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Thesis: Since the migration of Europeans to the America’s in the 15th century, Native American culture has come under pressure; nonetheless, great efforts have been made (since the 19th century) to revive the culture, albeit with many challenges too.
- The dilution of the Native American culture can be traced back to two important developments.
- One is the entry of Europeans to the America’s in the 15th century.
- With the coming of Europeans, Native Americans involuntarily lost some aspects of their culture.
- Integration with Europeans
- The second important point is when the government started to force Native Americans to change their normal way of life.
- Enactment of laws to “ civilize” Native Americans had irreparable damage to their culture.
- Revival of Native American culture started in the 19th century especially with the enactment of laws recognizing the rights of Native Americans.
- The government facilitates the signing of the Hopewell Trust
- The Hopewell Trust gave the Cherokees, Choctaws and the Chickasaws protection and the assurance that boundaries would be respected.
- Under the Hopewell Trust, Indians had the right to property and the assurance of special provisions to trade.
- Native Americans give the chance to become citizens.
- The government also issues fee simple patents
- Fee simple patents allowed community ownership of land.
- Issuance of fee simple patents gave recognition to Native American’s way of life.
- Dawes Act of 1887 gets enacted.
- Under Dawes Act, individual Native Americans were to be allotted part of their tribal land.
- The government offers the government a New Deal.
- Under the new deal, Indians could now reorganize.
- Again, Indians could also form their own governments.
- The government also established Native American Boarding schools.
- In the late 19th century, the government intervened to provide education to Native Americans of school-going age.
- Nonetheless, the process of revival was not without hitches.
- Enactment of the Removal Act in 1830 was a blow to the Native Americans.
- Although the initial plan was to allow voluntary migration of Native Americans, the process ended up using unnecessary force to move populations of Native Americans.
- Forceful migration disrupted the people’s way of life.
- Enactment of Indian Reorganization Act rendered the Dawes Act ineffective, with catastrophic results.
- Indian Reorganization Act led to repossession and subsequent loss of lands distributed to individual Native Americans.
- Native American tribes also suffered other social ills as a result of the Indian Reorganization Act.
- Inhibition to speak native language.
- Children attending the native Americans Boarding Schools established by the government were not allowed to use their native languages.
- Again, the children learn Christianity in these schools though there are Native American religious beliefs.
- Although the quest to revive Native American culture has severally been hit by challenges, two things stand out.
- The first one is the enactment of laws recognizing the rights of Native Americans.
- The second thing is the politcal will entrusted to foster revival of Native American culture.