

СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ В ТРАНСФОРМИРУЮЩЕМСЯ ОБЩЕСТВЕ

DOI 10.19181/nko.2022.28.1.5

УДК 366.02

M. H. Laskar¹

¹ University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya, India.

GLOBAL CONSUMER SOCIETY AND TREND OF CONSUMPTION IN INDIA

Abstract. For sociologists and social scientists, contemporary global society has entered into the phase that is labelled as advanced capitalism, advanced industrialism, information era and post-modernity. Consumer society is a kind of characteristic feature of this phase and an ideological force underlies the global development trends. This paper has discussed the development of consumer society and its implication for social well-being.

Social well-being is symbolically measured in consumer society; people's manifested well-being is determined by consumption of industrial commodities or objects. Social well-being is again linked to the notion of 'need' and different standards of life define 'need' differently. Marcuse (1964) differentiated between true needs and false needs; false need causes variation of standard of life and objective well-being. Consumer society shows greater interest in mass production and freedom of consumption. Technological advancement particularly Web.20 (Advancement of WWW) during the beginning of 21st Century reshaped the service sectors of the world.

India has become a part of global consumer society that is not a desired gain for its large weaker sections. Socio-historical inequalities like caste and class still remind us of the reality of social ill-being though affluent sections were able to attain objective well-being. Launching of Reliance Jio (Offering unlimited internet data plan at cheaper price) in 2007 marked the beginning of new digital life and mass consumption among Indian people, as it created a new service industry in the fields of food, cloth, aestheticism, entertainment and many more. But social well-being is not yet ensured; still there are large sections of the population striving for basic needs like quality education and quality healthcare. Until capability equality is achieved, social well-being in Indian society will be a utopia.

Keywords: consumer culture, consumer society, social well-being, consumerism.

For citation: Laskar M.H. (2022) Global consumer society and trend of consumption in India. Science. Culture. Society. Vol. 28. № 1. P. 54–65. DOI: 10.19181/nko.2022.28.1.5

Introduction. Featherstone described the consumer culture' as the impact of consumption on everyday life, which led to the adjustment of social activities around the accumulation and consumption of a constantly increasing range of goods and services. 'Consumer society' is a particular kind of social activity that follows a pattern of consumption (extravagant), acquiring and manifestation of luxurious and fashionable goods and clothes [1, p. 4]. Notions of consumer culture and consumer society are instrumental in describing contemporary global society as advanced capitalism or advanced industrial society.

This new phase of global society has varied interpretations by social scientists; some termed it as inevitable economic growth and affluent society, while others regarded it as a phase of consumer culture. There are certain inherent elements

of consumer society like popular culture, culture industry and material aestheticism, which constitute a system of mass consumption-oriented mass production. Development of this phase is largely determined by technology and its gradual advancement, particularly in the post-war period. Technological advancement in machine equipment, cars, ship-building, power and energy boosted the industrial growth that expedited in the late 20th Century when World Wide Web (WWW) began. The web had eventually transformed the world into a global village in the real sense of the term. Initially beneficiaries were mainly designated scientists, University researchers and corporations and over the period of time, it has paved the way for global service industries and consumer goods production. Web is accommodated in the pocket of consumers now due to technological paradigm shift from computer to smart mobile.

Adorno and Horkheimer [2] critically examined this technological advancement and pointed out the techno-rationality of advanced industrial society that has domination over the consciousness of common people. Though we have been liberated from the primitive social condition, techno-rationality of advanced industrial society manipulates the choice of life and even the needs. Adorno and Horkheimer and Marcuse specifically focused on the culture industry that industrialized the art and recreated the notion of entertainment as part of aestheticism. Culture industry is actually a process of standardization and industrialization of popular culture and mass consumption that is a part of economic growth. Marcuse has the view that liberty in advanced industrial society is a myth as he argued that “under the rule of a repressive whole, liberty can be made into a powerful instrument of domination” [3]. In the present industrial age, we are fortunate in getting rid of irrationality and primitive life, but orientation of masses in the rationality of technocratic industrial society is no less than irrationality.

Baudrillard [5] noted that the fundamental aspect of consumer society is social logic of consumption; egalitarian ideology of well-being works as a determinant factor of such logic. He pointed out that social well-being is myth and egalitarianism is myth in consumer society. Baudrillard [5] even questioned the notion of growth idealized by Galbraith [8], ‘growth as source of affluence’. Baudrillard asserted that growth may not eliminate socio-historical inequalities and he opposed the idea, ‘growth produces affluence and therefore equality’ [5]. Growth may be limited to privileged sections or affluent sections.

We may find the historical root of mass production and mass consumption in Fordism. Henry Ford’s Fordism explicitly stated that mass production meant mass consumption that marked the initiation of a new system of reproduction of labour power, new controlling and managing mechanism of labour and a kind of new aesthetics of modernism.

It is attempted to discuss the question – Is India a consumer society? What is the nature of consumer culture in India? Consumer culture in India is largely the extension of consumer society of advanced capitalism. We find the relationship between technological advancement and consumer culture in India. Technological intervention in various fields like health care, education, commodity production, transportation and infrastructure resulted growth of affluence among people but unfortunately larger sections of population are out of this affluence. Question of affordability or capability is important here to examine social well-being. In light of Amartya Sen’s [6–7] capability approach, it is analysed that capability inequality is rampant in Indian society. There are two extreme sides of the status of objective

well-being in Indian society, one is high level of affluence and other is absolute poverty; unfortunately, larger sections of the population fall into the second side.

Consumer society and social well-being. Changing socio-cultural and economic structure and simultaneous advancement of technology in the global arena are the most crucial issues of wide ranging methodological and theoretical debate in sociology and social sciences. Contemporary world has a direction towards industrial advancement, advancement of capitalism, post-modernism and consumer society that we shall understand in relation to social well-being. Consumer society is a kind of social activity, social taste and social choices around consumption of products of mass production that actually stemmed from advanced capitalism. Consumerism ideology is the underlying structure of consumer society and we may describe advanced industrial society as consumer society. In other words, consumer society is the driving force of advanced industrial society and we may relate this argument with theoretical propositions.

Fast changing economic system, massive growth of production, mass consumption and advancement of technology have marked the entry of global society into a phase, which is labelled as “Consumer society” by Baudrillard [5], advanced industrial society by Frankfurt School [2-3], post-industrial society by Daniel Bell (1973), Information society by Manuel Castells (1996) and so on. Frankfurt School [2–3] critically examined the peculiar nature of consumption trends in advanced industrial society, what Marx (1867) noted as commodity fetishism that also raised questions on capitalist logic of social well-being and its measurement through expenditure or consumption. Baudrillard (1970) extensively discussed consumer society, its social logic or ideological basis. We may further extend our discussion by focusing on the historical background of present advanced capitalism’s shift towards consumer society. Fordism [4] was the beginning of an era in mass production and economic growth. In 1914, Henry Ford introduced his principle of “five-dollar, eight-hour day” for assembly-line production methods required for mass production.

We shall here elaborate the very nature of consumer society and how far it affects the social well-being. How consumer society focuses on objective social well-being without considering socio-historical inequalities? Consumption is inevitably linked to the notion of needs and satisfaction. Differentiation between actual needs and false needs in consumer society is very difficult and ambiguous. Baudrillard noted that the fundamental aspect of consumer society is social logic of consumption; egalitarian ideology of well being works as a determinant factor of such logic. Well being is reduced to symbolic and manifested happiness and the so called equality of consumption. Ideological force of the notion of happiness does not emanate from the natural tendency of the individual towards happiness for himself. Notion of happiness in consumer society rather originated from socio-historical fact that the ‘myth of happiness in modern societies incorporated the myth of equality’.

Democratic principle of equality changed from a real equality of capacities, of responsibilities, of social chances and of happiness to an equality before the object and other manifested signs of social success and happiness. In other words, it is the equality of opportunity for TV, cars and other objects of symbolic social value [5, pp. 49-50]. Notion of ‘need’ is indissociable from that of well-being in the mystique of equality. To achieve social well being, there must be equality in fulfilling needs. Here we have to assess the distinction between equality before use-value of objects and inequality before exchange-value of objects. Baudrillard argued that all men are equal before need and before the principle of satisfaction, since all men are equal

before the use-value of objects and goods, whereas people are unequal and divided before exchange-value.

In advanced industrial society, we shall see the standard level of objects and goods, whose inherent use-value may be determined by actual needs or manipulative needs. For example, all are equal before the use value of cars for transportation but division of people appears before the exchange value of different standard levels of cars. One section of people who can afford only simple Maruti Alto 800 and it fulfils their needs, whereas, another section of people whose need is Audi and Mercedes-Benz. So based on one's capability, he may go for either Maruti Alto 800 or Audi. A person who has the capacity to buy an Audi would feel it is his need, so he has objective and subjective utility in his possession. In general economic terms of value of commodities or objects, 'Audi' has less use-value than basic food or commodities but in terms of symbolic or manifested well-being in advanced industrial society, possession of Audi or any luxurious car has higher use value than basic food for an affluent person. We find two kinds of need: true needs and symbolic needs; and two kinds of use: value inherent use-value of objects and manifested use-value of objects.

Equality before use-value of objects in their inherent attributes is one common thing but availability of different levels of one object (for example car) in the market makes people divided and unequal socially in the use of this object. Cars as objects have equal use-value but a variety of levels and luxuries create division in use-value if we compare these various levels of the same car. For affluent people, Audi has high use value, so here use-value and exchange value complements each other. For an average person, a Maruti Alto 800 has high use value, but its exchange value is low, so he is not able to own a car of high exchange value. So, even if a person has an Alto 800, meeting his needs, he will aspire to own an Audi that ultimately leads us to think about hierarchy in use-value of a particular object like car. The categories of cars have two different types of use-value, one fulfills the basic primary needs and other fulfills the symbolic well-being or standard of life in advanced industrial society. One person may show his progress in attaining well-being through upgrading the car, so both the car has high use value for him.

People are always divided before exchange value; those objects of high exchange value are in the possession of affluent and by default objects of high use value are also in their reach. Other sections of people, whose access to even objects of high use value such as food, proper drinking water, cloth etc. is limited and not sufficient. Another section, who owns the objects of high use value but incapable of acquiring objects of high exchange value, striving to attain for symbolic objective well-being. So people are divided before both use-value of objects and exchange value of objects.

For example, air freshener and AC Machine have low use value as people can live without these appliances since natural air and atmosphere have high use value but affluent people have set a standard of life in which these appliances have high use value and obviously their exchange value is high too. So, people of lower economic condition lack capability in access to these appliances. In order to attain a standard life, one has to equip his house with these appliances, whereas, people can live without these but universal standard is determined by capability of availing these appliances in life.

Thus, need in advanced industrial society is not simply a natural stimuli, nor is it a socio-cultural drive rather it's a manipulative or modified drive, desire and aspirations. Fulfilment of manipulative or false needs may require more commodities and more capacity to attain manifested satisfaction or objective utility. An-

other significant condition of social well being is 'affluence' that has a customized interpretation in consumer society. We may look into two contradictory views on 'affluence' – Galbraith's idea of 'growth as source of affluence' [8] and Baudrillard's argument "growth may not eliminate socio-historical inequalities" [5, p. 52]. Galbraith has a view that the issue of equality and inequality is not important; rather the problem of wealth and poverty is a major problem, which is resolved by affluent society. His argument is that those who are poor actually fall outside the industrial system, outside growth. Baudrillard noted that the Galbraithian approach has developed the ideas like 'growth means affluence' and 'affluence means democracy' [5, p. 52]. For the idealists of 'affluence', poverty is the residual problem that can be resolved with additional growth. Baudrillard was against the idea, 'growth produces affluence and therefore equality' and at the same time he avoided the extreme opposite view – 'growth produces inequality' [5, p. 53]. For Baudrillard figurative and GDP oriented industrial growth does not establish the egalitarian society, because there are socio-historical inequalities and the structure of privilege have tenacious prevalence in societies.

Consumerism is the mechanism of shaping masses as consumers in the mass production system of capitalism and it has been the structural basis of consumer society. Mass consumption is not merely expenditure but a way of life that has a historical root in Fordism, regarding that Gramsci [4] in his "Prison notebooks" noted Americanism and Fordism as 'biggest collective effort with unprecedented speed and with a consciousness of purpose' in the production process that produced a new type of worker and a new type of man. For Gramsci, this new method of work created a new mode of living, thinking and feeling of life. It was the year 1914 when Henry Ford introduced his principle of "five-dollar, eight-hour day" as recompense for workers manning the automated car-assembly line, which was marked the beginning of Fordism as a new approach of production in industrial society. Henry Ford's Fordism explicitly stated that mass production meant mass consumption that marked the initiation of a new system of reproduction of labour power, new controlling and management mechanism of the labour force and a kind of new aesthetics and human psychology.

In short, we may say that a new rationalized, modernist and populist democratic society emerged. Main purpose of the "five-dollar, eight-hour day" was to ensure discipline among workers required for a highly productive assembly-line system. It also meant to provide workers sufficient income and leisure time to consume the products of mass production. This assembly-line system of mass production had weak expansion to Europe till mid 1930s and it gained momentum only in the 1950s. Fordism formed the basis of the post-war boom after 1945 and it stayed intact until 1973 [4]. From David Harvey's discussion on Fordism, some important points may be noted here [4]:

- Fordism largely boosted the advanced capitalist countries like the United States, Japan, France, Germany, Britain and OECD Countries. Post-war period witnessed a massive growth of the industrial production of cars, ship-building, transport equipment, steel, petrochemicals, rubber and consumer electrical goods and these became the driving force of economic growth.
- Defeat of radical working class movements of the post-war period established a new politics of labour control and management.
- Traditional (Craft oriented) labour organization was suppressed and assembly-line labour organization emerged.

- In the Fordist production system, bureaucratized trade union organizations were increasingly corralled for exchange of wage gain for cooperation in managing workers. Sometimes even the state exercised its power to suppress the obstructive labour force. Trade Union power is accepted by corporations because the Unions control their membership and collaborate with management to raise productivity in return for better wages.

Fordism, besides a production system, emerged as a cultural development in industrial society. So it is argued that post-war Fordism must be seen more as a total way of life than merely a mass production system. Mass production signifies standardization of production as well as consumption, so it ultimately created a new aesthetic and commodification of culture. Fordism made contributions in developing the aesthetic of modernism.

In the contemporary global world, advancement in society or progress of humans is measured by technologized life and mass consumption, that is how much one is able to consume or have capacity to consume and how one is coping up with such technology and trends. This technological advancement and progress has rationalized the domination of common people by advanced capitalism. It is actually a transformation from domination of primitive tradition to domination of techno-rationality. Adorno and Horkheimer's [2, p. 95] idea of techno-rationality is a compulsive force in advanced industrial society. Their main focus was on the culture industry that paved the way for standardization of art and its mass production. Film and music is now a mass consumed commodity, products of culture industry that Adorno and Horkheimer [2] called as business rather than art. So, masses are free in consumption and entertainment, which Marcuse took a different way. Marcuse has the view that "under the rule of a repressive whole, liberty can be made into a powerful instrument of domination" [3, p. 10]. In the present industrial age, we are fortunate in getting rid of irrationality and primitive traditions, but domination of technocratic industrial society is no less than irrationality. It is the suppression of rationality; and this rationality has just reduced to the consumption of technology, product of industry and vice versa. Advanced industrial society has created enough choice for the individuals to choose and in fact, people are quite happy and convinced that society is progressive or they are enjoying freedom and liberty. But according to Marcuse [3, p. 11], availability of choices does not determine the degree of human freedom; rather it just decides what can be chosen and what is chosen by the individuals. The constant reproduction of superimposed needs by the individual does not establish autonomy; it only testifies to the efficacy of the controls.

In the following graph, we have presented the mechanism of advanced industrial society, whose main motto is 'more consumption and more profit'. Technological advancement and advanced industrial society mutually reinforce each other. This mutual connection leads to mass production and creation of global market for distribution and business. Ideology behind this system of production and advancement is consumerism, which influences the consciousness of the people. The consumerism ideology works in such a way that people follow the global trend of consumption and consistent growth of consumption leads to increase of mass production.

Is social well being ensured in consumer society? We may get the answer in Amartya Sen's 'Capability approach', in which he emphasized capability equality [6]. It is a matter of debate whether people's real objective and subjective well being are realized or not in so called affluent society or consumer society. Capability approach [6] evaluates the advantage of a person in terms of his or her actual ability to achieve

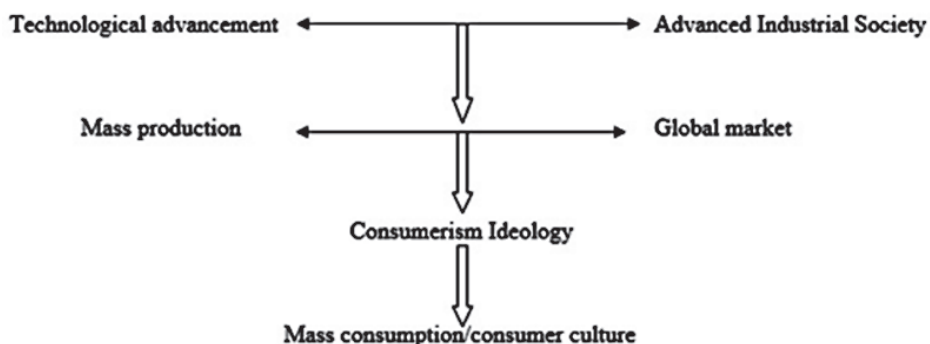


Figure 1. 'More consumption and more profit'.

various valuable functioning's as part of living. Functioning's may be elementary such as being adequately nourished, being in good health, etc. and complex functioning's such as self-respect or being socially integrated [7, pp. 30-31] One important aspect of "Capability Approach" [7] is that it deals with social well-being through informational focus instead of formula assessment.

Consumer society came up with a privileged structure in society that again internally keeps on upgrading and so aspiration of masses fluctuates according to the standard of privileged structure. There is no end of need and no limit of sufficiency in consumer society; the industrial system doesn't want to create a boundary in these. Needs get modified every day, it is difficult to demarcate what are real needs and what are false needs. Needs of affluent people are luxuries of the poor or weaker sections. Then what would be a standard need? In answering this question, we must focus on the advanced industrial concept of 'dynamic need'. The need in this sense is not static and not determined by natural drive of human being rather a drive of industrial systems for more profits. Symbolic well-being through lifestyle pattern is the immediate expression of consumer culture and affluent people are always leading the trend. This symbolic well-being is consumption oriented, so to fit into this lifestyle, lower sections of people are aspiring and striving hard. Therefore, a constant competition prevails that actually maintains the status quo of consumer society. Affluence is situational, presently, one person may be affluent but his affluence is relative and he has to upgrade his capability because the notion of affluence is dynamic not static. Consumption centric social well-being in consumer society undermines the socio-historical inequalities like class division, caste division (typically found in Indian society), ethnic division, racial division and so on. Without social equity, we cannot think of social equality and capability inequality is detrimental to social equity. Regional disparity is visible, if we consider Indian society for social well being assessment, mere consumption of affluent people cannot work; rather incapability of larger sections of people has to be taken into consideration.

Technological advancement and consumer culture in India. No doubt technological advancement has led to the upgradation of material life of the people in India but it again extended the prevalent social space and distinction among people. Consumer culture here mainly developed as an expansion of advanced capitalist society's consumer culture. Society like India is already divided into castes, classes, ethnic groups and tribal groups and due to these socio-historical inequalities, weaker sections of population are larger in size. Technological intervention in various fields

like health care, education, commodity production, transportation and infrastructure resulted growth of affluence among people but unfortunately this is limited to those who have capability of availing these. In the findings of Oxfam International¹, it is revealed that India is the most unequal country despite being the fastest growing economies in the world. Constant rise of inequality is reported by Oxfam and wealth possession of the richest is increasing. Rich are becoming richer at the fastest pace but the poor are striving for even minimum amenities of life such as livelihood, quality education and healthcare services. Unfortunately, the top 10% population of India holds 77% of the total national wealth. Importing of technology and development of indigenous technology are the two main sources of technological advancement in India. Technology and its equipment's are imported in the fields of medicine, health care system, defense system, transportation system, infrastructure building etc. At the same time, Indian industries and scientific research institutes are simultaneously creating technology in these fields for more market share. Our concern is not to discuss the proportion of imported and indigenous technological development; rather focus is on how technological advancement affected the society in general including economy, services, living standard and social condition.

Two dimensions of technological development in India are discussed here, which have two kinds of results. Infrastructural development has largely progressed because of technological advancement and post-independent Indian industrial policy concentrated on it. Hydroelectric power projects, transportation networks, and city development are the epitome of infrastructural development for industrial growth. From the beginning of 21st Century, Web 2.0 (Tim O'Reilly and John Battelle, 2009) transformed the web scenario of the world including India and simultaneous mobile phone revolution shifted the web into people's pocket.

Most significant or breakthrough point of India's web development or internet revolution in terms of usage was the launching of Reliance Jio in 2007. Reliance Jio marked the beginning of mass use of internet data plan at a cheaper rate. All telecom companies later followed Reliance Jio in offering consumers best data plans at a cheaper rate. Simultaneous growth of smartphones complemented this internet revolution and a new phase of consumption began. Internet data was earlier used for only essential purposes and that was again in Cyber café. This internet revolution changed the service sectors towards consumer creation and mass consumption.

Two sides of this advancement, one is high living standard and other is disparity in access to the facilities. High living standard or objective well being could be attained by few or smaller sections and larger sections of population are unable to get access in these facilities, so it signifies social ill-being.

Consumer culture in India is visible in people's consumption patterns in shopping malls, supermarkets, restaurants, online shopping apps and in culture industry. These are again integral parts of city culture. Shopping malls and supermarkets are the new developments in India to change the behaviour pattern towards consumption. Traditional shops or market places usually maintain one way exchange between buyer and shopkeeper or assistant of shopkeeper. People used to visit these shops keeping in mind that they would purchase certain commodities already listed and shopkeepers had to assemble all listed items before final billing manually. People also had to think about the available amount in the money purse or in the pocket before purchasing anything. Now Credit card and debit have changed not just the payment

¹ India: extreme inequality in numbers. Oxfam International. URL: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/india-extreme-inequality-numbers> (last request 26.11.2021).

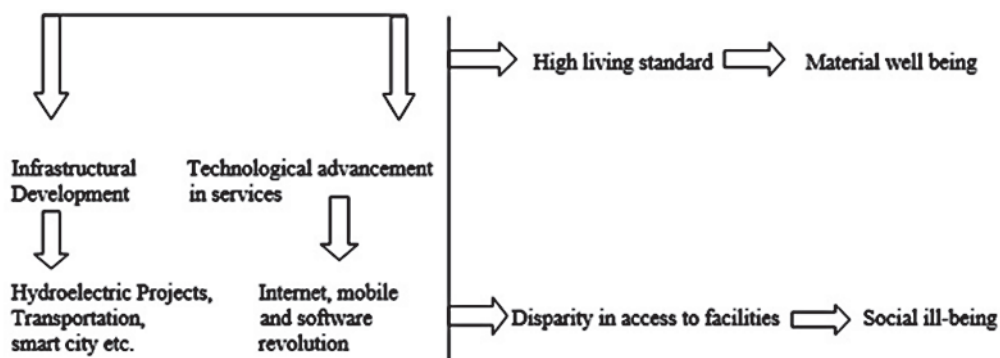


Figure 2. Two sides of advancement

method but also the amount of purchasing. Credit system too changed; traditional credit system was manual and it was a kind of trust between shopkeeper and buyers based on the affinity, mainly prevalent in rural India even today. But today, people use credit card, so there is no need to ask the shopkeeper for a favour and no trouble for the shopkeeper to keep a record of credit. If cash is not available, one can easily do shopping with credit card without any hurdle. Mall and Supermarket revolutionized everyday shopping pattern. Now people visit in the mall and supermarket and find specified displayed locations of specific items, then fill the cart with desired items. All the items filled in the cart are not necessarily essential or people might not have thought of these items before entering a mall or supermarket. Once they see displayed items, immediately feel the necessity or tendency forced them to purchase.

Social media, online shopping and culture industry flourished in India after Reliance Jio launched cheaper unlimited data plans in 2007. Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, Snapdeal and others have caused deep impact in the habits and lifestyle of the people. Online food delivery apps like Swiggy, Zomato, Uber Eats etc. further intervened in the food consumption of everyday life. Culture industry is the greatest development of consumer culture because of the constant growth of OTT (over-the-top) platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Voot, Disney + Hotstar and many more.

Social media plays a very crucial role in developing consumption habits among people. Social media in today's advanced industrial society is the combination of Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and many more. These platforms have attained utmost popularity and recognition due to enhancement of internet technology. These platforms in India have become more strengthened due to the upgradation of Telecom Company's internet data plan. In a developing country like India, the internet has become the most available resource today that ultimately becomes a dominant means to suppress mass consciousness over dissatisfaction and grievances. It has been observed that poor people are engrossed in social media platforms in their so called free time; that is actually a kind of alienation of the masses from their own self. Free time or time of relaxation is a new trend popularized to engage them in social media, which unfortunately takes away the time and energy of thinking about self or living with self. Satisfaction too is determined by the market force of industrial society. Social media is not just a medium of presenting mass culture items to audiences but industry in itself too in the sense that it produces its own contents and trends. Here, we must keep in mind that India is not an advanced industrial society but mass culture production and consumption are going

on widely. This does not imply in any way the mark of modernity rather domination of consumer society of the industrial world.

Question of Social well being in India. It is a matter of concern that both objective well-being and subjective well-being in Indian society is under examination. There is a problem of socio-historical inequality like caste and class, which plays a detrimental role in attaining social well-being. Integration and capability equality, two essential elements of social well-being are absent here, so more sociological analysis of this issue may advance an approach of dealing with the problem. Though economic growth is quite satisfactory and industrial development is following global standard in India, larger sections of people still lack capability in access to basic amenities of life such as income, food, shelter, cloth, education, healthcare and transportation.

There are again three kinds of living standards Indian people are living based on their capability_ high living standard, relatively low living standard and absolutely low living standard. High living standard here signifies the highest level of functionings in life, relatively low living standard signifies relatively low level of functionings and absolutely low living standard signifies disrupted functionings in life. Similarly amenities of life such as income, food, shelter, cloth, education, healthcare and transportation are of different standards based on the quality_ one is highly lavish that can only be availed by affluent sections and on the other hand another section of people who are simply availing poor quality of these amenities. There is a middle range amenity, which too average Indian cannot afford. Let's take an example of healthcare and education. Education is the primary or basic need of the people but a clear division is visible among people in terms of quality and the people's access to quality education. It is observed that affluent people have easy access to quality education due to their capability to spend in private schools and colleges. Children of these families are enrolled in international schools or branded boarding schools, so their overall development takes place in due time. On the other hand, poor people living in slum areas and congested housing colonies are out of this standard. Public run schools and colleges have now become an option for lower sections and unfortunate fact is that teaching learning and educational environment is deplorable in these schools and colleges. So, ultimately affluent people become more affluent by imparting the best quality education.

Now in the era of digitalization of education and e-learning, people from lower sections living in slums, congested colonies and villages find it hard to manage mobile, laptop, internet etc. and house infrastructure. They lack information regarding various platforms of learning and lack suitable environment for study in their place of living. For example, BYJU'S app and WhiteHat Jr. app extensively facilitate the education of children in today's time but larger sections of population in India are out of this technologized education due to low capability of accessing. Health is another primary need but it has turned into a luxury for lower sections. In India, private hospitals are known for the quality healthcare but affordability of people is a matter of discussion. Affluent sections easily enjoy the best quality healthcare but the rest of the people are incapable of spending required amount for such healthcare, so they depend on welfare schemes in public hospitals. Capability is essential for social wellbeing not mere access in healthcare and education through welfare policy.

Conclusion. It can be concluded that global consumer culture has changed the consumption pattern among people in India. Indian society is not yet achieved

social well-being. So, mere growth of affluence among few is not making any difference in social well-being. Socio-historical inequalities like caste and class are widely prevalent even today. Capability of the people has to be improved for a better living standard. There must be constant growth and mobility among people to live a better life.

References:

1. Featherstone, M. (1983) *Consumer Culture: An Introduction. Theory, Culture and Society*. Vol. 1, No. 3. Pp. 4-9. DOI: 10.1177/026327648300100301.
2. Horkheimer, M., Adorno, T. W. (1944) *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. Stanford University Press, Stanford. 283 p.
3. Marcuse, H. (1964) *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society*. Boston, Beacon Press. 286 p.
4. Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Basil Blackwell, Cambridge.
5. Baudrillard, J. (1998) *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. Sage Publications, London-Thousand Oaks-New Delhi. 208 p.
6. Sen, A. (2009) *The Idea of Justice*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge. 496 p.
7. Sen, A. (1993) Capability and Well-Being. In: Nussbaum M. and Sen A. (eds.), *The Quality of Life*. Clarendon Press, Oxford. Pp. 30-53. DOI: 10.1093/0198287976.003.0005.
8. Galbraith, J. K. (1999) *The Affluent Society*. Penguin. 288 p.

Funding Acknowledgements

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

The article was submitted on November 30, 2021.

Accepted on December 20, 2021.

Information about the author:

Mahmudul Hasan Laskar, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology,
University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya, India.
e-mail: hasanlaskaramu@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0001-7024-5757

М. Х. Ласкар¹

¹ Университет науки и техники. Мегхалая, Индия.

ГЛОБАЛЬНОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО ПОТРЕБЛЕНИЯ И ПОТРЕБИТЕЛЬСКИЕ ТЕНДЕНЦИИ В ИНДИИ

Аннотация. С точки зрения социологов и обществоведов, современное глобальное общество вступило в фазу, которую принято обозначать как развитой капитализм, развитой индустриализм, информационная эра и постмодернизм. Общество потребления является своего рода характерной чертой этой фазы и идеологической силой, лежащей в основе тенденций глобального развития. В данной статье автор рассматривает развитие общества потребления и его влияние на социальное благополучие. Помимо взаимосвязи общества потребления с массовым производством, рас-

считается роль технологического прогресса (в частности, развитие Интернета), изменившего мировой сектор услуг.

Социальное благополучие измеряется в обществе потребления условно, через потребление товаров и услуг. Таким образом проявляется связь социального благополучия с понятием «потребность», но различные стандарты жизни подразумевают разные «потребности». Дифференцируя истинные и ложные потребности, Г. Маркузе (1964) называл ложными именно те, что навязываются индивиду особыми социальными интересами.

Индия стала частью глобального общества потребления, что оказалось не лучшим вариантом для многочисленных малоимущих слоев населения. Традиционные для страны кастовое и классовое неравенства постоянно напоминают о реальности социального неблагополучия, хотя обеспеченные слои населения объективно уже достигли благополучия. Запуск Reliance Jio (дешевые безлимитные тарифы на интернет) в 2007 году ознаменовал начало новой цифровой эпохи и массового потребления среди индийского населения. Однако социальное благополучие не достигнуто, все еще остаются слои населения, нуждающиеся в удовлетворении базовых потребностей, таких как качественное образование и качественное здравоохранение. Пока не будет достигнуто равенство возможностей, социальное благополучие в индийском обществе останется утопией.

Ключевые слова: культура потребления, общество потребления, социальное благополучие, конsumerизм.

Для цитирования: Ласкар М.Х. Глобальное общество потребления и потребительские тенденции в Индии // Наука. Культура. Общество. 2022. Том 28, № 1. С. 54–65. DOI: 10.19181/nko.2022.28.1.5

Дата поступления в редакцию: 30.11.2021.

Принята к печати: 20.12.2021.

Сведения об авторе:

Махмудул Х. Ласкар, доцент, кафедра социологии.

Университет науки и техники. Мегхалая, Индия.

e-mail: hasanlaskaramu@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0001-7024-5757