



PROMOTING PEACE THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The globalized world today faces several military and nonmilitary challenges, which threaten the Peace of the world therefore Pursuit of Peace needs to be given the first priority. So far the issue of Peace was considered to be a state responsibility to be shouldered by the politicians but since the political efforts so far have not yielded adequate and positive results, time has come for the non-state actors to intervene. Education has the potential of becoming a major agent in the Peace making processes. The present paper intends to discuss the kind of role Higher Education may play in this regard. This conceptual paper makes a case for the inclusion of some additional components such as Peace Studies, Cultural Studies, and Ethnic Studies in the Higher Education curriculum with a view to generating awareness and knowledge about the causes of conflicts and wars. Since religions and wars have been inextricably connected, the teaching of religions in a rational and objective manner as an academic discipline is need of the hour. By failing to do this, we are giving this opportunity to the dogmatic religious leaders, who treat religion more as an institution rather than an ideology or a belief-system with a value-system embedded in it. The discipline of Language too has immense bearing on the threats to Peace. Some pioneer studies by the feminist scholars have researched about how languages have been abused to promote wars and terrorism. Some of the studies have deconstructed the languages to highlight the stereotyped masculine images and idioms, which consciously or unconsciously glorify violence. The same language may also be manipulated to promote Peace.

Introduction

Peace has been an important issue at all times in human history, not only from the point of view of safety, survival and social order but also from the perspective of human dignity and progress. However Peace has always deluded humanity. Human history is replete with the accounts of an unbroken series of conflicts and wars. In fact, history and wars seem to be synonymous terms. Majority of people, at all times have wanted Peace but somehow never been able to live in peace. Even if there were no wars going on, the threats of war have always been there, compelling people to live in fear. Peace has assumed a different dimension

in the context of globalization as the contemporary world is dramatically different from the earlier times in History. According to United Nations Report on Human Development (1999, p.29), globalization is changing the world landscape in three distinct ways:

- ◆ Shrinking space: People's lives, their jobs, incomes and health are affected by events on the other side of the globe, often by events that they do not even know about.
- ◆ Shrinking time: Markets and technologies now change with unprecedented speed, with action at a distance in real time, with impacts on people's lives far away.
- ◆ Disappearing Borders: National borders are breaking down not only for trade, capital and information but also for ideas, norms, cultures and values.

We are in the midst of a process of cultural flows across the world as a result of which "contacts between people and their cultures, their ideas, their values, their way of life have been growing and deepening in unprecedented ways." (U.N. Report 1999, p.33). Due to technological advancement, foreign cultures are no longer as foreign as they used to be. Local communities are no longer cultural islands. Consequently, people all over the world are faced with unparalleled opportunities of cultural growth but at the same time, they are also faced with unparalleled threats to their cultural identities.

Scholars studying this phenomenon from different angles describe this as either cultural homogenization or cultural heterogenization. According to some scholars, the two processes namely globalization and localization are going on simultaneously. The localizers emphasize the fact that global neighborhood does not promise global unity or shared lives but has created what John Tomlinson (1999, p. 105) describes as 'enforced proximity.'

Giddens (2000, p.68) describes 'fundamentalism as 'a child of globalization.' This according to him is the result of deep desire on the part of some groups of people to protect and preserve their culture, religion, language etc, which according to them are threatened by the pervasive & powerful Western culture. Some other scholars take a more positive & optimist stand and describe this as a two-way process of 'glocalization' in which 'local' is brought into conjunction with the 'global' and thus cultures coming in contact shape & reshape each other. The 'local' and the 'global' both are modified as a result of process of 'glocalization.' Giddens finds the process of 'globalization' becoming increasingly decentered as 'reverse colonization is taking place, in which non-western countries influence developments in the west.

Such a globalized world brings promises of progress & prosperity but at the same time poses threats to the peace and security of the humanity. Failed states and proliferation of nuclear weapons had already threatened Peace and security of the world. The identity-based (religious & ethnic) conflicts and the competition for resources and markets are additional threats, which are engendered by globalization. The advancement in technologies & Media has enabled terrorism if not directly motivated it. It has becomes easy to travel, communicate, instruct and transfer money. Underground transnational conspiracies can take advantage of all the developments that make the world a smaller place. This is how globalization & Peace are interlinked.

The environmentalist Vandana Shiva (2005) identifies the 'convergence of the military and the markets as a major threat to human security' in the context of globalization. She contends that a state-centric security system is being mobilized to protect and serve a capital-centric system 'which can go to the extent of defining even 'civic action in defense of human security as 'terrorism.' She further contends that 'a state-centric security system is being

mobilized to protect and serve a capital-centric system.’ She alerts us against the ‘use of war as a dominant metaphor for market control and new technologies and points out how trade wars are becoming a part of the discourse on globalization.

Brown (2007) explains the contemporary global security landscape through the following table.

	Interstate problems	Intrastate Problems	Transnational Problems
Military Challenges	Interstate wars Great-power competitions Weapons Proliferation	Military coups Ethnic conflicts Civil wars	Cross-border insurgencies Transnational terrorism Weapons proliferation through non-state actors
Non-military Challenges	Trade disputes Resource conflicts Energy competitions	Population growth Economic migrations Resource competitions	Transnational Media Transnational crime Technology proliferation.

The patterns of warfare have changed significantly in the contemporary world. The ‘symmetrical wars,’ where state armies are pitted against each other under the leadership of state leaders for power control or other state interests are gradually being replaced by ‘asymmetrical wars’ (mainly insurgencies & civil wars) fought by rebel groups for their own group interests. Such rebel groups often resort to guerrilla techniques & terrorism. Instead of confronting state armies, they employ strategy of exhaustion and target civilians in order to weaken their morale and to prove that the state cannot protect and thus induce shift in citizens’ loyalties.

Poorer countries, who cannot match the advanced powers in military strength, are now using other asymmetric strategies & capabilities to threaten the super powers. Massacre & ethnic cleansing occur frequently. The old types of organized and decisive state wars with definite end-points have given way to an intermediary state of wars wherein violence never ends at any point but ‘smolders on’. Many contemporary intrastate wars pit ethnic or religious groups against each other and are referred to as “ethnic wars” or ‘identity wars.” Many of these then take transnational dimension, since identity-groups straddle state boundaries, the distinction between interstate wars and civil wars is beginning to blur. The dividing Line between war & crime too has blurred as Criminal networks play a growing role by funding such ‘identity wars.’ Besides ‘identity wars which include ‘ethnic’ and ‘religious’ conflicts, there are several other causes of inter & intrastate as well as transnational conflicts.

Some of these causes are uneven resource distribution and the resultant competition for scarce resources, political instabilities, serious domestic and international crises, Population explosion and the environmental degradation of limited resources. Migrations also lead to conflicts as immigrants also generate social conflict within host or receiving country. Perceived threat from migrants to host country’s cultural identity lead to communal conflict,

political instabilities and the likelihood of civil strife. King (2007) offers the following data to illustrate the gravity of human wars and conflicts.

Ψ Data: One hundred twenty-one national and minority peoples fought guerrilla or civil wars at some time between 1945 and 2003. Of these, sixty were protracted ethno-national conflicts, that is, they were fought over issues of group autonomy and lasted at least a decade.

Ψ In 2002, there were forty-nine serious communal conflicts worldwide, eleven of which were wars and fifteen of which involved low-level rebellion or terror campaign.

Ψ In 2005, there were 11-5 million internationally recognized refugees and an estimated 21-3 million others who were internationally displaced. Most of the people were fleeing from civil wars, interethnic rivalries, and campaigns of mass murder and ethnic cleansing.

The above data is sufficient to prove that the 'world is on the downward slope to anarchy within and among states and to polarization of societies and continents along the lines of religious and cultural cleavage.

In the light of the new security threats and changed patterns of warfare leads us to the question if the existing traditional instruments of negotiation, mediation, peacekeeping and peace enforcement etc. are still effective in managing and resolving conflict and if war & peace issues should still rest with the state or government only.

According to Chiba & Schoenbaum (2008), the history testifies a range of Peace approaches that have evolved after the Second World War. Thus, we have three generations of Peace approaches:

- First generation of Peace approaches, till world war II were oriented towards
 - Peace Movements (meeting, demonstrating etc).
 - War Abolition (eliminating war as social institution).
 - Global Governance (globalizing conflict transformation).
- Second generation of Peace approaches, after World war II were oriented towards
 - Peace Education (knowledge/information, Journalism)
 - Non-violence (to be able to struggle non-violently).
 - Conflict Transformation (solving conflicts creatively).
- Third generation of peace approaches, after the Cold War have been now oriented towards
 - Peace Cultures (going into deep cultures if needed).
 - Basic Human Needs (accepted as non-negotiable pillars)
 - Peace Structures (repairing fault-lines along gender divisions, class divisions and so on).

The above description illustrates how gradually the non-state actors and the common people are now playing an increasing role in the Peace Processes. The first generation reacted against war as an institution and People demanded peace through a type of state efforts. The second generation reacted against State as they became increasingly skeptical of politicians and the honesty of their intentions so wanted to work peace themselves. The third generations reacted against simplistic approaches, realizing that understanding the deep roots of human conflicts and wars are crucial for peace development. The realization also came about the importance of human survival, basic needs of human beings, livelihood and human dignity as the building blocks of security and not just absence of military or non-military conflicts. The

human security now is interpreted in ways that place people and their participation at the center. Such an approach to Peace expands it beyond the domains of politics and international relations and involves active participation of non-state actors in order to inform the security debate of the dynamics of the contemporary patterns of military and non-military conflicts and the best means of resolving them and build the firm and solid foundations of peace. Interventions by the non-state actors with State in the Peace building Processes may be able to transform the conflicts. The State efforts for peace-building, peacekeeping and peace zones (models of peace) can be best attained if state and non-state actors work in unison. Even during post war & conflict phases, reconciliations efforts to heal traumas of violence must include state & non-state actors.

Since the causes of war are not related to only state & its policies but general, war & peace discourse also must be addressed by the other agencies, Higher Education being the foremost among these agencies. It has immense potential to play a positive interventionist role as a non-state actor. Higher Education system must respond to the global challenge in order to advance human survival and dignity. The academic institutions must participate in the global pursuit of peace. Some of the ways in which Higher Education may respond are:

- By generating in-depth theoretical knowledge of human conflicts and wars, with an emphasis on the causes and dynamics of human conflicts/war in a neutral and objective manner. One may also remember here the role of universities as 'Critics' of the society. In this context, Universities have to be critics of the State & politicians and point out the truth boldly.
- Mass Media (Press, T.V. & Radio) are also expected to play the role of watchdogs of the society but unfortunately, the Mass Media have proved themselves untrustworthy in this respect by increasingly becoming commercial, sensational and biased. The universities through researches, discussions/forums and outreach activities have the potential to play this role in an unbiased manner.
- By undertaking researches about human conflicts and Peace from multidisciplinary perspectives:
 - Sociological & Anthropological perspective to address the issues of ethnic challenges to security, the ethno-political conflicts created by modernization and globalization. (e.g. contemporary naxalite terror in some Indian States may be explained by its scrutiny from ethnic perspective or several of tribal wars of Africa may be solved better by understanding from ethnic perspective.
 - Feminist Perspective - Feminist deconstruction of the entire discourse on War & Peace may shed new light on the issue because so far international relation has been a predominantly male domain. Incorporating gender concerns into existing Peace and Security Discourse has significantly altered the Discourse, which now emphasizes Conflict prevention rather than conflict resolution. One of the techniques adopted is to deconstruct the language and literary traditions employed to describe war narratives. Davis points out the prevalent stereotyped images of 'warlike manliness' in the literature of later middle age: knighthood, fighting to rescue others' and alerts that "male physical force could sometimes be moralized" and 'could provide the foundation for an ideal warlike manliness.' This kind of moralization of collective male violence held sway and continue to exert a powerful fascination and to inspire respect" according

to her. Even Indian literature in all languages is replete with the heroic war sagas of the 'Kshatriyas.' The feminist scholars want us to look deeper into the existing war narratives which reinforce the stereotypical/prototypical images of 'fighting men & weeping women,' 'the victors & the vanquished,' and the triumphant ends of wars even at the cost of immeasurable loss of human life and property. I would go to the extent of suggesting even the analysis of Indian popular cinema, which often glorifies violence. This may be dangerous as it may inspire or even instigate people to violent conflicts.

- Language Perspective: Language is a tool, which can be and has been used to promote the so-called wars on terrorism hence we need to deconstruct languages from this perspective and correct it if it leads to violence. The feminist deconstructions of languages have already illustrated how gendered language has been used as an instrument of war. There literary genres and traditions in almost all languages that include poems, myths, epics, histories as well as articulated theories on the necessity, inevitability and glory of violence and wars. This needs to be probed. (e.g. Everything is fair in love & war.)
 - Historical perspective: History and war stories are almost synonyms. The traditional approach of history writing emphasized the accounts of great warrior kings and the battles they engaged. Their greatness depended on how many battles they won rather than what they did for his subjects. We now need to study history from a different perspective emphasizing 'Peace-times' of human history' and the achievements during these periods. It is proven fact that Art, Literature and trade usually flourished during war-free periods of history. India reached its Golden period during the millennium, when Buddhism was state religion and after the great Kalinga war, King Ashok had taken a vow never to engage in warfare again. History need to highlight such facts in order to cultivate the positive attitudes towards Peace and conviction among the students that Peace is indeed beneficial for human development.
 - Psychological perspective: The psychology behind human tendency towards violence, aggression, conflicts, insecurity etc must be studied. The case studies of political figures and historical heroic figures, who have initiated wars, should be studied in order to understand intentions and capabilities of the actors using terrorism in specific historical contexts. Due attention should also be given to post war/conflict issues such as healing after the violence, restorative justice, emotions, hope, forgiveness, truth recovery, collective social memory and public victimhood. Special participatory kind of researches should be undertaken keeping these psychological issues in mind.
- By introducing disciplines, which promote peace such as Peace Studies, War & Conflict Studies, Religious Studies, Cultural Studies, and Ethnic Studies etc. in Higher Education. These disciplines are important components of Higher Education Curriculum in many developed countries but unfortunately, Indian Universities are over emphasizing IT & Management and some other disciplines at the cost of such liberal disciplines.
- ◆ I would like to emphasize particularly the study of religions. The reason being Religion and wars are inextricably connected. Kimball (2000) writes, 'more

people in the 1st & 2nd millennia have died as a result of religious strife than political or geographical reasons. There is direct connection between the rise of religious social movements and recent events that connect these to violent acts. Throughout human history, religion has defined community boundaries. It rationalizes a group's collective history and its members' claims to social recognition and protection. Religion is also a boundary marker and by so being, contributes to discourse marking off the self from the other. Religion historically has supported social movements attacking vulnerable population groups.

Unfortunately, such an important discipline of Religious Studies does not find a place in the Curriculum of Indian Universities. The intellectuals and learned men and women look down upon religion as something antithetical to science. They view religiosity as dogma and irrational behavior. Anyone showing a keen interest in religion or exhibiting religious fervour is immediately labeled as a 'fanatic or a fundamentalist.'

Williams, G. (2007) has rightly remarked, 'The learned have their superstitions, prominent among them a belief that superstition is evaporating. Since science has explained the world in secular terms, there is no more need for religion.' The Secularism guaranteed by Indian constitution actually means freedom to choose one's Faith/Religion and tolerance towards Faiths/Religions, which are different from one's own. It must not mean apathy or indifference to religion. Secularism also means that India is not a Theocratic State in the sense some Islamic countries are. It seems as if many intellectuals equate secularism with atheism, which also is a belief system or ideology. Buddhism and Jainism were atheist religions, which rejected the 'concept of personal God. While avoiding religion, an important fact is ignored that religion is neither all about 'rites and rituals' nor about imaginary realms of supernatural beings and places (gods/goddesses/deities heaven/hell) but religions are also specific ideologies and belief systems/value systems too, which a particular society prizes. It can explain many things about the culture and ways of thinking and behaving of the people who follow a certain religion. Religion is also a system of social control and an instrument for political mobilization. From this point of view, also the study of religion should not be undervalued. Historically, there have been several instances when Religions have been used for challenging the state as it allows activists to protesting against regimes they believe to be morally wrong on the grounds of supernatural authority of religions. Religious activism has often accompanied communal and intergroup violence, not only because of religion's role in maintaining group boundaries but also because of the ways in which political and religious elites react to challenge to their authority. Although Islam is singled out currently as the focus of the contemporary debate on Terrorism, we must not be oblivious of the fact that terrorism has been associated with other religions too.

History testifies the violent conflicts between Judaism versus Christianity, Islam versus Hinduism, not so violent conflicts among Hinduism versus Buddhism/Jainism and other offshoots of Hinduism, last but not the least the well-known verbal attacks between Shaivites and Vaishnavites. How have these religious conflicts been solved? This historical perspective may help in finding some solutions to current religious problems.

Religion is an important component of Culture so not knowing one's religion adequately leads to alienation from one's culture. Religion is also part of one's identity. This is realized acutely when one resides in a country other than his/her country of origin. When one has to live in other countries amidst people of different faiths, especially with people who

are followers of world's dominant faiths, one has to face the hegemonic attitudes of the followers of the dominant faiths. If one does not know enough about one's faith, one may face problems. We have to pay due attention to religions as religion is an important variant in formation of human identity worldwide.

The study of religion carried out in a rational manner will help students to find solutions to the conflicts, which arise out of religious differences. Even if future generation has to reject any religion & be non-believers or atheists, it has to be informed & rational choice, not apathy or indifference/impassivity. Even deciding to be a non-believer is not wrong if this is based on the adequate knowledge of religion and then having logical and valid reasons to reject it.

Religion is a dynamic process and not a stagnant institution. History gives us enough examples of old religions being replaced by the new religions. The examples of Buddhism/Jainism as an opposition to Hinduism and Christianity opposing Judaism are well known. There have also been attempts to synthesize religions, i.e. Sikhism (Hinduism & Islam), Din-E- Ilahi of Emperor Akbar and Kashmiri Shaivism are some examples.

If the existing religions are not fitting in the modern contexts and not fulfilling the human needs in the contemporary times, there is always scope for new religions. Wordsworth, the well-known English poet declared his faith to be Pantheism (Nature as God) and John Keats, the great Aesthete and poet considered BEAUTY as his only faith.

Let such initiatives come from Higher Education. The ancient universities of Nalanda, Taxila, and Vikramshila contributed greatly to the Golden age of Indian History when development in Knowledge, Literature and Fine Arts reached at peak. These universities attracted great scholars from other countries and with this spread of knowledge was the Greater India reached its unprecedented heights.

There is need of intellectual discussions in the classrooms of the universities about the pertinent issues related to all religions and religious practices. These debates must probe the issue of how religions instigate violence and conflict. A few examples can be:

- ◆ Why do most of the Hindu deities carry some or the other weapon in their hands? (Rama with a bow, Vishnu with a discus, Shiva and Durga with a tridents and so on). Can this be called divinization of violence? Is militant Durga really an ideal feminine role-model? Has Vishnu evolved to a higher level when as a Krishna he is seen more with flute rather than discus or bow?
- ◆ Why should Crucifixion symbolize the Christian Faith? Does this glorify or deify violence? Wouldn't it be better to use image of Jesus Christ giving Sermon on the Mount instead of dying on a Cross?
- ◆ Why did meditating Buddha and Mahavir fail to attract the followers as against Rama with a bow and Krishna with discus or Shiva with trident?
- By incorporating the Peace perspective, wherever possible in the existing disciplines such as history, Sociology, psychology, anthropology, Literature & Language, Women's Studies and so on.
- If we want to realize the dream of 'global civil society' sensitizing the teachers and students in the universities towards Peace Issues is very important.
- By preparing the future generation for active participation in the Peace processes at national and international level. The very concept of 'citizenship' needs to be redefined in the context of globalized world. The new definition of citizenship perhaps

would need to recognize the entire globe as a social and political unit, thus transcending the geographical boundaries.

- It would also need to go much beyond the traditional ideas of rights, duties, loyalty, protection, privileges etc and incorporate more affective components. Higher Education has great potential to evolve such a new definition of 'citizenship' and futuristic 'Global Civil Society'.

Concluding it might be reiterate that the responsibility of Peace building must not be left only in the hands of the politicians or religious leaders, who have their vested interests and biases but also gear our Higher Education system to play a positive interventionist role in promoting Peace in the world.

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