

Intercultural Interaction and Handicrafts

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Abstract

Technological developments in the world since the mid-20th century, has increased intercultural communication and the whole world today has been informed of the existence of societies even in the most remote corners of the world. With increase in globalization in cultural context, the importance of local differences has emerged more today. As a result, a process has initiated in which the similarities with differences, localization with the universalization and modernization with the tradition experienced simultaneously and intercultural interaction has become inevitable and a natural phenomenon. However, handicrafts has been affected by cultural interactions negatively and the mistakes done caused the national culture and identities to weaken. For this reason, the necessity of experience of changing and developing in the frame of development with identity, transformation and cultural heritage today is emphasized. To be protected from the negative effects of the global interaction, many government produce protection and sustenance contracts, laws and projects by engaging in various initiatives. In the study, subjects is discussed with the examples of successful countries that aim to promote their local cultures globally and provide income.

Key words: Globalization, culture, handicraft

Introduction

Globalization is a concept that includes interrelated issues such as development of economic, social and political relations between the countries, better recognition of the beliefs and expectations of different societies and cultures and intensification of international relations.

According to many researchers, the globalization in basic sense is an economic process that is based transformation and rapid changes origins of which occurred in the 1960s and brings political consequences with. It spreads in three ways including political, economical and cultural.

Today, since the United States has the routing power for globalization and the countries such as China and India hold the world production industry in wide fields in their hands, it shows that the basis of the structure that appears to be economical is in fact “the culture”. If culture is considered to be a multi-faceted concept, it is not difficult to see that the technology era we are in and the globalization spread to many areas from science and art to language, religion, customs and traditions, law, diplomacy and economy (Korkmaz, 2006: 654).

Culture phenomenon, is not a meaning entirety that is unchanging, remaining always in the way it exists. It may change depending on time, developments in political, social and economical structures. It can mutually interaction with other cultures. However, to maintain the changes occurring as a result of cultural interaction to be healthy, the culture should gain a new shape according to the requirements of the era as the main character is preserved.

Technological developments in the world since the mid-20th century, has increased intercultural communication and the whole world today has been informed of the existence of societies even in the most remote corners of the world. Thus intercultural interaction has become inevitable and a natural phenomenon. Today, as a requirement of modernity and timeliness, to predict the results of this process affecting the whole world, the societies should accept their past and strengthen their interaction, work to get positive results from cultural interaction with the preservation of cultural diversity (Koca et al, 2007: 794). As Turhan (1997) noted, cultural changes are seen and understood at the end of an ongoing process for many years, not suddenly.

With increase in globalization in cultural context, local differences have emerged more today. As a result, a process has initiated in which the similarities with differences, localization with the universalization and modernization with the tradition experienced simultaneously. Handicraft is one of the most affected elements by this situation. Handicrafts that are part of the daily life for centuries and produced with the same technical and aesthetic features many times, today become an ordinary item that is presented to a wide audience by converting in the cultural industry with the effects of commercial and economical integration.

Handicraft products are resembled to the products of different cultures by transforming in the direction demanded especially by tourism, it is assimilated in other words. However, handicrafts are the parts of the national culture and embody the most living building blocks of the culture of a society. However, due to improper practices in the production and the new designs of handicrafts, it is seen that the national culture and identity are weakened. People approaching handicrafts with commercial logic harm them in an effort to keep the cultural values alive, and so they think that they keep them up to date and alive. In fact, to understand, to interpret and to perpetuate the cultural values without corruption requires a serious state policy as much as a social responsibility. Today, the necessity of experience of changing and

developing in the frame of development with identity in this sense, transformation and cultural heritage is emphasized. In the cultural studies in the new era, as well as identification and reviews, it is expressed that handicrafts should be addressed in representation and presentation aspects to ensure the cultural continuity and to transform the cultural values into values that will reach from local to global (Ekici, 2003).

To be protected from the negative effects of the global interaction, many government produce protection and sustenance contracts, laws and projects by engaging in various initiatives. At the same time, countries like Tunisia, Malta, Bolivia, Peru are among the countries that aim to promote their local cultures globally and to provide income. Germany, United States, Britain are the pioneer among the countries with the highest purchase of souvenir market today.

Tunisia is one of the best examples of countries in the world which is not affected by the cultural disadvantages of globalization and converted them into an opportunity. The country with 11% of the population earning their living by handicrafts has shown a great success in the globalization of the culture by opening stores in Europe's most important centers. Tunisia is a country that is worth to study in terms of bringing local handicrafts to the national and globalization stages. All kinds of cultural value across the country is dealt with a certain discipline, style and a central routing and is converted into a souvenir. Tunisian National Handicraft Center; is managing this subject with a successful system through education, manufacturing, product development, quality and standardization units. Within the frame of established store chains and production standards a success is achieved on a commercial scale. Handicraft workers in various fields, by bringing various unity and institutionalization in private and public sectors at the same time; continue their studies within the frame of defined strategies in production, exhibition and marketing fields. In particular, the organization for women is stated to be very active in this regard (Oguz, 2001: 116-117).

Another country that is successful in this subject is Japan having a share of 3% in World handicrafts export. Japan's product range in traditional handicraft sector is very wide. Besides being original all the products exhibit the cultural characteristics of the regions where they are made in. In the last fifty years, the impact of globalization on the life style has led to start mass production of some handicraft products. When the interest in handicraft sector increased in 1960s, a law that is organizing and promoting handicrafts is adopted in Japan. According to some articles in the law that should be an example:

- Products should be used in daily life,
- Products should be handmade,
- Products should be produced by using traditional handicraft production techniques,
- Raw materials used in products, should be supplied from their origin regions,
- The staff who will work in the handicraft workshop should be employed from their own regions.

The law has helped to preserve the authenticity of the products as well as increasing the production capacity of handicraft products. The article about the usage of these products in the Daily life is adopted to increase the demand rate to the products in the markets and also has been useful in training new masters. In addition, the articles about raw materials and employment also contribute to the regional economy (Oka.org.tr).

Conclusion

Communities that claim to their cultural values and want to promote national values such as handicrafts globally and to gain income, discuss how they will present them to national and universal in scientific level. The studies will be conducted in the handicrafts in this context; should take the local culture and artistic production relations, usage fields of the traditional material, their reformatting appropriate to today's requirements, dynamics affecting tourism into account. In the process of expansion of the global consumption culture, handicrafts that were indispensable in the daily life once have extincted, and some lost their importance by installing new functions to them except their own functions. Redesign of handicrafts with modern understanding and its transfer from national to universal are only possible with the better understanding and comprehension of cultural field. Today as the relation between contemporary art and tradition is constraintly on the agenda, geographic features, cultural heritage and vital diversity, differences will become meaningful and universal through transfer from generation to generation with any effort to make values and traditions permanent.

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