinnings, the cultural orientation framework predominantly deals with the interaction between values, attitudes and behaviours adopted by people in a particular nation. Values are the implicitly or explicitly desirable and normative tools of a society or a group that reflect the general beliefs for defining what is right and wrong or what is preferable by the group. Values enable the formation of attitudes or the bent of mind of individuals or group of individuals towards their surroundings which is further displayed through the behavioural patterns (Adler & Gundersen, 2008). Adler & Gundersen (2008) concluded that the behavioural patterns of the group keep on changing on continuous basis and significantly influence the culture of that group. Hence, this chain of interactions and reactions of values, attitudes and behaviours corresponding to the culture of a society works in a cyclical motion as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2:** Influence of culture on behaviour and behaviour on culture (Adler & Gundersen, 2008, p. 19)



Based upon the model, it can be seen that culture shapes the behavioural patterns of individuals. As sub-cultures exist within the broader framework of the national culture, the behavioural make up of individuals within the national setup also demonstrates variation and distinctiveness that sets it apart from the prime characteristic features of the national culture. The domain of cross-cultural management research finds a lack of investigation whereas considering the kind of implications that it holds, intra-cultural diversity research is a



significant field of research. Therefore, Tung (2008) and Panda & Gupta (2004) and many others have motivated the researchers and scholars to put remarkable efforts for conducting research and drawing valuable and fruitful conclusions that help the different social groups at large.

### **CULTURAL HETEROGENITY: A CASE OF INTRA-CULTURAL VARIATION ACROSS INDIA**

The present work endeavours to bring out the essence of cultural heterogeneity by using the example of one of the most heterogeneous nations, India. India, is one of the fastest growing and emerging nations across the globe. It represents the seventh fastest growing economy, second largest populous economy and the largest democracy of the world. It has 28 states with New Delhi as capital of the nation. India is the home to more than 2000 ethnic groups. Majority of the research work conducted in the domain of cross-cultural research for examining Indian culture adopts the approach of cultural homogeneity and neglects its sub-regional cultural heterogeneity (Ghosh, Ghosh, & Ghosh, 2016; Kumar, 2005). Ghosh et al., (2016) investigated that there is a huge gap in cross-cultural research that considers India as a mono-cultural nation. Dheer et al. (2015) investigated about 443 research studies on India's national culture and concluded that researchers and scholars treated it as a homogeneous entity rather than consider to evaluate its regional and sub/intra cultural heterogeneity.

India is famous for its diverse and heterogeneous cultural patterns and its diversity is considered as its main strength due to the strong interconnectedness that exists among its geographically, socially and economically diverse sub-groups. It's physical diversity represented through its natural environment, resources, rivers, lakes, forests, climates, seas, mountains and land whereas different subcultures, religions, castes, languages, foods, dresses, arts, dances, music, traditions, customs, rituals, values, beliefs, attitudes and behavioural patterns manifest the diversity within the people of the nation (Kaul, 2014).

Prasannarajan (2007) addresses India as a conglomerate of cultures and union of varied cultures. Infact, the Indian culture reveals multiculturalism (Sukhdev, 2016). Though multiculturalism is now experienced globally, the Indian culture serves as an appropriate example of a multicultural society (Niroop, 2017). Dheer et al. (2015) pointed out that cultural diversity and heterogeneity of the Indian culture are the consequences of its regional sub-cultural variations as Indian culture is a union of distinctive sub-cultural/heterogeneous regions (Kulkurni, 2012). Its unique geography, diverse demography and long history, has given birth to sub regional cultural diversity that has been exhibited by members of these distinct regions through significant variations in values, traditions and customs followed by them (Prasannarajan, 2007). Infact, Prasannarajan (2007) addresses India as a conglomerate of cultures and union of varied cultures.

Broadly analysing the situation, it becomes an extremely difficult task to make generalizations about the Indian culture depending upon the evaluation of one or few cultural orientations (Kakar, Kakar, de Vries, Manfred, & Vrignaud, 2002; Rangarajan, 2000). Indian culture is a complex web of several sub-cultural groups that represent evidences of its cultural heterogeneity (Singh, 2000) and it has become essential to evaluate its cultural heterogeneity

with even greater depth with the objective of gaining knowledge about its linguistic, ethnic, religious, and caste groups (Stern, 2003; Gautam, 2017).

Rajagopalachary & Rao (2016) address Indian culture as a complex grid of different types and categories of subcultures and refer to its democratic society as ‘cultural pluralism’, ‘unity in diversity’, ‘living together separately’, ‘religious neutrality’, ‘honeycomb’, ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘hybridity’. India is one of the most heterogeneous nations in the world as it’s society represents a wide array of factors describing its heterogeneity in terms of age, education, religion, caste, gender, language, regional background, ethnicity, economic status and lifestyle patterns etc. (Som, 2007).

Majority of the culture based research work considers that Indian culture is homogeneous in nature (Makambe & Pellissier, 2014; Sahay & Abhishek, 2013; Segelstrom & Holmlid, 2009; House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 1980, 2001) as homogeneity is inherent to most cultural traditions (Hebbar, 2018). Hindi is the most commonly spoken language in India. It is used as the official and national language of India based upon the Devanagari Script. Major portion of the Indian population believes in Hinduism and Buddhism and follows vegetarian and dairy based eating habits. Indians prefer traditional clothing styles, celebrate Diwali and Holi as the largest festivals of the nation and are fond of art and handicraft products (Hebbar, 2018; Kumar, 2018). ‘Unity in diversity’, ‘largest modern democracy’, and ‘higher tolerance’ are the significant features of Indian culture that act as a glue to unite its differences and variety of colours in a beautiful rainbow (Mishra, 2019).

It has been discovered that the Indian society is an integration of more than 10,000 communities, numerous religious sub-sets, several linguistic categories that indicate its heterogeneous nature (Singh, 1996). Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru beautifully described the heterogeneity and diversity of India in his book titled “Discovery of India” wherein he states that “The diversity of India is tremendous; it is obvious; it lies on the surface and anybody can see it. It concerns itself with physical appearances as well as with certain mental habits and traits.....Some kind of dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilization. The unity was not conceived as something imposed from outside standardization of externals or even of beliefs. It was something deeper and, within it’s fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practiced and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged” (Nehru, 1993). Therefore, all the above explanations and interpretations of the India describe it to be highly heterogeneous.

Here are few examples that explain India’s sub-cultural regional heterogeneity in greater depth and comprehensive manner. The North region of India comprises of the states Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh and union territories of Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir and Laddakh. This region is the combination of both hilly and plain area. The maximum portion of this area experiences hot summers, heavy rains and severe winters except the highly mountainous and extreme cold area of Kashmir and Ladakh (Dheer et al., 2015; Bakshi, 1997). Agriculture, sericulture, horticulture, tourism and hospitality are the major occupations of the population of this region (Dheer et al., 2015). People of this region are very religious, patriotic, brave, very hard working, cooperative, cheerful to other, love to host, soft and clean hearted (Jalan, 2014) and also strong believers of Ayurveda (Top 15 places to visit in Himachal Pradesh, n.d.). Sharma (2014) stated that people of this region are very fond of

good and tasty food. Rognjosh, matshkabargah, yakhny, syun oluv, syun qaliya, matzgand, gaad, tabakh maaz, tsok tsarwan, ladyar tsaman, Veth tsaman, dam alu, nadeir yakhnean, Hak, nadeir palak, kadaham, tsoek vangan, rajmaah-chawal, ambal, paneer, khameeri roti, saag, makki di roti, kheer and halwa, all type of paranthas and all type of dairy products, mithe chawal, mah chane ki daal, gajar ka halwa, jalebi and rabri, firni, bajra ki khichri, bathua ka prantha, kachri ki sabzi, churma, malpuas, bathua raita, besan masala roti, methi gajar, sinri ki sabzi, kadhi and mix daal, are the signature dishes of this region (Pandey, 2014; Jalan, 2014; Sharma, 2014). Lohri, Baisakhi, MakarSankranti, Maha Shivratri, Ram Navmi, Durga Ashtami, Janam Ashtami, Rakshbandhan, Diwali, Mela Dasmochey, Tangpe Chongya, Nauroz, Shab-i-Miraz, Jumat-ul-Vida, Shab-i-Qadar, Eid-ul-fitr, Mela Kshir Bhawani, Urs Shah Farid-ud-din Sahib, Mela Hemis Gumpa, Baisakhi, Ashoora, Ues Shekh Noor-ud-din-Sahib, Bhai Dooj, Eid-i-Milad-ul-Nabi, Christmas Day, Mela Losar, Guru Gobind Singh Ji's Birthday, GuruNanak Dev Ji's Birthday, Martyr's Day of Guru Arjun Dev Ji, Guru Hargobind Sinng Ji's Birthday, Eid-ul-Azha, Moharram, Ravidas Jayanti, are the major festivals and important days celebrated in this region (Jalan, 2014; Sharma, 2014).

The Southern region constitutes five states including Karnataka, Telangana, Andhara Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. This region has the tropical climate as three sides of this region touch the sea shores (Dheer et al. 2015; Chandrakanth, Bhat, & Accavva, 2004). The major occupations of this region are agriculture, fishing trade, tourism and developed industrial and information technology business sector (De Silva, 1978; Dheer et al., 2015). This region is considered as the highly developed region and people of this region are wise, rational and highly educated as the annual economic growth of the South Indian region is twice the annual growth of remaining India and also, the literacy rate of this region is much higher than the national literacy rate (Achanta, 2016; Dheer et al., 2015). Dosa, idli, wada along with other dishes such as seafood, biryani, rice and other coconut based dishes are the signature dishes of this region (Achanta, 2016; Cook, 2017). Onam, Pongal, Thrissur Pooram, Hampi festival, Mysore Dasara, Chithirai Thiruvizha, Vishu, Ugadi, Karaga, and Mahamaham are the major festivals celebrated in South India (10 most popular festivals in south India, 2018).

It has been summarised that North India is located in the Indo-Gangetic plain whereas South India located in the Peninsular Deccan Plateau. As compared to South Indians, North Indians are taller and strongly built along with fairer complexion and North Indians are known as descendants of Aryans (72% of Indians) while, South Indians are termed as descendants of Dravidians (28% of Indians) (Rizwan, 2018; Cultural differences between South and North India, 2018). Rice dosas, idlis, vadas, and uttapams are the favourite dishes of South Indian and they use more spices, tamarind, rice, fish and coconut in their food whereas North Indians use more dairy products and wheat in their food and they like parantha, puri, chapatti more (Rizwan, 2018; Cultural differences between South and North India, 2018). Women in North India widely prefer Salwar-Kameez or Churidaar whilst South Indian women mostly wear saris. Colourful lungis and white Dhotis are popular attire of South Indian men but are seldom seen in North India (Rizwan, 2018; Cultural differences between South and North India, 2018). The languages used in Northern region are based upon the Devanagari script while the languages spoken in Southern region are based upon Dravid script. Hindustani

music, musical instruments such as sitar, sarangi, santoor and table along with dances like Kathak, Chhau, Gaudiya Nritya belong to North India whilst Carnatic music, musical instruments including mridangam, gottuvadyam, violin, veena and jalatarangam along with dances like Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali and Mohiniyattam are famous in South India (Rizwan, 2018; Cultural differences between South and North India, 2018).

Hence, the Northern region of India represents different sub-cultural patterns from the South as well as the other regions of India. Similarly the East, West and Central parts of India hold their own regional sub-cultural patterns and orientations. The behavioural patterns of people belonging to these regions also varies significantly. Research in terms of the overall orientations of people belonging to these sub-cultural units can prove useful for determining their overall approach to life, decision making patterns, choices, preferences etc, precisely all that can compositely bring out how their behavioural interpretations may be made for several purposes.

### **CONCLUSION AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Considering the global trend of movement of people from one nation to other and from one region to the other for the betterment of their own and family as well as the changing lifestyles, there seems to be growing need to acknowledge the heterogeneity in the description of national cultures. Also, the growing interest of the researchers in the domain alongwith the growing significance of the context, acknowledging cultural heterogeneity within nations is seemingly important. This dilemma of cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity is yet to remain but its implications and context needs to be dwelt upon and needs greater attention.

As a consequence of historical amalgamations and combinations, the increasing number of permanent and temporary migrants and immigrations across borders, almost all countries across the globe demonstrate an array of multiple ethnicities and religious sub-cultural orientations within their national boundaries (Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez, & Gibson, 2005). Hence, there is a great need and urgency to recognise the significance of intra-national cultural heterogeneity and to conduct research studies emphasizing upon intra-national cultural heterogeneity along with country-level differences to provide substantive outcomes of cross-cultural research as well as a highlighted understanding of the concept and description of national culture.

According to the current scenario, the predominant focus of cross-cultural management research integrates the conceptualisation of 'national culture' as a homogeneous construct. The domain of intra-cultural/national heterogeneity that exists amongst nations could not draw the attention of researchers and scholars even more lately. Comprehending the within-country deviations or differences shall bring light, a more comprehensive picture of the concept of national culture. Most researchers and scholars in the field of cross-cultural management research, while determining the cross-cultural differences, refer to the works of prominent researchers like Hofstede (1980, 2001), House et al. (2004) etc. Despite the fact that these works assume criticism particularly on grounds of the assumed homogeneous nature of national cultures (eg. Dheer et al., 2015) or sometimes even construct validity, most research still assumes the homogeneous approaches to understand national cultures.

Uncovering the latest developments and deliberations that focus on the significance of intra-national diversity prevalent within a culture as well as the need of understanding this heterogeneity, the impact of such like research has far reaching implications in the domain of cross-cultural and international management research. Further, research in the domain of cross-cultural marketing, consumer behaviour, cross-cultural psychology, cultural studies, regional studies, international human resource management, behavioural studies, as well as other relevant domains of international management now need to explore several issues and contexts from the viewpoint of the heterogeneity approach and bring out the essence of intra-cultural variation and bringing substantive results and outcomes in the context.

With reference to the present research paper, in the context of India, the Indian culture manifests tremendous heterogeneity in numerous forms and brings out distinctive characteristics of its several regions and indicates variation that seeks acknowledgement. This was only the case of India, but the global picture in the terms of intra-national diversity is quite attractive and holds a broad scope for investigation. It is suggested that future research must take into consideration the cultural variations prevalent within a nation. Apart from broadening the perspective and scope of research, it shall facilitate to draw implications for different research outcomes and may be qualitatively and quantitatively explored.

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