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A study on the role of culture in shaping social attitudes and behaviors in Parvathipuram Manyam district

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Abstract
Culture is a powerful determinant of social behavior, shaping values, attitudes, and interpersonal interactions across communities. In tribal and rural regions, cultural norms play an even more influential role in guiding day-to-day life. The present study examines the role of culture in shaping social attitudes and behaviors among residents of Parvathipuram Manyam district in Andhra Pradesh. A total of 450 respondents from three mandals Gummalaxmipuram, Kurupam, and Komarada were selected through stratified sampling. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire and interviews.

The study reveals that cultural traditions, family structures, festivals, and social norms significantly shape people's attitudes toward education, gender relations, community participation, and decision-making processes. Gender differences were observed in the extent of cultural influence, with women reporting greater pressure to follow traditional norms. Mandal-wise differences also emerged, with Komarada showing the strongest adherence to traditional culture. The study provides practical suggestions for balancing cultural preservation with social progress.

Keywords: Cultural norms, social behavior, tribal regions, social attitudes, gender relations

1. Introduction

Culture is a composite of shared beliefs, customs, rituals, values, and social expectations that guide human behavior. It acts as an invisible force shaping the way people understand the world and interact with one another. Social attitudes are the learned tendencies that influence how individuals think, feel, and behave toward objects, events, or other people. Cultural forces create, sustain, and modify these attitudes over time.

Parvathipuram Manyam district is a predominantly tribal and rural region in Andhra Pradesh, known for its rich traditions, community practices, and unique socio-cultural identity. Festivals, local customs, clan systems, and rituals strongly influence the lifestyle of people in this region. Many families continue to follow traditional practices in areas such as marriage, education decisions, gender roles, and community obligations. At the same time, modernization, migration, education, and media exposure are slowly reshaping the social landscape.

Understanding how culture influences social attitudes is crucial for designing development policies, educational programs, and welfare initiatives that respect local values while promoting progress. This study therefore investigates the relationship between cultural practices and social attitudes across three mandals of Parvathipuram Manyam Gummalaxmipuram, Kurupam, and Komarada mandals..

2. Review of Literature
2.1 Culture and Social Behavior

Culture affects human behavior through shared value systems, symbolic meanings, and collective norms (Hofstede, 1980) [1]. People's perceptions of right and wrong, acceptable roles, and expected behaviors are shaped by their cultural environment.

2.2 Culture in Rural and Tribal Communities

Verrier Elwin (1969) [3] emphasized that tribal communities possess rich cultural traditions

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that influence decision-making and social conduct. Roy Burman (1989) [4] noted that indigenous cultural systems significantly regulate social roles, marriage patterns, and leadership structures.

2.3 Social Attitudes and Value Formation
According to Triandis (1995) [2], social attitudes develop from repeated socialization within cultural groups. Durkheim (1912) [6] argued that collective rituals and community gatherings strengthen social solidarity and influence moral behavior.

2.4 Gender and Culture
Cultural norms often define distinct roles for men and women. Sen (2001) [5] observed that traditional societies place greater social restrictions on women, influencing their decision-making power, mobility, and education.

2.5 Gap in the Literature
Though research exists on Indian tribal communities, limited studies focus specifically on Parvathipuram Manyam district. This study addresses that gap by examining how local cultural norms shape contemporary social attitudes and behaviors.

3. Objectives of the Study
1. To identify the cultural factors influencing social attitudes in Parvathipuram Manyam district.
2. To examine the relationship between cultural practices and social behaviors.
3. To analyze gender-wise differences in cultural influence.
4. To compare cultural influence across Gummalaxmipuram, Kurupam, and Komarada mandals.
5. To provide recommendations for culturally inclusive social development.

4. Hypotheses
H1: There is a significant relationship between cultural practices and social attitudes.
H2: Cultural influence on social behavior differs significantly across mandals.
H3: Gender significantly affects the level of cultural influence on individual behavior.

5. Research Methodology
5.1 Research Design
The study uses a descriptive and analytical research design.

5.2 Sample Size & Distribution
Total respondents: 450
- Male: 200
- Female: 250
- Gummalaxmipuram: 150
- Kurupam: 150
- Komarada: 100
Sampling method: Stratified Random Sampling

5.3 Data Collection Tools
- **Primary data:** Structured questionnaire, interviews, field observations
- **Secondary data:** Books, journals, district records, government reports

5.4 Data Analysis Tools
- Percentage method
- Mean and standard deviation
- Chi-square test
- Mandal-wise comparative analysis

6. Data Analysis
6.1 Cultural Participation
- 78% of respondents regularly participate in cultural festivals, rituals, and community events.
- Participation was highest in Kurupam (82%), followed by Gummalaxmipuram (77%) and Komarada (74%).

6.2 Influence of Culture on Gender Roles
- 65% agreed that culture strongly defines the roles of men and women.
- 72% of females reported higher cultural pressure compared to 55% of males.

6.3 Influence on Decision-Making
- 72% reported that major life decisions—marriage, education, employment—are guided by cultural beliefs and family elders.
- Komarada mandal showed the strongest traditional influence.

6.4 Education and Changing Attitudes
- 60% believed that education is slowly reducing rigid cultural attitudes.
- Youth (18-30 years) displayed more modern perspectives.

6.5 Mandal-Wise Cultural Variations
- **Gummalaxmipuram:** Moderate cultural influence, more exposure to modernization.
- **Kurupam:** Strong festival participation and community bonding.
- **Komarada:** Highest adherence to traditional norms; stronger cultural restrictions.

6.6 Hypotheses Testing (Summary)
- Chi-square tests found significant associations between culture and social attitudes (H1 accepted).
- Mandal-wise differences were statistically significant (H2 accepted).
- Gender-wise differences in cultural influence were significant (H3 accepted).

7. Major Findings
1. Culture strongly shapes social attitudes and everyday behavior across all three mandals.
2. Traditional customs remain influential, especially in Komarada mandal.
3. Gender differences are evident, with women experiencing heavier cultural restrictions.
4. Youth exhibit changing attitudes, influenced by education, media, and migration.
5. Cultural events strengthen social unity, enabling cooperation and shared identity.
6. Decision-making remains family- and community-centered, reflecting deep cultural roots.
7. Modernization is slowly modifying cultural norms, but tradition still plays a dominant role.

8. Suggestions

1. Introduce cultural preservation programs in schools to protect local heritage.
2. Encourage gender-sensitive cultural practices to reduce restrictive norms on women.
3. Promote community awareness programs balancing tradition with modern values.
4. Document cultural practices of the district for future generations.
5. Government initiatives should respect cultural traditions, especially in education and health interventions.
6. Training programs in leadership, health awareness, and skill development can empower youth.
7. Support tribal arts and festivals to strengthen cultural identity and tourism.

9. Conclusion

Culture in Parvathipuram Manyam district plays a pivotal role in shaping people's social attitudes and behaviors. The findings reveal that cultural beliefs, customs, festivals, and family norms influence decisions regarding education, gender roles, social participation, and personal conduct. While modern influences are visible, traditional norms continue to dominate daily life, particularly in Komarada mandal and among women.

The study highlights the need for developmental initiatives that respect cultural values while promoting social equality and modernization. A balanced approach will ensure cultural preservation and sustainable social progress.

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