Communal Harmony & Nation Building
Banaras Hindu University

Jointly Organised by
Dept. of Political Science, BHU
SIO of India
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Preface

‘Communal harmony’ and 'Nation building' are not phrases that are particularly in vogue these days. While these phrases once occupied an important, almost irreplaceable position in public discourse, to most people they now evoke a stale era of Nehruvian rhetoric, endless Congress party resolutions and kitsch bollywood movies like Amar, Akbar, Anthony. The current equivalent for such vague, open-ended politically-correct word play is probably “inclusive growth”. Perhaps it is to be expected that in a time when public discourse is obsessed with quarterly growth rates and GDP projections, our imagination of romantic ideas of social justice will also be limited by something as statistically relative as “inclusive growth”.

However, as much as we pretend to be single-mindedly obsessed with the rhetoric of 'development', no one can pretend to overlook the vitriol and divisiveness that has entered our public life in general. A communally charged atmosphere used to be the exception of election-year dramatics, but now it increasing seems to be the norm, especially in the context of 24-hour news cycles. Our perception of politics is more cynical than ever before, and the standard of political debate has fallen to levels that were previously considered obscene.

Amid all this, the unresolved fissures of our past have come to haunt us with a renewed vigor. The suicide of Dalit scholar Rohith Vemula at Hyderabad Central University is a glaring example of the fact that an assertive, proactive group belonging to the 'lower' castes is still not easily tolerable in our public spaces, even in the best of our public institutions.

We were supposed to be the generation that was above caste and religion, whose only priority was jobs and foreign
investments with dreams of Mumbai becoming New York. But the last couple of years have been a rude reminder that mere pretending to ignore our differences does not mean that anyone has forgotten about them.

In a time when it is becoming increasingly difficult to have a decent, sane conversation around any issue of contention, it is no longer enough to be politically correct and sing songs of Hindu-Muslim unity. We cannot make our differences magically disappear, or artificially diminish them in a rush to proclaim unity. What we need is to really engage with our differences, to identify them, describe them and lay them bare. It is true that we must know what is common among us, but we also need to know what is uncommon. And from that which is not common, that which cannot forcibly be made to look alike, what is it that we can live with? What about the other's otherness is acceptable to us and what is completely unacceptable? What can we live with and what needs to be kept away, at least from us?

These conversations are not easy, they are not quick or result-oriented and they are not inevitable. They will not happen by themselves if we do not make an effort to have these conversations. This humble attempt that is in your hand is an attempt to make that conversation happen.

The reason behind invoking Communal harmony and Nation building is that these phrases need to represent more than mere slogans of political correctness. In reality they represent a process, a continuous, sometimes frustrating but ultimately necessary process that needs to be owned not just by the state but by every stakeholder in our society. We believe there is a need to re-focus our attention towards that process through honest engagement and understanding.

You will find in the following pages a diverse collection of essays ranging from the conception of God and politics in
different religious cosmologies to commentaries on current affairs to creative methods of conflict resolution. All of these papers come from diverse backgrounds, sometimes from such opposing poles of the ideological spectrum that they are clearly irreconcilable. The only unifying factor behind them is that they represent part of a conversation, a conversation that is difficult and may seem endless, but is nonetheless one that we need to have and keep having.

Editor

Fawaz Shaheen
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Syed Maududi's Thoughts on Violence & Revolution
Khan Yasir*

Abstract

Syed Abul A'la Maududi, the founder of Jama'at e Islami, is also regarded as founder of modern Islamism. Islam for Maududi, is deen and not merely a traditional religion or a set of rituals. It is a way of life, a code of conduct, and an ideology. Muslims, he argues, by their virtue of being Muslim are a missionary community and their mission is not just to propagate Islam but to 'establish' the same (iqamat e deen). This establishment of deen has obvious political connotations and involves the capture of state power. Thus, striving for revolution is not a matter of choice or luxury, Maududi argues that it is an existential question for the ummah. Is all this enough to argue that Maududi's thoughts breed fundamentalism and terrorism? Does he actually advocate/justify violence? Does he aspire for a fascist state? In a global context where the notion of Islamic State and the so called Islamic Terrorism is gaining wide currency, this paper would try to engage in a meaningful debate with Maududi on the themes of violence and revolution from theoretical perspective.

Introduction

The aim of Islam is to bring about a universal revolution.¹ (Abul A'la Maududi)

Revolution has meant different things in different ages (see Therborn 2008). Revolution still means different things in

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¹ See Jihad fi sabilillah, 1970
different minds (see Kotowski 1984). I have discussed elsewhere the origin, usage, meanings and the numerous connotations of the word.² For the subject matter at hand it suffices to mention that scholars like Crane Brinton (1938), Peter Amann (1962), James C. Davies (1962), Peter Calvert (1970), and Charles Tilly (1978) define revolution simply as the displacement of one set of power-holders by another. While there are other scholars like C. B. Macpherson (1966), Samuel P. Huntington (1968), Eugene Kamenka (1970), Theda Skocpol (1979), and Asef Bayat (2008) who assert that revolution is more than mere regime collapse or destruction. For them it also involves basic transformations of a society’s political, social, economic, and ideological structures. To sum up in the words of Eric Selbin revolutions are the conscious effort by a broad-based, popularly mobilized group of actors, formal or informal, to profoundly transform the social, political, and economic institutions which dominate their lives; the goal is the fundamental transformation of the material and ideological conditions of their everyday lives. This reflects a process of origination and subsequent struggle, and an outcome, the effort at fundamental transformation. When both elements are realized, we are more likely to consider them “great” or “social” revolutions; lesser degrees of success are often labeled political revolutions, rebellions, revolts, resistance, or other types of collective action. (2008: 131)

Violence³ is infliction of physical harm (Sheldon 2001).

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2. For details see: Khan, Yasir. “Revolution: Past, Present and Prospects” in Role of Ideologies in the Making & Unmaking of Social Revolutions (M. Phil Thesis, Dept of Political Science, University of Delhi, 2013.)

3. The term “violence” too has several connotations and components. Scholars like Johan Galtung argue for a much broader concept of violence that takes account of structural violence or violence of omission that roughly includes everything that hinders individuals from developing their capabilities and dispositions.
This infliction of physical harm can be an individual act such as killing, injuring, terrorising, and torturing living beings. It can also be collective (or 'political' to be more precise) such as armed warfare, rebellion, rioting, assassination, executions, and torture. Roger Scruton (2007) argues that it is generally presumed that an act of violence needs justification. Without a justification an act of violence is always a violation, let's say, of rights.

Political thinkers have either rejected violence per se like Leo Tolstoy, M. K. Gandhi and Martin Luther King or have accepted/glorified it like Georges Sorel, Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler, and Frantz Fanon etc. Those who accept/glorify (and both things are different) tend to look at violence as means towards an end. For example, classical Marxists insist that a violent political revolution is indispensable in order to establish a classless and stateless society. They justify this violence by the rationale that existing societies are already simmering with every kind of violence.

Before proceeding to the core theme of discussing Maududi on the themes of violence and revolution let's deduce from the discussion above that for the purposes of this paper by “violence” we mean bloodshed and coercion and by “revolution” we mean fundamental changes in society's political, social, economic, and ideological structures. For the sake of brevity and significance we will try to discuss both the terms in relation to each other. The core question that emerges after linking both the terms together can be framed in the following words: is violence justified in order to bring revolution?

Maulana Syed Abul A'la Maududi, the founder of Jama'at e Islami, is also regarded as founder of modern Islamism.⁴ Beginning his career as a 17-year-old editor and

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journalist in leading Urdu newspapers of the British India, his theoretical contributions to the discourse of Islamism are tremendous. His lucid language, compelling style, apt analogies, and tirade against anything that he deems un-Islamic are highlights of his work that extend to hundreds of manuscripts. Islamisation of knowledge⁵ is the focus of his writings. He wrote extensively on the modern themes of politics,⁶ history,⁷ economics,⁸ society,⁹ ethics¹⁰ and many other subjects and opined that in all these matters and issues, Islamic guidelines are the best and that it is the job of Muslims to present the message of Islam in contemporary scholarly language.¹¹ This job he did throughout his career as a writer. What distinguished him from other writers however was his practical initiative for – what he referred to as the very purpose of the existence of ummah¹²– the establishment of deen.¹³ He founded Jama'at e Islami for this purpose.

5. The term was not coined by him; it was coined later by Ismail Raji al Farooqi
6. Musalman aur majjoda siyasi kahsmakash (Muslims and current politicalstrtolower) 3 volumes (Lahore: Islamic Publications, NA); Islami riyasat (Islamic State) (New Delhi: Fareed Book Depot, 2004); Mas'la e Qaumiyat (The problem of nationalism) (New Delhi: MMI Publishers, 2001); Quran ki siyasi ta'limat (Political teachings of Quran) (New Delhi: MMI Publishers, NA) etc.
7. Khilafat o Mulukiyat (Caliphate and monarchy) (Lahore: Idara e Tarjumanul Quran, NA); Tajdid o Ahyaa e deen (Revivalist movements in Islam) (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1999) etc.
10. Falsafa e Ikhlaq (Philosophy of ethics) (New Delhi: MMI Publishers, NA) etc.
Islam, for Maududi, is deen and not merely a traditional religion or a set of rituals. It is a way of life, a code of conduct, and an ideology.¹⁴ Maududi explores the word deen in Arabic and argues that the vastness of the word is “unmatched in any other language of the world”. However to give a sense of its meaning he says, “Today, to some extent, the word 'state' explains the concept but even this word requires much development to connote what all is connoted by deen”.¹⁵ According to Maududi, Islam is a set of principles¹⁶ and not what Muslims do. Ideally speaking, Muslims are an ummah and they cannot be divided in terms of caste, class, language or even nation. All other identities of a Muslim are subservient to their Islamic identity. Muslims, by their virtue, are a missionary community and their mission is not just to propagate Islam but to 'establish' the same (iqamat e deen).

11. This trend of presenting Islam in the language of modern world does not begin with Maududi. While the person cannot be pinpointed, this tradition can be said to begin with Jamaluddin Afghani and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and was taken forward by Shibli Nomani and Suleman Nadwi in India. But Maududi did this job remarkably. He was perhaps the first among his likes who read voluminous English books by and on Marx, Hegel, Darwin and others before criticising them from an Islamic point of view. His services as a writer in defence of Islam earned him the coveted title Mutakallim e Islam (The defender of Islam) from his contemporary scholars.

12. The global community of the faithful

13. For a better exposition of the term Sadruddin Islahi’s Fareeza e iqamat e deen (The obligation of establishment of deen) (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2000) is the best guide.

14. It is repeatedly asserted throughout Maududian literature that Islam is deen and not mere a religion or a set of rituals. So powerfully this notion was advocated that its echo resounds throughout the world. Even those ulema who were disillusioned with Maududi and his Jama’at e Islami were forced to articulate their discourse in this manner for e.g. Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi and Maulana Manzoor Nomani.

15. For details see his book Quran ki chaar bunyaadi istilaahen (Four core terminologies of Quran)

16. Explained in Quran and sunnah and legislations based on these primary sources
History, for Maududi, is a struggle between the forces of Islam and jahilliya. Maududi insists on the establishment of divine rule on earth (iqamat e deen) and presents the same as the universal solution of every problem, as “The root of every trouble and source of every mischief in this world is god-ship (khudai) of man over man.” This establishment of deen, that has obvious political connotations involving the capture of state power, though Maududi insists, through peaceful means, is not an option but an obligation on the Muslim ummah. The struggle of iqamat e deen is vital for their very existence. He argues, “The people who live under a state, they may not believe in its ideological foundations, but they had to, willingly or unwillingly, renounce 90 percent of their beliefs and ways and live according to the beliefs and ways of their state. In the remaining 10 percent too, the grip of their beliefs and ways withers away day by day”. Hence, striving for revolution is not a matter of choice or luxury, it is an existential question. Maududi articulates that if a Muslim “...is true in his belief and does not want to live against his beliefs, he has no choice but to step ahead and strive to conquer the coercive power [i.e. state] that shapes a social system and maintains it”.

(ISlami riyasat: 68)

How would deen be established? How the change in political, social, economic, and ideological structures are to be achieved? Should an underground resistance movement be organised in opposition of current power wielders? The answer is a flat “No” as far as Maududi is concerned. He is so

17. It is noteworthy that contrary to popular belief, Islam does not begin in 6th century AD with the advent of Muhammad, though he is the last and most important prophet of Islam. This struggle begins with Adam and Satan. According to the Islamic belief Adam was the first human being and also the first prophet.

18. Literally darkness, implying ignorance. The term covers any aberration from Islam be it pagan, modern or post-modern.

cautious in this regard that in one of his articles entitled “Reconstruction of Millat: The Right Course”²⁰ (1934) he actually seems to refute revolution. He argues,

Reform and revolution, both aim at averting deterioration. But the motivation and modus operandi are fundamentally different in both cases. Reform begins with thinking and contemplation. One examines the situation with a cool mind, ponders over causes of deterioration, tries to assess its extent and explores ways and means for its removal. He uses brute force for this purpose only as much as is unavoidable. As against this, revolution starts with reaction and revenge and with rage and fury. Evil and excess is countered with a bigger evil and excess destroying not only the evils and excesses but also the good and the fair. No doubt, often a reformer too has to do what a revolutionary does. Both start with operating upon the society to remove the evil. The reformer confines his operations exclusively to the evil marked by him beforehand and to the extent quite necessary in the interest of the society, and he readily provides succour to the sufferer. But the revolutionist operates blindly in revenge and retaliation removing not only the affected portion but also the healthy one. When the revolutionaries prevail they destroy everything conservative, may it be good or bad, right or wrong. If they realise their mistake at all, it is too late and the damage is already extensively done.

Would it be wrong to conclude from the passage above that Maududi is actually against revolution? Yes, because what Maududi is opposing is unjustifiable violence and coercion. In other words Maududi is all for an 'enduring revolution' (pa'edaar inquilab). In a speech that Maududi delivered on March 16, 1968 he said, “The way through

which we would like to bring Islamic system is the way of public opinion implying that we go ahead through awakening and levelling of public opinion in favour of Islam. Our way is not the way of violence and conspiracy. This stand of ours is well-thought-out. An enduring revolution comes naturally and gradually, this is the reason for our support of democracy.”

This procedure and progression from the status quo to the Islamic State is elaborated in detail in his paper entitled 'Islami Hukumat kaise qayam hoti hai?' (Translated as: Process of Islamic revolution) which he presented in Aligarh Muslim University's Strachey Hall, on 12th September 1940 on the invitation of Anjuman e Islami Tarikh o tamuddan.

1940s was a period of political turmoil in the Indian subcontinent. The movement for freedom was gaining momentum and with it the schism between Muslim League and Indian National Congress was widening. It was a period of newer and newer political alternatives and fewer and fewer roads to consensus. Multiple plans and schemes were suggested, debated and then rejected. It is noteworthy that Maududi was not in favour of Pakistan.

In the beginning of the paper, Maududi traces the reasons for his choice of the topic. He specifies in the very beginning that he intends to elaborate the 'process' whereby the Islamic State could 'naturally' be formed. The need for this elaboration is acute for him as the term 'Islamic State' was widely in vogue and had become according to him, “a child's plaything”. He points out that everyone wants to reach this goal but no one has a clear understanding of it. So strange means are suggested for reaching this goal by which attaining the goal is as impossible as “reaching America in a

21. Literally: How Islamic State comes into being?
22. but when it became a reality he chose to migrate
23. For Maududi: “Social revolution must precede political revolution”. (Islami riyasat: 723)
motor car”. The reason for this is what Maududi terms as, “loose thinking”. That is, for some or other historical reasons there is a craving for something called 'Islamic State' but “no attempt has been made either to define the nature of this state in a scientific manner or to study the process of its evolution.”²⁴

Maududi argues that the state is not a makeshift structure or something artificial that can be produced at one place and exported and installed at another. “It is rather” he says “a natural product of the interplay of certain moral, psychological, cultural and historical factors pre-existing; certain prerequisites must be fulfilled, certain social forces created and some natural requirements satisfied before it can come into being by the pressure of events”. Like a chemical that is formed only by the exact combination of ingredients and after a precise process, Maududi argues, “...it is an undeniable fact that in sociology a state is merely the natural consequence of those circumstances which pre-exist in a particular society”. It cannot happen, as Maududi eloquently puts it, that “a lemon seed may be sown and a tree bearing mangoes may grow out of it”.

However Maududi is quick to comment that he is not invoking the doctrine of 'determinism' here. He then says,

There is no doubt that in determining the nature of a state the will and actions of individuals and communities play a very great part. What I am driving at is that whatever the nature of the state-system that is desired to be created, it is indispensable to adopt and choose such means as fit in with the nature and spirit of the desired system and then to hit upon the appropriate course of action leading towards it.

Hence he argues that for a certain kind of state it is

²⁴ All the quotations of Maududi presented here are from Process of Islamic revolution unless specified otherwise.
essential that a particular type of movement should grow up with right kind of communal morality and spirit. The right kind of workers and leaders should be trained and such collective action should be taken as leading towards this end. If these necessary forces operate for a considerable period of time then only can a particular system of state be created, however adverse the circumstance and however staunch the opposition. This he links to and compares with the natural growth of a tree.

After establishing these premises he explains painstakingly the nature of an Islamic State. The Islamic State, for him, is distinct from nationalism and its influences. He says,

It is a state built exclusively on principles. I should call it an ideological state. A state having its foundations in certain recognized moral principles and free from all idea of nationality or race is one of which the world has never tasted but once,²⁵ and to the advantages of which it is insensible even to this day.

He briefly discusses the failure of Christianity, French Revolution and Communist Revolution in organising society on the principles and not on the basis of nationality.²⁶ All of them succumbed to one or the other nationalistic influences. And hence,

Islam is the only creed in the world which seeks to organize the state on the basis of an ideology free from all traces of nationalism and invites mankind to form a non-national state by accepting its ideological system.

²⁵. He is referring to the Islamic State established in Medina under Prophet Muhammad.

²⁶. For Maududi nationality is an exclusive attribute and depends on the accident of birth as distinct from rational choice made by a human being. Humans should be organized, as the argument goes, on the basis of their thoughts, principles and ideologies and not on the basis of their respective places of birth.
Here he took a few pot-shots at western educated Muslims who are not able to conceive and understand these Islamic ideals. Maududi complains that they only utter the word Islamic State but never quite understand its 'unique nature'. Influenced thoroughly by the rhetoric of nation-states, when they propose a model of Islamic State, it is nothing but the same nation-state albeit in disguise. The means they propose for attaining such a state are the same as ever, that is: unity of the nation, infusing national consciousness and spirit, central authority, strong national militia, demand for separate state (wherever majority) and demand for safeguarding of rights (wherever minority) etc. All this is contradictory to the ideals of an ideological state as, “The very basis of an ideological state is that we dismiss all questions of tribes, classes, and nobilities and look upon men as moral and spiritual beings”. Not a man's nationality but his humanity is a matter of concern. Islam sets forth some principles and “Anyone who accepts those principles is entitled to an equal share in the conduct of the state system built on them”.

Divine sovereignty is the core principle on which the foundations of an Islamic State is laid. Maududi argues, “Its fundamental theory is that the earth and all that it contains belongs to God, who alone is its Sovereign. No individual, family, class or nation and not even the whole of humanity can lay claim to sovereignty, either partially or wholly, God alone has the right to legislate and give commands”. Then what is a state for? Maududi answers, “The state, according to Islam, is nothing more than a combination of men working together as servants of God to carry out His will and purpose”.

Running this unique system requires, what he calls, “special type of individuals”. Maududi at his rhetorical best argues that leader and personnel trained according to the secular system are useless in an Islamic system. For him
every system is ideological. And every system trains people in order to serve a particular ideology. Even the scope of criticism that a system offers, is bound by its ideological constraints. Maududi argues,

The ordinary judges or even Chief Justices of the secular courts are not fit to work as clerks, or even peons in its [i.e. Islamic] judicial system... generals and marshals not fit to be recruited as ordinary soldiers. The foreign ministers of the secular states, not to say of their fitness for any office under the Islamic State system, will perhaps not escape imprisonment in that system for their lying, fraud and dishonesty. In short, all those persons who have been trained for running the affairs of secular states and whose moral and mental training has been undertaken in the spirit which permeates every activity of the secular state are totally unfit for an Islamic State.

From here he went on describing the characteristics of the workers for the Islamic revolution. He includes those who...

- have fear of God in their hearts
- have a sense of responsibility towards God
- prefer the next world over the present one
- consider moral gain or loss much more important than worldly success or failure
- are influenced not by personal or national motives but struggle to attain divine pleasure
- are not slaves of their avarice or sensual pleasures
- are free of narrow-mindedness and prejudices
- cannot be corrupted by wealth and power

In short, what Maududi terms as “materialistic” and “utilitarian mentality”, cannot lead to an Islamic revolution. Maududi explains the natural process of an Islamic
revolution as follows:

As I have pointed out in the beginning, the ideological, moral and cultural conditions existing in all society, bring forth by their interplay the type of state suited to them. It is not possible that a tree may shape as a lemon from its rudimentary stages right up to the stage of its completion but when it reaches the stage of fruition it should all of a sudden begin producing mangoes. The Islamic State does not start into being all of a sudden like a miracle; it is inevitable for its creation that in the beginning there should grow up a movement having for its basis that view of life, that ideal of existence, that standard of morality, and that character and spirit which is in keeping with the fundamentals of Islam. Its leaders and workers should be men who are psychologically and spiritually fit to accept that particular mould of character. They should then, by their ceaseless efforts, create the same mental attitude and moral spirit in their society, and on the basis of the moral and intellectual tendencies, so created, there should rise up a system of education to train and mould the masses in the Islamic pattern of life; the system should produce Muslim scientists, Muslim philosophers, Muslim historians, Muslim economists and financial experts, Muslim jurists and politicians; in short in every branch of knowledge there should be men who have imbibed the Islamic ideology and are imbued deeply with its spirit, men who have the ability to build a complete system of thought and of practical life based on Islamic principles and who have strength enough to challenge effectively intellectual leadership of the present Godless thinkers and scientists. With such an intellectual background the movement should take the field against the wrong system of life which is found all around us over the wide world. In this struggle its torch-bearers should furnish proof of their moral strength and of their sincerity by facing adversities, braving dangers and by offering
sacrifices in money and lives. They must go through all forms of trials and emerge like pure gold which everyone may declare unalloyed after having it tested. During their struggle they should, by word and deed, exemplify in their conduct and bearing that particular ideology which they claim to represent and, in everything they say or do, it should be apparent to everyone who comes into contact with them that the ideological state to which these selfless, truthful and God-fearing men of pure character and sacrificing spirit are inviting the world must certainly be a guarantee of social justice and world peace. By means of such a struggle all those elements in society, whose nature is not entirely devoid of truth and justice, will become attracted to the movement. The influence of people with a low mentality and of those who resort to mean tricks, will dislike to a palpable degree in the face of a lofty movement like this. A revolution will take place in the mentality of the masses and the collective life of humanity will cry out for a state-system like this, so that after a time it will become impossible in the changed society of the day for any other system of life to maintain its existence. Ultimately as an inevitable and natural consequence, that particular state-system will be set up for which the ground has been prepared in this manner and as soon as this system is set up, office-bearers from the lowest officials right up to ministers and administrators of every rank and status will be available for running it owing to the outturn of that particular system of education and training which I have mentioned above. (Italics mine)

Maududi reiterates his critique of nationalistic methods²⁷ pursued in the name of Islam and Islamic State.

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²⁷. It will be noteworthy that he was talking in the context of two-nation theory whose cause was aspired by the Muslim League led by Jinnah. This was precisely a 'nationalistic' organisation of 'western' educated people working for the welfare of Muslim 'nation'.
He argues at more than one place that Muslims are not a nation (Qaum) in the ordinary sense of the word.²⁸ If indeed they are a nation then surely the nationalistic leader “whether he is Moonje or Savarkar, Hitler or Mussolini” is right in employing all the nationalistic means available for the welfare of the nation concerned. And under such leadership the 'Muslim nation' should strive to get a separate national state or their fair share in the government, depending on their strength. But if Muslims are not a nation in ordinary sense of the term, and for Maududi they are not, then applying nationalistic means for establishment of an Islamic State and upbringings of an Islamic revolution is suicidal.

Maududi counters two common objections raised by an imaginary interlocutor. First, that Muslim awakening and national consciousness among them is necessary and Islamic spirit and ideological distinction may later follow. And the second objection (an outgrowth of the first one) that a Nation-State of Muslims should be first formed, which may be secular or of any other kind, and then through long-term process such a state would be converted into a pure Islamic State. The line of argument in both objections is that the practical “first step” should be taken first and ideological purity may wait. But Maududi strongly rejects any such 'personal or national expediency'. For him this is not “first step” but a “reverse step”. He is against any artificiality in the revolution and considers if any such thing did happen to be a “miracle”. Revolution for him should always be natural. “...the form of organization of a state has deep roots in social life. Until there is a change in the social fabric, no permanent change can be produced by artificial means in any system of government”.

²⁸. In Mas'la e Quamiyat (The problem of nationalism) Maududi states, “The word that Quran uses for the Muslims is 'hizb'; hizb means party. Nations are formed on the basis of race and parties on the basis of ideologies”. (p. 161)
He turns the pages of Islamic history to legitimize his theory. He argues that the only concrete example that we can have of a complete social revolution, i.e. of a complete overhaul in the social, political, economic, cultural, ideological, and spiritual structure of the society, is Arabia of the 7th century.²⁹ Maududi points out that the Prophet's age was replete with problems; problems whose parallels we can find in every society, even in today's world. There were two rival imperialisms of Rome and Persia; the social life of Arabia was based on class conflict and economic exploitation; ignorance, moral degradation, economic chaos, internecine wars etc was order of the day. Facing these and many such problems that are multidimensional in nature – prophet only proclaimed that there is no god but Allah³⁰ and invited people towards the same.

What Maududi raises here is fairly important and very succinct appraisal of the prophetic work in Arabia. Maududi argued that prophet's early 'disregard' for the surrounding problems, was not because of unconcern or indifference, but because what prophet did was the only sure way of exterminating all the problems from the root and introducing a permanent solution. The Prophet did turn his attention to every problem mentioned above and solved it but only later at the appropriate moment. His proclamation, in itself, was a call for revolution.³¹

Maududi painstakingly explains how the Prophet and the handful of people who believed in him were persecuted

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29. Invoking Prophet and legitimising oneself by quoting Seerah (life) of the prophet has the same effect as quoting verses of Quran or Prophet's sayings (i.e. hadith). It legitimises the argument as far as Muslims are concerned and makes it invincible unless, of course, the interpretation can be showed to be misplaced.
30. La ilaha il'lal'lah Muhammadur Rasoolul'lah (There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger) is the kalma of Muslims. Believing in this kalma and its proclamation is necessary in order to become a Muslim.
31. Maududi uses the word Dawat e Inquilab.
in Makkah. They were not persecuted for their clan or economic status as believers came from all quarters of Makkah: among them were wealthy and poor, native and foreign, blacks and fair-skinned, slaves and merchants. They were persecuted only for their 'ideology' and 'beliefs'. This persecution for thirteen long years is regarded by Maududi as a 'reformation' and 'training' process. Without this 'rigorous training' of the core group of people – who believe in a certain ideology and dream of certain ideals – no revolution is possible. The handful of people who were horrendously persecuted and were forced to leave Makkah and migrate to save their lives, founded an Islamic State in Medina after migration. The rest is history.

This was the natural process of revolution then, and for Maududi, this remains the natural process of revolution everywhere. Without such 'training' of an ideologically sound core group\textsuperscript{32} no revolution is possible. And without it, even if some kind of mutiny is there, the post-revolutionary order would soon degenerate to the pre-revolutionary order. Maududi thunders,

I assure you that, even if you are presented, as a free gift, a particular piece of territory to rule over, you will not be able, as things go now, to administer it according to Islamic principles even for a single day. You have made no preparations to train or educate people imbued with the moral spirit and possessed of the intellectual attitude which is necessary for running an Islamic State, its police, law courts, army, revenue, and its financial, educational and foreign policy.

Thus Maududi argues that revolution is not spontaneous. Revolution in a society materialises only when:

\begin{itemize}
  \item the entire pre-revolutionary order, its ways and ideology become obsolete and redundant in the
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{32} In Marxist terminology, Vanguard.
eyes of the population and hence can no longer be sustained.

- social and political environment and collective conscience are ripe for change.
- an alternative ideology starts gaining wider acceptance and its persecution only makes it more popular, and evokes sympathy for those persecuted amongst the masses.

The post-revolutionary order, Maududi argues, depends on the background of the revolutionary struggle and the ideals cherished therein – the aims and objectives put forth by the leader, the future vision and dreams shown by him, the efforts of workers and collective conscience of the populace etc. All this determines the post-revolutionary structure of society. One should not be mistaken that what Maududi provided was just the blueprint of an Islamic revolution. He was talking of the Islamic variant of revolution but was convinced that any revolution is born and brought up by its ideological fathers. He asserted categorically,

The French Revolution needed that particular kind of moral and mental basis which leaders like Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu had prepared. The Russian Revolution could only be brought about by the ideas of Marx, the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, and thousands of other communist workers whose lives were cast in the communist mould. The Nationalist-Socialism of Germany could only take root in those particular moral, psychological and cultural conditions which had been created by theories of leaders of thought like Hegel, Fichte, Goethe, Nietzsche, and many others including Hitler.

If this 'natural process' is avoided and 'nationalistic means' are employed to bring about an Islamic revolution, then for Maududi, it is mere a “wishful thinking”. ³³

³³ Khaam Khyali in Urdu
Maududi’s assessment which came six to seven years before partition seems insightful especially if the trajectory of Pakistan for the last six to seven decades is kept in mind.

I would like to conclude this paper with a quote from one of Maududi’s speeches. On 10 May 1963 Maududi delivered a speech in Masjid Dehlavi, Makkah. He was invited to speak on the programme of action for Islamic movements in the world. The addressees were primarily youths of Arab. In his speech he suggested several strategies and concluded in the following manner,

My last advice to the workers of the Islamic movements is that they should refrain from running underground movements or bring Islamic revolution through arms. This is in fact a kind of impatience and hastiness and in terms of results more detrimental than the rest. A true revolution always comes through popular movement. Spread your Dawah openly, reform the minds and thoughts of the people. Change their views. Conquer the hearts through moral weapons. And in this endeavour whatever dangers and tribulations befell, face them manly. The revolution that comes in this gradual way will be so strong and enduring that storms of hostile forces would not be able to obliterate it. Even if a revolution is brought in haste through artificial means then it will destroyed the same way through which it was brought in the first place. (1964: 362-3)

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“How can we say that there is peace when thousands are made to work in dehumanizing conditions? How can we say that there is peace when we build more prisons and fewer schools? How can we say that there is peace when so many go hungry? Today I challenge you to think about peace in a new way. When we demand peace, it must not only be a peace of national security ... It must also be a peace of human security, one concerned with the welfare and health of humanity.”³⁴

Introduction

On 23rd May 2015 in El Salvador, thousands of people gathered to honour the memory of a great man who died 35 years ago, viz. Archbishop Oscar Romero. That was the beatification³⁵ day of Romero who was shot dead while celebrating Holy Mass in the small chapel of the cancer hospital where he lived. He was a traditionalist priest, who maintained the status quo of the church-state/society relationship. He was inspired by his friend, Rutilio Grande, a Jesuit priest, who was already actively engaged in the liberation struggle of the people of El Salvador. The assassination of Grande was the antecedent of his own death as he too took keen interest in the plight of the people. He became the voice of Salvadorians till his death. Before, during and after his death, there was ceaseless conflict in El Salvador. In fact it was aggravated as more and more people
realised that they were being oppressed. On 21 December 2010, in Romero's memory the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 24 March (day of his death) as the 'International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims'. (http://www.un.org/en/events/righttotruthday accessed on 25.05.15).

This leads us to a lot of introspective questions on the nature of the struggle and consequent lack of peace in that land. What was the role of the Church and how did Archbishop Romero, as a religious leader, handle it? Why did the Church involve itself with the struggles of the people and what inspired it? What was the nature of peace there or how was the government trying to create peace? Can there be peace without justice? Can justice lead to lasting peace? If justice leads to further confrontation, how can reconciliation fill that gap and help in building lasting peace? How did religion and, in this context, Christianity play a role in bringing about a just and peaceful society through reconciliation?

As we grapple with these questions, the Salvadorian context, juxtaposed with the South African Truth and Reconciliation commission, gives us an excellent opportunity to grasp the Christian way of understanding peacebuilding as 'reconciliation and justice as peace'. Though the issue of peace and peacebuilding is addressed in all religions, here I would like to restrict myself only to Christianity with special reference to the Bible and the encyclical³⁶ of the Catholic Church.

**Meaning of peace and its relation to Religion**

Peace, literally speaking, is the absence of war or other hostilities or freedom from quarrels and disagreements. It also speaks of harmonious relation; public security and

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³⁶. A papal letter sent to all the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church.
order; inner contentment; serenity.³⁷

All religions have the concept of peace and prayers for peace in their scriptures; they preach peace, focusing on the goodness in society. Therefore they ought to involve themselves in peacebuilding process and develop structures to protect it. Religion, thus, tries to give hopes of maintaining peace.

However, when religion moves away from true faith, to become an ideology or a political tool, this basic 'oughtness' of a religion disappears and religion itself becomes an instrument that creates strife. It is an accepted point by great thinkers that religion has been, at different points in history, both advantageous and ruinous to the promotion of peace.³⁸ There is an old Persian maxim, “religion is like a candle that can illuminate one's cottage; it can also set it on fire: the choice is one's own, what use is made of it”.³⁹ We have seen this `candle' becoming a destructive fire almost in all the religions throughout history.

We vividly see this happening even today in the countries of the Middle East. That is why Salman Rushdie once said, “The simple truth is that whenever religion gets into society's driving seat, tyranny results.” (The Guardian, March 18, 2005)⁴⁰ Looking at history, or even the present context, we see religion proving to be the driving force for strife. However, religion and peacebuilding looks beyond headlines concerning violence perpetrated in the name of religion, to examine how world religions have also inspired social welfare and peacemaking activism.⁴¹ Therefore one

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40. Ibid.
cannot ignore the role religion has played in peacebuilding throughout history. Religion has been an impetus and inspiration for peacebuilding creating a just society.

**Christianity and Peacebuilding**

Is peace merely the absence of any kind of strife or war, as given in the dictionary definition? If absence of strife or war were to constitute peace, then most societies, including even the most subjugated, suppressed ones could be called peaceful societies. For example, in a patriarchal society a submissive woman may not create much strife in the family, but it will always be at the cost of a woman's fundamental rights. Similarly in a caste-ridden society, there will be peace and tranquillity as long as the lower castes are submissive and obedient to the higher. But isn't it at the expense of the large number of people who do not have a right to claim equality? This could be applied to widows, minorities, children or anyone who is weak and disadvantaged. This kind of peace is peace at a great 'cost'. Therefore David Trimble, a Nobel laureate, says “Peace is not the absence of war. Lasting peace is rooted in justice.”

Christianity too, like other religions, has its ups and downs in peacebuilding. Jesus' reference to peace is abundant throughout the New Testament and this reflects Jesus' basic outlook on life and society. At the announcement of Christ's birth itself the angels seem to have sung: “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased” (Lk 2, 14). The same is reflected in the life of Jesus. Right at the beginning of his ministry he speaks of the year of the Lord's favour (Lk, 4, 16), which is reflected in whole his life and activity where he gives a lot of importance to love, forgiveness – even to the enemy – and reconciliation. One of the powerful depictions of this forgiveness is found in the dying Jesus, who is reported to

have said about those who were crucifying him, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Lk 23; 24).

**Biblical Notion of peace**

The normal definition of peace would be absence of civil disturbance or hostilities, or freedom from internal and external strife. However the biblical concept of peace is wider than that, and rests heavily on the Hebrew root slm, (shalom) which means "to be complete" or "to be sound." The verb conveys both a dynamic and a static meaning: "to be complete or whole" or "to live well."\(^{43}\)

The noun has many nuances, but they can be grouped into four categories:

- shalom as wholeness of life or body (i.e., health);
- shalom as right relationship or harmony between two parties or people, often established by a covenant and, when related to God (whom they referred to as Yahweh), the covenant was renewed or maintained with a "peace offering";
- shalom as prosperity, success, or fulfillment (Lev 26:3-9); and
- shalom as victory over one's enemies or absence of war.
  - Shalom was used in both greetings and farewells."\(^{44}\)

**Biblical references exhorting peace:**

The Holy Bible contains many sources for religious peace building which gives us an insight into the process of peace building.

- The Priestly Blessing in Numbers ends with the words: "May God lift up his face onto you and give you peace" (Num 6:24–26).

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44. Ibid.
• The Psalms, one of the single biggest collections of prayer songs in the Bible, contain several references to peace. “The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked, those who love violence, he hates with a passion” (Ps 11,5) Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. (Ps. 34,14)

• Isaiah, one of the Major Prophets, has the following often quoted passages concerning peace: “They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.” (Is 2:4, Mic 4:3) and he continues the same saying “The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them...They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Is 11:6-9).

One must acknowledge that in the Old Testament there are also a lot of instances of war and retaliation, and often in the name of God. The real wars in which Yahweh himself is involved are those that usher in justice, welfare, liberation - in a word, shalom. However, it is of a great importance to see how King David was forbidden to build the temple for God and thus was deprived of that honour for the sole reason that his hands were bloodstained hands, ‘You have shed much blood and have fought many wars. You are not to build a house for my Name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in my sight.” (1 Ch 22:8).

Similarly in the New Testament which was written after the death of Jesus which contains the teachings of Jesus directly in the Gospels and through the disciples, in the

Epistles. They are often quoted to help the peace building process. Some of the quotes are given below:

- "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." (Mt. 5:9)
- "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also". (Mt. 5:38-39)
- "As far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." (Rom. 12:18)
- Similarly we see the practical aspect of love in the letter of John; he says, “Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen (1Jn, 4, 20).

In this context the definition of peace in Christianity has moved from its simplistic understanding as absence of strife to a comprehensive understanding of it. And therefore justice and rights are integral aspects of lasting and liberating peace, and one of the Christian ways of achieving it is through reconciliation.

**History of peace building in Christian tradition**

Throughout history Christians have struggled to understand how best to follow Jesus' peace message, especially in a world in which violence and injustice are constant features. Some have created regimes that included and justified the use of force; others have felt that violence is always wrong, and that Christians should be mindful of Jesus'
words to Peter at the time of his arrest in Gethsemane: “Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword,”⁴⁶ (Mt 26:52)

In the first 2 centuries of the Christian era, Christianity spread like wild fire, even though there was no political patronage to it. It was a new kind of philosophy, when there was so much of moral degradation in the Roman society. The first Christian centuries were a time of growth and martyrdom. The models within the Christian community in this period were nonviolent and based on a Christ-like witness of the faith by believers who preferred to die rather than respond violently, as in the case of Stephen's martyrdom.⁴⁷

Consequently some Christians feel that it is inconsistent with their religious principle to kill, or even to bear arms or serve in the military. Christian pacifism has been a significant element in the Christian tradition, even though it often met with persecution. Even though some Christians have found reassurance that strong military and political power could ensure order with the use of threat or force, others have consistently held on to the gospel message of “non-resistance to evil.” (Mt 5, 9) While some enthusiastically promoted the crusades, others like St Francis of Assisi, peacefully found ways to enter into dialogue with Muslims.⁴⁸ Similarly several Church Fathers interpreted Jesus' teachings as advocating nonviolence. Some even declined to join or discouraged others to join the military service.

In the last few centuries there have been a lot of church denominations that would solely identify themselves as Peace Churches. The concept evolved around it is called Christian pacifism. Christian pacifism is the theological and ethical position that any form of violence is incompatible

⁴⁶. Andrea Bartoli 153.
⁴⁷. Ibid.
⁴⁸. Andrea Bartoli 156.
with the Christian faith. Christian pacifists state that Jesus himself was a pacifist who taught and practiced pacifism, and that his followers must do likewise.⁴⁹

From the beginning of the First World War, Christian pacifist organizations emerged to support Christians in denominations other than the historic peace churches.⁵⁰ The first was the interdenominational Fellowship of Reconciliation ("FoR"), founded in Britain but soon joined by sister organizations in other countries. Pacifist organizations serving specific denominations are more or less closely allied with the FoR: they include the Pax Christi (Roman Catholic), the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, the Methodist Peace Fellowship, and so forth.

**Where has Christianity failed in Peace building?**

Over the past twenty centuries Christianity has done a lot for peace. But one should not ignore that religion cannot be independent of socio-economic, cultural and political factors. So, as we look at the past we also see a lot of scars in the peace building process, some of which are discussed below.

**The Idea of Monotheism and the desire for homogenisation**

The Semitic religions' Divine experience is monotheistic. Though theologically one may say that the Christian experience of the Divine is Trinitarian, we can still put it in the category of Monotheism. Strict monotheism will have lots of social implications. It can justify totalitarianism, it can justify centralised political power in one person, or monopolise the religious experience and its interpretation and theology.

This does away with numerous religious experiences in different places and cultures at different times. Plurality is a

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50. The term historic peace churches refers specifically only to three church groups among pacifist churches—Church of the Brethren; Religious Society of Friends (Quakers); and Mennonites.
natural thing but monotheist religions can subjugate the uniqueness of plurality to maintain the hegemony of the hierarchy claiming to know the absolute truth. Such interpretations are so well intertwined with political interest, that very often religion and its spirit is forgotten.

Very few religions have really integrated themselves in the cultures and traditions of the places where the particular religions later spread, worse still, in Monotheistic religions. Christianity is not an exception to that. This idea of monotheism leads to homogenisation. Over the centuries, we have seen the European cultures dominating the places where Christianity spread. When the Portuguese or the Spaniards or the French, invited people to be part of their religion they also imposed their culture, language, food and dress habits on them, and monotheism thus lead to monoculture. The National Sorry Day\textsuperscript{51} is one of the finest examples of the realisation of the damage that the homogenisation brought by religion coupled with culture and politics.

It is a pity that after the 15th century, the Church was closely connected with the colonial powers, with the hope of propagating the Christian faith, sometimes with real conversion of the person and sometimes by force. In the meantime there have been efforts to homogenise the Christian way of living with the western way of living. Faith was part of the culture of the colonisers as well!

\textbf{Forced Conversion and Inquisition}

It is an undeniable fact that most religions want their respective fold's numbers to increase. For this a lot of proselytising means were used for both political and

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{51} National Sorry Day is an annual event that has been held in Australia on 26 May, since 1998, to remember and commemorate the mistreatment of the country's indigenous population. During the 20th century, the Australian government's policies resulted in a "Stolen Generation"—i.e., "Aboriginal children separated, often forcibly, from their families in the interest of turning them into white Australians".
\end{footnote}
religious gains. Christianity too has its share of forced conversions. First in Europe and later worldwide - specifically in countries colonized by “Christian” Nations – pressures of various kinds were used to convert the colonised people to Christianity. Threats to life, punishment, and harsh treatment were routinely utilised by an alliance of sacred and secular powers. Although in many cases conversions were genuine and freely decided, overwhelming proof exists that the use of force was deemed an acceptable tool to obtain assent. The scars that this procedure left in the collective memory are hard to evaluate.⁵² When we discuss the reconciliation as peacebuilding it is necessary to acknowledge these unpleasant facts.

Pope John Paul II included forced conversions in the list of sins for which Christians should repent and ask forgiveness. He did ask for forgiveness during the Jubilee Year 2000. Here both individual and collective sins committed by Christians were acknowledged and forgiveness was sought. Clearly, it is of central importance for Christian Peacebuilding to continue in the task of acknowledging the discrepancy between the radical and absolute commandment of the Lord Jesus and the actual historical experience of millions of Christians. ⁵³

**RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE AS PEACE; CHRISTIAN PEACEBUILDING IN ACTION**

In the second part of this essay, the focus will be on the practical application of the Christian idea of peace in the encyclicals of the Catholic Church and in the real life incidents of Archbishop Oscar Romero as well as the reconciliation process in Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa.

Biblical peace, as we have seen earlier, is a holistic peace and is not merely absence of strife. Holistic peace is possible

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⁵². Andrea Bartoli 153.
⁵³. Ibid.
when there is respect for human life and dignity, upholding of human and fundamental rights of all sorts with socio-economic and political justice through reconciliation as means to achieve the goal, namely peace.

**Concept of Reconciliation: a Christian Perspective**

In understanding the Christian perspective of reconciliation the idea of Jubilee year is very significant. It is very well brought out both in the New and the Old testaments. Jesus' public service begins with the announcement of the Jubilee year. Reading out a passage from the prophet Isaiah, and acknowledging being anointed by the Spirit, he announces good news to the poor, the release of captives, the recovery of sight by the blind, and freedom for the oppressed. Here Jesus in replicating the words of Isaiah, sets an agenda for his life to passionately proclaim God's justice, where we see four provisions of social justice, namely the release of slaves, restoration of properties to the impoverished, rest to the land, and release or cancellation of the debts of the poor, and he advocates the duty of the people to establish right relationships with God, with one another and with the land. The concept of Jubilee year was intended to break the greed-exploitation spiral through releasing the slaves, restoring the land, cancelling the debt etc with an intention of restoring everything to its original nature. The purpose of Christian concept of reconciliation is to create the 'year of Lord's favour'.

**Cosmotheandric Reconciliation**

Cosmotheandric, a word borrowed from Raimon Panikkar, speaks about the God-Cosmos-human relationship. The Christian reconciliation is of this kind. It is a triple reconciliation: reconciliation with God, with fellow human beings and with nature.

Taking a cue from Jesus' manifesto as expressed in Luke 4,16, we see that Jesus' message of reconciliation was preached both to the people of Israel and to those living
outside its physical and spiritual frontiers: tax collectors, prostitute, sinners, and persons of all kinds who were marginalised and excluded. His ministry of reconciliation with God and with one another knew no boundaries. He spoke to the powerful, challenging them to a change of heart. He showed special love for the sinner, the poor widow, and the lost sheep. The kingdom of God, which he constantly preached, became a vision for a world where all relationships are reconciled in God.⁵⁴ This kind of triple reconciliation is expressed in the following way:

**Reconciliation with God:** it is also called vertical reconciliation. One of the pre-requisites for Peace building is peace within oneself. At least those who follow their religion believe peace can be achieved only through the right relationship with God. What is also important here is to develop a right idea of God, an idea of a God who is himself peace loving!

**Reconciliation with one another:** the second significant kind of reconciliation is a horizontal one where the peace building process is done between humans. In this global world, there are social, economic and political forces that have facilitated the creation of new relationships among people, but there are other forces which have broken the bonds of love and solidarity within the human family. While many poor people have been lifted from poverty, the gap between the rich and the poor within nations and across national boundaries has increased. From the perspective of those living at the margins, globalisation appears to be a massive force that excludes and exploits the weak and the poor, and this intensifies exclusion on the basis of religion, race, caste, and gender.⁵⁵ Transnational interests, unconstrained by national laws and often abetted by corruption, frequently exploit the

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⁵⁵. Ibid., 76-77.
natural resources of the poor.⁵⁶ Therefore to develop a right relationship one needs to see from the perspective of the poor and the marginalised. Here reconciliation demands that we build bridges between the rich and the poor, establishing advocacy links of mutual support between those who hold political power and those who find it difficult to voice their interests.

Lastly, reconciliation with the Cosmos: during the World Day of Peace address in 2010 Pope Benedict XVI spoke about good environmental stewardship. The present pope, Francis, focused his attention on repairing our relationship with the natural world. He also emphasized that environmental destruction is a sin. We have seen in the past how humans have gone away from a good environmental stewardship. So when so much harm has been done, reconciliation with nature is a must.

The Process of reconciliation

It is important for us to understand the process of reconciliation. It could be formulated like this: After an offense is committed, the wrongdoer comes to an awareness of the nature of the offense. The wrongdoer then expresses remorse, and goes to the victim, offering an apology and seeking forgiveness. The victim, after hearing the wrongdoer and judging the person to be genuinely remorseful, extends forgiveness to the person, and then reconciliation between the two takes place.⁵⁷ The basic requirement here is to distinguish the wrongdoer from wrong done. This is an ideal way of personal reconciliation. The process can be similar at a political or communitarian level. What can immediately be expected here is the restoration of relationship, of peace,

⁵⁶. Ibid., 77.
and a return to the condition which was prior to the wrongdoing.

However, whether at a personal level or at the community level reconciliation is not easy. Very often the wrongdoers do not show any remorse, even if they do realise their wrong; there will be umpteen ways to justify or defend it. Sometimes they may even believe they have done nothing wrong or they may be fearful of punishment, humiliation etc.; there can be a host of other reasons as well, like the extent of damage, discouragement from a few in the community, leaders milking some political mileage etc. At the community level there may be a lot of historical reasons for justification and very often the victim is innocent. This can be vividly seen in any of the riots or social conflicts.

**What is Justice in the Bible?**

When one thinks of biblical justice, the first passage that comes to mind is the parable of equal wages (Mt 20:1-16). Here the owner of the vineyard paid the same wage for one who had been working since morning and for the one who came late in the evening. He gave those who did work from morning what was justly agreed upon. He was generous to the one who came last. He did not see how much work was done; rather, his focus was on the need of the worker. This is the kind of justice we see all through the Bible.

In the Bible justice describes God’s moral nature. The word justice (mispat) is often juxtaposed with words like righteousness (tsedeqah), but the meaning of justice (mispat) in Hebrew thought differs from its conception in Greek, which is popular in the Western thinking, according to which justice consists in each person receiving equal due. In the Hebrew vision compassion and mercy are intrinsic to justice. Hence there can be no justice and consequently no shalom until and unless the needs of the poor, the widows, and the orphans are met.  

Therefore God’s justice is focused more on action than on words. Through Isaiah (58:6-7), God says, “‘No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help’” Similar ideas are expressed by Jesus in Matthew 25. In this passage Jesus speaks about the Judgment Day, when Jesus rewards people who saw God in the poor, the naked, the prisoners etc.⁵⁹

It is important to note from the peace building point of view, that behind the biblical idea of justice is the rich concept of shalom or peace. Justice in the biblical sense pervades all aspects of life. Peace can exists only when there is this kind of justice

THE CHURCH ENCYCLICALS WITH REFERENCE TO PEACE AND PEACEBUILDING

Since the time of the release of the encyclical Rerum Novarum in 1891, the Church has made conscious efforts to know the pulse of the people and to respond to it. For our benefit only two Encyclicals, Pacem in Terris and Caritas in Veritate are cited here.

Pacem in Terris (1963)

The central theme of Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth) is peace. Here Pope John XXIII dwells on the 'signs of the time' such as an increasing consciousness of human dignity (number 79), workers' rights (40), women's rights (41), nations becoming free from colonial subjugation (42), constitutional governments (76), issues of fundamental

human rights (75) and the awareness of the whole world as a community (145). In this context he speaks about the need for negotiations and dialogue (126).

The fundamental thesis of the encyclical is that peace will be only an empty-sounding word unless it is based on the order founded on truth, built according to justice, integrated with charity, and put into practice in freedom (167). In developing this thesis, Pope John reminds Christians that Jesus Christ is the author of peace (117), the Prince of Peace (167) who brings us peace and leaves us peace (170), and he reminds everyone that there can be no peace among people unless there is peace within each one of them.⁶⁰

In this encyclical the Pope says that peace is possible only if it is grounded on truth, guided by justice, inspired by love, and refined in freedom (37); or, to put it in another way: its foundation is truth, its measure and objective is justice, its driving force is love, and its method of attainment is freedom (149). The Pope stresses also the importance of human dignity as well as individual and community rights to achieve peace.

Caritas in Veritate (2009)

Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth) is one of the recent encyclicals which comprehensively deals with issues of the people of the world. It is concerned with the problems of global development and progress towards the common good; it states that both Love and Truth are essential elements of an effective response. The encyclical begins with a discussion on how charity and truth are fundamental requirements of our development, both of individuals and of humanity as a whole.

Love is described as an extraordinary force motivating people to strive for the common good: “The more we strive

to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them". The Pope emphasises that while charity is "at the heart of the Church's social doctrine", it must be linked to truth if it is to remain a force for good. Without truth, love can become an "empty shell," to be filled with emotional influences which in the worst case can result in love turning into its opposite. ⁶¹

In chapter five on “the cooperation of the human family,” the Pope speaks of what human development is. He advocates discernment as a necessary tool so that folk can avoid dangerous ideologies and religions that encourage people to cut themselves off from communion with others. He says religion must play a part in political discussion, so there can be a fruitful dialogue between faith and reason. The Pope cautions against keeping God out of human society and fundamentalism, both of which make such dialogue difficult.

Both these encyclicals have a special emphasis on justice and reconciliation as peacebuilding. As in the biblical notion of peace, we see here too, multidimensional causes for losing or restoring peace. Each of the encyclicals speaks about rights, dignity, justice, dialogue etc. as necessary for the common good.

Particularly in the more recent encyclical, there is a special stress on charity or love and he says that Charity goes beyond justice, because to love is to give, to offer what is “mine” to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is “his/hers”, what is due to them by reason of their being or acting. We cannot “give” what is ours to the other, without first giving him/her what pertains to him/her in justice. If we love others with charity, then first of all we will be just towards them. Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, an alternative or parallel path to it, but

it is inseparable from charity, and is intrinsic to it. Justice is the primary way of charity or, in Paul VI’s words, it is “the minimum measure” of it, an integral part of the love “in deed and in truth” (1 Jn 3:18), to which Saint John exhorts us. ⁶²

**Archbishop Oscar Romero (El Salvador)**

“The violence we preach is not the violence of the sword, the violence of hatred. It is the violence of love, of brotherhood, the violence that wills to beat weapons into sickles for work”.

– Oscar Romero, Nov 27, 1977.⁶³

There are countless heroes who tirelessly worked for justice and peace. Oscar Romero was one of them. The basic inspiration for his vigorous involvement in the people's struggles can be traced back to Gaudium et Spes, a document of the Catholic Church, in which emphasis is given to the concept of 'People of God'. This document also addresses justice and peace issues. It says, “The joys and the hopes, the grief and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the grief and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”⁶⁴ The document expressed the terrible divide in our world between the rich and the poor, especially the people who go hungry. It stressed the importance of solidarity, dialogue and engagement with the world in order to transform the world, promoting human dignity, freedom,

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and human rights. The core message of the document was that peace is the fruit of justice.⁶⁵

El Salvador, a tiny Catholic country in Central America, named after Christ the Saviour, with a population of about 4 million, was ruled at the time by a military-led junta. It was a country with terrible economic exploitation, social deprivation and malnutrition – a result of institutionalised injustice. To put it in Romero’s words,

“...faces of landless peasants, mistreated and killed by the forces of power, faces of labourers arbitrarily dismissed and without a living wage for their families, faces of the elderly, faces of outcasts, faces of slum dwellers, faces of poor children who from infancy begin to feel the cruel sting of social injustice. For them, it seems, there is no school, no high school, no university. By what right have we catalogued persons as first-class persons or second-class persons? In the theology of human nature, there is only one class: children of God”.⁶⁶

Killings, torture, disappearances, political imprisonment and forced exile were the order of the day under the military regime. Six priests and dozens of catechists were killed before Romero. He integrated the message of Jesus in his daily life and worked for social justice, non-violent change, peace and reconciliation in society. He was always on the side of poor and oppressed people. He denounced violation of human rights, political violence, the corrupt system of justice and exploitation. His message was clear. No to the killings of the right. No to the violence of the

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left. Yes to political organisation. Yes to the option for the poor. Yes to dialogue. He invited the wealthy groups to a change of heart - sometimes gently; sometimes more sharply.⁶⁷ He spoke the truth fearlessly, prophetically. He did not speak to one group or another. He simply spoke the truth and paid with his life the price for speaking. Following his assassination the war became unstoppable and during twelve years claimed over 70,000 lives. Archbishop Romero's relevance to us and to justice and peace movement around the world is manifold.

To articulate his works and mission in his own words “...We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.”

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission (South Africa)**

Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is”.⁶⁸ Religion influences public sphere in many ways, especially when people are so religiously oriented. Though the themes such as forgiveness, reconciliation and reparation are not usual in political discourse, they could be well made use of in the process of peacebuilding. One of the well-known examples of how religion played its role in communitarian reconciliation and conflict resolution is 'The Truth and Reconciliation Commission' (TRC). TRC was a court-like restorative justice body assembled in South Africa after the abolition of apartheid. In this the witnesses who were identified as victims of gross human rights violations were invited to give statements about their experiences. There was also a provision for the perpetrators of violence to give testimony and request amnesty from both civil and

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67. Julian Filochowski.
68. Mahatma Gandhi Quotes, http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/mahatmagan135298.html#XiES404i4x FOXs95.99
criminal prosecution. Here the survivors would come forward to give testimony about the death of their loved ones under the repression of apartheid, and the suffering they themselves had undergone since.

Religious and political leaders like Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, influenced by the religious concepts of forgiveness and love for neighbour initiated the process of reconciliation to reconstruct the nation without retaliation, bloodshed or civil war, thus allowing a smooth transition into a new nation.

Religious leaders possess a tremendous ability to influence people through moral language that resonates with people's basic values. In South Africa, the call for people to reconcile became a surround-sound campaign, with preachers linking faith with political transition every week and on radio stations across the country. Religious institutions are widespread and provide places for meetings, and their hierarchical structure allows for connecting local people to national and international offices and communication structures. The TRC used churches as meeting places to hold hearings on human rights violations. In many ways Christianity infused the entire TRC process.⁶⁹ The people who testified to this were often poor and without formal education. Nor did they undergo any therapy. It was their faith and religious experience coupled with national ethos and leaders' vision that made this process possible.

**Peace building in the Indian context**

In 1893, Swami Vivekananda defined the greatness of Hindu religion to the world in his model speech at the

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Parliament of World Religions held in Chicago. He said, “I thank you in the name of the mother of religions...I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth”.70 In India diversity is our strength. There is creativity and beauty in diversity. On the other hand uniformity at the cost of diversity is a threat. Homogenising is not a good thing to a vibrant society. Respecting diversity and the identity of each of the segments of society and getting along with it has been the tradition in India.

This diversity has now been challenged. There is an increasing stress on monoculture and homogenisation. There is a rise in religious fundamentalism and communal violence, so much so that it made the U.S. President Barack Obama say, 'India will succeed as long as it is not splintered along religious lines”71 This opinion articulates the fears that an ordinary thinking Indian has whenever he/she sees that the very religion which was born as a means of liberation has become the cause for suffering.

Since the time of independence there have been so many religious and ethnic conflicts in India. This has been a threat to peacebuilding and consequently nation building. Such kind of religious conflicts vulgarizes religion destroying the beauty of Religion. Very often it is influenced by political agenda and invariably the victims are innocent people. In such a context, how can justice and reconciliation help build our nation?

One thing that we can easily harness from the Indian ethos is the ability of Indian people to absorb, accommodate and be at ease with plurality. Having understood the lessons from the life and acts of Romero and TRC, we ask: can justice and reconciliation be used to build up peace, given the spiraling violence in the name of ethnicity and religion? Indeed there is a need for justice in society and reconciliation between the communities.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the process of peacebuilding is complex and interconnected. It is a divine gift as well as human responsibility; it demands justice and at the same time, it is characterised by mercy, compassion and is abounding in love; it denotes conflicts and at the same time makes radical reconciliation its aim. In other words biblical peace does not negate war (or conflict) in an absolute way, but directs it not against any human beings perceived as enemies but against the very forces that make human beings their agents.⁷² The transformation that is brought about in justice and in reconciliation is not just a truce, but rather it has its spill-over effects in all walks of life; this becomes essential in building the nation. In reconciliation the wrongdoer does not disappear from view. Since justice is an important dimension of reconciliation the wrongdoer is confronted. However, the divine dimension in this process is to have the ability to distinguish the wrongdoer from the wrong done. This will lead to a just and humane society of peace and prosperity.

⁷² Joseph Lobo 32.
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Communal Violence and Harmony in Uttar Pradesh: A Case Study of By-Elections-2014

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Introduction:

Communalism in political science refers to the political activity of a particular ethnic or religious individual or group to capture the political power in the interest of their religious community. Therefore in this context first of all it is necessary to understand the relationship of human beings with their religion. The nature of humans is aptly defined by Thomas Hobbes who said that in the state of nature every person has a natural right or liberty to do anything which one human being thinks necessary for sustaining one's own life in a better way because life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short". On the other hand religion in the words of S. Radhakrishnan “is actually the tool of fulfilment of man's life, an experience in which every aspect of his being is raised to its highest extent”. Therefore Swami Nirvendananda said that religion degenerates into a bundle of crude dogmas and meaningless ceremonials. Its followers become wild and fanatic and make religion a cause for communal fight and this fanatic nature of human being is cleverly utilised by political leaders for their own political purposes. It is observed by scholars that, during and after communal violence each group or political party tries to show off its emotional feeling and support towards the victim's group and tries to maintain its vote bank in elections,

73. Hobbes, Thomas. The Leviathan. Chapter XIII.
effects of communal violence have the capacity to change the voter's choice at the time of elections in a great manner.

Scholars like Paul R Brass, Steven I Wilkinson, Asghar Ali Engineer, Rashiduddin Khan, Zoya Hasan and others have tried to define the term communalism in the Indian context. They believe that communal violence is directly linked to political parties and political leaders. As Justice V.S Deve also said in his enquiry report (1990; vol II; 18) that, “religion is being used as a short cut tool in the electoral politics of India”. In India as religion is a very sensitive matter, our political leaders very easily blackmail Indian people in the name of religion and caste. As the data given below illustrates, after independence the growth rate of communal violence has rapidly increased, especially reaching a peak around 1978.

![Rioting incidents per 100,000 population, 1953-2011](http://chunauti.org/2014/08/07/manmohan-years-still-most-peaceful-despite-riots-uptick-in-2012-13/)

This data is analysed by the organisation Chunauti lead by the efforts of Shivam Vij, and they try to show that the rate of rioting in India (per 100,000 people from the 1953-2011 periods) has fallen continuously since 1992, reaching a plateau around 2003 and remaining pretty much constant.

since then. But from that period the Home ministry of India in its report collecting the data on communal violence across the country between 2005 and 2013 (till August) shows that in UP one in every four incidents is catastrophic. The national average stands at one death for seven incidents. With around 260 deaths, U.P accounted for over 25% of all deaths (1,006) in the incidents of communal violence in the country from the period of 2005 to 2013. On an average, 130 people died and 2,000 were injured in communal violence each year and Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest rank in the number of deaths. A total of 176 people died in these incidents and another 2,171 were injured in the period of 2005-09.

With the coming into power of Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav in U.P in 2012, the graph of communal violence in U.P reached at its highest peak, particularly around the time of the bloody communal violence and rioting in Muzaffarnagar in 2013. Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha Shri RPN Singh had told the Rajya Sabha that U.P topped in the list of states with regard to instances of communal violence in 2013, the year when the state was gearing up for the Lok Sabha polls of 2014 and it supported the theory of Brass, that is, the 'institutional riots system theory' (IRS) because communal tension in U.P heightens when polls draw near, thus supporting Brass's argument that communal violence is just a pre planned activity of the politicians for the sake of political power.

The same kind of communal politics is also seen in the context of By-elections held in U.P in 2014, because U.P had seen around 600 instances of communal violence and most of the communal violence took place near the 12 assembly

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78. The Times of India, 13 Sep, 2013.
80. Muslim Mirror News August 9, 2014
seats which were due for by polls in the next six months. Jhon Dyal also mentioned in his report ‘100 Days Under the New Regime the State of Minorities’ that, “over the 600 incidents of communal violence targeted against religious minorities have taken place from May to September 2014 in several parts of the country, but especially which have seen, or will soon see, nearly the by-elections or elections to the Legislative Assemblies. In the first few weeks of the new government, by its own admission, a total of 113 communal incidents have taken place in various parts of the country during May-June in which 15 people were killed and 318 others were injured, Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr. Kiren Rijiju told the Rajya Sabha.”⁸¹

The ongoing communal violence after the Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013 in U.P indicated that these riots are pre planned activities. According to an Indian Express report “between May 16 — when U.P delivered a impressive tally to the BJP in the Lok Sabha — and July 25, 605 low-key clashes took place which police examined as “communal” in nature. Nearly 200 of these occurred in or around the 12 constituencies and another 200 in the broader region of U.P.”⁸² Because all the “communal violence” incidents recorded by police in Uttar Pradesh within 10 weeks following the Lok Sabha elections results have occurred in or on the fringes of 12 assembly constituencies that are scheduled to go to polls in next few months.⁸³ It becomes clear from the facts that U.P has become a platform for communal politics.

Social Media, State Politics & Riots:

The election commissions of India announced on 16th August, 2014 the scheduled notice for the by-elections in India, and from that period the level of communal violence

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82. The India Express, 9 Aug, 2014
83. Ibid.
grow in a rapid way. As per the notice, U.P has listed Western U.P-5, Terai-2, Awadh-1, Bundelkhand-2 and Eastern U.P-2 seats which were due for the elections. In this by-election of U.P, BSP did not contest the by-poll, while Congress and SP fielded its candidates on all the 11 Assembly seats, whereas BJP contested on 10 and its ally Apna Dal on one.

With the announcement of this notice, the U.P politics got heated with the help of different tools and tactics such through social media and spread of campaigns like love jihad and ghar wapsi. Even the Congress Vice-President Rahul Gandhi said that the series of communal violence in U.P has been artificially and deliberately engineered.⁸⁴

The role of social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter etc.) has become very efficient and effective as a means to mobilize the people for any cause. In present cases these social media tools have played a very effective role in fanning communal violence and encouraging communal hatred among the society.

The great effect of this social media was first seen in Muzaffarnagar violence in 2013, where an old fake video was circulated on mobile through WhatsApp and this video became a successful tool for the arrangement of mahapanchayat. This mahapanchayat played a very important role in the eruption of communal violence in Muzaffarnagar in 2013. A series of incidents saw approximately 95 deaths in U.P, and the communal conflict in Muzaffarnagar alone the official figure shows 53 deaths and a total of 219 Muslims and 134 Hindus were injured. According to the Indian Express the death toll in Muzaffarnagar was 62 dead in which 46 were Muslims and 16 were Hindus.⁸⁵

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After this bloody riot the communal violence in U.P continued to go on because after the Lok Sabha elections 2014, the by-election was the next target for the political leaders. But in these riots too the cause of conflict and contention were same old issues like construction of mosques, graveyards, volume of loudspeaker in temples or mosques etc. Among the 600 incidents of communal riots 120 of them were triggered by the use of loudspeakers at the places of worship. Such as one incident analyzed by the Indian Express Report II dated on 6 Aug, 2014, it examined that;

A message was sent out on the social media (WhatsApp), allegedly by Vijay Kumar Mittal, head of the Bageshwar temple committee in Saharanpur and he was also an old VHP's leader.

The message of wording such as;

“Mitron aaj to tumhare mandiron se speaker utar rahe hain, ek na huye to kal yeh tumhare ghar main ghuske tumhari izzat utarenge. Isliye bolta hoon, apni taakat dikha do. To sab milte hain, shaam 6 baje Bageshwar mandir.

(Friends, today, they are removing speakers from your temples; if you do not unite, tomorrow they will enter your homes and humiliate you. This is why I say, demonstrate your strength. So let us meet at 6 pm at the Bageshwar temple.)

The report further said that after circulating this communal hate smelling message, around the 2,500 Hindus replied this message and assembled immediately at the defined place of message, but that night was passed on peacefully but at the next day this message went out and erupted a communal conflict as like in other places communal conflict on the issue of loudspeaker took place such as eight incidents each in Amroha and Saharanpur, seven each in Sambhal & Bareilly, six in Shamli and five
incidents each were witnessed in Bhgpat, Rampur, Bahraich and Balrampur etc. The incidents fever spiked sharply after June 16, when the Hindu mobs poured out on the streets of Kant, Moradabad, after a newly installed loudspeaker at a Dalit temple was removed but in all these riots rumours also played a very effective role, for example; Vijay Kumar Mittal have denied from this kind of WhatsApp message.

This strategy to mobilise the people on communal line was employed BJP and its sister organizations such as Hindu Mahasabha and Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Their members were also very actively engaged in promoting an atmosphere of hate on the issue of 'love jihad' during the election campaign for by-polls. For example Yogi Adityanath, the head campaigner of BJP in the by-elections of U.P along with the Union Minister Kalraj Mishra and state BJP Chief Laxmikant Bajpayi, said;"The issue of 'love jihad' would certainly be an issue in this by-poll, and I have been raising this issue for the past four to five years. The menace first began in Kerala and has now spread to Western UP." This relates the belief among the Hindu communal organisations that Muslim boys, who marry Hindu girls, are part of a conspiracy and for this purpose they receive big money which comes from the Arab countries and Hindu innocent girls suffer from this. But this myth has also been exposed like other myths of Sangh Parivar (RSS) as a communal propaganda for political power.

On the other hand Sakshi Maharaj, a BJP M.P. gave vent to further communal hate propaganda when he demanded the demolition of Madarsas because in his view they are the breeding ground of terrorism. He alleged that Muslim students were not being taught about nationalism in these religious schools (Madarsas) and teaching students only about the holy Quran turns them into terrorists and jihadis

87. Ibid.
88. The Times of India, 29 Aug, 2014
which is not in the best interests of the nation.⁸⁹

The BJP and its sister groups also tried forceful religious conversion for which they mobilized a movement of Ghar Wapsi (Back to Home), which means calling back all the Muslims & the Christians into the Hindu religion, because according to them the old and basic religion is only the Hindu religion and all the Muslims and Christians of the nation basically belong only to the Hindu religion, and were forcibly converted during the reign of Muslims and then during the British Raj.

From all of these ongoing campaigns spreading hatred around areas of electoral importance a series of incidents communal violence erupted in U.P in various districts, and basically these were all a part of the political strategy to polarize the votes of Muslims and Dalits in all these areas for the by-elections in 2014. To support to this view it is necessary to mention the comment of a senior official of district administration, who did not wish to be identified, that: “There is a constant pressure from one group to keep issues burning. We get daily complaints about issues, many of which are old. But they are being pursued on a day-to-day basis. And wherever possible, politics is being introduced.⁹⁰

⁸⁹. The Times of India 15 Sep, 2014
⁹⁰. The Indian Express 9 Aug, 2014
The above data shows that U.P became the centre of communal politics after the Muzaffarnagar riots in 2013 and in all these riots the state politics was same as we saw in the Muzaffarnagar riots, because each political party whether it is national or regional or local all blame each other. For instance Naresh Aggarwal of the Samajwadi Party Rajya Sabha member said that there is a clear attempt to create communal tension in U.P and the role of BJP needs to be seen. Rahul Gandhi made a similar comment on it that this politics of promoting polarization for electoral gain must
On the other hand BJP President Amit Shah, whose personality appeared in U.P politics as a Machiavellian mastermind in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections said that:

“Maharashtra and Haryana are going to the polls. Why is there no communal tension? Why only in U.P? If communal tension continues in U.P, I can tell you, BJP will form the next government in U.P with a clear majority.”

After adding and analyzing the communal propaganda of leaders of different political parties, it becomes clear that not a single party comes out effectively to counter all the tension of communal violence in U.P politics. Political parties were already received a lesson from the Muzaffarnagar riots in 2013 and understood the utility of communal violence in U.P politics.

**Harmony Results:**

It was predicted by most political commentators that this time again BJP will enjoy the taste of successes in by-elections of U.P as earlier in Lok Sabha elections 2014 where it received a mammoth 71 out of 80 seats in the state.

But this time the result of by-elections yielded success for the ruling party of state, that is, the Samajwadi party which won a total of 8 seats out of 12 constituencies of U.P and BJP was able to capture just 3 seats. On the other hand Congress was unable to win even one seat.

The voting pattern of the people is clearly an indication that Congress not only lost its votes to Samajwadi Party but the BJP but also failed to win back Scheduled Caste support even in the absence of BSP. Further analysis shows that the vote-share of Congress in this by-poll has further declined since the 2012 Assembly elections. In Bijnor, Naseeb Pathan,
kin of a Congress MLC, received just 1.26 per cent of votes while the same party had got 22.67 per cent votes in last Assembly election in 2012 when Congress contested the election in alliance with Rashtriya Lok Dal.⁹⁵ On the other hand BJP lost seven out of the 10 seats held by it as well as one belonging to its ally Apna Dal to the ruling SP, managing to post wins in only three constituencies - Saharapur (City), Lucknow East and Noida.⁹⁶

The data given below compares the vote's margin of the BJP and SP.

**BJP and SP positions in By-elections-2014 results of Uttar Pradesh**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PC/AC No.</th>
<th>PC/AC Name</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes Secured</th>
<th>Runner Up</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes Secured</th>
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<td>Mainpuri</td>
<td>Tej Pratap Singh Yadav</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>653686</td>
<td>Prem Singh Shukla</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>332537</td>
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<td>Rajeev Gumber</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>108306</td>
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<td>SP</td>
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<td>Ruchirena</td>
<td>SP</td>
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<td>Hemendra Pal</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>90181</td>
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<td>Navab Jan</td>
<td>SP</td>
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<td>BJP</td>
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<td>Kajal Sharma</td>
<td>SP</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>130402</td>
<td>Ramkumar Verma</td>
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<td>Jagdish Prasad</td>
<td>BJP</td>
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When the BJP star campaigner Yogi Adityanath was asked about this huge failure in Gorakhpur, he replied that: "the way of police and administration of the state have been politicised. I was not allowed to address election meetings and therefore obstacles were created" he also said that "we have won both Noida, Saharanpur and Lucknow where I campaigned," he said, adding his focus was on "Prime Minister Narendra Modi development idea and Hindutva issues" during electioneering, but he also added that, "I feel that review of ticket distribution to the candidates and strategy of political party regulate the campaign is also another important thing. Whether it is victory or defeat, it motivates a person to examine one's own thoughts or feelings. We will restudy of everything and talk to the high command of the BJP party."

On the other hand when same question was asked of the BJP state in charge Laxmikant Bajpai of U.P, he said that: “I have accepted the party's failure in this by-elections and the cause behind the defeat would be analyzed. The responsibility of defeat is mine and my team leaders but it has given us a strong lesson for the future that is next Vidhan Sabha polls of U.P.”

Senior leaders like the Congress general secretary Madhusudan Mistry, who is also head of the party affairs in

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UP region, have refused to accept the party defeat by saying that, 'party did not get enough time to prepare for the by-elections. Some other leaders like Beni Prasad Verma have point out that the party lost because of the selection of non-serious candidates. “Except for one or two candidates who took the by-elections seriously and fought with true spirit, but all others lacked confidence. They only filed the nomination papers and did nothing to show any efficiency that they could also win the election,” Verma said.⁹⁸

The Samajwadi Party made a great comeback in U.P and was able to win 8 seats. This will come as a welcome break for Chief Minister of U.P Akhilesh Yadav who faced flak for the party's insipid performance in the Lok Sabha elections in 2014⁹⁹. After the surprise success of SP in the by-elections, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav said that people of the state have shown the door to divisive and communal forces, adding that, "People of the state have given a befitting answer to the communal forces and have expressed intention that they need harmony and brotherhood." He also thanked the people of the state for "failing" the communal powers. He commented that Communal forces always tried to gain energy by spreading communal hatred among the people, but people by their power of vote defeated all the communal propaganda." Senior Cabinet Minister Shivpal said that the people have voted against communal forces and for development. He also added that; "In Lok Sabha elections communal forces coax the people, but now they are aware with the facts of communal violence."¹⁰⁰

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100. The Times of India 16 Sep, 2014
Conclusion:

After thoroughly examining the by-elections of U.P. in 2014, we can arrive at the conclusion that communal violence is really a tactic of political parties and political leaders. Therefore U.P is continuously facing communal riots even after the huge incident of Muzaffarnagar violence in 2013, which was clearly attached to the general elections of 2014. But after the forming of the BJP government at the Centre the Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has always kept quiet throughout the hate-filled campaign that his party leaders waged in U.P. He also totally ignored the hateful statements made against the Muslim community which were made by the BJP and Sangh Parivar leaders in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and elsewhere. Silence is no longer an option especially for a leader of the nation¹⁰¹ and when any government and ruling party fails to counter or deal with such kind of situations then at the time of the next elections it suffers very badly. This can be seen in the by-election results where the BJP suffered badly and communal tensions in the state were countered by the people of the state by their vote.¹⁰² It must be understood that these inter-religious clashes are actually inter-political clashes, and different political parties just carve out their vote-banks among the different religious communities by targeting a particular community, in order to emerge as champion of one’s community. In fact, they are the champions just of their own political interests¹⁰³ However as Prof. Varshney has argued that in the context of India, the strength of inter-communal ties, such as through civic associations and groups, may be able to reduce the incidence of communal

violence and in this way they could maintain the communal harmony in the state.

In the present era communal violence has became a very serious threat, and as Jawaharlal Nehru once remarked India has a greater threat from communal violence than from any external threat, and this prediction of his has now became an unfortunate reality of the nation. So there is a need to pass a strong law regarding communal violence, which should be free from the all defects found in the Communal Violence bill of 2005, as pointed out by Asghar Ali Engineer.¹⁰⁴ We also need to contemplate a ban on all communal organisations and political parties from contesting elections because it is important for communal harmony and peace building in India that electoral contests be kept away from communal polarisation.

Hindus and Muslims are the major communities in India. They have their own identities, traditions, customs, cultures, beliefs. Both communities have their own grievances. Sometimes these grievances collide and explode each other. The only solutions for these problems know each other as well as understand each other and think about others grievances. It can also be solved through interactive programs like dialogues, healthy discussions and the like. Such an effort was made by Syed Ameenul Hasan Rizvi in 1980 through his journal *Radiance weekly*.

**Historical Background**

This dialogue in writing began by an article of Mr. K.R. Malkani (Chief Editor of Organiser, New Delhi) titled “Hindus and Muslims; A question of different wavelength,” in *Organiser* weekly (New Delhi) on September, 1980. Mr. S. Shabuddin gave reply to Mr. Malkani through *Radiance Weekly* (Delhi) on 2 November 1980. S. Ameenul Hasan Rizvi wrote a short note to express his thanks to Mr. Malkani and Mr. S. Shabuddin for initiating the dialogue and he also supported Mr. Malkani’s view that public issues should be discussed publicly with its spirit and that understanding the problem is half solution of the problem. At last he invited all the readers and all Hindu brothers to join the dialogue.

As a response to this invitation some Hindu gentlemen expressed their views in *Radiance*. Publishing the first article of this series written by Mr. K.M. Joshi, the Editor of Radiance explained that they had published the thought of both eminent personalities and invited readers to take part in the dialogue with a purpose of providing insight into both

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communities regarding how they view each other and to help develop a better understanding between these communities in order to further communal harmony and amity.

Rizvi described it is not as an argument, but an open dialogue where the readers are free to express their ideas with frankness and without any inhibition. Views freely expressed by Hindu and Muslim readers appeared in Radiance till June 1981. Contributors to this dialogue included Mr. K.R Malkani, Chief Editor of Organiser New Delhi, Mr. S. Shabuddin, Member of Parliament, Mr. S. Ameenul Hasan Rizvi, Editor Radiance Weekly Delhi, Mr. Shaukath Hussain⁶, Advocate, Supreme Court, Mr. K.M. Joshi, Mr. Krishna Dhon Sardar, Dr. B.P.Vyas, Mr. Ibraheem Madani and Mr. Ahmad Rashid Sherwani.


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K.R. Malkani's views

Kewalram Ratanmal Malkani (1921) was an eminent journalist. He was among the founder members of Bhartiya Janta Party [BJP] where for almost a decade he worked as vice president and then from 1994 to 2000 he represented the party in the Rajya Sabha. In 2002 he was sworn in as Lieutenant Governor of Pondicherry, post he held till the time of his last breath on 27 October 2003.

Mr. Malkani began his article with the grievances of Indian Muslims and focused on the following points.
1. There is no end of riots, in which Muslims generally suffer more loss of lives.
2. Aligarh Muslim University must be recognized as a “minority” educational institution.
3. Urdu is not getting its due.
4. Muslim Personal Law must never be touched.
5. Muslims do not get their share in the (government) services.

In Malkani's opinion when the Hindu hears these grievances their response is usually not very sympathetic. Hindus believed that that partition was the solution for all the Muslim problems. But after partition Hindus feel cheated and said, 'These people asked for Pakistan. Now why don't they go there?'

Malkani expressed the following responses:
1. Hindus are of the opinion that most of the riots are started by Muslims by quoting official records.
2. He still remembers the role of AMU in the partition movement and wishes that it had been closed down after independence. He sees AMU as a Muslim representation; apart from that how much more does the Muslim want? In short, according to him, AMU must
not be recognized as a minority educational institution.

3. He says that Urdu is recognized in several states, so it does get its due. To prove this he quoted Late Josh Malihabadi’s saying, 'Urdu has a better future in India than Pakistan'.

4. With regards to Personal Law, the directive principles of the Indian constitution recommended a uniform civil law for all citizens of India and he asks why India cannot amend the Muslim Law regarding polygamy when even Pakistan amended it.

5. He is of the view that, the Hindu sees separate electorate and seat reservation as the seed of parson. The farthest he will go is inclusion of Muslims among 'Backward classes' for preferential job consideration.

Malkani went on to suggest the following:

1. Muslim leaders especially Muslim legislators in the country should call for a meeting and express their regrets for what Muslim invaders did to this country.

2. Muslims should remove the mosques forcibly built over the *Rama Janmasthan* in Ayodhya, *Krishna Janmasthan* in Mathura and Kashi Vishvonathan in Varanasi. It will bring an electric effect in Hindu minds.

3. There is a need for rewriting the history books. In his view, the Hindus believe that every Muslim ruler was a monster and they need to know that from Baber to Aurangazeb, the Mughals banned cow slaughter and drank only Ganga-Jal and ran a virtual coalition with Rajputs. He says that Hindus think that Muslims did not play an honorable role in the freedom Movement, but the fact is that in 1857 and 1921 the Muslims played a very active role in the freedom struggle.

Malkani says that petrodollars were flowing into India. They were going into only a few pockets-those of Hindu Politicians, Muslim Politicians and Maulvis. For historic
reasons the Hindus hate the invasion of Arab money more than the invasion of CIA\textsuperscript{10} and KGB\textsuperscript{11} money.

Malkani asked Muslim leaders why they kept silent when Saudis banned the entry of Sikhs and Abu Dhabi arrested and expropriated nine Hindus for practicing their religion. On the basis of the above he legitimized the riots in India. He states that the economic backwardness of Muslim community lies on the shoulder of Muslims and expressed it by a mocking comment that 'the Muslims not only has less money, he has more mouth to feed thanks to his polygamy and extra-allergy to family planning\textsuperscript{12}.

The positive threads of Malkani's articles were:

1. Men of good will in both communities should put their heads – and hearts – together to defuse the situation.

2. The Hindus and Muslims were blood brothers who must live in peace and justice – in fairness to their posterity.

Shahabuddin's response

Syed Shahabuddin (born 1935) was an Indian politician from the town of Ranchi, India. Originally Shahabuddin was a diplomat working for Indian Foreign Service, but later on he entered politics and served three terms between 1979 and 1996 as a member of the Parliament.

1. Mr. S. Shabuddin counters the use of the term “The Hindu” by Mr. Malkani as a representation of all Hindus. Shahabuddin points out that he does not consider Malkani’s reaction as representing the reaction of common Hindus or the entire Hindu community. Shahabuddin added that he has many Hindu friends who do not share Mr. Malkani’s views.

2. He criticized Malkani’s view that the Muslims and Hindus are on different wavelength, adding that 'only the communalists among them are’\textsuperscript{13}. He says that most
problems of both communities are common, their joys and sorrows are interwoven and he believes that the masses are generous and would not like any one to be deprived of their due rights because of the religion.

3. He argues Malkani's solution that Muslims should remove the mosques forcibly built over holy temples, by asking the questions that 'how far back in history can you go and how far in future will you carry your burden of bitterness? Why must you preach doctrine of perpetual hatred, of constant confrontation? Why don't you ask the Aryans to apologize to the Dravidians? Why don't you ask the upper castes to apologize to the Shudras and to the Harijans? Why don't you ask for punitive expeditions against the Arabs, the Turks, the Persians, the Afghans and Mongols who invaded Indian rather than take out your sense of humiliation on Muslim Indians of present generation, who are in any case overwhelmingly descended from converts. Why must you visit the alleged sins of their fathers upon their sons?'

4. Shahabuddin welcomed Mr. Malkani's proposition that there is a need of rewriting history books, but asks whether history must become a vehicle for propagating poison in our system.

5. Shahabuddin's also refutes Malkani's Petrodollar problem by pointing out that Petrodollars are coming to India through trade and employment of Indians overseas. A very little amount is coming through as donations and contributions into Muslim pockets. He says that he would like Government of India to ban all donations and contributions by foreign donors to Indian institutions and organizations. He added that Muslim community is not supposed to go around the Muslim world with a begging bowl and he demanded that if any contribution is used for illegal or subversive purpose,
the government should expose it and punish the culprits.

6. Regarding the alleged ban on the entry of Sikhs in Saudi Arabia and practice or propagation of Hinduism in Abu Dhabi, he stated that the Muslim community of India was not an extension of the Muslim countries and he put two questions to Malkani; that how many Hindu leaders have condemned those actions and demanded a firm stand by the Government of India against them? And why does Mr. Malkani not demand that India cut off diplomatic relations and stop economic transactions with countries which discriminate against Indian nationals or against Hinduism? Later he pointer to the actual cause of continuing riots by saying that:

'It is a sorry fact that with or without judicial enquiry, no one has yet been hanged in our country for thousands killed in communal disturbances. I hope Mr. Malkani does not blame Muslim community for this lapse. This patent failure of our administrative and judicial system is one basic reason why the communal riots continue to occur'.

7. Shabuddin disagreed with Malkani that the immediate cause of Muslim discontent is because of their economical condition. But he would agree that the underlying cause of social fragmentation and violent confrontation between one section of our people and another is economic. He indicated an incident from Moradabad region in Uttar Pradesh where the Muslim community was not only economically content but indeed prosperous. It was investing its surplus in education and coming out of the ghettos to build new homes. Indeed it has been punished for these very reasons, for its effort to join the national mainstream, to raise itself economically and educationally. Its rising
8. Shabuddin criticized Malkani’s point about polygamy as unscientific, describing his reasons one by one. First, polygamy is perhaps more common among non-Muslims than among the Muslims. Second, the rate of increase of population depends upon female fertility and not upon the mechanism of fertilization. Polygamy may deprive some males but does not increase the number of available females or increase their reproductive period. Third, the marginal difference between the rate of growth of Muslim population and the general rate of growth between 1961 and 1971 may well be due to improvement in statistical methodology and perhaps some conversion. He concluded his opinion with an advice that ‘please do not imagine that there is a diabolic plot behind it to convert India into a Muslim majority state. At the present rate, it shall take a few hundred years’.\textsuperscript{16}

9. Shahabuddin agreed with Malkani that economic growth shall provide the bridge to a future without caste, ethnic, linguistic and regional imbalances. At last he asked Malkani to allow his heart to grieve over the massacre and senseless brutality of innocents, the burning of men, women and children and shed few drops for these victims. Would he save a drowning child only if he is sure that it is a Hindu child?

Mr. Shahabuddin concluded his article by advising Mr. Malkani to come out of his shell and look at this great country in all its totality and to realise that he cannot be a good Hindu if he is not a good human being, and that he can’t regard the whole world as his family as he refuse to share, nay, even appreciate the sorrow of those who wear a different label.

Mr. K. R. Malkani wrote an article to refute Mr. S. Shahabuddin’s views. In his view most Muslims look upon
most Hindus as “communal”; and most Hindus look upon most Muslims as “communal”. He claimed that even after partition, during Indo-Pak sports events Muslims support Pakistan, openly chanting slogans of “Pakistan Zindabad” and this may have an effect on Hindu mind. Malkani raised the question that if Muslim Civil Law is part of Islam, what about criminal law? He also stated that his view on the Aryan invasion concept is that it is only a figment of European imagination.

After K. M. Malkani, Mr. K. M. Joshi, Mr. Krishna Dhon Sardar and Dr. B. P. Vyas expressed their views, which were largely an extension of K. R. Malkanis’s views.

S. A. H. Rizvi’s Observations

Syed Ameenul Hasan Rizvi (1925-2002) was a distinguished intellectual, journalist Supreme Court advocate and an active member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, serving as a member of its advisory council for 15 years. He argued the Shah Bano case before the Supreme Court and presented Islamic views on the issue. He was also deeply involved in the struggle to secure the minority character of Aligarh Muslim University.

S. Ameenul Hasan Rizvi began his article with gratitude to Br. Malkani, Br. K. M. Joshi, Br. Krishna Dhon Sardar and Br. B. P. Vyas for freely expressing their views following Br. S. Shahabuddin. He studied the Hindu brother’s articles and arrived at a conclusion that Hindu brothers still refuse to accept Muslims as Indians and sons of this soil with equal rights. Muslims are still perceived as outside invaders in the hearts of Hindus, but they refuse to admit it openly and take refuge behind the incident of the partition of Pakistan and other real or imaginary grievances.

First, he addressed the Pakistan issue and he said that the young Muslim generation is not aware why a big fuss is made over cutting away of a piece of land. For Hindus, India is
not just a homeland like the United States of America for Americans or England for British, but rather it is Bharat Mata – Mother India – to them. They give same sanctity to Bharat Mata, as they give to gao mata (mother cow), which is alien to the concept of Muslim Nationalism.

With regard to partition he posed two questions. 1. Are Muslims really responsible for the partition? 2. If they are, are they alone the guilty or there are others also who share the responsibility?

As for the first question he answers that Muslims are responsible for the partition of India through Muslim League. But some top Hindu leaders also supported the idea of a separate Muslim country. For instance, Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya in his Presidential address of the Hindu Maha Sabha Session at Gorakpur in 1923 mooted the idea of separate home land for Muslims and C. Rajagopalajari, the first Indian Governor General of free India also supported the League's demand.

To the second question he answers that Hindus are equally guilty, and in some ways even guiltier than Muslims. Muslims are guilty because they asked for separation and Hindus are guilty because they agreed to it. There are a number of authentic records which establish that it was the intransigence, unaccommodating attitude and intolerance on the part of some Congress leaders which forced Muslim League towards partition. It was Sardar Vallabai Pattel's master brain behind the Congress decision to accept partition while Jamiat-ul-Ulama and Muslim leaders of the Congress including Abul Kalam Azad never agreed to it.

The propaganda of Muslim community's guilt was and continues to be mounted by the Rashtriya Swaym Sevak Sangh (RSS) circles. Rizvi asks them if they had provided any solution to resist partition. Whether any resolution, any organized Movement, any protest demonstration or any
exhibition was organized by them to stop the partition? Then why are they crying and moaning after partition? Sardar Patel voiced their dream and laid bare his own mind when he declared in Lucknow soon after independence: “Musalmanon ka ub yehan kuch nahin hai: unhen jo kuch milna tha who unhon nei le liya; ub yahan unke liye kuch nahin hai” (There is now nothing for Muslims here: whatever was due to them has been taken by them; there is nothing left for them) 17.

Muslims' position on partition is that (1) they alone are not responsible for the creation of Pakistan, (2) whatever their share in it, they do not admit it as a crime to suffer from any sense of guilt, (3) they view it as just the case of one warring brother among three asking for his separate share in the ancestral property, and the other two agreeing to it, neither of the other two having any right to blame the other for it.

With regard to the hosting of Pakistani flags, in 99.9 per cent of cases it was done by mischief mongers and in 0.1 per cent of cases it was based on mistakes that they consider all green flags used by Muslims in their tombs and shrines as Pakistani flags. Some people mistake it for Pakistani flags and spread rumors among the Hindu brothers. It is quite similar in the case of Muslims who were shouting “Pakistan Zindabad”. It is just hooey. No section of Muslims has yet gone that far out of its senses.

Rizvi describes that according to Islamic tenets if any Mosque is wrongfully and forcefully build on a church or Gurudwara or a Synagogue or a Temple, it is well known to be illegal. It will not become a Mosque and God will punish the destroyers for this and the prayers (Namaz) offered in such Mosques will not accepted by God. It is the Islamic duty of the Muslim Scholars (Ulema) and leaders of Muslim Organizations to take initiatives to hand back such lands after due investigation.
He reveals without any hesitation that he is ready to apologize to the whole world for any act of indecency, injustice, transgression and any un-Islamic act done by any Muslim. But he denied Malkani’s demand that all Muslim legislators should fix a day to gather at one place to apologize to Hindus for what the Muslim invaders did to this country.

Rizvi discusses Malkani’s complaint that while many Hindus condemn the violence against Muslims, how many Muslims condemned the slaughter of Hindus in Sambhal two years back or Murder of soldiers (jawans) in Aligarh and Moradabad this year? He answered in a constructive manner to this question, that if Hindus condemn violence against Muslims they do the right thing, but his question is that, both *Radiance* and *Dawat*, the two Muslim papers (which are taken by Mr. Malkani’s camp as the most communal Muslim papers) condemned and grieved over these instances. But what about *Organiser*, whose Chief Editor is Mr. Malkani? When a whole van-full of Muslims were roasted alive in broad day-light in Jamshedpur, did Mr. Malkani or his *Organiser* say any word of condemnation and remorse?

His stand on the issue of Aligarh Muslim University is obvious, that according to the Constitution of India all minorities have a right to establish educational institutions of their choice and having done so they have a right to administer its affairs (Art.30). Muslims established the Aligarh Muslim University. Therefore they have a constitutional right to manage its affairs. This right was taken away from them. The government is now willing to restore that right. Now, why they are coming in between Government and Muslims?

Urdu and AMU are matters between Muslims and Government, not between Muslims and Hindus. But why are they opposing everything in the name of holiness? Similarly in the case of Muslim Personal Law, our Hindu brothers do not have any role and Muslims want to stick to their personal
law ordained by their religion. If the Muslim women are happy with the right of men to pronounce ‘talaq’ orally (which is a sin and highly detestable, but enforceable) and do away with marital bonds, why should Hindu brothers allow it to come in the way of National Integration?

Rizvi welcomes Malkani’s argument about Muslim criminal law, ‘Why not introduce Muslim Criminal law – with its tooth for a tooth doctrine – for Muslims?’ and answered that the Muslims want fornicators among us to be lashed one hundred times and adulterers to be stoned to death; a Muslim thief’s hand to be chopped and a Muslim who drinks alcohol to receive 40 lashes and a Muslim who charges any one with adultery or fornication and does not produce the requisite evidence, to be whipped (these are the offences and punishments prescribed by our religion) and we will most heartily welcome if the Government will legislate to that effect. And he added with full confidence, 'I can assure Br. Malkani that overwhelming majority of Muslims will welcome it'. Rizvi concluded his article with a hope that Hindu brothers will change their attitude towards Muslims.

After Rizvi, Dr. B. P Vyas's article was published. The article sought to highlight the author’s suspicions regarding Muslims patriotism. S. Shahabuddin refuted his views in these words that 'if Dr. Vyas refuses to think of Muslims as patriotic or nationalist, there is nothing one can do to convince him'. The dialogue continued through S. Ibraheem Madani, who mainly concentrated on the issue of AMU. Then Shaukath Hussain wrote in detail on the parentage of partition. This article is very interesting and the facts are revealed with full evidences from authentic sources. Ahmed Shervani and Shamsuddin Akbari expressed their views on Hindu Muslim dialogue.
Conclusion

The book titled “Dialogue between Hindus and Muslims” is a compiled version of articles which were published in Radiance weekly. It was a good initiative taken by Syed Ameenul Hasan Rizvi through his journal Radiance when he was editor of same. This dialogue seriously attracted a wide range of people's attention from many quarters while it appeared in Radiance weekly because of the relevance and scope of this issue in Indian society. Every community in a plural society should be aware of their own problems and grievances. It can be solved or gradually regulated through mutual discussion and understanding. These articles highlight a lot of facts behind the communal tensions among Hindus and Muslims. Such Dialogue can reduce the distance between the two major communities of India who are apprehensive to each other because of historical reasons.

References and Notes

1. Syed Ameenul Hasan Rizvi, born in Raichur (Karnataka) on 12 February 1925. He was a distinguished intellectual, journalist and a Supreme Court lawyer was an active member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board and was a member of its advisory council for 15 years. He worked with Jamaat-e-Islami Hind as its legal advisor for three years before taking over its mouthpiece Radiance Views-weekly as editor in 1977. He fought Shah Bano case in the Supreme Court and presented Islamic views on the issue before the apex court. He was deeply involved in the struggle to secure the minority character of the Aligarh Muslim University. He also assisted the Commission probing the Bhagalpur riots. Rizvi was put behind bars during the infamous Emergency period proclaimed by the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the mid-1970s. For the last few
years he was deeply involved with the Institute of Objective Studies and Milli Council besides a host of other social and religious organizations. He was author of several books including Supreme Court and the Muslim Personal Law, Dialogues Between Hindus and Muslims, Battles by the Prophet (in the light of Qur'an) and Three Major Errors in 12 English Translations of the Qur'an, he was a regular contributor to several newspapers and magazines on issues concerning religious harmony, Muslim personal law and Muslims. He died of a massive cardiac arrest in Bangalore on 5 February 2002.


3. Kewalram Ratanmal Malkani (19 November 1921) earned Master's Degree in Economics and Politics from the School of Economics and Sociology in Bombay [Now Mumbai]. He joined D. G. National College Hyderabad as the lecturer [1945-1947] and also worked as Niemen Fellow at Harvard University (1961-62). After the partition of the country, towards the start of 1948 he joined Hindustan Times as an Assistant Editor and then become associated with weekly Organiser as Editor. This association lasted for long 35years till 1983. He was first General Secretary of the Editors' Guild of India (1978-79). He has also worked for seven years [1983-1990] as Vice-President of the Deendayal Research Institute, New Delhi. He was among the founder members of Bhartiya Janta Party [BJP], a political party formed in the year 1980, starting from 1991, almost for a decade he worked as vice president. He was a member of Rajya Sabha from 1994 to 2000. In the year 2002 on July 3rd he
was sworn in as Lieutenant Governor of Pondicherry, post he held till the time of his last breath on 27 October 2003.

4. Organiser, one of the oldest weeklies published from New Delhi started bringing out, a few weeks before Partition in 1947. Organiser popularly known as the Mouthpiece of Rashtriy Swayam Sev Sangh (RSS).

5. Syed Shahabuddin (born 1935) was an Indian politician from the town of Ranchi, India. Originally Shahabuddin was a diplomat working for Indian Foreign Service. But later became a politician and served three terms between 1979 and 1996 as a member of the Parliament. He was known for his involvement in the Shah Bano Case and his opposition to the demolition of Babari Masjid. During his time as a politician, Shahabuddin was the Joint Secretary in charge of South East Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific in the Ministry of External Affairs. He founded the Insaf Party in 1989 (dissolved in 1990 and later revived). He was known for his strong belief in the Federal Structure of India and his desire to see more people participating at every level of governance. He has made several statements over the years highlighting his beliefs, for example on the 16th November 2012 he published an open letter to Narendra Modi (now Prime Minister of India) regarding Muslim voters amongst other things. He was involved with many Muslim institutions and organizations including the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, of which he was the President between 2004 and 2007. Shahabuddin edited the research monthly journal 'Muslim India' between 1983 and 2002 and again from July 2006. He was a regular contributor to TV discussions relating to current affairs. He has also written many articles about topics ranging from Pakistan to the status
of Urdu for the Saudi Arabian newspaper Arab News. His journal was praiseworthy and informative, a basis for welfare and planning for progress. His biography has been published with the title “Syed Shabuddin: Outstanding Voice of Muslim India”, compiled by Mushtaque Madani, Published by P. A. Inamdar in 2013.

6. Shaukath Hussain, One of the famous Supreme courts Lawyer, who fought for Justice Many Muslims cases. He is also very good Scholar, his article of Rizvi’s collection counted as one of number one articles.


8. Ibid. 7.

9. Petrodollar refers to United States dollars earned through exports of petroleum (oil). Originally, in an effort to support the value of the dollar, Richard Nixon negotiated a deal with Saudi Arabia that in exchange for arms and protection they would denominate all future oil sales in U.S. dollars. Subsequently, the other OPEC countries agreed to similar deals thus ensuring a global demand for U.S. dollars and allowing the U.S. to export some of its inflation. Since these dollars did not circulate within the country they were not part of the normal money supply, economists felt another term was necessary to describe the dollars received by petroleum exporting countries (OPEC) in exchange for oil, so the term petrodollar was coined by Georgetown University economics professor, Ibrahim Oweiss.

10. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is one of the principal Intelligence-gathering agencies of the United States federal government. The CIA’s headquarters is in Langley, Virginia, a few miles west of Washington, D.C. Its employees operate from U.S. embassies and many
other locations around the world. The only independent U.S. intelligence agency, it reports to the Director of National Intelligence.

11. The KGB, an initials for Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti (Russian language), translated in English as Committee for State Security, was the main security agency for the Soviet Union from 1954 until its collapse in 1991. Formed in 1954 as a direct successor of such preceding agencies as the CHEKA, NKGB, and MGB, the committee was attached to the Council of Ministers. It was the chief government agency of "union-republican jurisdiction", acting as internal security, intelligence and secret police. Similar agencies were instated in each of the republican of the Soviet Union aside from Russia and consisted of many ministries, state committees, and state commissions.


15. Ibid: 12.


17. Ibid: 36.

18. Dawat' Seh-Roza, (Three (3) - day Alternative) Newspaper. It was started in 1953 as a Weekly. Later in 1960 it was turned into a Daily newspaper. During 1980-85 a weekly edition was added too. Since the day one, three days alternative newspaper Dawat has been the first choice of the sincere muslim readers. Countrywide, the number of readers it has are above one lakh twenty five thousand. It consider as mouthpiece of Jamat-e-Islami..
19. Talaq means divorce. The Qur'an's view of marriage and divorce can be summed up as “staying together on equitable terms or separating with kindness”.


How Conflict and Displacement Fuel Human Trafficking. The Case of Nepal and Opportunities for Real Action and Innovative Solutions.

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Abstract

Disaffected, impoverished, and displaced people in weak and failing states are particularly vulnerable. Human trafficking exploits social and political turmoil caused by natural disasters, economic crisis, and armed conflict. The exploitation and forced servitude of millions of trafficking victims take many forms. Women and children are trafficked into becoming child soldiers and concubines of illegal armed groups, men, women and children are trafficked into forced labor and sexual slavery, forced to sell drugs, steal, and beg money for the criminals controlling them, and thousands are coerced or forced into a growing black market trade in human body parts. The growth in illegal mining operations by illegal armed groups and organized crime is also fueling conditions of forced labor. Trafficking victims are dehumanized and suffer grave physical and mental illness and often die at the hands of their captors and exploiters. Nepal is particularly afflicted by the scourge of human trafficking. All the elements of modern-day slavery and human exploitation are present in Nepal that is struggling to overcome decades of internal armed conflict, social fragmentation, poverty, and the constant debilitating presence of organized crime and corruption. Women’s Link Worldwide recently reported that human trafficking is not viewed as an internal problem among Nepalese officials, despite estimates that more than 70,000 people are trafficked from Nepal each year. This article examines human
trafficking in its many forms in Nepal, the parties involved in trafficking, and the State's response or lack of response to human trafficking. The article also presents innovations that might be effective for combating human trafficking, and proposes that Nepal can serve as an effective model for other countries to address this growing menace to domestic and international human rights.

**Introduction**

War affects vulnerable groups the most because they are the ones that have most often been discriminated against and excluded and disaffected from a nation from wealth, education, policies of protection and prevention. Once so exposed, they are at risk of re-victimization even in post-conflict scenarios by being exploited and traded by individuals and organized crime within and outside their societies. Amid such chaos and impunity, nations in conflict struggle to balance security and resources. Nations lack policies with proper legal, physical, and social protection mechanisms. They experience a breakdown in economic, social structures, and legal institutions. International obligations are ignored or its application is inadequate and poorly executed. Instability is exacerbated by the massive displacement of people and families that then face stigmatization and abuse. Women and girls especially fall prey to sexual violence and other forms of victimization.

To achieve stability and peace, nations devise models of transitional justice. Most models focus on responsibility for the crimes and abuses perpetrated during the conflict and contain reparation programs for victims of war. While the measures included in transitional justice may achieve compensation and culpability, they often fail to address violations of economic, social, and cultural rights, and they do not tackle the root of the problems or address past injustice. The result is that nations remain in a phase of low intensity conflict, deprived of meaningful stability and
peace. Abuses continue or transform, and violent actors morph into new entities while new violent actors enter an already chaotic state of affairs.

To achieve significant peace and comprehensive justice and to secure a nation in which vulnerable groups do not remain at risk of further abuses, the transitional justice framework must be holistic and comprehensive. It should not only address violations considered crimes under international law, but it must also account for the root causes of conflict and provide for the protection of all human rights, including economic, social, and cultural rights. Moreover, true stability and justice can only be achieved if a peace process embraces the participation of women and women's groups in order to ensure that women's needs and interests are included and gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive responses to the conflict are promoted.

This article examines the ordeal of trafficking of women and children and the duty of the Nepal government to fulfill both its commitments to its citizens by enforcing its domestic laws, and its obligations to the international community by effecting innovative forms of transitional justice to deal decisively with this growing human rights crisis.

The Actors and Conditions that Fuel Human Trafficking

The problem is particularly acute in Nepal. Nepal is one of the least developed countries of the world, lacking in sufficient economic capital, infrastructure, and developed human resources to forge an independent path of development. Overwhelmingly agrarian in nature, 90 percent of its 20 million inhabitants rely on subsistence agriculture. Adult literacy is as low as 22 percent for females and 60 percent for males; infant and maternal mortality rates are the highest in South Asia. The historically high level of out migration of people searching for sustainable livelihood options is escalating. In certain districts in the
country the out migration of men and women of prime productive and reproductive age is particularly high. Trafficking is an important offshoot of migration in Nepal, and one of its most abusive forms.

a. Illegal Armed Groups and arm conflict

Armed groups are responsible for the violence. Peace and security of the nation with well-planned attacks against military targets, civilian targets, and the country's infrastructure. Some criminal group has become such a powerful international criminal organization, with a vast criminal empire of drug trafficking, weapons trafficking, money laundering, and even international cattle rustling, that there is no incentive for the group to put down its arms any time soon.

Nearly all illegal combatant groups maintain both a rural and urban presence and assert control over most regions of national territory to the point that in many areas government security forces are loathe to enter except in force and do not remain very long when they do. These groups pose the greatest threat to the civil society and public security.

b. Internal Displacements

It has been found that as many of the Nepalese have been internally displaced in the course of the long-running internal conflict. Displacement is a strategy by armed groups used to maintain territorial control. It is also an expression of power among the actors fighting for territorial control. Most of the reports indicate that internal displacement is caused by the direct or indirect action of illegal armed groups or clashes between groups. Displacements typically occur from rural areas to urban centers.

c. Forced Recruitments

Criminal gangs prey on defenseless people and recruit,
coerce or force individuals into joining the illegal groups. The presence of such gangs in the Nepal contributes to the social collapse, and increases the victimization of all people living there, but especially women and children.

d. Urban Displacement

Forced urban displacement constitutes another form of human trafficking. Urban displacement been recognized as a problem Moreover, only members of the affected communities were aware of urban displacement because denouncing it provoked direct threats from the perpetrators.

While urban displacement is now an acknowledged problem, the authorities seem less concerned about the welfare of the inhabitants who are victimized by urban displacement. Also, urban displacement appears to be occurring with government complicity, in direct violation of several civil and human rights.

e. Victimization of Women.

A significant number of displaced women in the Nepal become displaced due to sexual violence. The conflict hits particularly hard displaced women who are forced to assume all family responsibilities after the killing of their husbands or partners. Women (and children) are trafficked or forced due to the conditions in which they live to become prostitutes in domestic sex tourism industry fuelled by foreign visitors, or become forced labourers in manufacturing and agriculture production. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to false opportunities to get out.

f. Conclusions

Nepal is a nation trying to stand on its feet after decades of internal conflict and socio-political violence. The trafficking of human beings for sex and labour is a thriving business in Nepal as long as the conditions of displacement
cause women and children to take desperate measures to survive, or are forced to remain living in conditions that render them fully exposed to exploitation and criminality. Human trafficking has served as an instrument of intimidation, domination and control of civilian populations, as a tool to remove people from their land, and as a means for illegal armed groups to amass illicit wealth.

There is also a troubling gap between Nepal's laws and the execution of its laws. Nepal has excellent laws. Most are carefully constructed, some elegantly so. The constitutional jurisprudence is often bold in its rulings on the constitutionality of Nepal's law, and the Constitutional Block has integrated to constitutional rank many international treaties and conventions pertaining to international humanitarian law and human rights law.

But the gap between commitment and fulfillment of the law persists and is due to three reasons. First, there is a large difference between what appears in writing and how the law is applied in practice. The second reason, which is related to the first, is due in great part to the lack of economic resources. It takes money to enforce the laws, and for many reasons, seems constantly short of money to fund its policies and programs. Either the money has been mismanaged, or it has been misused and siphoned away due to corruption. This is only speculation to take up at another time. The third reason is due to the discrimination and stigmatization embedded in the culture of Nepal where the ruling elites continue to preserve at all costs the prerogatives of their station in life and care precious little for anyone living below their class level.

What can be done?

• It is important for responsible parties to carry out public awareness raising the issue of trafficking and advocacy for survivors' rights. This will help to change negative
attitude towards trafficking victims.

- The government should empower survivors by organizing skill-oriented training and providing financial supports in order to enable them to acquire economic independence. This will have two benefits. On the one hand, survivors get opportunities and on the other, their information and knowledge would be more effective to conduct the programmes.

- It is necessary to conduct gender-sensitive programmes to enhance gender equality in the grassroots levels to the policy level. This is because gender discrimination is one of the reasons that may signify traditional discriminatory practices in the society.

- Discriminatory laws should be abolished and new ones formulated. In addition, the existing rules and laws should be applied effectively.

- It is important to ensure communities' participation in all anti-trafficking programmes, as this would ensure sustainability of the programmes.

**Key Findings, Gaps and Recommendations**

**a. Conceptual Clarity**

There is a need for NGOs and donor agencies to develop conceptual clarity on trafficking, particularly on its relation to migration and sex work. Some interventions currently conflate these concepts leading to strategies that may (explicitly or implicitly) restrict women's freedom and right to mobility. This is particularly true in welfare-oriented interventions in which NGOs claim to know what is best for women/girls (including whether or not they should be allowed to migrate). Lack of conceptual clarity affects all phases of a project, including monitoring and evaluation. For example, some organizations equate keeping women in the village with success preventing trafficking.
Conceptual clarity is also important in terms of understanding how 'vulnerability' to trafficking is conceived and, consequently it has implications for the way in which some programs target 'at risk' groups.

Adopting a human rights framework and basing interventions on sound research (see below) may help to clarify current trafficking discourses.

b. Research

There is a need for more research that informs intervention strategies and their subsequent monitoring and evaluation. Current information is largely anecdotal. Research should include:

- Analysis of the socio-economic context and process of female labor migration in Nepal and its linkages with trafficking. An understanding of this is fundamental to the development of appropriate intervention strategies.

- Documentation of known trafficking cases to develop a clearer picture of current trafficking methods, sites and processes, and also to develop a clearer picture of who is at risk and why and how to define vulnerability. This would assist the appropriate targeting of interventions.

- Documentation and follow-up of 'rescued' and 'intercepted' trafficked women/girls, including those who do and who do not return home to their families, and those who are HIV positive. Again, this would help develop a better understanding of vulnerability and is important to inform and refine care and support strategies.

- Research on the livelihood and coping strategies of other sex workers and female migrants who return to Nepal. This would help to inform care and support strategies.

- Experience indicates that research specifically on trafficking is best conducted by NGOs that have a strong field presence and that have built up trust in their target communities.
c. Program Site

Rural/Urban: Current evidence suggests that trafficking of female and child migrants from urban work sites is common and increasing. However, most prevention work to date focuses upon rural areas. There is a need to broaden the focus of trafficking prevention efforts to include the cities and urban workplaces.

Border: Current, border-based prevention strategies require further assessment to determine their effectiveness and to ensure that women's right to mobility is not being breached.

d. Program Content

Prevention: Most preventive interventions focus on: (i) improving women's opportunities in the village, (ii) keeping women in the village, and (iii) giving warnings about the potential dangers of trafficking and migration. These are valid activities but some IEC messages do not appear to be based on an informed understanding of local migration processes or on community needs/priorities. Given the reality that many women DO migrate or are trafficked, and that trafficking may occur in city workplaces as well as directly from rural areas, IEC materials need to be realistic and relevant and should include concrete relevant advice on how to migrate safely. There is also a need to establish support systems to enable safe migration and to help women once they are in the cities.

Care and Support: Current evidence suggests that care and support of rescued girls is a difficult and long-term process. NGOs engaged in this work require technical and financial support to develop systematic techniques for family assessment, counseling, intervention, and follow-up. Particular help is required to develop appropriate plans for girls who cannot return home and for those who are HIV positive. In particular, one current strategy of segregating
HIV positive 'rescued' girls in a home in a remote district requires careful evaluation.

**e. Program Process**

Prevention: Evidence from this report and from experience in other fields suggests that interventions that work from the bottom-up, that involve communities, build capacities and that aim to establish systems (e.g., women's groups) for providing support and taking action appear to hold greater promise for action and sustainability than top-down interventions that are characterized by one-time sensitization programs. Likewise, interventions that are empowerment-oriented and that, through a process of dialogue, aim to facilitate informed decision-making (e.g., on whether or not to migrate), are more likely to be relevant to community realities and to be accepted by target groups than those that are welfare-oriented and paternalistic in approach (telling people what is best for them).

Care and Support: Currently most care and support programs are welfare-oriented in which women/girls are provided with limited options, given directive counseling, and traditional skills training and jobs. However, some programs are empowerment oriented and aim to provide a range of skills and options to enable independent living and to build up self-esteem. The latter appears to be a promising approach but NGOs require assistance to develop these programs further.

**f. Advocacy and Networking**

There is a need for coordination and consistency in current advocacy work. An emphasis on promoting human rights and promoting safe migration may help to overcome some of the ideological differences (particularly with respect to sex work) that currently divide the field.

NGOs working to prosecute anti-trafficking cases require more support. The cases they pursue should be documented and used in advocacy work with the judiciary.
g. Monitoring and Evaluation

Though a great deal of trafficking-related work is being done, most interventions have not been systematically documented or evaluated and on-going monitoring of programs is absent, ad hoc, or is insufficiently rigorous. Hence, at this stage, it is not possible to make informed judgments of an intervention's relative efficacy or sustainability. There is an urgent need to support NGOs to develop appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Some formative research may first be required to develop appropriate process and impact indicators. Thorough documentation and sharing of experiences would greatly help to identify lessons learned and to build up a better understanding of which approaches work/do not work and why. This may be particularly useful for care and support strategies.

h. Potentially Innovative Intervention Approaches Prevention

• Community surveillance appears to be a good example of how community involvement combined with outside support may assist communities to establish systems that can take action in the event of suspected trafficking and that can help those in difficulty. However, care must be taken not to equate women leaving the village with trafficking. Similarly, care must be taken not to abuse the system, so that it does not become a mechanism for controlling women/girls.

• Establishing women's groups who can provide support and who can take action in the event of problems is also a promising anti-trafficking strategy. Such groups can be used as a forum for advice giving and for support and shelter to those facing family or financial problems who might otherwise be tempted to run away or leave the village via an unsafe route (e.g., with an unknown broker).
• Working with children/young people through schools, teachers or child clubs appears to be an innovative anti-trafficking strategy. Peer support/influence is harnessed and the groups/clubs may act as neutral forums where children who are experiencing family problems can seek help.

• Involving trafficking survivors is another promising strategy. Their involvement may be useful: firstly, in order to make anti-trafficking messages more realistic and relevant to particular target groups. Experience in other fields has shown that people are more likely to identify with peer-led education rather than that given by social workers. Secondly, the example of one NGO that helped trafficking survivors to set up their own organization shows that their involvement can also play an important part in the rebuilding of their own self-esteem and confidence, and may act as an important capacity building opportunity.

• The intervention in Kathmandu (run by the NGO formed by trafficking survivors) is also an innovative approach to preventing trafficking by trying to tackle the problem at a different and increasingly significant stage in the trafficking/migration process.

REFERENCES


“MULTICULTURALISM: AN INSTRUMENT FOR CREATING PEACE AND HARMONY IN SOCIETY”

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Abstract

This paper highlights the concept of multiculturalism and also examines how multiculturalism plays a great role in creating peace and harmony in society. Literally speaking multiculturalism means that several different cultures can co-exist with each other in society. Thus in a multicultural society multiple groups of cultures can exist within one society. Multicultural societies depend on mutual understanding, engaging proactively in co-operation between different communities, respecting one another and inter-personal differences related to behaviour. In present times most countries are internally plural. These countries have different religions, races, cultures, civilisations and communities. Through multiculturalism these communities can live with each other peacefully. Multiculturalism grants equal civil and political rights to all the people without any kind of discrimination based on the cast, creed, religion and races. In the early 1970s multiculturalism emerged in the world. It has its origin in the western countries because the term multiculturalism is mostly used with reference to western countries. Firstly, multiculturalism was found in Canada in 1971 and then in Australia in 1973. Canada is usually considered as the birthplace of multiculturalism. The Canadian government followed the multiculturalism ideology because it emphasised on the social importance of immigration. Canada adopted multiculturalism as an official policy. Now many western and African countries have multiculturalism society for e.g. Netherlands and Nigeria.
The concept of multiculturalism is used as remedy by the western countries. A multicultural society can be stable and will last long only if there is common sense of belongingness among its citizens. The people of the country should commit to each other for common interest and attachment. The society based on the multiculturalism promotes an idea of peace and security among communities following different religions. Multiculturalism encourages a creative dialogue between different cultures and their moral visions. Finally multiculturalism leads to pillarised society. There is need of commitment and tolerating power among communities for each other. Multiculturalists claim that different cultures and traditions can enrich the society. Multiculturalism usually occurred when the society is ready to accept the culture of immigrants.

**Keywords**- multiculturalism, peace, harmony, culture, interpersonal, ideology, communities.

**Introduction**

"*The same stream of life that runs through my veins day and night runs through the world.*"

- Rabindranath Tagore

The literal meaning of multiculturalism is that several different cultures can co-exist with each other. Thus in a multicultural society multiple groups of cultures can exist within one society. In another words we can say that multiculturalism is a belief or ideology according to which different cultures exhibit and dwell together. This concept of multiculturalism originated in the western societies. “European countries' legal systems and cultural policies respond to these efforts in many different ways. Respecting identity politics-driven group rights seems to be the most common approach, resulting in the creation of a multicultural society” (Janicki, 2010). United Kingdom and Netherlands are the most apparent examples. Different
cultures represent their different concept and way of good life.

Conflict and ethnic violence have become part of our daily life and there is need for cooperation among different groups of society. In western countries this idea of multiculturalism has yielded successful results, and it can also be adopted in other countries. “Multiculturalism is best understood neither as a political doctrine with programmatic content nor a philosophical school with distinct theory of man's place in the world but as a perspective on a way of reviving of human life” (Parekh, 1999). Multiculturalism is also used as an umbrella term to characterise the moral and political claims of a wide range of disadvantages groups, including African Americans, women, gays and lesbians and the disabled. “Multiculturalism is a collection of concepts derived from three main approaches. The first meaning of multiculturalism is a demographic and descriptive one, which is commonly understood as a description of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious differentiation of societies. The second has clearly ideological and normative meaning, implying state ideology concerning the maintenance of cultural diversity in a society. The last is a programme and political meaning, usually developed as a set of state policies heading towards the creation of a unified institutional system respecting cultural differences and offering equal access for all members of the society”, (Inglis 1996; Tiryakin 2003; Lodzinski 2007). As the term "multiculturalism" implies, a variety of cultures are allowed to co-exist, if not form the sine qua non of what it means to exist as a human being, (Kanpol, MacLaren, 1983).

Culture is the essence of personal and national identity. Culture provides basic values, attitudes and norms to the people. The Oxford English Dictionary defines culture as the intellectual side of civilization. Therefore, multiculturalism is
a network or system of various interrelated and intermingled cultures, having and sharing different characteristics. Multiculturalism promotes the idea of togetherness of different religions and communities. Mere tolerance of group differences is said to treat the members of minority groups as equal citizens; recognition and positive accommodation of group differences are required through “group differentiated rights”, a term coined by Will Kymlicka. He again asserts that the increasing multicultural fabric of modern societies has given rise to many new issues and conflicts, as ethnic and national minorities demand recognition and support for their cultural identity, (Kymlicka, 1995). Multiculturalism is based on harmony and peace values. It works as a preventive measure against violence. Multiculturalism may be outlined as “...a framework for coexistence of separates cultures rather than a transitional mechanism for integrating newcomers into the dominant culture” (Fukuyama, 2006). Parekh challenges the continuing legacy of moral monism in contemporary liberalism (Parekh, 1999). He says multiculturalism is in fact "not about minorities" but "is about the proper terms of relationship between different cultural communities”. Mahajan examines existing multicultural alternatives and tries to reconcile cultural rights with individual freedom (Mahajan, 2002).

In the present time different cultures are coming closer to each other. Globalization is playing a very important role in bringing together different civilizations and traditions. In particular the increasing levels of migration due to globalisation have encouraged the idea of promoting multiculturalism, and today there is a new wave of global culture spreading all over the world. In many western countries multiculturalism is a part of official policy since the 1970s and there are many examples of countries that have followed the multicultural system. These include Netherlands, which adopted official policy on
multiculturalism in the 1980s, as well as Switzerland, Sweden and New Zealand. Australia, United States of America, Canada and Britain are also countries that have a stated commitment to follow the rule of assimilation or multiculturalism. Multiculturalism can prevail in society if it is obeying or following human rights. Mutual respect among different communities and a secular approach to maintain peaceful environment is a must. Few commentators see multiculturalism purely as an ideology and instead refer to it as a process of social change and social justice to all the communities without any discrimination.

In a multicultural society people following different faiths can live together and enjoy their rights with full freedom without any restriction by the government. In this type of system the majority cannot force minority group to follow their culture, rather they allow them to enjoy their rights. They have full opportunity to develop on their own terms. Multiculturalism requires tolerance on the side of both the side minority and majority.

Australia is widely known as a country of immigration and an example of a multicultural nation. Assimilation promotes incorporation of the migrants in the host society. Australia has also adopted this policy as an official policy. The Government declared Australia as a multicultural society in 1973 and introduced Multicultural Policy. Australian Multiculturalism highlights its cultural and ethnic diversity, and one of the ways it demonstrates its diversity is by an annual celebration known as 'Harmony Day'. There are more than two hundred ethnic communities in Australia who speak different languages. Immigrants coming from different countries are also well integrated into the mainstream of the nation. In 1985 the Australian church declared that its church is a multicultural church because of the large number of migrants. Although conflicts and rifts among communities do exist, immigrants from all over the
world still come to Australia and it has managed to maintain its multicultural structure and domestic pluralism even in relation to the settlement of ethnically diverse immigrants groups.

Australia has welcomed new people belonging to different lifestyles, having different attitudes and behaviours. They have accepted diverse styles of food and cultures of people following different faiths. Incidents of ill-treatment and abuse towards immigrants have often been reported in recent years, but multiculturalism remains a significant part Australia’s development and its identity. Both major political parties – Labour and Conservative – have supported the concept of the multiculturalism. Migrants have been invited to join cultural and political institutions of the government with the goal of integrating them into the mainstream of the nation.

Canada adopted a multicultural policy in 1971. The Canadian Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism is often referred to as the origin of modern political awareness of multiculturalism (Ronald, 2010). Canada is home to a diverse polulation belonging to different races, religions and cultures. The Canadian government adopted multiculturalism as an ideology to emphasise the social importance of immigration. As more and more immigrants come to search for a better life, the population naturally becomes more diverse. Canada is often considered the first country that adopted multiculturalism as an official policy.

As part of this approach different cultures were promoted in Canada that resulted in the growth and evolution of the nation, and multiculturalism is considered a matter of pride by Canadians. They have adopted multiculturalism not only in theory but also in practice, as evidenced by the Multiculturalism Act which had become a law back in 1988.
The Canadian concept of multiculturalism is criticised by a section of French Canadians. Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor are the two most influential Canadian thinkers who focused on the concept of the multiculturalism. Will Kymlicka demands legal recognition of all the rights (political, cultural, ethnic, racial etc.) for the minority community. And Charles Taylor has advocated for equal representation for all the communities (Taylor, 1994).

America is an immigrant country and another nation that is well known for its approach to multiculturalism. Since 1950s the American government has admitted and supported cultural diversity. Fair policies are allowed and all citizens have the right to preserve their cultural inheritance.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (vasudha-the earth and kutumbakam-family) is a Sanskrit phrase which means that the whole universe is one family. Since the Vedic period India is known for a culture of worship, respect and peaceful coexistence with all communities preaching different religions, practising different customs, conventions etc. and here emerged what is called multiculturalism. India is culturally,
religiously and linguistically one of the most diverse countries in the world and diversity is the main requirement of the multiculturalism. According to the 1961 Census of India, there are 1652 indigenous languages in the country. Most of the States are based on ethno-linguistic and ethno-religious groups (Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and North Eastern States). Multiculturalism has been an important aspect of Indian history and traditions and the Indian constitution provides political and institutional measures for the recognition and accommodation of the country's diversity (Bhattachryya, 2003). Multiculturalism is an unproblematic harmony. It is defined as the culture ideal and it always focused on how diverse groups in a society can co-exist with one another.

In multicultural system the majority group accepts the cultural differences and the state secures equal rights for the minorities. The multicultural model is a combination of a set of social policies to respond the needs of settlers and a statement about openness of the nation to cultural diversity. Multiculturalism promotes the awareness of oneness of humanity and the consciousness of common values in various cultures. Multiculturalism creates an environment of peace and harmony in society. States should expend efforts in developing the multicultural ethos of peace that would help people and nations to understand and respect each other. It would reduce the possibilities of conflict and violence in the society. The promotion of multiculturalism can prevent the dangerous influence on society caused by the widespread rise of terror and hatred that lead to conflicts and violence. The government should actively strive to bring all the communities into the mainstream of the nation. It would result in the reduction of the conflicts and violence in the society.

The government should establish ministries to promote “Multicultural Peace Culture”, (Aharoni). States should
promote multicultural peace education that would help in creating peace and harmony in society. Governments should organise multicultural programmes to be implemented at the national and international level. Non-governmental organisations can play a better role in the creation of the new multicultural peace system. A multicultural system can also help in building trust among nations. Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) are a powerful component in building confidence in international system. Multicultural education should be provided in the schools and colleges. It would create feeling of togetherness. At regional level, the interactions of cultures provide opportunities for the cultural differences to communicate and interact to create multiculturalism. This approach is known as interculturalism.

Peace Museums can also be established to propagate multiculturalism, peace culture and harmony among different communities. Peace Museums have been formulated in Japan, England and Samarkand. These Peace Museums promote all religions and culture and civilisations together. This helps in creating peaceful environment in the world. Media and telecommunications play an effective role in interconnecting people and nations as they are one of the main factors in the process of the globalisation of culture and the spread of multiculturalism. Arts and culture should be researched and translated into different languages. This will create respect for different religions and culture. Multiculturalism encourages a creative dialogue between different cultures and their moral visions.

Multiculturalism plays a very important role in building a harmonious environment and new culture of peace. Social harmony is an integrative value in a global information society, which unites in itself love, peace, justice, freedom, equality, brotherhood, cooperation, nonviolence, tolerance and humanism. According to multiculturalists cultures are
overlapping and interactive but they also recognise that they belong to distinct societal cultures and wish to preserve these cultures. They emphasise that both redistribution and recognition are important dimensions in the pursuit of equality for minority groups. Multiculturalism provides three special kinds of rights: 1) cultural rights, 2) self-government rights and 3) special representation rights. Multicultural education should be promoted to equalise the society in order to bring peace and harmony in society. According to Thomas Jefferson “the goals of education should be “to enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom” (1810) and to empower the people as the “ultimate guardians of their own liberty” (1784).

Multiculturalism advocates equal status for all communities and equality among communities. It respects differences in society. Globalisation means interconnectedness of social aspects, political aspects, and economic aspects together and it promotes inter-change their ideas. In the present time society is facing different types of problems like communalism, ethnic conflict, and communal disharmony in the society. Through multiculturalism the different types of people can live with peace and harmony.

Multiculturalism has become an issue of discussion among contemporary political thinkers. It is defined in different ways by different thinkers. The emergence of different cultures is posing a challenge to peace and harmony in the society. The rise of the concept of multiculturalism in the 1970s has sought to solve this problem of the threat to the cultural diversity. Multiculturalists gave the concept of co-existence of different cultures and togetherness of the communities. In a multicultural state the political system requires to recognise equal understanding of all cultures and cultural communities
in society. In this type of society, political system belongs to none but to all with equality.

The western world adopted this concept of the multiculturalism very successfully. It should also be adopted by the third world countries. According to Kymlicka (2011), all the states can adopt multiculturalism and its policies by recognising the legitimate interest of minorities in their identity and culture, without eroding liberal and democratic values. In multicultural world everyone enjoys equal economic, political, and social rights in the society. Their rights are protected by the equal protection of law. The citizens of all races should equally participate in politics as it is an essential element of citizens' capacity (Taylor). The political system should be strong enough to strengthen the citizens' active role in the political system.

There is need of a “balanced multiculturalism” policy to develop different strategies to fulfil the requirements of both the majority groups and minority groups. The majority group should be proud of the minority group. It is called a sense of pride in others, (Fathali, 1991).

Conclusion

In western countries multiculturalism is used as a set of strategies to fight against racism and protect minorities of all types. Multiculturalism can create a new identity of the 'global citizen'. In western countries there is tolerance of behavioural differences and religious differences among different communities. There is a belief that all immigrants would be assimilated in the same way. It may be possible if they adopt the majority culture or in a US-style melting pot situation, where both minority and majority merge together to form a new entity (K. Vani, John). Multiculturalism seeks to address the issue of discrimination. Out of multiculturalism a new culture emerges over a period of time which finally gives birth to unique collective conscious
of the people. Multiculturalism should be included in daily classroom teachings. Multiculturalism can be seen as the modern expression of those political principles that allow for both majority rule, and respect for the rights of minorities, (Alexander, 1996). All communities can live with a peace and harmony. Multiculturalism represents the latest stage toward the abstract conceptualization of our social identity.

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20. Withol de Wenden. (2003). speaks of the Jacobin Tradition in France, dating back to the French revolution, which has opposed the right to be different, pluralism and group rights. pp. 77.
Introduction

In the 21st century, peace is more than the absence of war. Peace is when people are able to resolve their conflicts without violence and can work together to improve the quality of their lives. Peace has been and remains a permanent ideal and aspiration, as well as a right and a duty. However, in our fast-paced, interconnected world, peace is at risk. While world wars are becoming a thing of the past, violence, civil strife and conflict continue to define the lives of millions. As an ongoing process of political, economic and cultural negotiation, peace requires constant engineering, vigilance and active participation. It implies commitment and a long-term vision, and this entails a blend of traditional and contemporary ways of understanding the roots of conflicts, ways of mitigating violence, and paths towards reconciliation and healing. Today, all conflicts are and must be a concern of all, since in our globalized world a conflict anywhere can generate conflict everywhere. In times of unprecedented communication, opportunities, interconnectedness and migration, the risks to peace also lie in the inequalities, fanaticism, and marginalization of vulnerable groups, as well as the rejection and ignorance of other cultures, together with their traditions, beliefs and histories.

Relationship between Peace and Culture

When discussing the relationship between peace and culture the point to be addressed is whether it is right to assume that cultural differences are the cause of conflicts. Needless to say, there have been many societies in history
peacefully coexisting with others despite ethnic or regional differences. Yet, we cannot deny that culture intensifies such confrontations when ethnic or cultural differences are combined with economic or political interests. Therefore, we must consider how such situations can be prevented in order to define conditions for co-existence and co-prosperity. This problem of co-existence of different ethnic or social groups is important even at the local or national level, but it has a more difficult dimension in the international arena, because unlike the national level, the international society finds it much more difficult to foster a sense of global community and unity as compared to individual nations, ethnic groups or communities. Therefore, the role of intercultural exchanges needs to be emphasized particularly at the international level.

To this end, we must accept the premise that it is essential for all human beings to share a common ethos and sensibility, to be aware of the significance of mutual understanding and differences in sensibility, and to tolerate differences in the interests of building up a sense of global unity. Culture emerges as an essential factor for lasting peace. Neither equitable progress nor social cohesion is truly possible if culture is left to one side. On the contrary, the road to inclusive social and economic development, environmental sustainability, peace and security is firmly grounded in culture as understood in its spiritual, material and intellectual dimensions encompassing diverse value systems, traditions and beliefs. Culture informs and influences people's relation to sustainable development, conflicts, and reconciliation in a distinct but direct manner. It determines and creates paths for lasting conflict-resolution and healing. Thus, as “a repository of knowledge, meaning and values that permeate all aspects of our lives, culture also defines the way human beings live and interact with each other and their environment.”¹

1. From Green Economies to Green Societies – UNESCO’s Commitment to Sustainable Development, 65.
The Cultural Workings of Conflict and Peace

Peace can be associated with a multitude of factors and phenomena that reinforce one another, including gender equality, justice, relevant education and employment opportunities, the sound management of natural resources, human rights protection, political inclusion, and low levels of corruption.² However, most of these factors are culturally coded and hence can only be defined contextually. Understanding the central role played by culture in identifying the roots of a given conflict and the related specific path towards reconciliation is thus an essential, if not determining, step in achieving lasting peace and security.

Yet, recent research has convincingly pinpointed the fact that the cultural dimension is often at the heart of peace-building processes by being at once part of the problem and part of the solution. As Michelle LeBaron has put it:

“Culture is an essential part of conflict and conflict resolution. Cultures are like underground rivers that run through our lives and relationships, giving us messages that shape our perceptions, attributions, judgments and ideas of self and the other.”³ As a source of identity, meaning and belonging, culture can both facilitate social cohesion and justify social exclusion and xenophobia. Amartya Sen has aptly captured this paradox:

“A sense of identity can make an important contribution to our relations with others. At the same time, it is important to recognize the fact that a sense of identity can firmly exclude many people as it warmly embraces others. The adversity of exclusion can be made to go hand in hand with the gifts of inclusion. Identity can be a source of richness and warmth as well as of violence and terror.”⁴

2. “The Future We Want for All”, op. cit., Para. 45
Consequently, the changing nature of present-day conflicts, which occur less between states and more often within them, and which are led not by organized armies but by paramilitary groups and with civilians increasingly in the crossfire, call for new considerations about conflict-resolution and methods of reconciliation. “In these new wars, culture stands at the frontline.”

**Heritage: Towards Shared Identities**

There is an urgent need for cooperation and multilateralism and for globally agreed, shared policies that integrate culture into peace-building strategies and programmes. Important actions here include the prevention of conflicts through education for peace, intercultural dialogue, the promotion and support of cultural diversity, and the fostering of international cooperation in science and technology, as well as the advancement of media programmes to combat violence. These are inclusive policies that place the emphasis on human rights, the freedom of expression, equity and equality and dignity and dialogue.

In times of conflict, the protection of cultural heritage in all its forms is paramount. “Culture and heritage are not about stones and buildings – they are about identities and belongings. They carry values from the past that are important for the societies today and tomorrow. We must safeguard the heritage because it is what brings us together as a community; it is what binds us within a shared destiny.”

Three legally binding international treaties reinforce the idea of heritage as a reservoir of identity and meaning: the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict; the 1970 UNESCO

6. Address by Irina Bokova on the occasion of the ICOMOS Gala to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, 2 December 2012.
Convenon on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; and the 1972 World Heritage Convenon. These conventions also highlight the fact that attacks on cultural heritage translate directly into attacks on shared identity. Heritage is not targeted by chance: by destroying bridges, temples, mosques, churches and shrines, and manuscripts and libraries, the attackers aim to break both the connections to the past and the projections into the future of the attacked communities. This is one of the reasons why UNESCO has called for “seeing cultural heritage as an international security issue.”

Although at times of war the protection of cultural sites, monuments and artifacts may seem to be a luxury in the middle of destruction and the loss of human lives, one should not forget that “protecting culture is also protecting people.” Culture represents an anchor of stability, and it is the foundation on which countries and people can hope to rebuild their lives.

**Art and culture in policy strands**

It is important that stronger “coalitions for culture” must be built in order to integrate culture and respect for cultural heritage into all international peace-building processes. Two UN Security Council Resolutions adopted in 2012 (2056 and 2071) represent but one step in this direction. However, protecting and safeguarding heritage alone is not sufficient to build peace though without it peace cannot be lasting.

When mainstreamed within educational strategies at the early stage, cultural initiatives that recognize diversity

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within a human rights-based approach may play a particularly important role in building confidence and tolerance among multicultural communities and in providing a common space for dialogue.

Culture-driven development, which acknowledges diversity and promotes the ability of individuals to freely participate in cultural life and access cultural assets, will considerably contribute to the building of a culture of “living together” and thus to peace and human security.

Encouraging cultural activities and creativity in conflict areas or areas affected by disasters will enable the affected communities to reconnect with their identities and regain a sense of normality, enjoying art and beginning to heal the scars of war. Cultural programmes may also help foster appreciation of cultural diversity and appreciation of the “universal element” in all cultures, helping to “humanize” the other and paving the way towards mutual understanding.

Changes in approaches to peace-building entail close cooperation between policymakers, international organizations and civil-society initiatives. Relating arts to a peace-building agenda necessitates bridging the gap between reality on the ground and policy-making. Art and culture are part of a range of solutions. At the same time, in doing so, it is important to understand that art can be a unifying factor as well as a dividing one. History and cultural linkages can be used to incite violence. Agendas need to go beyond nice stories and see how approaches can be translated into something replicable and scalable, and eventually incorporated into mainstream policy by being connected to a global agenda. A more scientific approach to arts-based projects is needed to see where the intended project fits.
Youth Exchanges

Greater engagement with the youth by organizing more exchange programmes that help in fostering better understanding of other cultures can be organised on the lines of the youth exchanges that were conducted between France and Germany after World War II. Educational reconstruction is extremely crucial. In an age when technology is connecting the young generation in a virtual world, joining young people together in the same space is of incredible significance. Young people must be able to engage in artistic peace-building exchanges, creating a perpetuating network of cultural innovators for future generations. Providing support for future artists to ensure that the youth voice is included at all times is also necessary. There needs to be greater emphasis on connectivity between artists and those responsible for economic and social policy. Given that cultural exchange is defined as activities that enhance mutual understanding and foster the appreciation of mutual identities, we can say that it is a process of assimilation, absorption and integration. At the same time, it functions as a process and medium for independence, resistance and isolation. Because of these contradictory aspects, we must find an answer to this question: under what conditions will cultural activities have a lasting impact? In terms of conflict prevention, mutual understanding – namely developing a sense of unity that can be shared by all human beings – will be of great significance.

When a conflict is prolonged, local people become isolated from the outside world, and their true lives and images become obscure in the eyes of the outsiders. Conflict itself rather than their suffering is presented to the world. Thus, the conflict and violence serve as the only medium for connecting the area of conflict with the rest of the world, and the actual people inhabiting the area and their everyday lives, mindset and emotions are not communicated well.
One of the objectives of cultural exchange is to protect such people against psychological and cultural isolation, that is, to provide links between these citizens in the area of conflict and outside societies. Inviting a Baghdad citizens' drama group to Japan and have them present a play can be cited as an example of such efforts to bridge the people of Iraq with the Japanese citizens.

**The Role of Cultural Exchange after the End of Conflict**

1. **Providing mental recovery**

   When a military or political conflict is near its end, it is required to consider how cultural exchange can help heal psychological wounds. To help such people heal their psychological damage, cultural exchange activities offering both parties an opportunity to bilaterally express their feelings will be of help in redefining their identities. A good example is a joint drama workshop held to bridge the gap between people who were on the government and rebel sides in Aceh, Indonesia, by offering an opportunity to converse with each other and to lessen the pain of those who had no choice but to battle against people sharing similar ethnic origins.

2. **Getting over the memories of Conflict**

   Physical damage is easily discovered but mental anguish does not surface unless those who suffer open up their hearts. In many cases, those suffering are reluctant to talk about their agony. Providing such people with an opportunity to express themselves and keeping a record of their psychological wounds will ease the process of reconciliation and future conflict. This can be done through cultural activities in the forms of literature, dramas, and international symposia.

3. **Restoring cultural and ethnic pride**

   Conflicts often destroy or distort self-identity and demolish cultural traditions in which ethnic identity is
expressed. Hence, a post-conflict peace building process should include activities for restoring and reestablishing a symbol of ethnic cultural identity, for instance a historical monument or a performing art. Inviting an Afghan craftsman to Japan to restore ceramic art destroyed during the civil war is one example of such endeavors. At the same time, cultural heritage plays a key role in reconciliation. In post-conflict situations, cultural heritage often becomes a strong symbol and tool for the rebuilding of communities, helping them actively to break the cycle of violence. The reconstruction of the Old Town of Warsaw and its inscription on the World Heritage List is a symbolic creative act of reconciliation.

Conclusion

When conducting cultural activities for peace building, practical problems and difficulties are faced. Such issues include questions about how best to grasp the needs and intentions of local people and how to prioritize projects. Cultural activists may run the risk of being involved in conflict. Therefore it is to be ascertained who is going to be responsible for reducing such risk. What can be done to avoid risks? One approach is to invite the people from both sides of conflict areas to an outside setting and have them take part in cultural workshops. An alternative will be to create protected spaces which enable safe conduct of cultural activities in conflict zones. Political risks are also involved in cultural exchange. Can cultural exchanges remain neutral without being biased towards either side? This is a constant political problem which has to be solved. Furthermore, organizers of cultural exchanges in conflict regions, especially government-related organizations, must consider how they should avoid the risk of inadvertently getting involved in conflicts and ensure the safety of activists. Failing to take appropriate measures will likely set off political risks in the country of origin of those organizations.

Finally, there is the issue of evaluation. It is very difficult
to assess the effectiveness of cultural exchange for peace building, and that requires a long-term perspective. The higher the military or political risk, the more significant this issue becomes in relation to accountability.

Despite these challenges it cannot be denied that art and culture play a major role in conflict resolution and prevention. Though their use should be more practical and through properly defined and effective policies.
INTRODUCTION

The tragedy of the last century is that it began with the promise of no war but it ended with 108 million dead in war. Today's World is still full of ongoing violent struggles, wars and conflicts. The potential use of nuclear armament for war is still a possibility. World is not only divided on traditional lines of ideology, haves and have-nots. North-South, Developed and Developing, rich and poor but has found new grounds for division such as ethnicity, religion and technology. In the economic sphere globalization and liberalization are setting the tone of development. The just war theory is again gaining acceptance in the name of 'humanitarian intervention'. : It is quite clear that despite a longing for a peaceful world this century is not ready to bring us Kant's 'eternal peace' or 'stable peace'. Peace is the core of progress, both internal and external. Absence of war and weapons alone can't bring perennial peace. Peace can be attained by harmonizing human minds. A peaceful world is not a world of void. Peace is neither the peace of the grave nor that of status quo which perpetuates existing inequalities in justice or increase violence and exploitation. The peace that is required is that which results from a realization of justice and ensured equality and independence for all.

In India, the yearning for a peaceful world is an ancient one. In Yajurveda (one of the oldest composed text in human history period approx 1500 B.C.), we find prayer for a peaceful world.
Om may there be peace in the sky and in space!
May there be peace on land and in waters!
May herbs and food bring us peace.
May all the personifications of God bring us peace.
May God bring us peace!
May there be peace throughout the world!
May the peace be peaceful. May God give me such peace!
Om! May there be peace (physical peace, peace (mental peace) and peace [spiritual peace] Om!

[Yajurveda Ch. 36 Hy. 17]

But only praying for a peaceful world will not bring peace on this plane. The history of mankind is largely a history of wars, class struggle and preparation of war. War has such an important place in human history that many consider it a natural, unavoidable phenomenon of human history. As some say that war is but “the continuation of politics by other mean”. The invention and deployment of nuclear weapons has added a new dangerous dimension to the existing war-peace syndrome. Einstein stated that, “the unleashed power of the atom has changed everything except our way of thinking. Thus we are drifting towards unparalleled catastrophe.

We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive. The problem of making a peaceful world is not an abstract but a concrete one of immediate necessity and of highest priority. It is not nuclear but technological advancement that has threatened world safety. The 9/11 attack is a recent example of that. Before us we have two alternatives. Either to continue the process of hatred, intolerance, fanaticism and war or to resolutely start intensive and constructive efforts to eliminate war, violence and the use of force.
Objective - To promote peace education theory.

One goal of education is to create the conditions for peace, that is, a society where citizens can freely share concerns, be productive, have creative use of their time, enjoy human rights and manage conflicts without direct violence. The whole concept of civilization rotates somewhat around the axis of peace and civic virtue.

Teaching peace and the crucial consequence, learning peace, are left to various elements in civil society, like the family or church, both of which ideally promote values of tolerance, love and charity but in reality are fraught with unresolved conflicts.

Research Problem: Peace and related issues are National, State and International government responsibilities.

In contemporary societies approaches to peace are usurped by the National Security State with its emphasis upon peace through strength. Teachers who feel pressured to account for their instruction by having their students to score well on standardized tests may not wish to promote something as frivolous as teaching values or preparing their students to countenance the many sources of violence that exist in their lives.

Hypothesis- If peace will not strive to be all inclusive it will not affect the whole mankind.

During this past century there has been a growth in social concern about horrific forms of violence, ethnic hatred, racism, sexual abuse, communalism, regionalism, domestic violence and a corresponding growth in the field of peace education where educators of all stripes from day one to adult, hope to use their professional skills to warn their fellow citizens about imminent danger and advise them about palms to peace.
Methodology:

“Peace education”, as used in this paper refers to all teaching about peace – what it is, why it does not exist and how to achieve it – including academic content that gets ignored in most institutions of education. This includes teaching about the challenges of achieving peace, developing non violent skills and promoting peaceful attitudes.

Peace education has five main postulates:

1) It explains the roots of violence.
2) It teaches alternative to violence.
3) It adjusts to cover different form of violence.
4) Peace itself is a process that varies according to context.
5) Conflict is omnipresent.

Postulate One has the role of clarion call to warn about the hazards of violence. Under this postulate students in peace education learn about the “other” in order to deconstruct enemy images.

Postulate Two presents different peace strategies that can be used to address the problems of violence pointed out in postulate one.

Postulate Three explains the dynamic nature of peace education and shifts its emphasis according to the type of violence as it is addressing.

Postulate Four embeds peace education theory and practice within specific cultural norms.

Postulate Five states that peace educators cannot eliminate conflict but they can provide students valuable skills in managing conflict.
Limitations:-

Peace is too grave a matter to be left solely to politicians. With the possibility of a rapprochement between adversaries, reconciliation processes need to take place without which mutual understanding and tolerance are likely to be precarious.

Reconciliation may need the support and facilitation of educational interventions, both school based activities as well as out of school, community and media based. For these reasons peace education programs have been carried out in a great variety of formats all over the world for at lest 30 years. The importance of such programs has recently been amplified by UNESCO's call for the development of a world wide “Culture of Peace”. With the growing interest in peace education, the development of the scholarly aspects of the enterprise to inform and be informed by practice is becoming an urgent matter.

However, this task is facing two major obstacles. The first obstacle concerns conceptual ambiguity; it emanates from the many profoundly different kinds of activities purporting to serve an exceedingly divergent array of goals which are all grouped under the same category of “peace education”. One would face difficulties finding a common core for educational programs for school based violence prevention, multicultural education and the promotion of mutual understanding between real enemies as in Kosovo or Israel. Indeed, can programs designed to cultivate skill in classroom based co-operation or school yard interpersonal conflict be grouped together with programs designed to cultivate mutual tolerance between Whites and Latinos in Los Angeles schools or between Catholics and Protestants in Belfast?
Conclusion

Factually speaking, peace education programs are designed to educate for peace with a real ethnic, racial or national adversary. Such programs face mutually exclusive collective narratives, anchored in painful historical memories which are accompanied by grave inequalities that offer a conception of peace education in such inter-group contexts, defined as intractable conflicts. A conception that sees peace education as affecting one's way of treating the “other” collectively narrates as a legitimate one which, in turn, appears to facilitate a relatively optimistic view of future reconciliation and willingness to act towards it.

The second obstacle concerns the paucity of research and evaluation of peace education as an educational challenge, distinguished from research on either basic social psychological processes or from research programs which – according to the conception to be offered here – are only tangentially related to genuine peace education. It distinguishes between researches that pertain to programs designed to change a student's way of relating to another collective racial, ethnic, national or religious group, as is the case with peace education in contexts of inter-group conflict.
1. Naresh Dadhich. “Towards a more peaceful world” Published in 32004 by Aaekh Publication.


The term Nationalism is derived from the word 'Nation'. The common notion as to what the term 'Nationalism' stands for is often very narrow and constricted. Nationalism is seen as a feeling whereby the people belonging to a particular nation believe that their nation is superior to all other nations due to various reasons. However, Nationalism in its true sense means a feeling of oneness and solidarity felt by the people of a country. It stands for a large group of people who take pride in their nation's past, incessantly strive towards building a stronger socio-economic society and believe in its growth potential for future. A nation gives its people a permanent identity in this world where every other form of identity becomes transient and shifting. Thus, Nationalism gives a sense of belonging to an individual.

Nationalism, as a concept is relatively new. It emerged only after the emergence of Nations. Earlier, the primitive man, being a nomad never felt the sense of belonging towards a particular piece of land. Eventually, he developed a sense of ownership. He felt the need to possess the things he used. With this began his urge to settle down with what was, as he believed, his own. This led to the beginning of, some sort of, civilized life. The nomadic tribes evolved into groups that settled down and started living an organized life. Over the years, tribes came together to form larger groups, villages came into existence; kingdoms came into being and thus, began the formation of a civilized society. But these were not Nations just yet. The people in different societies
owed their loyalties to different objects – the tribe leader in case of a tribe, a king in case of a kingdom, the master in case of a slave, the feudal lords in case of a feudal setup. Gradually, in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century, the world witnessed the struggles of the people to organize themselves, and thereby the world, into Nations. People living together in a particular geographical territory and sharing common language, culture, beliefs or descent came together to constitute Nations.

**The Advent of British and Emergence of Indian Nationalism**

The British came to India in the year 1600 as traders and eventually went on to rule the land for the nearly 200 years. The era of British Raj in India had both pros and cons. One of the major contributions of British rule was the establishment of a centralized system administration. This was done to ease the process of ruling, which was hindered by the vast territory and the diversity in rules, laws and customs in India where each region being a separate kingdom had its own way of administration. Thus, for the first time the people of this peninsula came together under one single authority – The Crown. The people were now subjected to the same rules and faced similar problems stemming from the same source of power. The British brought in a new system of education, communication, transportation and a number of other institutions. They set up the first railway line to facilitate trade which ended up linking the numerous fragmented regions to one another making entire Indian territory stand out as a single Nation. All these acts led to the establishment in the indigenous population of a rudimentary feeling of belongingness to a single territory, a nation called India. The nation saw the emergence of a new social class. One which had received education and had been exposed to the liberal and democratic ideas of other struggling nations. One which had read about the leading ideals of the French Revolution, of liberty, fraternity and
equality. This class drew inspiration from such movements around the world and began demanding basic rights – the right to their own lands, the right against a foreign power ruling them and their people, the right against exploitation and the right to shape the future of their own nation and thus came into conflict with the ruling power. Gradually, as the exploitation under the crown became incessant and the general populace began to realize and assert their rights, the bonds of togetherness were cemented and the feeling of Nationalism emerged as people cut across difference of class and castes and came together, united, to fight against a common enemy and to fight for a common objective, that of freedom. The Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movements under Mahatma Gandhi and the pan India resistance to the unjust laws of British all consolidated the Indians in a single unit thus emerged the feeling of Indian Nationalism.

**Complexities faced by Nationalism in India in promoting Communal Harmony**

The development of Nationalism in India was not easy. It was complex owing to a lot of difficulties in terms of history, geography and diversity. Historically, India consisted of a number of warring kingdoms and hence the feeling of belonging to a single unit through a common and shared past throughout the region was difficult and gradual to come about. It started only under the British rule. Second, the territorial vastness of the region posed a serious threat to any efforts at unification. Third and probably the most important reason for the difficulties was the extensive diversity of the people. The region was home to people belonging to different communities, different religions, speaking different languages, following different traditions and having vastly different cultures. Even the people belonging to a single religion were differentiated on the basis of different sects of the same religion. Further, the division of
society on the basis of caste also plagued the nascent nation. Thus, it often happened that one community could not relate to the other owing to such prominent differences. Communities, at times, could see nothing in common with each other and therefore could not identify as being a single entity belonging to a single nation, until the advent of British. However, Indian Nationalism grew despite this diversity and other serious problems to become the largest democracy of the world.

Communalism in India

The term Communalism can be broken down to two words, 'communal' and 'ism'. The word 'communal' is derived from the word 'community', and means 'belonging to a particular community', whereas the suffix 'ism' denotes a particular doctrine or practice. Thus, the word communalism essentially means the loyalty and commitment a person feels towards the community to which he belongs. Community has, in general, come to connote religious communities exclusively. However its real ambit is very large. Communalism is not restricted to religion alone. India is a Pluralistic society. A pluralistic society is one where the population has multiple religions, races, languages, cultures and traditions and all of them co-exist in a single territory. Communalism can, therefore, also be on the basis of caste, social class, region, language, culture and traditions. Thus, it can be easily inferred that in today's society, an individual belongs to multiple communities. For e.g. an individual may be a Hindu by birth, born in Kolkata, speaking Bengali, belonging to a middle class family and an engineer by profession. Thus, he can be classified into five different communities. India being among the most diverse nations of the world, every Indian exhibits multiple communal identities. There is immense diversity and to maintain peace and order no single community can be placed at a higher pedestal.
Causes of Communal Disharmony in Society

Communalism can become a cause of threat for the harmony of the society due to multiple reasons. The first of those is when individuals fail to acknowledge their multiple communal identities and lay undue importance to any single one of them, viewing it as above all others. The British Imperialism brought forth the 'Two Nation Theory' and the policy of 'Divide and Rule' where they tried to cause discord between the Hindus and the Muslims by highlighting religion as a major cause of problem between the two communities and by stating that both the communities, essentially, belonged to two separate nations. This sowed the seeds of distrust between the two communities, which had previously co-existed very peacefully, sharing the same resources for thousands of years. It ultimately resulted into the violent and bitter partition of India in the year 1947.

The second reason for communal discord is clash of interests between various communities on various issues. When the society gets divided into two or more communities demanding different things, and where one group's interest clashes with that of the other and the groups are unwilling to compromise, there arises conflict. Sometimes these conflicts show themselves in violent ways. The most common example of this problem is manifested in the form of frequently occurring communal riots and tensions where each group seeks to settle the matter through bloodshed and violence. Another example is that of lobbying by rich businessmen and industrialists that have many a times made the legislatures to decide in favor of such big businesses, at the cost of small time farmers and other stakeholders, due to lack of proper stakeholder analysis or worse still, corruption. The society, therefore gets divided on the basis of clash of interest on the major issue of livelihood.

Thirdly, economics plays a major role in causing communal upheaval. Certain sections of the society have
historically been backward in terms of growth and development. They faced oppression and exploitation under the British and were subsequently denied opportunities after Independence too. Despite the best efforts of the government, the help and assistance that was started specifically to uplift the conditions of this group failed to reach them, due to various procedural and administrative problems and instances of widespread corruption. This led to them being trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty, devoid of a chance to a better life. Thus the society got divided into two vastly different classes based on economics. The first class consisted of people who had the money and thus had the access to opportunities for a better life. Whereas the other class consisted of people who were to remain poor and suffer for the rest of their lives due to lack of finances and opportunities that never reached them. This division of society was the most starkly visible and the one that led to suffering in the most acute and permanent form for a long period of time.

The fourth cause can be attributed to the various political malpractices adopted by various political organizations that count on communal divide to give them a head start towards narrow minded political aims. One of the most common examples of such malpractices is the vote bank politics. Fielding of a candidate belonging to a particular community from a region with a substantial population of the same for elections shows how politicians and political parties divide people on the lines of religion to win seats in the legislature and how the pressing concern of the development of that area is the last thing on their minds. Pressure groups, being a socio political institution, were constituted with the belief that they would pressurize the government into doing the things which would be beneficial for the greater good of the community, have themselves succumbed to self interest. Thus, the existing institutions that were built to protect and preserve the communal fabric
have itself contributed to it's destruction.

The fifth reason for communal disharmony in society is irresponsible journalism by the media. In this 21st Century era of technology, media in the form of print, television and digital communication reaches nearly every household. No individual can remain untouched by the events happening in the nation and the world around it. Media, at times, is known to sensationalize crucial issues by exaggeration and irresponsible reporting in pursuit of better TRP ratings. This sensationalized reporting gives a communal touch to ordinary events, thereby leading to communal tensions.

**Role of State in Ensuring Communal Harmony and Nation Building**

Nation Building can be understood as the efforts taken by the various political and non-political institutions in a country to invoke and promote a feeling of loyalty, tolerance, solidarity and togetherness amongst the people towards the nation. Nation Building proceeds towards building a strong nation. India, with all it's diversity and dynamism provides for a unique setup for such processes. The primary threat to nation building in India is the problem of communal disharmony. A peaceful environment is conducive to growth and development of any country. Such a situation is not possible with communal strife. Thus, it becomes the primary responsibility of the state to address and resolve issues of communal discord with due care and sensitivity. The Indian Constitution lays down certain fundamental rights to be guaranteed to all citizens, irrespective of their caste, creed, gender or social class. Along with these it also lays down certain guidelines to help the government formulate policies that accommodate and promote the growth and development of all sections of society equally.

**Efforts Taken by The State to Promote Communal Harmony**

The Constitution of India describes it as a 'Sovereign', 'Socialist' and 'Secular' democracy. Sovereignty means that
the state shall hold the supreme power and shall not be under subjugation from any other internal or external authority. This implies that no particular community shall dictate the terms of policy or wield extraordinary power over others. Thus, the principle of Sovereignty, embodied in the very structure of our polity helps in keeping a check on majoritarianism, ensuring that all minority communities have a fair chance of participating in policy decisions that affect them. Their problems and concerns are heard and addressed and their voice is not stifled by the majority voice. As the supreme power rests with the State itself, no particular community is allowed to dominate, thus peaceful co-existence and absence of communal strife is assured to a large extent.

Socialism as a concept means elimination of inequality in income, status and standards of living.¹ Indian democracy takes the responsibility of ensuring this upon the central and the state governments. The extension of this principle is manifested in various policies formulated by the government, the most prominent being the Quota System. Under this system, the government reserves seats for certain economically and socially backward communities in educational and governmental institutions. This is done to level the playing field for the underprivileged minority by bringing them at par with others. This is an attempt to bridge the social divide between different classes by ensuring that the process of development is equitable and fair.

Secular state as defined by Donald Eugene Smith, is a state which gives individual and corporate freedom of religion and is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion, nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with any religion.² The extensive diversity in terms of religion in

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the country is often a major cause of communal violence. No religion has been designated as the national religion. The state does not promote or advocate any particular religion. Discrimination on the basis of religion is a punishable offence. Thus, the principle of secularism is imbibed in the day to day workings of the nation to prevent inequality and discrimination on the basis of religion and foster and promote equality and peace.

The political processes such as periodic free and fair elections, universal adult franchise, government for a fixed term contribute towards forming an accountable government. The government elected through such democratic process is answerable to the people for its actions and owes a duty of service to the nation. Such processes make an attempt to make a government more responsive and sensitive towards understanding communalism and working towards harmonizing it. Thus, the primary mechanisms and procedures to promote communal harmony are enshrined in the very base of our polity through constitutional safeguards and guidelines. The government too takes adequate steps to reduce disproportionate concentration of wealth and development to facilitate regional growth in every part of the country through financial assistance and policies. The constitution also ensures social justice and security by laying down adequate guidelines to guide the state in its efforts towards communal harmony and nation building.

**Impact of Media in the Society**

Media refers to print media in the form of newspapers, magazines, journals and electronic media in the form of shows telecast on televisions and those aired on radios. The reach of media, of all forms, is throughout the vastness of the Indian territory, across all regional boundaries, spanning the entire nation. Media's extensive reach to the masses has rechristened it as 'Mass media'. With current technological
advancements and increased curiosity among the people, the ambit of media has surpassed its previous limitations. The media has pushed the national boundaries of information and news to merge them with the global world outside it. Every piece of information, every event taking place anywhere in the world reaches us within a matter of minutes through the constant reporting done by the media. Similarly, every event of some significance happening around us is out there for the world to see. The media's reach in the general populace living around the world along with its capacity to influence and mould public opinion and perception on a particular issue give it the power to cause major changes in the world around. It has, therefore, become a very significant part of the global community.

**Historical Perspective and Present Aspirations**

Media has always been accorded a position of due importance in India. Historically, the print media's contribution to the Indian freedom struggle cannot be underestimated. Newspapers like Harijan, Young India, Bande Mataram, Al-Hilal, Amrit Bazar Patrika played a major role in mobilizing the masses by spreading awareness about the British exploitation and injustices, and organizing protests against the crown. They also sought to pacify communal tensions and misunderstandings created by the British to prevent people from coming together as one. The role of media in the Indian freedom struggle is, therefore, one of the best examples as to the power it holds over the people of a place. This power makes media a very effective tool for communication and, thus, in spreading awareness and bridging the difference between different communities. In an utopian world, the ideal function of an ideal media would be to provide accurate and authentic account of significant events. These accounts would consist of bare facts, devoid of all personal prejudices and opinions and would present a very objective analysis of the event and
would help the reader or viewer to form his opinion rationally. However, this world is far from utopian and our media far from ideal. There are a lot of factors affecting media reporting and journalism, and not all of them are beneficial for the society at large. Sometimes these pose a serious threat to communal harmony of the nation and, therefore, undermine the entire process of nation building undertaken by various institutions. In a diverse country like India, it thus becomes paramount to build a responsible media that works hand in hand with the government to achieve the goal of building a stronger nation through promoting communal harmony.

**Role of Media in Facilitating Harmony**

The role that the media is expected to perform towards the country is most poignantly expressed in the Code of Journalistic Conduct given by the Press Council of India. Even though the code is specifically for the conduct of print media, the social responsibility shared by the entire media remains the same and so does the sense of morality. Point number 20(11) of the code says,

"Journalists and columnists owe a very special responsibility to their country in promoting communal peace and amity. Their writings are not a mere reflection of their own feelings but help to a large extent in moulding the feelings and sentiments of the society at large. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that they use their pen with circumspection and restrain."³

Media is vested with a huge social responsibility, especially in a country like India. India, with its unique composition of such extensive communal diversity requires sensitive and careful understanding for the improper presentation of any information might cause suspicion or unrest. The media, therefore, has the difficult job of

disseminating information without inciting negativity. The Press Council of India's code of conduct for Journalists' makes an exhaustive attempt to lay down a basic framework of principles and ethics to help print media determine how to go about publishing news with the minimum chances of hurting communal sentiments or disrespecting any community.

The primary purpose of the very existence of a media is the dissemination of authentic, accurate and well analyzed facts. The information given should be verified from valid and authoritative sources before being published as news for the entire world to know. The media is the most effective tool to mobilize public opinion on any particular issue. It would be most harmful for such opinions to be based on inaccurate facts. The facts presented should, therefore, not be exaggerated or trivialized. They should not be distorted to promote a particular view of an issue. The media should make an honest attempt to analyze facts from every single view point possible so as to help readers or viewers to have a more comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand. The existence and understanding of multiple view-points can create a more flexible, accommodating and tolerant citizenry. Such citizens will, over time, become capable of respecting different opinions. Divergent opinions give rise to multiple perspectives which help in creating a dynamic society. Thus, accuracy and validity of facts, along with exploring and analyzing an issue from multiple perspectives is one of the most important jobs of the media.

An added responsibility on the media is that of unbiased reporting. Every individual has certain inherent prejudices and biases and every society has stereotypes. Media, at times, fans such feelings. For example, movies have frequently projected people belonging from the Muslim community as anti nationals, or Biharis as uncouth, vulgar and job takers, or women as bad drivers. All these
Stereotypes have become popular due to their constant presence and incessant circulation in the media. These have had dire consequences as was seen in the attacks on Biharis and people from U.P. in Maharashtra. Apart from stereotypes, many a times, the writer's inherent prejudices find manifestation in the form of their writings. These articles have a fair chance of instilling the same biases into the minds of the readers. Such negative biases, when directed towards a particular community, may cause distrust and suspicion towards them for the reader. Herein comes the discretion of distinguishing between an opinion and an analysis. The media should not create stereotypes and biases or promote the existing ones. The analyses should rise above narrow personal perceptions to show the larger picture for the benefit of all. Thus, an objective analysis of facts, devoid of all societal stereotypes and prejudices would go a long way in promoting communal harmony.

The heaviest burden laid down on the media is that of reporting during and about instances of communal clashes. Point 20 (1) of the Press Council of India's code of conduct for journalism states –

"News, views or comments relating to communal or religious disputes/clashes shall be published after proper verification of facts and presented with due caution and restraint in a manner which is conducive to the creation of an atmosphere congenial to communal harmony, amity and peace. Sensational, provocative and alarming headlines are to be avoided. Acts of communal violence or vandalism shall be reported in a manner as may not undermine the people's confidence in the law and order machinery of the State. Giving community-wise figures of the victims of communal riot, or writing about the incident in a style which is likely to inflame passions, aggravate the tension, or accentuate the strained relations between the communities/religious groups concerned, or which has a potential to exacerbate
the trouble, shall be avoided."⁴

Point 20(3) states –

“**The role of media in such situations (Gujarat Carnage/Crisis) is to be peacemakers and not abettors, to be troubleshooters and not troublemakers.**”⁵

With advancement in technology and existence of a plethora of T.V. channels and newspapers the media's manner of reporting instances of communal clashes have also changed drastically. The four day long anti Sikh riots of 1984 after the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards saw remarkable journalism but could not have the same impact as that in case of the 2002 Gujarat riots. During the 1984 riots, the national media was busy covering the funeral of Mrs. Gandhi and as a result media reporting of the riots started one full day after they had actually begun. The first reports, therefore, remained those of eye witnesses and the ones that travelled by word of mouth. The only electronic media available in 1984 was the State owned Doordarshan, thus, the reporting of the riots remained limited, both in terms of coverage and perspective. Contrary to this, in the 2002 Gujarat riots, the full impact of electronic media reporting was seen. The Gujarat riots happened between the months of February and May 2002. They were the result of the Godhra tragedy, where a train bogey with 58 Hindus was allegedly set on fire by a Muslim mob. This time, apart from Doordarshan, there were a number of privately owned media houses and the coverage received was, thus, very comprehensive and unsparing. It was India's first communal riot to be covered on television. The images of violence and footages of rioters bragging about the cruelty inflicted by them were a first by the Indian media. These audio visuals along the columns and write ups helped to

5. Press Council of India. (2010). Norms of Journalistic Conduct
emphasize the gravity of the situation. The private media also played a leading role in exposing the inaction of the government on various fronts. There were reports about how a 90km violence prone stretch was left without police protection. There were allegations that the media projected a biased picture of the riots and was condemned for giving out community wise statistics. However, this was the first time in the history of Indian media that such an extensive coverage of communal riots had taken place.

A communal clash leaves a deep scar in the psyche of both, the people involved and the nation at large. Far off relatives of people embroiled in the clashes look at their T.V. screens and newspapers with a sense of hope and fear combined. Media has, in numerous instances, played an active part in rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of the communal riots. Media has brought out stories of people showing extraordinary courage and bravery by protecting their neighbors and friends belonging to different communities. Such stories help in restoring people's faith in humanity and nationalism in times of crisis.

However, media has not always behaved as a responsible reporter. The most prominent example of media irresponsibility has been the reporting of the 26/11 attack. The Supreme Court, had specifically mentioned that the media needs to exercise more caution and restraint while reporting live attacks. Transcripts received from Hotel Taj and Nariman House revealed that the conspirators of the attack were watching the media coverage as the attack unfolded and due to the detailed information given regarding the positioning of troop, they were able to guide the terrorists accordingly. For example, media reports had revealed that troops were strengthening their position on the rooftops. The collaborators were therefore able to inform the handlers about helicopters landing on the terrace. This careless and extensive reporting put the officers
in field at grave danger. It also helped facilitate the terrorists' movements throughout the buildings. Thus, the role of media here was strongly condemned and the Supreme Court, strongly criticizing their moves, asked them to put up self regulatory mechanisms to prevent such irresponsible journalism in future.

**Conclusion**

Throughout history media has held effective power to influence, shape and mobilize public opinion. It contributes towards making an informed and aware body of citizens. The media provides for a forum to come together, discuss, debate and deliberate into matters of importance. It provides a space where multiple view points on a single issue are explored, analyzed and debated upon. In a pluralistic society like ours, the media gives the requisite space for the existence of plurality of opinions and perceptions. Through this, it instills in the people a sense of tolerance and understanding towards those different from them.

A socially responsible media, thus, facilitate communal harmony by instilling in people the essential ideals of democracy. That of mutual respect and tolerance for each other, accommodation of divergent opinions and views and the principle of equality of all communities irrespective of the differences in caste, class, race, gender, region, religion or language. True, there have been instances where media credibility has been undermined and its priorities questioned. But throughout history, they have more or less done their best to keep the fabric of communal harmony intact. In 2014 it was stated in the Parliament that there has been a remarkable drop of 19 percent in communal incidents, from 694 in the year 2013 to 561 in 2014. The Media has come a long way in strengthening the nation by facilitating communal harmony through the very root, that is, the people. Thus, media efforts, in tandem with the
government efforts, to maintain communal harmony and peace in the society, is the best way forward towards building a stronger nation.

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Understanding the Dynamism of Hinduism

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Introduction

Hinduism is diverse in philosophy, mythology and practices. This diversity has come from a few millennia of development and integration of various sub-cultures. This dynamic nature of Hinduism makes it very flexible and it keeps adapting to times and climes. It is also amenable to be adapted to the temperament of the people who practice it. All these make Hinduism difficult to understand even by many Hindus. People of other religions and cultures find it almost impossible to comprehend Hinduism. This leads to a lot of misunderstanding, resulting in apprehensions. In this discussion, first various aspects of Hinduism as being practiced today are presented. Then the dynamism of Hinduism is explained using language and cuisine as analogies. Finally, the problems faced by Hinduism today because of non-appreciation of the diverse and dynamic nature of Hinduism are discussed.

Part 1: Aspects of Hinduism

Every religion has three aspects – philosophy, mythology and practices. These three cater to the intellect, emotions and activities of the followers. They go together and support each other. To understand Hinduism, one has to look at all these three aspects.

The Goal

Man is an integral being with various aspects like physical, intellectual and emotional. Accordingly, the needs of man are also along these various aspects. The pursuits of man relate to the fulfillment of these needs. At the physical level, being totally free from the needs is not possible.
Physical limitations, disease, old age and death are inevitable. At the intellectual level also, complete perfection is not possible. There will always be limitations in knowledge, understanding and memory. However, at the emotional level, perfection has been achieved by innumerable people throughout the history of mankind in various geographies and cultures.

Hinduism considers this emotional perfection as the goal of human life. Various Hindu scriptures give descriptions of the person who has attained this emotional perfection.

Emotional perfection is characterized by total freedom from selfish desires and the freedom from subjugation to psychological defects like lust, greed, anger, arrogance and jealousy. The people who have achieved this have been revered as saints. They have been guiding lights and role models for the rest of society. Such people have infinite compassion to fellow human beings and often their love extends to all living beings. They are naturally moral, self-controlled and content with themselves.¹

Emotional perfection is achieved by knowing deeply and assimilating the Truth about the individual, the Universal and the world. Thus, the pursuit becomes that of preparing oneself to assimilate the Truth.

Mahatma Gandhi defines Hinduism as “a relentless pursuit of Truth.”² The French Nobel Laureate, Romain Rolland says, “The true Vedantic spirit does not start out with a system of preconceived ideas.... each man has been entirely free to search wherever he pleased for the spiritual explanation of the spectacle of the universe.”³ Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj makes this pursuit of Truth so pure that he says, “If you expect any benefits from your search,

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¹ Bhagavad Gita – 2.55, 2.56, 2.57, 2.71, 12.13, 12.14
² What is Hinduism, page 1
³ Life of Swami Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel, page 147
material, mental or spiritual, you have missed the point. Truth gives no advantage. It gives you no higher status, no power over others; all you get is truth and the freedom from the false.”⁴

During our interaction with the world and people in it, we take upon different identities. When attending the wedding of a relative, when a person asks, “Who are you?” we would identify ourselves by our relationship to the bride or groom. When attending an inter-college meet, we would identify ourselves with our college. When interacting with our parents, we identify as their children. When running away from a tiger, we identify ourselves as its potential food. All these identities are based on the body and mind. They are applicable in certain contexts. Now, where there is no context, when we are alone, what is our identity? All problems in life are because we are overwhelmed by one context-based-identity or the other. If we are able to discover our context-free identity and establish ourselves firmly in it, then based on that, we can easily handle all the ups and downs of life without being carried away by the situations. Our happiness and peace will not depend on the people, objects and situations around us. This knowledge of our real identity is the one what will give us the emotional freedom and perfection. With this freedom, we will be able to work with the world and other human beings in the most ideal way. This is the goal.

From this emotional freedom and perfection comes the highest form of humanism. Swami Vivekananda says, “I do not care for liberation, or for devotion, I would rather go to a hundred thousand hells doing good to others (silently) like the spring — this is my religion.”⁵ A popular Hindu prayer says, “na tu aham kaamaye raajyam na swargam na apunarbhavam | kaamaye dukha tapaanaam praaninaam

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4. I am That, page 299
aarnaasanam” – “I do not desire kingship nor heaven nor freedom from rebirth. I only desire that I help to free living beings from their sorrow and suffering.”⁶ Thus, the Hindu goal is to be able to offer oneself completely in the service of living beings, based on complete inner emotional freedom, based on true understanding of one's own real nature.

Gradual Approach

Many people are mature and sensitive enough to be altruistic, even if not emotionally perfect. They are naturally selfless and have a tendency to help others. They are not comfortable when they see someone else suffer. They consider the joys and sorrows of others as their own. This humanism is a sufficient reason for them to be compassionate, moral and self-controlled. They are already spiritually advanced, even if they do not know it. They are already closer to the goal.

However, many people are selfish. They need a self-serving reason to be compassionate, moral and self-controlled. Various systems of reason and faith have tried to inspire these people towards a socially acceptable and beneficial life. For most of the people, religion has been an effective system to inspire them towards compassion, morality and contentment.

Every religion is based on the principle “good begets good; bad begets bad”. Every religion says that good people will be rewarded and bad people will be punished. This gives a reason for selfish people to be good. However, in the world around us, we do not see this always true. Most of the cases that we see are contrary to this. To address this, all religions have a concept of after-life. They say that the consequences of their actions cannot be escaped even by death.

6. This popular prayer is based on the prayer of King Rantideva in Srimad Bhagavatam - 9.21.12 - na kaamaye aham gatim ishvaraat paraam ashtarddhi yuktaam apunarbhavam vaa | aartim prapadye akhila deha bhaajaam antah sthito yena bhavanti adukhaah
Different people consider different things as desirable, based on their maturity. To cater to different people at different levels of maturity, religions have been offering various models that people can understand.

1. Some people can understand only pleasure and pain. So some religions propose that after death, the good would enjoy pleasure (in heaven) and bad would suffer pain (in hell). The description of heaven and hell by various religions depends on the environment where the religion originated and developed. For example, the description of “Paradise” of Islam is similar to an oasis⁷. The “heaven” in Norse mythology called “Asgard” is place of joyous feasting and fighting.

2. Some people are mature enough to not give much importance to pleasure and pain. They are more interested in proximity to their beloved and revered deity. So some religions propose that after death the devout will enjoy eternal proximity to the deity of their heart. For example, Christianity has the “Kingdom of Heaven” concept where the devotees enjoy the company of God and Christ.

Hinduism offers all these and more. For people who can understand only pleasure and pain, Hinduism offers various concepts of heavens and hells. The pleasures in heavens are like 'absence of disease, old age and death', 'pleasant music', 'classical dance', 'tasty food and wine', etc. Also, it offers favourable or unfavourable birth on earth itself based on the actions. For people who value proximity to their favourite form of God more than anything else, there are regions like Vaikuntha for devotees of Vishnu, Kailasha for devotees of Shiva, Goloka for devotees of Krishna, etc. Thus Hinduism is an inclusive, pluralistic and universal religion, which is

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7. The word “Jannah” means “garden” in Arabic. Descriptions are in verses like 9.72, 36.56-57, 47.15, 88.12-16
harmonious with other religions.⁸ A verse in the Mahabharata says, “A religion which opposes another religion is not a true religion. True religion is that which does not come in the way of another religion.”⁹

However, Hinduism says that any place cannot be a permanent one. The result of a finite action cannot be infinite - “naasti akritah kritena”.¹⁰ When the fruits of action are exhausted, the person has to return back – “ksheene punye martya lokam vishanti”¹¹

If a person has managed to give up all worldly desires, then there is no reason for him to come back to this world. In that case, he will be given the opportunity to know the Truth about his own real nature from wherever he is. That will expand his individuality into the Universal.

As long as a person holds onto an individual limited identity, he is subject to desire and that would result in various forms of sorrow. The only permanent solution to sorrow is the knowledge that individuality is only apparent. The person is never apart from the Universal. It is only this knowledge that would deliver a person from all limitation and the inevitable sorrow that goes along with the sense of limitation. This knowledge can be gained in this world or any other world from a wise teacher.

This absolute freedom from sorrow, based on the knowledge that individuality is only apparent, is called Moksha. This is the goal.¹²

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8. Detailed discussion on various models of Interreligious Attitudes are given in the paper presented by Swami Bhajanananda in the conference on “Exploring Harmony among Religious Traditions in India” at Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata, 2007
9. Mahabharata, 3.131.10
10. Mundaka Upanishad – 1.2.12
11. Bhagavad Gita – 9.21
Hinduism offers various intermediate goals to people based on what would inspire them. As a person matures, it gradually raises the goal and leads the person to the ultimate goal of absolute freedom. This results in apparent contradiction in the various statements of the scriptures. If one understands that they are meant for people at various levels of maturity, one can easily reconcile the apparent differences.

**Role of Stories**

To help people to assimilate the principles of Hinduism easily and also to provide support for the intermediate goals, Hinduism uses stories. Hinduism has one of the richest collections of stories, legends, anecdotes and parables in the world. These reflect the principles of Hinduism in a colourful manner, which is easy to understand and assimilate.

The Vedas have a number of stories of devatas, rishis, teachers and students. Sage Vyasa collected most of the stories prevailing at that time in to a set of books called puranas. They contain stories of teachers, students, kings, devatas, asuras, saints and devotees. A number of stories are also present in the two great epics – the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. These cannot be called mythology. Most of the stories would have originated based on some real event involving real persons. Because of the long passage of time and because of the Hindu literary tradition of extrapolation and exaggeration, they have attained the current form.

To these are added the books with the stories of various saints like the Alwars and Nayanmars of South India, the Bhakta Vijayam depicting the stories of various devotees of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, etc. There are a lot of stories of devotion and valour, with innumerable local variations, which form the rich tapestry of the Hindu heritage.
Every saint and teacher uses a number of stories and parables to convey the religious and spiritual ideas. All these drive the principles of Hinduism into the heart of the Hindus.

**Way of Life**

To be able to imbibe the principles of religion, it has to be a way of life. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says, “Philosophy in India is not an abstract study remote from the life of man. It is intimately woven into the texture of human existence. The civilization of India is an effort to embody philosophical wisdom in social life.”¹³

Religion lives in the day-to-day life of its practitioners. Hinduism has inseparably integrated into the daily life, festivals, art forms and places in India.

Almost all the traditional forms of music, dance, drama and painting are based on the stories of Hinduism. Many of the commonly used proverbs, idioms, illustrations and verbal expressions are based on these stories. All these are reminders of the principles that they depict.

There are a number of places of pilgrimage in India, which are associated with the stories, legends and anecdotes of Hinduism. The walls of Hindu temples are adorned by paintings and sculptures depicting various incidents in these stories. Thus, pilgrimage and visiting temples is a popular way to remind oneself of these stories and get their message into one's life.

Hinduism has a rich array of interesting and colourful festivals like Diwali, Holi, Kumbhamela, etc. Most of the festivals are days commemorating the important events in these stories. Thus celebrating the festivals is also a way to remember these stories and the messages that they convey.

Hinduism has a rich set of rituals for everyday life associated with key moments in the day like waking up,

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¹³. The Pursuit of Truth, page 92
taking bath, eating, travelling and going to sleep. It also has traditional ceremonies to mark various important events in life like conception, birth, naming, start of solid food, start of schooling, marriage, house-warming, 60th birthday and death. All these rituals and ceremonies reflect and remind the principles of Hinduism in different ways.

Both in the stories and in the customs, Hinduism allows a huge scope for local and personal variations. There are innumerable thriving sub-cultures with their own variations. All this diversity is celebrated as the sign of life by Hinduism.

**Part 2: Hinduism as an Organic Religion**

As mentioned above, Hinduism is diverse in philosophy, mythology and practices. One way to understand Hinduism is to look at it not as a “monolithic revealed religion” like many of the institutionalized religions, but as a “systematization of prevailing revelations and practices”. Comparing with the way languages and cuisine develop organically, here is presented a paradigm to understand Hinduism. This understanding will help Hindus to define themselves better. It will also help other religions and social structures to interact with Hinduism better.

One immediate question that can arise in the minds of people who are new to Hinduism is, “How can there be multiple revelations?” Hinduism has a simple logic to answer that. There is one God, who is omniscient, omnipotent and compassionate. Being so, He would naturally know even if He be called by any name and adored in any manner. As He knows the innermost thoughts of everyone, there can be no restriction in name or form or ritual to interact with Him. The same God has revealed various scriptures of the various religions in the world to suit people of different regions and cultures. Denying this would be to challenge the omniscience and compassion of God.

Hinduism is a “natural” religion. It is the collection and
systematization of the thoughts, revelations, legends and practices of the people of India and other places of its influence. It is a live, developing, dynamic culture. It is an organically developed and developing cultural entity, like a language or a cuisine. Grammar or recipe is derived from the existing practices. The grammar or recipe tries to systematize and standardize to enable people to learn it and pass it on to the next generation.

There are a few observations that need to be noted here about the analogy.

(1) The language or cuisine is not limited by the grammar or recipe. The original is what is in the life of the people. What is in books is only an approximation for a beginner or visitor. When in doubt, you should always go back to the field. The south Indian sambar that is made by a grandmother in a village hut is more authentic than what is made by a chef in a five-star hotel. The sambar that you find in the five-star hotel is only an imitation and approximation of the original that is made in the village hut.

(2) The language and cuisine existing in the life of people will have infinite variations. The diversity is natural and has to be appreciated and preserved. In the name of standardization, the diversity should not be lost. Each of the south Indian sambars that you can taste in various villages and even among different communities in the same village will be unique and different. Still, they are all authentic. There is no right or wrong about these diverse variations. All of them are original.

(3) If a variant of the language or cuisine is discovered after the systematization process, it is the systematized form that has to be tuned to cover the new discovery. The newly discovered variant cannot be discarded because it does not conform to the system.
If the language or cuisine has changed naturally over a period of time, the new variant also has to be included into the systematized form. The original also can be retained. The new one also has to be added to the already existing diversity.

Keeping these comparisons in mind, we can understand Hinduism better.

The thoughts, revelations, legends and practices in the life of the people are diverse and often contradictory. The beauty of the Hindu culture lies in this diversity. The acceptance of diversity has made Hinduism the most dynamic and tolerant of all faiths.

The Vedas are the records of the revelations, beliefs, thoughts, legends and practices that existed in the various parts of India during the time of their compilation by Veda Vyasa. They are field observations and so are sacrosanct. They cannot be tampered with. There may be apparent contradictions. There may be different parts of it meant for people in different stages of development or people with different cultures and inclinations. It is left to the philosophers to extract a coherent system of philosophy out of the records. It is left to the religious teachers to extract various meditations mentioned in the Vedas and prescribe to the students based on their need.

It has to be pointed out here about a misconception that there is a gradual development of ideas in the Vedas. This is not correct. Prof. Chandradhar Sharma notes, “The Vedic sages were greatly intellectual and intensely spiritual personages who in their mystic moments came face to face with Reality and this mystic experience, this direct intuitive spiritual insight overflowed in literature as the Vedic hymns. The key-note of the Vedic hymns is the same spiritual monism, the same immanent conception of the identity-in-difference which ultimately transcends even itself, the same
indescribable absolutism which holds both monism and pluralism within its bosom and which ultimately transcends both. ... Hence there is no development from polytheism through monotheism to monism, but only of monism from the first Mantra portion to the last Upanishadic portion.”¹⁴

Similarly, the Puranas are the legends and mythology of the people in various parts of India, also collected and recorded initially by Veda Vyasa. There seems to have been a lot of additions to them in later times. There may be apparent contradictions. But that is what it is. It is left to the teachers to resolve the contradictions. It is left to the teachers to pick and choose what to teach to which student. For example, Shiva Purana would extol Shiva as the greatest. Vishnu Purana would extol Vishnu as the greatest. These are not contradictions. They are meant for people with different inclinations.

There have been attempts to standardize Hinduism throughout the ages. The beauty of this process is that it has always been trying to form a framework where every thought and practice finds a place. As minimal tuning as possible is done to the apparently contradictory systems to be able to fit into a generic framework. This can be seen in the works of Sage Vyasa, Sage Patanjali, Sri Sankara, Swami Vivekananda, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, etc. This is an ongoing process. For example, Patanjali is not the originator of the system of Yoga. He is one of the people who systematized the various Yoga practices that were already widely existent. Sankara is not the originator of Advaita. He is one of the people who systematized this way of explaining the statements of the Vedas in a coherent manner. The same is true about every name and book that we find in Hinduism. Hinduism has the biggest corpus of religious literature of all the religions in the world. This is still growing actively.

¹⁴. A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, page 16
The Vedas use words like “sages say so”, “learned people say so”, etc. in a number of places. The Vedas do not claim to originate an idea or a practice. It always shows that the ideas and practices mentioned are prevailing ones. This is true with the other Hindu scriptures also. A sutra (aphorism) in one of the social practices guidebook says: “the remaining duties [which have not been mentioned here] must be learnt from women and those of all castes.”¹⁵ This is a clear proof that Hindu practices are bottom-up and not top-down.

In Bhagavad Gita, at the end of the 16th chapter, Krishna says that do’s and dont’s should be decided by referring to the scriptures. Immediately, Arjuna raises the question of what governs the actions of a person who does not depend on the scriptures. The entire 17th chapter and some of the 18th chapter brilliantly deals with this. Various aspects of human life – actions, knowledge, joy, worship, charity, austerity, etc. – are classified into three categories – satva (encouraged), rajas (discouraged) and tamas (prohibited). Krishna shows how the scriptural injunctions can be explained based on some basic principles. The directives of the scriptures are actually ready-reckoners, so that every time we need not derive the do’s and dont’s from the basic principles. For example, Krishna says, “That which is pain in the short-term and pleasure in the long-term can be encouraged as a source of joy. That which is pleasure in the short-term and pain in the long-term is discouraged. That pursuit of joy which causes suffering and is due to lethargy, delusion and indolence is prohibited.”¹⁶ This is a very logical answer for how to decide what is good and what is bad. Similarly, Krishna says, “That knowledge by which you see unity in diversity is encouraged. That by which you see only diversity is discouraged. That which is not based on reason, promotes selfishness and comes from a narrow-minded viewpoint is prohibited.”¹⁷ Thus, Bhagavad Gita lays down

15. Apastamba Sutras - 2.11.29.15
17. Bhagavad Gita - 18.20-22
the general humanitarian values as the foundation of Hinduism and not dogmas that are not supported by reason and experience.

The Vedas are also clear that reason should be given utmost importance. They classify things into two: indriya and ati-indriya – those that can be verified by senses and those that cannot be verified by senses. The Vedas are the ultimate authority only for the non-verifiable concepts like freewill, law of karma, fruit of rituals, procedure of rituals, nature of the fundamental substance, nature of God, nature of Consciousness, etc. And these also cannot contradict logic. Adi Sankara tells clearly, “Even if a hundred Vedic dicta say fire is cold and does not burn, that dicta have to be rejected.”¹⁸ Thus the Vedas are very clear about their domain and are not in conflict with science. Vedas encourage scientific inquiry.

If any Indian society is found, whose practices are not found in the Vedas or whose stories are not found in the Puranas, they are not rejected. New stories are added to integrate the stories of these people into the “mainstream” stories. Many local stories in various parts of India can be traced to a recent (a few hundred years) origin – like the story of Vishnu crossing the Vaigai river in Madurai, Tamilnadu, the story of Lord Ayyappa in Kerala, etc. These newly found practices are documented for posterity. There are practices of recent origin like the use of props to practice yogic postures, introduced by Sri. B. K. S.Iyengar. They are also included into the huge literature of the practices of Hinduism. Someone somewhere might find some use of these. So, there is no question of some Indian communities or tribes being “non-Hindu”. There is no such concept as a non-Hindu Indian community or tribe. There is no question of whether these modern practices are a part of Hinduism or not. They are a part of the ever-growing and dynamic Hinduism.

¹⁸. Sankara’s Bhagavad Gita Bhashyam – 18.66.11
This makes Hinduism the most dynamic and tolerant of all religions. The idioms of teaching Hinduism keep evolving. Every new idea found anywhere in the world is suitably integrated into Hinduism. Every new story found anywhere is Indianized and integrated. There are some over-zealous teachers who try to draw parallels between Hindu concepts and the recent developments in Science. Some use the parallels as analogies, some go overboard to declare them as being really connected. Hinduism leaves it to time for the ideas that are genuine to stand the test of time and the fake ones to fade away naturally.

When an idea or a custom is found unsuitable to the modern times, Hindus do not condemn it. They just give it a pleasant “thanks and good-bye”. Irrelevant practices are dropped and new ideas are taken up. For example, when there were a lot of wars and adult males from the general public were enlisted often, there were more females in the society than males. So polygamy was the norm. With the change of times, less wars, regular armies, etc. the demography changed and today monogamy is the norm. Similarly, as the sensitivity of the people towards violence increased, corporeal punishments were no longer needed to maintain order in the society. So there is no more chopping of hands, giving whip lashes, etc., which were prevalent in ancient times. Similarly, food habits like vegetarianism have evolved. There was a time when non-vegetarian diet was the norm. As the society became less violent, moved from pastoral to agrarian and there was more agricultural produce with longer shelf-life available, the whole society became more vegetarian. Similarly, discrimination based on birth is seeing a natural death. Every Hindu saint in the past couple of hundred years has talked and worked against the caste discrimination. But the society is holding on to it due to selfish worldly interests of a few people. And, Hinduism is being blamed for it. It is still a menace because the Hindu
Thus, all aspects of Hinduism – philosophy, stories and practices – have evolved organically and are continuing to evolve. This living vitality and dynamism are hallmarks of Hinduism. This is what keeps it “eternal”, true to its name – “sanatana dharma”.

Who is a Hindu?

Now, with such a wide, flexible and dynamic system, is there any unity underlying the diversity? What defines Hinduism? Do all the various sects share any principles in common? Yes, there are. Here are some of the principles agreed upon by almost all the variants of Hinduism. Though a common Hindu might not be able to articulate the basic principles, almost all the Hindu saints and leaders in the past two thousand years accept these common basic principles. When these are explained to a common Hindu, he would quickly realize that these words reflect his understanding.

1. I, as an individual, am fully responsible for everything that I face in my life. My current situation is because of my past action and my future situation will be influenced by my current action. I cannot escape the consequence of my actions. As my birth itself is a situation that is different for each person, pre-birth existence becomes the only logical possibility. Similarly, as I keep doing things till my last breath, a post-birth existence becomes the only logical possibility. Thus, I am alone responsible for the situations in my life and my past and current actions will determine my future situations. Prayer, charity, austerity, repentance, etc are also actions and they also affect the future situations in my life.

2. The whole of existence is an interconnected system. I am not isolated from the rest of the existence. The whole of existence is personified as God for the
convenience of transaction. God is omnipresent and knows my innermost thoughts. I can worship God through any form or without form, through any ritual or without any ritual. I can even deny the existence of God, and accept only an unconscious universal system that exists. As long as my relationship with the whole system is one of contribution and symbiosis, and not that of consumption and exploitation, I am in line with the Hindu ethos. This principle is expressed in the various popular Hindu statements like "nara seva hi naaraayana seva" — Service to man is service to God. Swami Vivekananda says, “After so much austerity, I have understood this as the real truth — God is present in every Jiva; there is no other God besides that. 'Who serves Jiva, serves God indeed.'”¹⁹

3. Leading a truthful, useful, compassionate, helpful and self-controlled life will ensure my spiritual development irrespective of my beliefs or absence of any. Thus, even if a person does not believe in any of the popular Hindu beliefs or may belong to another religion or may be an atheist, if he leads the life of a good human being, Hinduism has a positive message for him: the person is moving towards positive spiritual development. This makes Hinduism tolerant of other religions and atheism.

4. Religion is an inner pursuit of every human being. Every person has direct access to the divinity within, which can be reached by deep inner search. Rajiv Malhotra has coined the word “embodied knowing” to indicate this. He says, “The dharma family (including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism) has developed an extensive range of inner sciences and experiential technologies called 'adhyatma vidya' to access divinity and higher states of consciousness. Adhyatma vidya is a body of wisdom and techniques culled from centuries of

first-person empirical inquiry into the nature of consciousness and undertaken by advanced practitioners. ... Their truth must be rediscovered and directly experienced by each person.”²⁰ The Vedas, Gita and several Hindu scriptures have detailed instructions for various kinds of meditations. Meditation and Hindu spiritual life are inseparable.

5. Religion is not a sealed book. There have been saints and prophets in the past, present and there will be in the future too. There will be more religions and sects with their own revealed books in the future. Hinduism welcomes all. Swami Vivekananda says, “I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished? Or is it still a continuous revelation going on? It is a marvellous book — these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave it open for all of them. We stand in the present, but open ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present, and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present, and to all that are to come in the future!”²¹

With these as the basic principles, infinite variations are allowed to thrive under the huge umbrella of Hinduism. Keeping these intact, Hinduism is allowed to change and adapt to the changing times without losing its identity. Even if everything else is different and these are present, it is still Hinduism. Even if a person does not even know any Hindu forms of God, has not even heard about any Hindu scriptures, has never even seen a Hindu temple, he is a Hindu.

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²⁰ Being Different, page 5-6
if he inherently believes in these principles, even if he is not able to articulate them in this manner.

To support these principles and help people to imbibe these in their everyday life, there are various stories, legends, scriptures, songs, festivals, pilgrimages and rituals. They all form an integral part of Hinduism.

**Part 3: Modern Challenges**

Hinduism is a dynamic religion. It celebrates diversity in philosophy, mythology and practices. It allows integration of new elements. It allows dropping of outdated concepts and practices. It allows individuals to adapt Hinduism to their inclinations. It allows all these keep a very basic set of non-negotiables.

Problem comes when people want to freeze Hinduism and the Hindu society in the past. For various vested interests some people try to prevent the natural change from happening. This creates conflicts and delays the natural changes.

The irony is this. An academician, who claims to study Hinduism and Hindu society, first defines Hinduism based on centuries-old outdated models. Then he condemns Hinduism based on those models. When Hindus say that his model is outdated, he says that what is followed now is not Hinduism. This becomes a vicious cycle.

Another problem is trying to stereotype or standardize the whole of Hinduism into a particular variant. There are religious leaders, political leaders and academicians who try to restrict what and what is not Hinduism. These attempts create a lot of discord among the followers of Hinduism.

Similarly, an academician defines Hinduism as what is there in the books and claim that the tribal people of India are not Hindus. If Hindus show that their beliefs and practices can be accommodated into Hinduism, the
It is the recent academicians who want to define and freeze Hinduism who are the problem. For example, the Advaita Vedantins have been having the eternal debate between the Bhamati school and Vivarana school. They have been debating it for more than a thousand years and have no problem continuing to have both these schools of thought side by side for thousands of years in future too. But an academician who is not comfortable with this coexistence of two schools makes it a battle ground between Sankara and Vivekananda, divides the Hindu saints and leaders into two camps, pitches them against each other and creates all kinds of problems.

Hindus themselves do not have any problem in the coexistence of various points of views like Bhamati-Vivarana, Advaita-Vishishtadvaita, Shaiva-Vaishnava, Vedanta-Mysticism, Yoga-Vedanta, Bhakti-Jnana, Grihasta-Sannyasa, etc. To understand Hinduism, one should first understand that there is no one right way. There are no frozen concepts or practices. Hinduism is a dynamic evolving religious and spiritual culture. Without this perspective, whoever tries to study Hinduism will only land up doing more harm than good.

Another challenge is the rise of violent intolerance among Hindus. This is the reaction of the Hindus against the inaction of political establishment towards the intolerant and predatory attitude and action of some religions in India. Some religions in India have an exclusive outlook – “My way is the only way” or “My way is the best way”. They have an intolerant attitude towards other religions. Their rising numbers is creating a general intolerant atmosphere in the country. This is making the Hindus feel threatened. This fear is being exploited by some fringe elements that incite Hindus into a violent backlash. Educating Hindus about Hinduism and strengthening Hinduism is the way to help the Hindus
handle the apprehensions in a non-violent manner.

**Conclusion**

Hinduism is an organically developed human heritage. Its richness in thought, mythology and practices are mind boggling. It may be carrying some outdated objectionable practices. Left to itself, it has the capacity to adjust to the times and serve humanity in the best possible manner. During these modern times, when humanity is so visibly agitated about saving obscure endangered species of animals and insects, it is important that humanity does everything possible to nurture this huge human heritage. It has given life and succour to millions of human beings in the past and has the capacity to do so in the future also. Any modern social institution is expected to be decentralized, democratic, rational, pluralistic, humanist, dynamic and non-dogmatic. Hinduism is almost the only religion that matches these criteria. It can serve as a template for other religions and other human institutions to also implement these criteria. Its life and dynamism has to be nurtured as a living asset of humanity.
Uprising of Communal harmony

ABSTRACT

Communal harmony is one of the greatest challenges that India has been facing for a long time. The communal harmony and amity that we proudly identify as a feature of India is the result of the civilizations which are more than thousands of years old. It is India where one can see a melange of religions, culture and languages. The spirit of tolerance and assimilation is the basis of the communal harmony that exists in India. A model that stands out when speaking of communal harmony is found in the Baha'i community that endeavoured to get themselves rid of all the detriments that existed in the Indian society.

But it was around and after independence that these feelings of communal amity started to disappear and violence began to take their place. Although even today the communities live largely in peace and harmony, there are times when the country has witnessed menacing communal conflicts and bloody riots.

The role of media in promoting communal harmony and in maintaining peace and integrity has always been in question. Media is considered to be the fourth pillar of any country, especially a mammoth democratic country like India. It is one of the most important avenues in moulding of the public opinion. It has been rightly said- “Social media is not about the exploitation of technology but service to the community.” But today it is considered to be one of the leading factors in promoting communal disharmony. To be sure, it has contributed in promoting harmony among the people but there have also been quite a few instances where it has given air to disharmony and discord among the various communities. It has criticized certain religions which has aroused feelings of hatred among the people and contributed in instigating savage violence.
INTRODUCTION

Baha’u’llah, the founder of Baha’i faith says- “The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: 'Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch...’”. Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other.”

We can say that it is the Baha’i community on which the communal harmony is modelled. This Baha’i community is considered as an embryo for the future society. It strives to achieve unity, peace and harmony among different communities. It strongly believes that it is the 'higher' or the majority castes that carry greater responsibility to maintain peace with the minority groups. It says –‘Responsibility falls equally on the majority or higher caste, who must trade their 'sense of superiority' and often 'patronizing attitude' for 'genuine friendship' and 'close association' and minorities, be they religious communities, ethnic groups or castes, must demonstrate 'readiness to forget the past' and eliminate 'every trace of suspicion' resulting from a long period of 'grievous and slow healing wounds'.

India is a place where one can find diversity of faith and religion since time immemorial. It has been rightly described as a “socio-linguistic giant”. One not only finds myriad of religions here but one could also sense and witness the feelings of amicability and sympathy among the people. It was in the first century of the Christian era that the Christians and the Jews came to India and received a congenial acceptance. Similarly when the Parsis and the Muslims came to India after several centuries they too received the same amicable acceptance here. And since then India has been known for its utmost unity and harmony among the various communities.

But it is the same India where people have also witnessed communal disharmony. And it was August 1893 in
Mumbai where the foremost major communal riots took place. Hundreds of people were killed and many more were injured. The communal harmony had disappeared and the era of communal disharmony began. After the partition of the subcontinent, in 1948 India witnessed the worst riot in which Noakhali in Bengal and various other villages in Bihar were the badly hit. Further in 1961 the first riot between the Hindus and Muslims took place in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. And then a large number of riots of followed. The Ahmadabad riots in 1969 between the Hindus and the Muslims where large numbers of people perished. The assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31st October, 1984 again ignited the flames of communal disharmony and this was followed by anti-Sikh riots which lasted for around fifteen days.

Further in 1987 riots took place in Meerut which lasted for two months. The city was on fire, about 350 shops were destroyed and more than 300 people were killed. This was followed by Bhagalpur riots in 1989. Bhagalpur, which was known as the silk city, saw carnage and arson in which thousands of people were killed, 50,000 got displaced and around 11000 houses were incinerated. And it did not stop here. In December 1992 the Babri masjid was demolished and again riots broke out in different parts of India which continued for days and thousands of people were pushed to the death while businesses properties worth crores of rupees were destroyed. And then the Gujarat Riots took place in 2002, which was again a Hindu-Muslim riot. 58 Hindu activists were dead along with a number of Muslims in Gujarat. Thus, India has witnessed extreme form of communalism for the past few years. The frequency of communal violence has increased to a great extent. One of the recent incidences of communal riots took place in the city of Pune in 2014. The new Webster dictionary defines Communalism as—
“A theory or system of government in which each commune is virtually an independent state and the nation is merely a federation of such states.”

Quoting the words of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation- “Communalism of the virulent type is a recent growth. The lawlessness is a monster with many faces. It hurts all, in the end, including those who are primarily responsible for it.”

COMMUNAL HARMONY AND NATION BUILDING

Communal harmony today forms an integral part of the nation building. Nation building and communal harmony are part and parcel of a growing economy in this liberalised and globalised world. According to Magstadt nation building -

“is a process which all the inhabitants of a given territory, regardless of individual ethnic, tribal, religious or linguistic differences, come to identify with the symbols and institutions of the state and share a common sense of destiny.”

The drastic rise in the number of communal incidents in the country is adversely affecting the nation building efforts. There are six pre-requisites in the process of nation-building-

• Education and experiments
• Safety and security
• A healthy and a clean environment of the society
• Prosperity
• Entertainment, and
• Harmony and hope.

All the above five pillars of Nation building cannot stand without harmony and peace in the nation. Education and prosperity cannot further make progress if the communities lack unity among themselves. Furthermore if the
communities are at discord, people are not safe in their own lands. E. R Dubey in his article Communal Harmony writes-

“Anyone is powerful till he/she belongs to community and community has only one religion called communitarianism. A nation is strong as long as its citizens speak in one voice and are willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of her honour.”¹

It has been rightly said that harmony is natural but disharmony is result of the actions of the human beings. One of the gravest challenges that the country is facing is communalism. Communal harmony has to be preserved and maintained for the prosperity of the nation in the long run.

Thus, communal harmony leads to national integrity and brotherhood among the citizens of a democratic nation like India where one sees a myriad of cultures, languages and caste. It is an absolute prerequisite for the progress and the development of a nation.

DO WE HAVE A RESPONSIBLE MEDIA?

Media is considered to be the fourth pillar of the society. Edmund Burke has rightly stated media as the “Fourth Estate” of a prosperous nation. It is the most important part of any democratic country. Today media not only includes TV, Newspaper and News channels but also Radio, Journals, Magazines and the most important- Internet and Email. It plays the role of an agent who promulgates the information and moulds public opinions. In the old days, newspaper was the main source of information for the public. Its foremost duty was to disseminate news which was to be “unprejudiced and unequivocal” in its motives, and also to mould the public view in such a manner as to avoid encouraging violence among the people. There was a respect for the truth and it aimed to achieve incorruptible

governance. But today the domain of media has enlarged from newspapers and news channels to radio, magazines, internet and etc.

**Historical stance:**

Media was considered to be one of the most important means of promoting communal harmony in the nation back then. During the days of British rule in India when the domain of media was just limited to newspapers and pamphlets, it played an important role in promoting peace and unity throughout the nation. One of the best examples is the anti-partition movement that was launched during the decision of partition of Bengal in 1905. The newspapers and the periodicals such as Yugantar, Bande Mataram, Amrit Bazar etc carried out the views of the leaders across the nation and urged them to raise their voices against the partition of Bengal. And it was because of these efforts that finally led to the quashing of the partition in 1911.

Further during the struggle for freedom, Mahatma Gandhi too launched newspapers namely- Harijan and Young India and Navjivan. These newspapers carried articles which emphasized on the importance of communal harmony, peace and unity to fight against the British rule and also to protect the interests of the minority community.

Al-Hilal, another famous newspaper by Maulana Azad too played an important role in awakening the feelings of the communal harmony and brotherhood among the people and strongly opposing communalism.

Kesari and Maratha, other newspapers founded by the Lokmanya Tilak during the freedom struggle also contributed in spreading communal harmony and in uniting the people of India to fight against the British rule.

**Present scenario:**

Today media enjoys substantial freedom of speech and expression. But with this freedom comes great
responsibility. The present day situation of our country demands an agile, sporty and active media that knows how the news has to be disseminated keeping in mind the well-being of the society. In this regard the Press Council of India says-

“Media is mandated to follow certain ethics in collecting and disseminating the information viz., ensuring authenticity of the news, use of restrained and socially acceptable language for ensuring objectivity and fairness in reporting and keeping in mind its cascading effect on the society and on the individuals and institutions concerned.”²

In the last few years India has been drenched in communal violence. Ashutosh Varshney in his book says that “an event is identified as a communal riot if there is violence, and two or more communally identified groups confront each other or members of the other group at some point during the violence.”³ These events stir the atmosphere with feelings of hostility and enmity. Here comes the media which plays a very significant role during such situations in the country and its responsibility becomes immense. However sometimes it tends to neglect these duties and responsibilities and contributes in creating communal tensions, thus itself becoming one of the factors of communal disharmony. If we look back in the early 90s, riots which took place after partition, incidents at Mumbai, Ayodhya and Gujarat, the media has played divergent roles in covering these incidences. And unfortunately media while neglecting the seriousness of the situation has often sparked the flames of communal disharmony among the people.

The Sikh Riots 1984

In was in June 1984 that a terrorist group led by Jamail Singh Bhindranwale hid in the vicinity of the famous Sikh

shrine, The Golden Temple. Soon a 36 hour curfew was imposed in the state of Punjab and all the modes of communication and travel were disbanded. Electricity supplies were suspended and there was a total black out in the whole of Punjab. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi wanted to drive out these terrorists and thus Operation Blue star was declared. On 5th June the Indian Army under the command of Major Gen. Kuldeep Singh Brar attempted to capture the temple and after two days of struggle the army had full control of the temple. In this two day long battle not only the militant leaders but large number of pilgrims, children and civilians too were killed. The result was that the Sikh community was enraged as their holiest shrine had been turned into a bloody battlefield where a number of innocent lives had been lost. And on 31st December 1984, the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards and this led to disastrous anti-Sikh riots in the capital city Delhi. The homes of Sikhs were singled out in the capital and were brutally destroyed. More than three thousand Sikhs were killed, two hundred Gurudwaras were burnt down and the shops owned by the Sikhs were ransacked. These riots were described as “Genocide” by the current Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh.

It is during the occurrence of such savage incidences that media comes forward and plays a significant role. It becomes the responsibility of the media to cover the incident and place it before the public in a manner that does not invite any further agitation. However in the Punjab riots in 1984 the media unfortunately played a non-supportive role. The day before Operation Bluestar was to begin; the Government restricted media coverage. The control was so tight that even foreign reporters were not allowed to cover the events; furthermore the Indian Government did not allow journalists visas for these foreign chroniclers. After a week when the press was allowed, they described the whole
event in a different manner. The militants were described as “petty political rabble-rousers” rather than the leaders of a public movement. The data and the images released by the press largely differed from the actual severe situation that prevailed in the streets of the capital. The selective information that media resorted to, created an ambiguous image of the Sikhs throughout the nation. They failed or rather ignored to scrutinize the actual issues and circumstances that gave rise to such bloody violence in the country. The leading national newspapers i.e. the Times of India and the Hindustan Times further gave fuel to the fire by encouraging hostility between the Hindus and the Sikhs. Manoj Mitta, a senior journalist and currently Associate Editor of the Times of India in his book “When a Tree Shook Delhi” writes-

“The media by and large went by the official line on the carnage. It focused on the happenings at Teen Murti Bhawan, where Indira Gandhi's body lay in state and where from people around the world had come to pay respect. So photographers were flocking to that place and the killings that were simultaneously going on in the capital did not get recorded at all. It's bizarre but true."⁴ The act of the media thus left the people dismayed throughout the nation.

**The Gujarat Riots, 2002**

A tragic incident took place in February 2002 in the small town of Godhra, Gujarat. On 27th February the Sabarmati Express reached Godhra and after an unusual stoppage of twenty minutes that day the train moved out of the platform. Soon at Signal Falia, a Muslim inhabited locality the alarm chain was pulled and in an instant one of the compartments was on flames. Nothing was clear as to what actually happened. Around 56 passengers were burnt to death. It was firmly believed that the Muslims had a hand in this

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⁴ Manoj Mitta, When a Tree Shook Delhi, Lotus Roli Books, 2008
brutal and inhuman act. However the aftermath had left the nation astounded. The next three days, from 28th February to 2nd March 2002, Muslims were slaughtered, massacred and burnt alive in 16 out of 24 districts of Gujarat. Around 2,000 Muslims were killed, hundreds of mosques were destroyed and other religious and cultural monuments were crushed into pieces. The Muslim community in Gujarat had suffered a huge economic loss.

It was for the first time in the history of India that violence was carried live on television. People for the first time saw the horrendous images of brutal communal riots on their television screens, as back in 90s when the Sikh riots and Barbari Masjid fiasco took place there was no mode of live coverage. The media was then restricted to newspapers and radio. But the Gujarat riots received wide media coverage by the three major news channels in India; Star News, Zee News and Aaj Tak News. However these news channels failed to follow certain guidelines formulated by the Press Council of India, a quasi-judicial ombudsmen organisation. According to the guidelines the identity of the victims or the attackers is not to be revealed in the news reports or channels; but the news channels mentioned the killing of the Kar sevaks. Besides this there was a strict restriction on mentioning any victims or attackers as a Hindu or a Muslim but these news channels made these guidelines almost redundant.

Besides this, the two largest selling newspapers in Gujarat- the Gujarat Samachar and Sandesh also contributed in provoking communal disharmony in the nation. The headlines used by them such as – “THE PLAN WAS TO TORCH THE WHOLE TRAIN, NOT JUST ONE BOGEY”, “AVENGE BLOOD WITH BLOOD”, “70 HINDUS BURNT ALIVE IN GODHRA”, worsened the situation. PUCL later found that there was heavy false reporting in these newspapers. It was also reported that in incidences where Muslims were the
attackers, their names were clearly mentioned however when they were the victims of heinous crimes such as murders and arson, their identity wasn't revealed. The study further concluded that-

"No sources were quoted for headlines, even when they were simply lifted from speeches by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (one of the Hindutva political parties in the state). Headlines were also misleading, and often followed up by reports that did not substantiate, and even negated the headlines completely...The anti-minority stand was obvious in the slant in news reporting."

Similarly we can recall the Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy which resulted in grave consequences after the Danish newspaper, Jyllands- Posten published 12 cartoons on 30th September, 2002 which depicted Prophet Mohammad. The Muslim communities in Denmark protested against such criticism of the Islam. And soon the clashes spread worldwide and protests could be seen in various parts of country including Mumbai, Lucknow and Delhi.

Section 66A of India's Information Technology Act penalises a person for passing any information which is—

(a) grossly offensive or has menacing character; or

(b) known to be false, but for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience, danger, obstruction, insult, injury, criminal intimidation, enmity, hatred or ill will.

Besides this Section 153 of the Indian Penal Code also punishes an act which leads to communal disharmony in the society. But it seems that these sections hold no importance for the present day media. They continue to act irresponsibly by presenting the news in a melodramatic way. The headlines target a particular community and create communal tensions resulting into brutal bloodthirsty riots.
Media instead of controlling the situation further fuels it with its sensational and scandalous headlines.

Thus, today where the media enjoys great freedom of speech and expression, it also needs to improve the way it is working and should aim at restoring public peace and tranquillity in cases of communal conflict. It should not only be vigilant but should also avoid using such staggering and appalling headlines.

ROLE OF THE JOURNALISTS

Journalists play another important role in how the news has to be presented before the public. Keeping in the mind the increased frequency of the communal clashes in the country in the last few years, it becomes the basic responsibility of the journalists to promote communal harmony and peace through their news channels or newspapers. Section 20:11 of the Press council of India says-

“Journalists and columnists owe a very special responsibility to their country in promoting communal peace and amity. Their writings are not a mere reflection of their own feelings but help to a large extent in moulding the feelings and sentiments of the society at large. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that they use their pen with circumspection and restrain.”⁵

The journalists are required to be vigilant as well as thoughtful and restrained while dealing with the issues of communal violence. It is their foremost duty to avoid using derogatory words or language regarding any particular community or group of people. After the Gujarat riots the norms of the journalistic conduct were soon revised saying-

“The role of media in such situations {Gujarat Carnage} is to be peacemakers and not abettors, to be trouble-shooters and not trouble makers. (Section 20:111)”⁶

5.  Press Council Of India, Norms of Journalistic Conduct, 2010
6.  ibid
Another important aspect of journalism is to publish the entire truth. It is the responsibility of the journalist to publish the entire truth keeping in mind the consequences of such publication. Kant in 1786 in his famous essay “On the supposed right to lie out of Humanity” wrote that there is an ingrained necessity of publishing the truth even if there is a conflict with the duties. However at the same time there are dissenting views regarding the above opinion. It has been urged that the publication of the entire truth should not be made necessary if there are chances that it may give rise to communal conflicts and social anarchy.

Press council of India in this regard says—

“Truth is no defence for publishing derogatory, scurrilous and defamatory material against a private citizen where no public interest is involved.”

There are number of journalists who are making an effort through their writings in promoting communal harmony and unity across the nation, people like Ram Puniyani who took voluntary retirement from his work in order to devote his full time in promoting communal harmony. Shahriar Kabir is another journalist whose work mainly focuses on communism and fundamentalism. We cannot deny the fact that these journalists have put in a huge effort in promoting communal peace in their country but taking a look at the present day conditions it cannot be denied that somewhere the media has become a common factor in giving rise to communalism hatred and distrust in the country.

Thus, journalists should follow certain basic principles while they write on communal clashes. First of all, their writings leave a very strong impact on the minds of the readers which might ignite in them the feeling of communalism. Therefore it is their foremost duty to use their pen with utmost caution and restraint. Second, the
news related to communal violence should be presented after the proper verification of the fact. Furthermore the sensational and infuriating headlines should be avoided. Third, they should ensure that their writings are free from any form of personal belief or prejudice and do not tend to arouse enmity or disharmony among the communities.

CONCLUSION

Media plays a vital role in enhancing the development of the nation and in resolving the communal clashes which have become a recurring part of Indian polity. We cannot avoid the instances where media came forward and made paramount efforts in restoring the communal harmony and unity in the country such as the Ram Janamboomi attack that took place in Ayodhya in 2005, the blasts in the markets of Delhi, the Jama Masjid explosions of 2006, the Varanasi bombings in 2006 and the Bombay and the New Delhi blasts in 2008 which had grave aftermaths.

Media today enjoys great freedom of speech and expression and it owes a responsibility to use this freedom with due care and caution. Its major role is to strengthen the communal harmony in the country because the peace and equanimity that emanates from communal harmony is important for the social and the economic growth of a country. And in a country like India which is home to a large number of communities with different culture, language and religion, it becomes necessary to maintain peace and harmony among the people.

One cannot forget the devastating riots in Gujarat and Punjab where media played a cynical role and fuelled the situation with feelings of communal hatred and distrust. Thus, media should be governed by well defined rules and regulations especially while covering the events which involve communal clashes and are likely to create communal tensions. It should keep in mind the guidelines laid down by the Press Council of India as well as the general good of the society.
Besides this communal harmony is a pre-requisite in the process of nation building. And so it becomes the duty of the government as well as the media to encourage communal harmony in the nation and take India to an entire different level where it is known not only for its communal unity but also for its vigilant, sporty and a responsible media.

Thus summing up with a very famous quote by Charles Osgood-

“It was while making newspaper deliveries, trying to miss the bushes and hit the porch, that I first learned the importance of accuracy in journalism.”

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Communicating Civil Society to Maintain Harmony at Religious Spaces: the Experiments by Mohalla Committees in Mumbai

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Abstract

The civil societies in India, had got presence in society, particularly, these societies had formed toward mass movement against arising threat on basis of caste, class and religion. The ethnic strife had reached at apex in communalizing people. The recent political movements, communal riots, suppressive attitude against minorities had aroused sympathy and social support from civil societies, had achieved success to some extent.

After Babari demolition and bomb blasts at Mumbai, the chaos and uncertainty in Mumbai of 1992 and frequent incidence led campaign for organization of civil societies across Mumbai. Later, country witnessed many communal incidences, but, these civil societies performed well in bringing peace and tranquility across the metropolitan city. The Mohalla committees (neighborhood groups), in each streets under community leaders, police and mass had proved, these dynamic innovative movement had got success in maintaining peace and order in city.

This research will bring fore, activities of Mohalla committees in maintaining peace and order with support of formal agencies, their communication between mass and state agencies. On other hand, the research will show the social impact on maintaining harmony in religious spaces, cutting across the barrier of ethnic, caste, regional differences.
Key words: Mohalla committee, civil society, religious spaces, Mumbai

Introduction

India was a country that stretched from Khyber Pass in north to south Arabian Sea. People of different ethnic groups, religious communities and regional groups lived here and though different regions of the country were under the political control of different rulers, there were no conflicts among ethnic groups and communities. In India, there are different religious communities and yet India is well known for her unity in diversity. The state follows a liberalist approach and each citizen has the right to follow his own ethos and values in term of their culture and their religion.

After the coming of colonial rulers to the subcontinent, they applied the policy of divide et imperia, thus creating division among people on the basis of identity and affiliation in order to prevent any threat that could produce a challenge to their power. They faced major challenge from the Mughal dynasty, and they addressed the challenge by dividing Muslims and Hindus and sowing the seeds of communal tussle. In 1893, Bal Gangadhara Tilak, a Hindu reformist leader started Ganapathi festival on the eve of Muharram fest which resulted in communal tension in Mumbai.

British rulers developed the island city of Bombay and soon industries, ports and small scale enterprises began to boom. Many people migrated from different parts of country. They were people of different identities, color, caste and religion. With more than 13 million inhabitants, Mumbai soon become the most populous city in India. Being a commercial hub, it continues to grow and attract thousands from all over country. Unfortunately independence from British power came together with partition and the subcontinent witnessed a historical exodus of religious
communities between India and Pakistan. The independence and eve of the partition between India and Pakistan had sown the seeds of communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims (Van Der Veer.1994). Bearing the brunt of partition, Muslims lost their political identity and faith in state and authority in India. During the 1980s, a period of political revivalism, radical right wing parties emerged against secular-moderate vision of nation. In Mumbai, Shivasena and Barathiya Janatha Party (BJP) championed Hindu religious revivalism and son of soil slogans which culminated in beginning of Rathyathra, started from Mumbai to Ramjanmaboomi in Ayodhya. The demolition of Babari mosque and Mumbai blast of 1992-93 further fueled the fire of communal tussle in which hundreds of thousands of Muslims were killed and many lost their livelihood and housing. The fury of communalism resulted in migration of people to peripheries, segregation in housing and gettoization.

But, there were a group people among both communities consisting of social activists, film stars, religious leaders, community well wishers and they got the support of police and politicians. In 1993, Dr. PC Alexander, the governor of Maharashtra organized a meeting of these people to form Mohalla committee in different areas of Mumbai. Though there were many communal flashpoints in different parts of the country but Mohalla committees had ensured security even at time of Gujarat carnage and other communal conflicts. Even though the primary goal was to maintain peace and security, they also participated in large scale social development of education, infrastructural development, and sanitation of slums.

Muslims in Mumbai

The city of Mumbai has been regarded as the space for the spirit of secularism and modernity at the same time it has been historically a site for the bitterest nationalist, working
class and ethno-religious struggles. The post colonial geography of Mumbai carries with it layered memories of these struggles. Muslim localities and neighborhood in this island city have undergone many changes since centuries of their existence. Their relationship with the city's economy, socio-cultural environment and political process has been contextual, layered and diverse. Particularly, for last two decades, the special division between Hindus and Muslims more pronounced and it attributed to the use of regional and religious identity as means for political mobilization.

According 1901 census, Muslims made up roughly one fifth of the city's population. Though they formed a substantial religious minority, they were not a homogeneous social grouping and were deeply divided socially as well as theologically. The census classified Muslims into fourteen different communities, namely Arabs, Sayads, Bohras, Julahas, Khojas, Memons, Pathans, and Sheikhs. They were concentrated in the areas of Chakla, Umarkhadi, Khartalao, Nagpada, Mandvi and Dongri. These were space for like caste groups within the community and some section of the city in which certain groups chose to live and not others. (Contractor, 2014).

The special concentration of Muslims commonly referred to as the Mohalla was term introduced by the Mughals for administrative division of the city and it has been associated with Muslim neighborhood. The Muslim settlement in urban and semi-urban localities was called qasbas that represented political and social dominance maintained through land ownership. The Marathi word 'wada' and 'wadi' is used in reference to Hindu localities and 'chawl' referred to working class neighborhood. Furthermore, these mohallas were associated with caste like groups or interrelated occupational groups among Muslims which were linguistically and culturally distinct. Hence, entire mohalla was identified with specific groups such as
Khoja and Bohra mohallas, a weavers' mohalla and a butchers' mohalla. Hence, mohalla maintained cohesion by preserving social and religious customs and to enforce a specific code of behavior among the members. Despite territorial space it maintained through endogamy, cultural and religious assertions either through the celebration of religious ceremonies or festivals or even involvement in violence or riot.

Mohallas were sites for various forms of communal activities which included the celebration of religious ceremonies or festivals. The Band of Muharram, celebration of Eid Milaad e Nabi or melas at Ganapati or Gokulashtami or arrangement of lights during Diwali were necessary to social life of these neighborhoods. The practice associated with Moharram on the day people mourn the martyrdom of Imam Hussain at Karbala were prominent in city which may not seen in Mohallas of other Muslim religious communities like Sunni. The Ganapati festival celebration is intrinsic to the social life of Marathi-middle class and Brahmin localities. During the festive season police play a role in maintaining law and order due to high probability that violence may break out and disturb the order of mohallas. Dadas, political leaders and other power brokers play an important role in the relationship of people with police, and often act as representatives and enforcers for powerful sections of society.

Communal Politics and Special Representation in Post Colonial Mumbai

The rise of communal politics in post colonial India has been closely associated with organized and militant Hindu nationalism that appeared in the 1920s with origin of Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS). Their history not brought nationalist movement but it is one of the several contingent outcomes of a protracted struggle over the definition of Indian nationhood. The Hindu nationalist
movement popularized the use the term hindutva as part of political project which equates religious and national identity: an Indian is a Hindu and defines Indian nationhood as Hindu rashtra (Jafforlot, 1996). During the period between 1980-1993 the period of Ram Mandir movement, saw the Hindu nationalist movement led by the RSS with branches and subsidiaries growing into most powerful cluster of the political and cultural organizations in the country including Mumbai. This “saffron wave” resulted in growing Hindu nationalist agendas, discourses and institutions penetrating everyday life. On other hand a political vacuum resulted in the rise of a cultural conservative Muslim leadership that seemed to confirm the stereotype types about “anti national” Muslims which contributed in portraying Indian Muslim a demonized “other” in subsequent process of mass production of communal stereotype types among Hindu community. During 1927-2008, total 84 Hindu-Muslim riots have been reported in the city. In these riot about 1870 persons killed, 8463 persons injured and property of millions of rupees has been destroyed. The riot seems to be happening in cyclical manner at 8-10 years gap. The city experienced higher incidence of riots during 1970-75, 1984-87 and 1991-93 (Shaban, 2013).

The special exclusion of Muslims became central to the spatial strategies of hindutva in the quest for power particularly in the last two decades in Mumbai. This could be attributed to the use of religious and regional identities as means of political mobilization. The rise of Shiva Sena in 1960s marked the beginning of the communalization of the cultural and political environment in the city. It offered the rhetoric of ethno-religious unity and regional cultural pride that repacked older anti-Muslim myths. At same time the rise of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) at national level provided an environment for further marginalization and isolation of Muslims. Hindutva as a hegemonic politico-cultural ideology
transformed the city's geography by use of a range of spatial strategies. It widely used public spaces as sites for the display of the Hindu right's violent political strategies and anti-Muslim rhetoric. After BJP-Shiva Sena combine came to power in 1995, they transformed several landmarks in the city by renaming them after Chatrapati Shivaji, the Hindu Maratha warrior king and icon of Shiva Sena. Today several public spaces including government offices, commercial establishments, streets, parks and traffic islands across the city are marked with the installation of grand statues of Shivaji, mounted on a horse holding a sword, decorated with folk saffron flags. Slums and chawls became sites for cultural populism and violent spatial strategies. With support of higher caste communities for their concern of cleanliness and security in the city, Shiva Sena started direct action against 'outsider' or non Maharashtrian residents of Mubai, like Bhayyas from Uttar Pradesh, Lungi-wallas from South India and among them all they especially targeted Muslims.

After the riots following demolition of Babari masjid in 1992 and bomb blast in January 1993, many people lost their home and people hesitated to go back to their homes. The violence carved out the boundaries around the religious identity and demarcated boundaries in 'Hindustan' and 'Pakistan'. Certain areas that already had sizable Muslim population saw influx of Muslim population. In central Mumbai areas such as Nagpada, Madanpura, Bhendi Bazaar, Muhammdali Road and some parts of Wadala such as Kidwai Nagar or Byculla saw influx of Muslim population. In the suburbs Jogeshwari-west, Kurla-Govandi and Mumbra were further concentrated with Muslims. Middle class Muslims located in Millat Nagar, Lokhandwala in Andheri and Mira Road. The frequent communal violence inherited communal common sense among the community.

After the violence several civil society organizations, social activists, film stars and community leaders engaged in
rehabilitation, resettlement and social support for Muslim community. Civil society could work to negotiate with common people, government officials, police and politicians. They organized under umbrella of mohalla committees at different parts of the city. In coming parts, it is going to discuss how civil society organization like mohalla committee create social network within Muslim community and how they negotiate with police and government officials.

**Conceptualizing Social Harmony and Social Capital**

The social harmony in multi-religious communities should be discussed through perspective of the religious doctrines. Religion is a universal social fact; its history begins with origin of human being. Religious symbols and rituals integrate community, perpetuate mutual cooperation and brotherhood each other. When social scientists study religion they do not investigate whether God or some other natural forces exist or whether certain beliefs are valid or not. Instead, they focus on social impact of religion the way religion shapes people's behavior and their understanding of world (Ferrente, 2008).

The word “religion” etymologically, means “bring together”. Philosophy of every religion put forward “Love other”, religious responsibility till not fulfill with respect of others. Same time it create network of collectivity, organic solidarity and brotherhood among their members as well as integration of outside community. I would like to carry on the discussion on social harmony through concept of social capital by eminent social scientist Robert Putnam.

According to Putnam, social capital is creation of social network which play as productive force for progress of the society. Social capital, with two kinds, bond capital and bridge capital, first, create social network among community with same identity, religion, class while later bond network
among different communities with different ideologies and religions. Both are interrelated, first one considered as foundation and basic structure which induce integration of other communities.

Putnam promoted the idea that religion is a powerful force by its virtue and ability to foster social capital. He is much more positive to social capital which he regards foundational to civic virtue and communal health. Religion is a rich source of social capital has been enthusiastically some taken up by religious scholars of religion, have influenced social policy. (Woodhead, 2011).

In religious civil society, social justice deals with areas of social concern. First, economic justice involving rules and procedure for maintaining productive and effective money-earning systems. Second, remedial justice that involves just and fair rules and procedure pertaining to civil, criminal and legal matters. Finally, distributive justice which focuses on fair outcomes, concerned with relative fairness— all people with in society actually possess a portion of that society’s “benefits and burdens” (Wheaton, 2008). It stresses integral relationship between spirituality and social justice in between religious authority and followers.

The first point to clear up is how the idea of social capital differs from the simple idea of capital. The word 'capital' means that which produces wealth, or resources produced in order to produce other goods in the future (Rasmusen, 2002). As a concept, social capital has been around for some time, and its origins can be traced to as early as the first decade of the 20th century. Like all other concepts in the social sciences, social capital can offer a partial understanding of how social relationship and societies work. So, with its ideological form social capital can hope to theorize and offer some explanation of social issues and solutions what it defines as social problem (Harper, 2001). It
is not panacea for all social issues but it can treat some sickness of society.

Theoretical debates on social capital have taken broadly between functionalist approaches which build on works of James Colman and Robert D Putnam and the more critical approach of Pierre Bourdieu. Social capital defined with its function, with two elements in common; they all consist of some social aspects of social structure and they facilitate certain actions of actors within the structure. For Colman, social capital is constituted in the space between social structure and agency, and between and among individuals, so that it “inheres” in the structure of social relationship.

While Colman's work on family and education have been influential in social capital theory, his work has been transferred by Robert Putnam with emphasis from family to community and from individual to collective social capital. Putnam sees that societies are made up of families and communities of networks of friends and colleagues. He stresses, moral and religious values, importance of trust and reciprocity that make relationship work and sustain the connections that bind societies together.

Putnam's theory of social capital is child of the circumstances. He sounded the warning most loudly when he offered evidence, that, Americans decreased their voluntary rate of civic participation during 20th century. The metaphor coined by Putnam Bowling alone signals that Americans are becoming more individualistic and that decreases in voluntary associations are reducing the social capital available for collective advantage.

Social capital can be defined both at individual and collective level. At individual level it can be operationalized as the number of contacts a person has in the society, and degree to which these contacts trust each another. At collective level the emphasis is on aggregated
measurements of average social contacts and networks and the level of trust embedded in them. This integrative approach shows that social capital is basically featured by existing individual social ties being the foundation for collective capital. Through reciprocal relations each individual may benefit by accessing resources that end up in forming large structures providing mutual benefits to groups rather than individuals. (Frumence, 2011). Generally, it can divide into structural and cognitive social capital.

**Bond Capital and Bridge Capital**

In contrast, bonding social capital exist between family, close friends and other close relation in between their segments, factions and religious groups. Bonding relationship provides emotional support and way of transmitting behavioral norms between individuals in the relationship. It creates 'strong ties' among members with mutual cooperation, understanding and trust among each other (Johnston, 2011). According to John Field, in cooperation and trust, individuals only embrace collective actions where they think this is the best way of achieving their individualized choices (2008). Bridging social capital relates to networks between homogeneous groups of people to different socio-religious backgrounds. Bridging social capital focuses on external relations and refers to the 'weak ties' between individuals and groups. These 'weak ties' usually form between individuals of different religious and ideological backgrounds 'Weak tie' relationships are considered provisional and lack depth. It expands social horizons and provides much emotional support for Individuals with 'weak ties' or bridging social capital tend to have a broader set of information and access to opportunities (Johnston, 2011).

Bond capital function as basic network and foundation for mutual relation other communities. The members of the homogeneous group may have common membership in
other networks also. Solidarity can also emerge from weak ties and can thus otherwise bridge diverse racial and religious groups. Most social capital research has hitherto measured it as generalized trust. Thus this trust has been associated with exclusive networks and provision of collective goods. It is bridging social capital. Generalized trust of this nature is normative and related to morals and faiths to strangers rather than to information, because people trust above and beyond what their rational calculations tell them is appropriate (Sevendson, 2009)

Religion is one of the factors integrating society in a collective manner. In functionalist perspective, religion brings morality and social justice, mutual understanding among their members. In religious sense, rituals are rules that govern how people behave among their segments and their everyday activities. 'Religion in a given society will be that instituted process of interaction among the members of that society and between them and the universe at large as they conceive it to be constituted which provides them with meaning, coherence, direction, unity, easement, and whatever degree of control over events they perceive as possible (Woodhead, 2011)

It provides moral and material support and mutual cooperation among their members. Religion has also played a key role in shaping particular practices and institutional forms of philanthropic and voluntary organizations. Some charge that religious people contribute mainly to their own congregations, so in a sense they are giving charity to themselves (Putnam, 2010). Probably the best known of these is “tithing.” This practice, which has its roots in the Old Testament, involves giving 10% of one's income (or wealth) to charity. Similar practice exists among Muslims as Zakat, to distribute 2.5% of total wealth among weaker sections of community like, widows, orphans, destitute. Langar system of Sikhs to provide food for every one of their community can also be cited as a similar example.
Recent studies have documented the extraordinary role religious congregations play in actually housing and delivering social services, health services, recreation, and even arts programs in communities where such services and programs are most needed, and other nonprofits are least present beyond their religious boundaries.

Social Capital as Social Glue

Putnam’s definition of social capital extends this to include both “social networks and associated norms of reciprocity and trust worthiness”. This definition captures the two key components. The first one, structural component made of social networks and other aspects of social organization. It is argued that denser and more extensive networks are associated with higher level of trust and cooperation with wide range of public and private benefits. Therefore networks closely linked to other - the attitudinal or cognitive component. These are the shared norms and habits of trust and of reciprocity that provide the facilities for cooperation and help create a more efficient and smooth running society. In fact, it brings about “Generalized trust” the population trust other in general (Fieldhouse, 2008).
Structural social capital concerns the density and extent to which individuals or members participate in various formal and informal associations and any other social activity. It builds cooperation and facilitates mutual benefits through collective action. In context of civil society organizations, the organization create social networks among the social activists, community leaders, religious leaders and common people, they can bridge the network in between and channelize the resource, offer social support and ensure social justice for those suffering.

Structural social capital can be further sub-classified into bonding, bridging and linking. Bonding social capital, relations formed by social networks between homogeneous groups. It basically involves people who are closely linked through networking. This type of social capital includes both formal and informal groups, associations and clubs. In bridging social capital the connected bonds are formed beyond the boundaries of various social groups. Bridging social capital extends to individuals, organizations and social groups that cut across different communities and individuals, and have vertical ties. Linking social capital is defined as the existing relationships between individuals and groups with dissimilar situations and from different societies, which enables members to access a wider range of resources, ideas and information (Woolcock, 2011).

Cognitive social capital includes values, attitudes, beliefs, norms and reciprocity which can be seen as a resource held between individuals interacting within the social networks. The cognitive component also includes perceptions of support, sharing and trust. It predisposes people towards mutually beneficial collective actions.

The morality of society is directly related with their religious ideologies. Every religion preaches norms and values of harmony among each other. The basic philosophy
of scriptures includes love for others. Even it induces people respect and cooperates with other's symbols and practices, until they deter or dishonor own faith. It creates a notion of stigma which perpetuates crime, communal abuses and attacks.

Norms governing network behavior relate to trust, unity and reciprocity. Within networks individuals have what is called particularized trust; a trust that is specific to the individual a person knows. This is different to the trust people have for strangers. The trust to strangers is by nature generalized and is termed 'generalized trust'. Closely relate to trust are unity and reciprocity. Unity is a feeling of belonging to a network together with the feeling that a two-way relationship exists between the individual and the network. Reciprocity concerns the exchanges that take place within a network. Individuals are likely to offer assistance to others if they believe that in future the assistance will be reciprocated (Western, 2005)

**How Religious Harmony Create Social Capital**

Sociologically, religion refers to those process and institutions which bind individuals authoritatively into the social order- it is considered as moral and social authority (Turner, 2005). Functionalists maintain that religion serve some social functions for the individual and for society. In several ways it promotes social unity harmony and solidarity. First, shared doctrines and rituals create emotional bond among believers. Second, many religious rituals alleviate individual anxieties, these by binding individuals to a group. Finally, religion functions as stabilizing force in times severe social disturbances (Ferrente, 2008).

Durkheim rejected any division and falsity of belief, but it existed for making moral and social order in society “there are no religions which are false. All are true in their own fashion, all answer though in different ways to give condition
of human existence. It involves special types of knowledge that is embedded in collective practices that are reinforced by shared values” (1961[1912]). Religious institutions provide a public space with which concepts of justice, equality, brotherhood as component of religious faith. The monks and priests are demand of everyday life, who can embrace religious practices that required achieving salvation. (Turner, 2005).

Both Weber and Durkheim convey a lively sense of religion's role in shaping, symbolizing, communicating, stabilizing and sacralizing shared values. Talcott Parsons, inspired by both, goes further in his emphasis on religion as above all a focus of societal values (Woodhead, 2011).

Social capital would investigate on two methods, critical tool and conceptual tool. First one deals with formulated social networks among society. It is depend on functions of individuals. Same time, conceptual tools also more significant role. It provide organic energy, its function extends to all parts of the network. Every functions are interrelated contributes to the functions of another. Religion provides a tendency for socialization and works as agency which makes social cohesion and social harmony easier.

Every function contributed from actions of a new actor explicitly becomes rational – though not in the sense of acting in accordance with self interest. Colman related this rationality as consisting in the actor's construction of internal constitution in which the rights, resources and interest of various actors are reflected and through which action come about. The actions also takes place with context and rationality of actor are interlinked with “co- creative centers of relationship”, that is, it indicates that a person is constantly immersed in a complex web of social contexts. These social contexts constitute the moral play ground on and through which religious tasks are performed. First and
foremost family constitutes one's primary social context. However, it also expands one's sensitivity beyond the family. For instance, the virtue within the domain of family expanded to further circles from fellow groups, fellow villagers to strangers (Weber, 2002).

Colman is interested to analyze actors private returns in a specific social context, while Putnam in its external or public manifestation. This change of focus comes along with conceptual shift from specific actor and specific social context to 'public' that is from an emphasis on context to a generalized good of a group (Weber, 2008).

Social Harmony, Civic Participation and Mohalla Committees

Social harmony come about to fore with civic participation, public co operation and mutual help. Among dense populated society, social systems are more complex and civic participation only makes people's relationship and mutual understanding. In modern society work places are mixed with several communities from different backgrounds.

Putnam identifies five general components of social capital that are likely to enhance civic engagement performance: community organizational life, engagement in public affairs, community voluntarism, informal sociability and social trust. Each of these dimensions incorporates distinctive bonding (exclusive) and bridging (inclusive) aspects, which may bring together similar groups of people or connect myriad diverse groups (Andrews, 2012).

According to Varsheney, the civil society can be divided into three categories; movement politics led by electoral politics, non electoral civic intervention and initiative led by local administration. Of the three, the first two are society based and the third state based. In Mohalla committees,
there is participation of three categories.

The idea of formation of mohalla committees in not a new idea, it started in Bheevandi, a town at out skirt of Mumbai. During 1980s the city was suffering from recurring communal tension. After experiencing the worst riot in 1984, some civil society organization started thinking how to restore peace and harmony in city. As result, Suresh Kapade, the deputy commissioner of the police took the challenge and he prepared the historical reason for communal tension. At the initial stage, he set up a central committee and 75 local committee for each ward of the Municipal Corporation. Each committee had 12 members from both Hindu and Muslim communities.

After outbreak of communal violence in 1992, many civil society organization actively participated in rehabilitation of victims. Relief camps were organized at different parts of the city and social activist are busy in relief and rehabilitation activities. The government agencies realized that people particularly Muslims has lost credibility in state agencies including police and people not ready to approach for any help and government started channelizing the resources to nongovernmental organizations.

Mean while, F.T Khorakiwala started a project to establish a citizen police committee in 72 police stations of the city. The task was not easy and he requested Julio Rebeiro to the take the challenge. He got support from social activist Sushobha Barve and assistance from police commissioner Satish Sahney. Sushobha Bharve states that,

It was then decided that the first aim should be to open up channels of communication between the police and citizens and particularly the minority Muslim community to restore trust and confidence. The second aim was to bring the communities nearer. With this background in June 1994 informal meetings were initiated with Muslims. (.........)
people were encouraged to express all they felt and suffered during the riot and role of police and their grievance. (Quoted, Thakkar, 2004).

Slowly the distrust was replaced by accountability and people encouraged sharing feeling with the committee. During the time, the team members got massive support from social workers, community leaders and top of police officials. Bharve added that

Experience has shown that trust and confidence building does not come public statements. It is built through personal contacts, openness and honesty. Reconciliation is not about confessions and words only. It has to be given in flesh. Reconciliation also implies sharing in the socio-economic and material resources of the country. Forgiveness without sharing will otherwise be empty. (Quoted Thakkar, 2004).

Later on, the first meeting was held at a school in Mahim. The team interacted with well educated Muslims. Their perception was that it is an eye wash. Slowly people got convinced regarding the activities of the team and their engagement in solving communal tension and restoring social harmony in their neighborhood. The formation of 24 active mohalla committees in the communally sensitive areas of the Mumbai brought a new chapter in history of the city. The team insisted, since these initiatives were taken by citizens themselves, it should be free from influence of politics and anti-social elements. As the name of mohalla committees suggests, it is forged by a group of people who are living together. Members are concerned citizen of the area who were non political and non controversial in their working method and non communal in their approach. The committee works in affinity with a police station. Each area has a beat officer. Members would come from all communities who devote time for community service
without any personal motive. There are doctors, lawyers, teachers and other responsible and committed people from the locality. There would be a facilitator who manage and conduct meeting and follow up the actions of the meeting in their vicinity.

**Works of Muhalla Committees in Mumbai**

The core activities of mohalla committees focus on issues related to (a) complaints related to the work of police of the area (b) civic issues like health, availability of water, environment, and garbage disposal (c) facilities for education of the children and youth in this area and (d) activities promoting communal harmony such as celebration of festivals of different communities. They come forward during the celebration of festivals like Eid and Diwali by organizing inter religious prayers, communicating ideas of peace and harmony, building bridges among various groups of all communities, arranging sports and cricket matches and running bridge course for school dropouts.

Mohalla committees do not follow a specific uniform pattern in their functioning, the reason that, each of them run by different people and they face various problems. As it mentioned above, Mahim was chosen for initial activities of the movement. It is place for frequent communal tension between Hindus and Muslims one hand and Muslim and police on the other hand. At the initial stage, a school principal was selected a facilitator. They organized educational activities for school children and health camp for both people and police officers. But in Dharavi the case is slightly different. There were demarcated areas between Muslims and Hindus. Youngsters suggested conducting cricket matches where both communities play together. Police officers also joined the teams. Sports activities have been used by mohalla committees of Dongri, Nagpada, JJ Marg, Malawi, Wadala and Antop Hill to channelize energy of
youth and make awareness among them. From 1996 onwards cricket tournament for peace have been conducted each year between the youngsters of mohalla and police officers.

The experience shows that lecturing the communities on communal harmony does not make any sense, but there is a need for some solid and result oriented work. Versova mohalla committee introduced sewing classes where women from all communities participated. They will get skill and they can do job and earn money. At Imamwada and Wadala started study classes, libraries and sports for local youth while in Dharavi started a counseling center to deal with small offences and crime.

Mostly mohalla committees actively work during the festive seasons and religious processions. Most communal tussles happen during this time. They actively participate in religious programs and communicate with police officers to maintain law and order at that time.

Social capital comprises two factors- social trust and civic engagement; it is reciprocal relationship between civic participation and interpersonal relationship. Putnam interpreted it as “people's connections with the life of their communities” (Moy, 1999).

In turn social pressure in one part badly affects all functions of society. Failure to cooperate for mutual benefits does not necessarily signal ignorance or irrationality but, it mostly created from social circumstances. In absence of coordination and mutual commitment, however every one defects unintentionally but rationally, confirms one another bad expectations. In all these situations the simple solution may be that everyone should be better off if everyone cooperates. But, most of the time this is practically impossible.
For social harmony such dilemmas should be overcome, I think social capital may be a partial panacea. Putnam refers to solution as 'features of social organization such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (1994). According to him, creating “social context” for working together in a society, it is potential stock for social capital. The core these civic heritages at rich networks of organized reciprocity and civic solidarity are originated form religious fraternities. In public society, mosques, churches or synagogues organize mass people willingly; encourage social harmony and mutual coordination.

Networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocities and more efficient than a distrustful society. Same time civic engagement facilitates coordination and communication and amplifies information about the trustworthiness of other individuals.

According to functionalists, communal conflicts are occurs at the time of dysfunction of social solidarity and harmony. It creates a social pressure and badly affects all functions of society. Everyone feels dissatisfaction and denial of expectation from their own society. Even they losses trust and support from others.

Existing and imposed laws are not a measurement of social harmony. According to Putnam, law almost everyone agrees are made to be broken, but, fearing other's is lawlessness, every one demands sterner discipline (1994). Social norms and values should be beyond these boundaries. Then, how it can contribute social happiness? He continues “trapped in these interlocking vicious circles, nearly everyone feels powerless, exploited and unhappy” (1994). Now, it is worth mentioned that, pre modern society were very harmonious and social norms and values are more valid, the reason that their social networks and civic engagement were more strong and solid. They were provided much attention for social cooperation and mutual trust.
Stocks of social capital, such as trust, norms and networks tend to be self-enforced, not deliberately constructed. It comes through “moral resources” which is mostly originated from religious scriptures and philosophies.

Successful collaboration in one endeavor builds connections and trust- social assets that facilitate future collaboration in other unrelated tasks. This means, social capital must be by –product of other social activities, typically, consist in ties, norms, and trust transferable from one social setting to other.

However, social capital at earlier stage, giving people the confidence and respect to intervene before behaviors get out of hand for example, by discouraging teenagers from forming threatening groups on the street or taking drugs (Field, 2008) Even in such a fluid and dynamic society, the greater cohesion and shared expectation of the wider community the lower rate of crime and disorder. Criminality appears generally to thrive in neighborhoods where people don't know one another all that well, where supervision of teenage peer groups is minimal and where civil engagement is low(Field,2008).

In context of Mumbai, mohalla committees are active and dynamic people organized under one umbrella, they include people from community leaders, social activists, politicians and police officers. Normally they conduct meeting at mohallas and engage with common people in raising their voices to concerned authorities and suggest solution for the problem. Most the time, mohallas suffer problem related with housing, water, electricity and criminal cases, inter community conflicts. These small cases may exaggerate and it will turn to violence. The civil society could understand the problem of the people they will help in solving the problem.
Conclusion

The living experience of mohalla committees shows some insights into the living experience of minorities, particularly Muslims, in a democratic-secular country and plural society. The civil society-led efforts have been successful to some extent in maintenance of an atmosphere of peace and harmony.

In any exercise of conflict resolution it is very important to have a listening exercise among the common people. In city life no one has time to listen to others and this is often heart of all problems. The experience of mohalla committee tells us the experiences that any neutral individual who is accountable and trusted in the community can help and open communication channels between the parties. The more we create a social network among the people the more they will restrict themselves in engaging with communal tension and violence. At this moment mohalla committees can facilitate creative communication and engage themselves in social activities of mohalla.

In communal violence victims loose trust in police and judiciary and the distrust will urge people to keep away from police and concerned authorities. Therefore the partnership with police is quite necessary. It is not usually easy to create a platform of communication between police and local people. In fact, police personnel often find it difficult to connect with citizens and consider them as equals. Senior officers are more sympathetic to mohalla committees but police at lower level are less interested to engage with activities of mohalla committees.

Influence of political parties and functionaries often dilutes the spirit of mohalla committees. The political parties with different interests seek to appeal to their own narrow constituencies, and do not shy away from playing the
communal card in the process. Therefore the work of mohalla committees needs to be driven by local people and as free from subversive political influence as possible.

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INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Dictionary defines pluralism as “A condition or system in which two or more states, groups, principles, sources of authority, etc., coexist.”¹ Though, this is what pluralism stands for in the classical sense it is used differently across a wide range of topics. It denotes a diversity of views and stands rather than a single approach or method of interpretation. It may even be divided into different categories like Scientific Pluralism, the view that some phenomena observed in science require multiple explanations to account for their nature; Structural Pluralism, a concept used to examine the way in which societies are structured; Cultural Pluralism, when small groups within a larger society maintain their unique cultural identities and Religious Pluralism, the acceptance of all religious paths as equally valid, promoting coexistence. In the light of the topic of the paper- Islam and Pluralism, cultural pluralism and religious pluralism will be our main areas of concern.

The God of Islam is a creator and sustainer of all that exists² and is so sublime in nature that He is beyond space and time. The topic of God's nature and attributes is accosted throughout the Holy Book of Muslims called, Qur’an. Qur'an is considered to be a divinely revealed book by the followers of Islamic faith, a book that is considered to be the verbatim word of God.³

2. The Holy Qur’an,Chapter 2 verse 255.
Its scriptural status in a global religious community and its major place within world literature generally has led to a great deal of secondary literature on the Qur'an.\(^4\) It is believed that the Qur'an was verbally revealed by God to His Chosen Last Prophet- Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the angel Gabreil (Jibril)\(^5\), gradually over a period of approximately 23 years, beginning on 22 December 609 CE\(^6\), when he was 40, and concluding in 632, the year of his death. The concept of God in Islam can be derived from the Chapter 112 of the Qur'an, famously known as the Chapter of Oneness—

Say, “He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.”\(^7\)

It is evident, that the concept of God is very simple, where the God is just one and the believer directs all time and energy in worshipping only One God. Such a concept of the all powerful, formless and shapeless creator exists in all religions. Even in a faith, which believes in multitudes of Gods, like Hinduism, a concept of one supreme deity is acknowledged: "Ekam evadvitiyam" - "He is One only without a second." [Chandogya Upanishad 6:2:1]

Since the God in Islam has no equivalents, all conception of 'lower' or 'higher' Gods is vehemently rejected in the Islamic cosmology. Even the worship of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is considered a thing that puts a believer out of the fold of Islam. This makes Islam a strictly monotheistic faith. When on one hand, the simplicity of Islam's concept of God

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7. The Holy Qur'an, Surat Al-Ikhlas, Chapter 112.
makes it easy to comprehend God and provides a basis of unity to those who believe in such a God, the rejection of worshipping any other thing besides a God of any shape and form is seen as an obstacle for pluralism. Can a faith which considers reverence of any animate or inanimate object as blasphemous co-exist along with other religions, or allow those to thrive who believe in concepts like pantheism of trinity?

Scholars and philosophers have put across various views and points regarding compatibility or the lack thereof, of Islam with pluralism. This paper aims at analyzing the same in the light of authentic Islamic scripture - Qur'an and Hadith.

**The Call for Religious Pluralism**

Throughout recorded history, mankind has been known to fall into war and destruction. The reasons have been innumerable, be it for land, for wealth, for women, for glory and many times for God too. Ironic as it might sound men have fought to literally defend the God, who they in the same breath claim to be all powerful. War and murder is not exclusive to religions though; state-imposed atheism was a defining feature of brutal 20th century regimes led by Stalin, Tito, Mao Zedong, and Pol Pot among others, which resulted in the suffering and murder of millions. Tens of thousands of Russian Christians alone were executed for their beliefs by Atheists intent on purging religion from the Soviet Union but many wars do seem to have occurred due to religious differences. Even the current wave of terrorism seems to have inspired from religious extremism. A dominant religion in certain places has utilized religion to serve the majority and oppress the small groups of other religions. In modern era, many Muslim countries have laws that criminalize the act of leaving Islam to someone born in Muslim family, forbid entry to non-Muslims into Mosques, and forbid construction of Church, Synagogue or Temples in their countries.⁸

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Tired of all the killing and discrimination in the name of God, mankind has started pressing on the idea of religious pluralism. The origin of this idea is unknown but can be traced back to Buddhism which actively promotes the idea of freedom to choose one’s religion.⁹

Therefore, religious pluralism would mean that all religions or faiths are different paths to God and all are equally true and valid. In other words, no faith can claim that only way with which you can attain paradise, nirvana or moksha is by following the tenets are worshipping the God of their religion.

This idea is ingenious in a way that, since it is believed that all religions are equal, there is no superiority of one over another and therefore no war or discrimination. This is not to be confused with religious diversity, rather religious pluralism is a social norm.¹⁰

But the question here is, does the hate of otherness stop with the acceptance of religious pluralism. The recent ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims, by the Buddhists, does seem to point that religious pluralism as an inherent part of faith cannot stop war and crime. Therefore, even if all faiths were to profess the equality of others, the underlying reasons for violence is not necessarily absence of equality, but perhaps, a lack of empathy or an absence of rules and codes by the religion on its people, which calls for them to be just and noble with the other religious people.

It seems, that in the current worldview, religious pluralism has not only failed it’s preachers but also purged the growth of religious dialogue between different religions. It has even made inter religious dialogue dysfunctional. The

dialogue between philosophical concepts has seen a decline and therefore the development of philosophies have suffered. It was the idea of questioning the validity of a religious philosophy that would develop it and make it more refined, but that has seen a huge halt with the press upon religious pluralism to become acceptable to very cores of faiths.

**Importance of Cultural Pluralism as a Tenet of Faith in Islam**

Islam is one of those religions which from the very onset have seen other religions and has developed monumentally under the influence and midst of idolatry, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrians and people who associated with no religion at all. The early Islamic society consisted of active traders and therefore was subjected to constant mingling with non-Muslims. Islamic empire encompassed huge areas of Europe and Asia and it spread in far and wide islands. This is the reason that Islam from the beginning has addressed the topic of pluralism and thriving in a multi religious society. A very famous verse of the Qur'an from Chapter 109 states: "O you who do not believe! I worship not what you worship, and you worship not what I worship; nor will I worship what you worship; neither will you worship what I worship. Therefore, to you your religion and to me my religion!"¹¹ This is a chapter which was revealed in the early days of prophet hood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) while he was still living in Mecca. The people of Mecca would criticize Muhammad (peace be upon him) on rejecting the many Gods and worshipping only One.¹² Therefore a verse came compounding the idea of living together in a society and yet following one's own religion. It seems to be clearly stating that what one believed with respect to the faith need not be a matter of concern for other.

¹¹ The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Kafirun, Chapter 109, verse 1-6.
¹² Tafsir of IbnKathir.
Now, one may argue that the period of Mecca was when the Muslims were underdogs and Islam was a weak part of the society and therefore, finding verses of pluralism is an undoubtedly a protective measure. The rise of Islam began with the migration of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to Medina, then known as Yathrib. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was invited by the people of Yathrib to act as an honest mediator on behalf of the fighting tribes and establish peace. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was able to charter a constitution and treaty for people of Medina which served as a source of harmony for ages to come. We shall discuss this document later in the paper. With the rise of Islam, one may expect that the pluralism would begin to fade and forceful conversions and ill treatment of non Muslims may begin. But this is proven to be untrue, as treatment of non-Muslims with kindness and justice was made a mandate of faith for Muslims. A very famous verse of the Qur'an was revealed in the later times in Medina which states, "Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth has been made clear from error. Whoever rejects false worship and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And Allah hears and knows all things."¹³

One of the fundamentals of Pluralism established by this verse is that no one can be forced into accepting Islam. Although, it is the duty of a Muslim to convey the message of Islam, but any sort of physical compulsion is disallowed.

There are many other verses talking of social pluralism, such as:

“If it had been your Lord's will, all of the people on Earth would have believed. Would you then compel the people so to have them believe?”¹⁴

“So if they dispute with you, say 'I have submitted my

¹⁴. The Holy Qur'an, Surah Yunus, Chapter 10, verse 99.
whole self to Allah, and so have those who follow me.' And say to the People of the Scripture and to the unlearned: 'Do you also submit yourselves?' If they do, then they are on right guidance. But if they turn away, your duty is only to convey the Message. And in Allah's sight are all of His servants.”¹⁵

Allah says: “The Messenger's duty is but to proclaim the Message.”¹⁶

It is very important to note that all these verses were revealed in Medina, a time when Muslims lived alongside people of other faith. Calling upon Muslims to not disturb the lives of people by coercing them into accepting faith is pressed upon again and again.

Establishment of Pluralism with the Constitution of Medina

A very foundational moment of early Islamic history is the migration of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from the city of Mecca to Medina. It is famously known as the Hijrah and also marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. The Hijrah took place in June 622 CE.¹⁷ The migration was as a result of an invitation by a delegation from Medina, consisting of the representatives of the twelve important clans of Medina, inviting him as a neutral outsider to Medina to serve as the chief arbitrator for the entire community.¹⁸ For a hundred years before 620, there was constant fighting between the polytheists of Medina and its Jewish inhabitants. The recurring slaughters and disagreements over the resulting claims, especially after the Battle of Bu'ath in which all the clans were involved, made it obvious to them that the tribal conceptions of blood-feud and an eye for an eye were no longer workable unless there was one man with authority to adjudicate in disputed cases.¹⁹ The delegation from Medina

¹⁵. The Holy Qur’an, Surah Al-Imran, Chapter 3, verse 20.
¹⁷. Supra 6 at p.52
¹⁸. Watt, The Cambridge History of Islam, p. 39
¹⁹. ibid
pledged themselves and their fellow-citizens to accept Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) into their community and physically protect him as one of themselves.²⁰ Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had his role changed from a mere religious leader, to that of a political leader as well. He was, with great finesse able to draft in 622 CE²¹, what is famously known as Ṣaḥīfat al-Madīnah or Mithāq al-Madīnah, which can be translated as Constitution of Medina. The charter constituted an agreement between the various Muslim (Muhajirun [the ones who migrated from Mecca] and Ansar [the converts of Medina]), Jewish, pagan, and Christian groups in Medina. A very noteworthy point here is that the constitution declared all the groups to form ummahwāḥidah meaning one nation, and formed the basis of a multi-

21. Watt, Muhammad at Medina, p. 227-228; Watt argues that the initial agreement was shortly after the hijra and the document was amended at a later date specifically after the battle of Badr (AH [anno hijra] 2, = AD 624). Serjeant argues that the charter is in fact 8 different treaties which can be dated according to events as they transpired in Medina with the first treaty being written shortly after Muhammad's arrival.


Wellhausen bases this judgement on three considerations; first Muhammad is very diffident about his own position, he accepts the Pagan tribes within the Umma, and maintains the Jewish clans as clients of the Ansars see Wellhausen, Excursus, p. 158. Even Moshe Gil a skeptic of Islamic history argues that it was written within 5 months of Muhammad's arrival in Medina. Moshe Gil. "The Constitution of Medina: A Reconsideration." Israel Oriental Studies 4 (1974): p. 45.]
religious Islamic state in Medina which was truly pluralistic in its real sense. It ensured freedom of religious beliefs and practices for all citizens. It assured that representatives of all parties, Muslim or non-Muslim, should be present when consultation occurs or in cases of negotiation with foreign states, and that no one should go to war before consulting the Prophet. It also established the security of women, a tax system for supporting the community in times of conflict, and a judicial system for resolving disputes. It declared the role of Medina as a ḥaram ("sacred place"), where no weapons can be carried and no blood spilled.

**The non-Muslims had the following rights:**

- The security of God is equal for all groups.
- Non-Muslim members will have the same political and cultural rights as Muslims. They will have autonomy and freedom of religion.
- Non-Muslims will take up arms against the enemy of the Ummah and share the cost of war.
- There is to be no treachery between the two.
- Non-Muslims will not be obliged to take part in religious wars of the Muslims.

The city of Medina became a model for pluralism for the societies of that time, with a concrete constitution and laws in place to preserve rights of everyone equally.

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23. Ahmed, 1979, p. 46-7

24. Article 15, as quoted in Ahmed, 1979, p. 46-7

25. Article 25, as quoted in Ahmed, 1979, p. 46-7

26. Article 37, as quoted in Ahmed, 1979, p. 46-7

27. Article 45, as quoted in Ahmed, 1979, p. 46-7
The proclamation of excellent treatment of non-Muslims was not made only with the perspective of keeping peace within society. In fact, Islam made it a point to make pluralism an important tenet of faith, where the people who believe are actually told that they will be accountable for whatever wrong they do to disbelievers, in the life of the hereafter. Some sayings of the prophet that explicitly state these things are recorded as Hadith:

“Whoever kills a person who has a truce with the Muslims will never smell the fragrance of Paradise.” ²⁸

“Beware! Whoever is cruel and hard on a non-Muslim minority, or curtails their rights, or burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad) will complain against the person on the Day of Judgment.”²⁹

The importance of pluralism as a part of faith was stressed upon to the extent that a Quranic verse commands the believers to be polite in their arguments over religious philosophy with people of other faith:

"And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, "We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him."³⁰

**Continuation of Pluralism after the Prophet**

During the reign of Ali Ibn Abi Taleb (4th ruler of Islamic state after the prophet), he lost his Shield in a battle and a Jew took it. After knowing that the Jew had it, the Prince of

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28. Saheeh Muslim, Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 87, Hadith 52; USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 9, Book 83, Hadith 49
29. Sunan of Abu Dawud
30. The Holy Qur’an, Chapter 29, verse 46.
the Believers, as Islamic rulers were called, asked the Jew to give him the shield back. The Jew refused and insisted that this shield belonged to him and not Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, Ali took the case to court.

The Judge at that time was Shuraiah Al Qadhi. He was renowned for holding people equally before law. As the Jew and Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, stood before the judge. The judge said, “Please lay your case O Aba Al Hassan (meaning The father of Al Hasan, this way of figure of speech in Arabic is called Kunya, that is when you call a man by his son's name and it is considered a sign of friendship and closeness)”. While he called the Jew with his name (without titles) Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, refused that the judge privileged him by calling him in a way to show friendship and did not do the same thing with the Jew.

After each one finished stating his case, the judge decided that by the Islamic law and due to lack of proof that the shield belonged to Ali Ibn Abi Taleb, then the Jew owns it.

The Jew could not believe that Justice would be applied in the Islamic state even against Ali, the Caliph who is at the same time the Prophet's beloved and trusted cousin. Then the Jew said: “I declare that there is but one God and that Muhammad is His Prophet. O Prince of the believers the shield was yours, I followed your army while you were leaving “Seffeen” and it fell from your camel “ALAw rak”

Ali said: “You became a Muslim so I give it to you”.³¹

This is a famous story from Islamic history among many others where justice took precedence over being on the side of the majority.

³¹ Adab Al Qadhi: Islamic Legal and Judicial System by Alīmad ibn ‘Umar Khaṣṣāf, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Ṣadr al-Shahīd and Munir Ahmad Mughal
The Quran compels its followers as follows: “O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives.”³²

With the story cited above, it is evident that the pluralism was incorporated as a social norm within the Islamic society by making it a part of faith.

**Does Islam Entirely Reject Religious Pluralism?**

According to a hadith, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has said, that God has sent one lac twenty four thousand messengers to earth. The scholars classify this as a daif hadith, which means that the chain of narration is weak. But a Quranic verse says:

And verily, We have sent among every ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): “Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from Taghut (all false deities, etc. i.e., do not worship Taghut besides Allah).” Then of them were some whom Allah guided and of them were some upon whom the straying was justified. So travel through the land and see what was the end of those who denied (the truth),³³ which implies that Islam acknowledges that apart from the 25 prophets mentioned by name in the Qur'an, there have been more Prophets, thereby leaving a huge door open for all other faiths.

Muslims maintain that all revelations and messages brought by every Prophet was essentially the same of claiming oneness of God, and that their message got altered over the time, since humankind is always prone to forgetfulness and mistakes.³⁴

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32. The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 4, verse 135.
33. The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 16, verse 36.
Special relevance is attached to the Christians and Jews, calling them as People of the Book, which means, a people who's Messengers left a book with them. Muslims believe that these books have parts of truth within them, though they have got corrupted of truth with time.

Such beliefs are very much in line with the modern concept of Religious pluralism which says, one's religion is not the sole and exclusive source of truth, and thus the acknowledgement that at least some truths and true values exist in other religions.

Islam also allows for Muslim men to marry the people of the book, and the wife is not obliged to convert to Islam. Such ideas, make Islam one of the religions that have well developed rules of equality and tolerance towards other faiths.

In the light of the Quranic verse of messengers being sent to every ummah, Muslim scholars today perform research on various religions, with a view to establish common grounds with people of other faith which will increase understanding and tolerance and cooperation between Muslims and others, thereby promoting pluralism.

**Conclusion**

Among all the religions in the world, Islam is the only religion that addresses the topic of rights of non-Muslims in Muslim lands from a faith perspective, where treating them kindly and justly is invoked upon as an act of faith and something that pleases the God. Pluralism is therefore coherent with Islam. In the current world, where there is a lack of understanding between faiths, digging into the roots of the religions and heaping the fruits of pluralism has become essential to peaceful coexistence between communities. During a time, where there is a war on the concept of religion as a whole, it is of utmost importance to
bring forth the benefits of faith related concepts which can lead to a greater dialogue and preservation of a rich culture and heritage. Islam is and always has been a faith with open doors, which is subject to interpretation under the light of the actions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Its non contextual interpretation by the extremist groups is purging it of its goodness and benefits. It is time not to let them hijack a faith and interpret it by going to its roots as a peaceful religion of coexistence and spread that narrative.

Islam provides ingenious methods of creating a pluralistic society which can be implemented in modern day societies. The Islamic countries today, are not ideal examples of what an Islamic state should look like; it is time for them also to dig the roots of Islam and find ideals of pluralism.
“If God Wishes Me To Become A Martyr Of The Mosques, Then Let It Be. But I Tell You That My Death Will Not Be Vain, And That From My Blood, Islamic Flowers Will Grow”

-Rachid Al-Ghannouchi

Pluralism is one of the most important subjects of discussion in the contemporary world. Pluralism is both an ideology as well as a methodology. It has been divided into several sub categories like Political pluralism, Economic pluralism, and Religious pluralism among others. Islam as an ideology has its own solutions towards different issues or problems. After Arab spring, relevance of such issues increased because many of the Western and Eastern Scholars dealt Islam as a full-fledged ideology. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi, Yusuf al Qardawi and Tariq Ramadan are some of them. Current study focused on Islamic teachings about pluralism and Rachid Al-Ghannouchi’s ideas and practical experiences. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi is a well-known Islamic Scholar of contemporary modern world, one of the ideologue of Arab Spring, thinker, revivalist and co-founder of Ennahda Movement, Tunisia; mostly discussed about Pluralistic society especially in political scenario. John L Esposito, the author of The Makers of the Contemporary Islam portrays Rachid Al-Ghannouchi as “a major activist-intellectual, a creative reform from the relationship of Islam to Secularism, democracy, civil society and women rights”

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Pluralism in Islam

“Pluralism is the state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious or spiritual or social groups maintain and develop their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of a common civilization” - Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Islam is not a group of individual beliefs, rituals, or mannerisms. It is a comprehensive way of life. Before the modern Islamic movement, Islam had been thought of as a preparation for one to get to heaven, not a system to mold society. Islam is often viewed as an inherently violent and intolerant world religion. This misconception is fueled in part by the miscreant deeds of some Muslims, particularly toward those of other faith beliefs. That conduct is then unfairly imputed to Islamic doctrine and co-religionists globally. This attribution is unfair because the individual Muslim's action may not in fact be supported by informed readings of Islamic legal strictures, nor necessarily be representative of the 2.08 billion Muslims in the world.

Quran enjoins the acceptance and appreciation of the plurality of culture and religion, but within the unity of faith in the one God. Actually, Islam stresses on the unity of humanity, it also recognizes human diversity and gives valuable principles to deal with ethnic, racial and religious differences in society. However, this pluralistic dimension of Islamic teachings has received little attention in our time despite its vital significance for society. In today’s globalised and sometimes polarized world, there is a dire need to understand the pluralistic perspectives of Islamic teachings in order to develop an environment of peaceful coexistence and harmony in society. There are many examples in the sources of Islamic teachings and history to understand the pluralistic perspective of Islam. The Quran is Islam's foundational text regarded by Muslims as the literal word of God. It constitutes a primary source informing Islamic law.
And it articulates several significant principles regarding inter-religious harmony, peaceful co-existence and religious pluralistic success. There are several verses in the Quran that underline human pluralities, such as social, biological and religious differences.

According to the Quran, all human beings are from the same soul but they have been created with differences. The following verses beautifully portray human plurality:

"The same religion He has established for you is as that which He enjoined on Noah -- and what We now reveal to you -- and enjoined on Abraham, Moses, Jesus, saying, 'Establish the religion and do not become divided therein'" (42:13).

The Quran further states, "Say, 'We believe in God and in that which He has revealed to us and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, the descendants and that which was revealed to Moses, Jesus and that which was revealed to the prophets from their Lord, We make no difference between one and another and we bow in submission to Him'" (2:136).

Thus, the Quran makes the belief in all the prophets – from Adam to Noah to Abraham to Moses to Jesus – incumbent upon Muslims. All those Prophets should be respected, as should their followers. Indeed, Islam prohibits oppression in all of its ugly forms, irrespective of the faith, gender, race or economic status of the victim or perpetrator. The Quran instructs, "Help one another in benevolence and piety, and help not one another in sin and transgression" (5:2). Allah says, “For each [community] We have appointed from you a law [-giver] and a way. Had God willed, He could have made you one community. But that He might try you by that which He has given you [He has made you as you are]. So vie with one another in good works” (5:48).

Muslims are spiritually prohibited from oppressing the adherents of other faith groups. Thus, killings, mutilation,
burnings, discrimination and violence against minority religious communities by Muslims is wrong.

Islamic doctrine provides for religious freedom and recognizes the plurality of faith and communities and the Quran teaches us not to impose one's faith on others; rather, it urges us to tolerate the differences. The Quran states, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (2:256) and "Will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe?" (10:99) and “To you is your path [religion]; to me mine” (109:6).

“O humankind We [God] have created you male and female, and made you into communities and tribes, so that you may know one another. Surely the noblest amongst you in the sight of God is the most God-fearing of you. God is All-Knowing and All-Aware”. (49:13)

The verse reveals that diversity is a natural part of human society and important for human identity. The nobility of a human being depends on one's actions and Allah is the only one who can judge the piety and nobility of a human being. The Quran highlights the plurality of religious communities too. It says that Allah has purposefully created different communities, or else, he could have made all humanity one community. In short, the teachings of the Quran are very clear on plurality in human society. In Islamic legal tradition, humankind has free will to exercise choice, including religious decisions. God is believed to be the sole arbiter of religious differences. This is true even in the case of conversion from Islam. A number of Islamic scholars have found that Muslims are free to leave the fold of Islam without suffering retribution for doing so. Capital punishment, the penalty often meted out to such converts, is reserved by Islamic law for the crime of treason and not conversion, they hold.

Finally, Islam mandates Muslim preservation of all places of divine worship: "For had it not been for God's
checking some men by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, wherein the name of God is often mentioned, would have been destroyed" (22:40).

Hence the destruction, desecration or vandalism by Muslims of other houses of worship here or abroad is a gross violation of Islamic legal principles.

The Islamic principles derived from the Quran make clear that all of humankind share the same sanctity of life and honor. Moreover, their application has been in practice since Islam's inception.

The life and the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) provides the best example of the pluralistic approach and practices in Islam. Historically, there are many instances where the Prophet showed exceeding tolerance and respect for the people of other faiths and dealt respectfully with his opponents.

For instance, when a prominent Christian delegation came from Najran to engage the Prophet in a theological debate in Madina, its members were not only invited to live in the Prophet's mosque but also allowed to perform their religious practices inside the mosque. Similarly, during the famous treaty of Hudaibiya, the Prophet showed a highly pluralistic approach while accepting the apparently bitter demands of the Quraish without the latter's recognition of his Prophet-hood.

Another incident from the early days of Islamic history relates to when the Prophet (PBUH) negotiated a covenant between the Muslims and the Jews, binding each community to respect each other's beliefs and to provide mutual protection.

Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) pluralistic and humanistic approach was reflected even in the conquest of
Makkah. After the conquest he not only granted amnesty to the people of Makkah but also declared the house of his bitter opponent Abu Sufyan as a place of asylum and peace, regardless of who accepted Islam and who didn't.

There are many other instances in the life and the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PUBH) which help us to understand Islam's recognition and respect for pluralism in society. These teachings and practices are a source of inspiration for human civilization for all time to come. It is evident that in the 1,400-year history of Islam, whenever Muslim societies flourished and set up highly developed societies, pluralism was a key characteristic of those societies.

During the reign of Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph, a Christian woman lodged a complaint alleging that the Muslim governor of Egypt annexed her house without consent in connection with a mosque expansion project. In response to Umar's legal inquiries, the Muslim governor explained that the number of worshiping Muslims exceeded mosque capacity necessitating the expansion. He further explained that since the complainant's house was adjacent to the mosque, the state offered to compensate her for the property. She declined this offer. Consequently, the state demolished her home and placed its value with the treasury for her to retrieve.

Ultimately, Umar ruled in favor of the woman, ordering the demolition of the portion of the mosque built on the site of her house and providing her house be re-constructed as it had previously existed.

The Abbasids' Baghdad, the Fatimids' Cairo, the Umayyads' Cordoba, became centers of excellence by welcoming and nurturing the best minds from different regions, backgrounds,
Faiths, etc. Consequently, these dynasties through their pluralistic mechanisms developed powerful and vibrant civilizations.

During the Islamic rule of the Umayyad and Abbasids, the most qualified people were entrusted significant posts without regard to religious beliefs.

Harun al-Rashid, a famed Muslim ruler, appointed a Christian man as the Director of Public Instruction and all the schools and colleges were placed under his charge. In making such appointments, he considered only excellence in one's field.

These examples are in contradistinction to the contemporary practice of religious discrimination against the members of minority faith communities reportedly occurring in some Muslim majority countries.

To be sure, religious intolerance, discrimination and violence is not an exclusively Muslim problem - rather the disturbing phenomenon transcends faith and geography. Today, we live in a globalised world where modern communication technology has brought different nations closer; however, this process has also created tensions amongst nations as well as within their respective societies. This situation demands adhering to Islamic teachings and ideals which helped set up pluralistic societies in the past.

To manage the differences inherent in a society there is a dire need to understand Islamic teachings regarding the admissibility of pluralism. Doing so can transform our society's diversity into a strength and help develop an environment in which differences amongst communities are owned, respected and celebrated rather than denied.

Rachid Al-Ghannouchi

Rachid Al-Ghannouchi, a thinker, reformer, leader,
Tunisian Islamic ideologue and founder of the al-Nahdah political party in Tunisia, is one of the forerunners of the contemporary Islamic resurgence. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi (born in 1941) has emerged as the most popular and powerful political figure in Tunisia as well as in the Arab region as a whole. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi studied philosophy at the University of Damascus and graduated in 1968. He spent a year at the Sorbonne before returning to his homeland, where he and his associates established an organization for the reform and transformation of Tunisian society based on Islamic values and principles. He founded the Islamic Tendency Movement in 1981, which was later rechristened as Ennahda Party, which aimed, in the Tunisian context, at the “reconstruction of economic life on a more equitable basis, the end of single party rule and the acceptance of political pluralism and democracy.” Tunisia's autocratic regime perceived him and his views as a challenge and threat to its authority and Rachid Al-Ghannouchi was sentenced to 11 years in prison. This created a huge uproar across the country, following which he was released in 1984. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi then moved to Britain and obtained political asylum there. He returned to Tunisia on January 30, 2011 after 22 years in exile.

Rachid Al-Ghannouchi on pluralism

Rachid Al-Ghannouchi is known as one of the most prominent political ideologues of contemporary Muslim World. In his interview with Financial Times, he shared his experience with the coalition government of Tunisia. He worked with a pluralistic and accommodating attitude even with ideological enemies. His views reflect a refreshing openness, accommodation and flexibility. According to him, “Islam has a strong democratic spirit in as much as it respects religious, social and political differences. Islam has never favoured a monolithic state. Throughout their history Muslims have objected to the imposition of a single all-
powerful interpretation of Islam. Any attempt to impose a single interpretation has always proven inherently unstable and temporary”12. From these words itself one can understand the views of Rachid Al-Ghannouchi on pluralism, “even if the party won a majority in the elections, a coalition was essential not only to draft the constitution but also to run Tunisia during the transition. The negotiations have already begun, with more than one party”13. He portrays the future Tunisia, in an interview to BBC's Radio 4 in February 2012, as type of state that “doesn't interfere in people's private lives”14. The state should not have anything to do with “imposing or telling people what to wear, what to eat and drink and what they believe in, and what they should not believe in” 15. His views on pluralism can be discussed on following heads:

**Political pluralism**

Rachid Al-Ghannouchi emphasized on democracy, social justice, human rights and political pluralism in the current Islamic discourse and in Islam-inspired political and social movements, in the Arab region in particular and in the Islamic world in general. He argues that the values of justice, human rights and public consultation are embedded in the Quran and in the Islamic tradition. For more than three decades, Rachid Al-Ghannouchi has consistently argued that democracy and pluralism are compatible with Islamic values and principles16. The Quran and the *Shariah* only provide some fundamental principles pertaining to the political and constitutional affairs of Muslims. That is, the *shariah* does not prescribe any uniform system of government for Muslim countries. Rachid Al-Ghannoushi holds the view that “Islam does not include a political system”, however, he believes “there are political guidelines and values found in Islam, but there is no detailed political system to follow”. The *shariah* has refrain from providing detailed regulations for all the changing requirements of Muslim social existence.
According to al-Ghannoushi, God has left the forming of a political system to the people, as long as they do not separate religion completely from politics. He said “politics should be inspired by Islamic values. These values inspired by the shariah should have an important impact on political conduct”. Al-Ghannoushi believed that Islam does not provide a detailed political system to follow; but there are political guidelines and principles such as popular consultation (shura), majority rule (al-hukmu alaghabliyyah), popular sovereignty (al-siyadah) and maqasid al-shariah with its five principles. According to him, Islam includes these several principles that are shared with democratic values in the modern governmental system. These democratic values in Islam are inspired by the shariah and should have an important impact on political conduct. In a state based on Islamic law (shariah), the issue of legislation relates to many problems of administration which are not touched upon by the Islamic law. It is believed that with the passage of time the practical form of government for any country will naturally change and therefore the Islamic law (shariah) has left it to the community (ummah) to develop relevant forms of political and governmental systems through an exercise of independent reasoning (ijtihad) in consonance with the spirit of the law and the best interest of the nation. In matters affecting the communal aspect of community life, no legislation reasoning or decision can be left to the discretion of individuals, but the decision must be based on a definite consensus (ijma) of the whole community (ummah). This can be implemented through the process of modern forms of public participation such as referendums or general elections. This indicates that Islam only provides broad principles and a general framework in the area of worldly interactions (muamalah) which makes it possible for the Muslim community to evolve and meet the needs of every age.
According to Al-Ghannoushi, democracy is not an ideology or philosophy to be imitated by Muslims; it is only as a “political tool” or instrument for electing, checking, and rotating political power and for protecting the civil liberties and basic rights of citizens. He not only says that democracy is a part of Islam but also he holds rationalism, humanism, the possibility of interpretation (ijtihad), the existence of diversity within Islam, the concept of popular consultation (shura), and the application of the concept of consensus (ijma) which is strongly rooted in Islam, which he considered tools of Western democracy compatible with these Islamic democratic values and principles. Al-Ghannoushi is of the opinion that there is the possibility that democracy may have Islamic roots. Europe benefited from the Islamic civilizations, heritage of engineering and mathematics, and as a result advanced technology. It's clear that Europeans may have “borrowed” other ideas. Malek Bennabi’s book entitled “al-Islam wa al-Dimuqratiyyah” (Islam and Democracy) posed the question: Is there democracy in Islam? Bennabi answered in the affirmative: Islam is a democratic ideology that bestows on Muslims political and social rights and the right to resist enslavement. He cleared that democracy was practiced in the first Islamic state of the righteous caliphs (Khulafa al-Rashidun); but, this democracy ceased as the Umayyads' took over the Caliphate (khilafah) and transformed it into a dynastic rule.

In his opinion, inclusion into political community is conditional on four core principles: respect of pluralism of ideas, political programs, shared democratic space and peaceful contestation. These principles should bring together all kinds of political choices in a democratic community. In June 2003 in France, representatives from four of Tunisia’s major non-regime parties met in order to negotiate and sign a document called “Call from Tunis”. The document endorsed the two principles of twin tolerations.
They are: (1) any future elected government must be “founded” on the sovereignty of the people as the sole source of legitimacy, while at the same time showing 'respect for the people's identity and its Arab-Muslim values' and (2) the state would provide “the guarantee of liberty of beliefs to all and the political neutralization of places of worship”. Ennahda accepted both these fundamental agreements and they also demanded for “the full equality of women and men”. According to him, the goal of Tunisia is to be “a civic state, not a religious state”. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi thinks that a civic state based on equality between all citizens regardless of faith, gender or race with guaranteed right to political and social association is an essential strategy to escape an Egypt-like coup in Tunisia. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi strongly dislikes the ideological polarization, religious-secular clash and violence and calls for inclusiveness and partnership between diverse intellectual and political components of society. He believes that the Arab Spring would succeed only if there is a successful transition towards democracy. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi responded in an interview taken just after the victory of Arab Spring, he expressed his ideas about the free Tunisia: “Politically we're moving towards democracy, so we have conducted our first free and fair elections ever in our history, and now we're preparing ourselves for the next elections which will be in a few months”. The assembly of Tunisia has managed to produce the first draft of the new constitution for the country. The new constitution will be based on the main idea that the source of its legitimacy is its people and political pluralism is one of the pillars of the system. The freedom of religion, the separation of powers, freedom of the press, and equality between the sexes are all pillars of the new system. The philosophy underpins the Constitution; is the compatibility between modernity and Islam. Today, in Tunisia there are no political prisoners and there are no newspapers that are banned because of their
political views and there is no political party that is banned. The judiciary is independent and is fighting against corruption. He expresses the idea of political pluralism that there is no limit to political pluralism other than the condition of rejecting violence and giving anyone the right to found the party.\textsuperscript{24}

More over all, the Tunisian constitution is founded on two principles: the principle of Islam and the principle of modern society and human rights\textsuperscript{25}.

**Gender Pluralism**

In Tunisia, *Ennahda* officials implored the government to promote equal opportunities in education and employment for women as well as freedom to choose and reject Islamic dress. Before the Arab awakenings, Rachid Al-Ghannouchi, supported assenting action to increase women participation in parliament. Ennadha has large number of women parliamentarians and supports a quota for women in parliament\textsuperscript{26}. The first elected assembly in the history of Tunisia brought together the different groups in the country, including women who are veiled and women who are not veiled, even those who represent Ennadha itself. Out of 52 women members of parliament, 42 are from Ennadha, some of whom wear the *Hijab* and some who don’t\textsuperscript{27}.

In Ghannouchi’s view political pluralism is not only limited to one part of society but rather he assured participation of women in nation building. He says, “Women enjoy equality, people can establish and join any party and they have the freedom to adopt any faith”\textsuperscript{28, 29}. He also add, “We are against the imposition of the head scarf in the name of Islam and We are against the banning of the head scarf in the name of Secularism or Modernity”\textsuperscript{30}.

**Attitude towards Non-Muslims**

With regard to the right of nationality of non-Muslim
citizens in an Islamic state, Rachid Al-Ghannoushi stated that the principles of justice, equity, security, and community and the protection should be granted to non-Muslims citizen in a Muslim state as rights embodied in the divine law. There is one nationality for those who live in an Islamic state, be they Muslims or non-Muslims. They all enjoy three inviolable rights; the first of these rights is equality, which is positive and comprehensive regardless of race, ethnic origin, colour, social status or creed. The second right is freedom, which encompasses freedom of thought and freedom of belief including the right of non-Muslims in a Muslim state to build churches, temples, monasteries, synagogues, and so on. The third right is the freedom of movement including the right to establish schools and religious institutions. One of the examples is Ennadha's attitude towards Jews: Ennahda cleared that they will protect Tunisia's smallest Jewish minority, who faces considerable pressure from small consecutive elements in society. Ennahda's senior leadership rejected the calls from extremists (even from Israel) that Tunisian Jews should leave the country.

Apart from the position of head of state, Muslim writers disagree on which positions or which public functions should be allowed or denied to non-Muslims in an Islamic state. Rachid Al-Ghannoushi rejected the stance of scholars who argued that non-Muslim citizens are not eligible to hold senior positions in the Islamic state. Rachid Al-Ghannoushi was of the opinion that as long as non-Muslim citizens have the right to participate in elections at all level, they qualify to occupy any positions in the state except that of the head of state.

Religious Pluralism

Various Islamist leaders stressed their commitment to build institutions and safeguard individual freedom and minorities and rule of law. Moderation and tolerance in
religious matters is a hallmark of Tunisian social milieu. Tunisia abolished slavery in 1848, a century before most of the Arab countries. In 1857, Tunisia issued Ahd Al Iman (Charter of Faith), the document that stressed equal rights under law for the non-Muslims (Jews and Christians) in various walks of life. Al-Ghannoushi holds a “positive concept of freedom”. In his version, freedom is achieved through servitude to God. He believes that the main message in Islam is to guarantee human rights and the objective of Islamic law (shariah) is to serve the interest of human beings. Religion depends on true faith and free will, thus the freedom of belief is the starting point of Islamic human rights. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi opines that the first and most important human right guaranteed by Islam is the freedom of belief, which he defines as the individual’s right to choose his faith free from any compulsion. He explains that by virtue of being a God-given right, freedom of choice is sanctified and guaranteed by Islamic law (shariah). The golden rule in this matter, he points out, the Quranic verse: “No compulsion in religion” (2:256). It is from this rule that the rights of non-Muslims in an Islamic state derive legitimacy. Al-Ghannoushi addresses this topic in detail in his book titled “Huquq al-Muwatanah Huquq Ghayr al-Musiimmin Fil-Mujtama’ al-Islami”, first published in Tunis in 1989. An English translation titled “The Right to Nationality Status of Non-Muslim Citizens in a Muslim Nation” published by the Islamic Foundation of America in 1990. In his book “Public Liberties in the Islamic State” he lists seven basic rights: Equality (all citizens are equal before the law), freedom to practice religious worship, freedom to propagate religions other than Islam, freedom and dignity of the human being, freedom of thought and expression, and freedom of private ownership and social rights (employment, health care and social security). These values are in accordance with democratic value.
Cultural Pluralism

“Culture includes all of man’s material civilization, tools, weapons, clothing, shelter, machines and even system of industry” – Ellwood.

Islamic teachings have shaped the history and political culture of hundreds of millions of people over fourteen centuries and have embraced a vast range of nations, culture, sects, and schools of thought. Tunisia is a country with a variety of different cultures and civilizations, and multiple successive dynasties contributed to the culture of Tunisia over centuries with varying degrees of influence. Tunisia is a country with limited resources but it is rich cultural and intellectual heritage. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi not only speaks about political pluralism but cultural pluralism too. He proudly comments about his country and country’s culture, “Tunisians are linked to their history and geography. Through history they are linked to their Islamic heritage and to the Arab world. In geography they are linked to Europe and to the rest of the World. Tunisia is like a big museum of civilization – the Romans, Carthage, the Berbers and Islamic history. Historical sites throughout Tunisia reveal their pluralist attitude, indicating the marks of different civilizations from different eras. Tunisia is famous for its health treatment centers and their beaches are most attractive place for tourists. According to Rachid Al-Ghannouchi, millions of tourists come to Tunisia, and they want them not just to enjoy the beautiful beaches that they have, but also the rich history and civilization that have passed through the Tunisia. They want Tunisia to be a centre for people to know the history of the region and to get to know each other.

Conclusion

Islam has a living history of pluralistic aptitudes. Islamic culture, belief and tradition point out this truth. Rigid
attitudes of a certain section lead them to misinterpret narrations and historical events while closing their mind to the study of real teachings and the history of Islam. Those (the real) teachings and the history of Islam give us the best principles and practices.

Keeping in view the realities of today's world and, particularly of our own country, it is imperative that we understand the pluralistic ideals and approaches that have the full sanction of Islam. Sincere efforts are needed to make the pluralistic teachings of Islam a part of our individual as well as social life in order to shape and sustain a peaceful society. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi, the leader of the *Ennahda* Party in Tunisia, is a democrat as well as an Islamist. Imprisoned twice for calling for political pluralism and economic justice during Ben Ali’s authoritarian Tunisia, he lived in exile for 22 years. As a major party in Tunisia today, *Ennahda* has always chosen to form a national unity government instead of one dominated by itself. The aim is to move Tunisia towards democracy and development. As an original Muslim thinker, Rachid Al-Ghannouchi stands for the guarantee of personal freedoms and holds that gender equality, democracy and pluralism are compatible with Islam. He opposes religious extremism. He once remarked, "Freedom comes before Islam and is the step leading to Islam." As a rationalist philosopher, Rachid Al-Ghannouchi represents the *aqalana* rationalist tradition in Islamic thought, which upholds harmony between human reason and revelation. Rachid Al-Ghannouchi believes that Tunisia should be a religiously tolerant and pluralist society with gender equality. He is banned from entering Saudi Arabia and Iran because of his moderate views.
References


15. Ibid


17. Ibid

18. Ibid


20. Stepan, Alfred. Tunisia's Transition and the Twin

21. Ibid.


38. Ibid


42. Ibid


“I wish I could tell you how lonely I am. How cold and harsh it is here. Everywhere there is conflict and unkindness. I think God has forsaken this place. I believe I have seen hell and it's white, it's snow-white.”

― Elizabeth Gaskell, North and South

INTRODUCTION

Peace is the paramount factor for stability and progress of a nation. As we can observe, the developed nations are peaceful hence stable. They are away from the situation of violence between two non-state groups. This violence shared by these groups sometimes takes shape of communal conflicts, which over a long period of time gives birth to civil war. If people think that it is only India that is infested with communal conflicts, they are mistaken. As such situation has arisen and arises in most of the African nations. But, the 21st century India is not poised to follow the model of these nations; rather it is poised to become one of the most developed nations of the world. Apart from other socio-economic problems, communal conflicts also hamper its development prospects.

Communal conflict can be defined as a violent conflict between non-state groups that are organised along a shared communal identity. From this definition, following elements come into picture:

1. Violent conflict, which refers to the use of lethal violence to gain control over some disputed and perceived indivisible resource, such as a piece of land or local political power.¹

2. Non-state groups, meaning that neither of the groups controls the state or its armed forces, although there may be tacit involvement or support of the state or any of its agencies.²

3. Each of these groups is organised along a shared communal identity, thus they are not formally organised rebel groups or militias but they confront along the line of group identities.³

Most of the people relate the term communal⁴ identity with ethnic or religious identity. But the term is wide enough to also include diverse varieties of shared identification based on a common history, a common culture or common core values. For instance the conflicts arising in the parts of West and Central African nations, which is often based on the dividing line of 'original' inhabitants of an area ('indigenes') and more recent 'settlers', is classified as a communal conflict since people organise and identify themselves along these lines.

CAUSES OF COMMUNAL CONFLICTS

Different scholars have presented varying opinions regarding the causes of communal conflicts. Some of these opinions are as follows:

1. Economic deprivation and the class struggle. From the Marxist point of view, the problem of communalism relates to economic deprivation and to the class struggle between the haves and the have-not's to secure a monopoly control of the market and other economic resources.⁵
2. **Political representation.** In countries where elections are contested – or at least heavily influenced – along ethnic lines, the group whose candidate loses the election is often keen to take revenge of the loss. As witnessed in the racial conflict post-2007 presidential election of Kenya, the election of President Mwai Kibaki, who represented the traditionally dominant Kikuyu tribe, became a cause of conflict. Amid allegations of a rigged election, the results led to ethnic violence between members of different tribes, particularly between the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin.⁶

3. **Control over resources.** In the Sahel region⁷, pastoral conflicts have occurred due to population shifts to the south prompted primarily by climatic change. The reason behind the recurring conflicts is control over resources and land tenure, particularly in states such as Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.⁸ The situation is similar in Nigeria, at least since 2010, where poverty, joblessness and political corruption has fuelled extremists from both sides⁹ and driven the conflict towards religious violence between Muslims and Christians.

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7. The Sahel is the ecoclimatic and biogeographic zone of transition in Africa that stretches across the south-central latitudes of Northern between the Atlantic Ocean and the Red Sea.
Another example is Sri Lanka, where the colonial era saw the Sinhala bourgeoisie constrained in its share of trade and commerce, which was dominated by the British and Indians and Muslim and Chettiar traders, as well as access to finance which was controlled by British bankers or South Indian Chettiahs.¹⁰

4. Original inhabitant of an area. A glaring example here is the conflict in Sri Lanka, rooted in the 19th century when British colonial administrators began development of tea and coffee plantations, and Tamil workers from South India were brought as plantation labour. The question of their citizenship rights has been a persistent cause of conflict.¹¹ Violent communal conflicts in Nigeria between the Hausa and Fulani on one side, and the Anagutas, Afsare and Birom on the other, are also rooted in the inhabitant-settler dichotomy. The latter three groups are considered indigenous to the area, while the Hausa and Fulani are more recent settlers.¹²

5. Differences on religious and ethnic lines. The sporadic Hindu – Muslim flare-ups in India are an example of conflict along religious lines. In the years following independence of Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese disenfranchised the once-migrant Tamil plantation workers and made Sinhala the official language and adding fuel to fire, in 1972 Buddhism was declared the nation's primary religion.¹³

11. Id.
COMMUNAL HARMONY AND NATIONAL INTEGRITY

If we identify ourselves as a linguistic or religious group, we open the gates for the outsider to bring rift between us. But if we identify ourselves as citizens of one nation, no one can divide us. This is the need of hour. Communal differences pave the ways for the outsider to promote the feeling of hatred for other communities.

For example, if the soldiers of armed forces identify themselves as a member of a community, they harbour the feeling of pride for their community and consider their community better than others. This is bound to bring conflict among them. Thus, instead of facing the enemy outside, they would consider the members of other community enemy inside the boundary.

If bricks of a wall create gap in themselves, the wall becomes weak and entire wall can be easily pulled down. The same applies in the case of communal conflicts.

ART AND CULTURE BRINGING COMMUNAL HARMONY - EXAMPLES

War tears us apart. Even after the war and violence are over, the communities involved in the conflict find it hard to forget the devastating experience of violence and blood that they faced. In order to progress and participate in the development process of the nation, these communities have to get rid of the memories of such conflicts. Art and culture has a crucial role to play in reconciliation process initiated by the government in various places. Reconciliation, through art and culture can occur in two ways: first, it is easier for a victim of war to express his/ her pain and remorse, through aesthetic mediums, and second, collaboration between individuals belonging to different communities in artistic and cultural projects and performances leads to building up of trust and respect for each other, understanding each other's different but equally painful wartime experiences and ultimately recognizing each other's interdependence.¹⁴
There are concrete examples in the about the role of art and culture in promotion of communal harmony in various devastated regions of the world. Some of these examples are:

**Sri Lanka.** The decades-long ethnic civil war in Sri Lanka destroyed entire communities and left behind much bitterness and suffering in its wake. But a path towards reconciliation has been made possible by the government through the arts—whether it is through music, painting, poetry, prose, song, dance, film, photography, theatre, or puppetry and cultures inter alia.

The Aru Sri Art Theatre troupe founded by Mrs. Arunthathy Sri Ranganathan with object of promoting interethnic harmony, has organised various events towards that goal. A few examples are performance of the dance drama Sri Ram at the International Ramayana Festival in Bintan, Indonesia and Singapore in 2012; and glittering performances of classical compositions on Hindu themes such as Bharathanatyam and the Cosmic Dance of Shiva by Sri Lankan dancers of different ethnicities and religions.¹⁵

Also, Sri Lanka held the Interfaith Music Festival in 2012, organized by the Mother Sri Lanka Trust and The Art of Living Foundation, where children of the island came together to perform Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, and Islamic chants and songs on one stage.¹⁶ In, 2011, the Jaffna Music Festival was organised by Sewalanka Foundation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Aru Sri Art Theatre, and Concerts Norway, wherein hundreds of local folk artists of Sri Lanka as well as international folk artists

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15. Id.
16. Id.
performed in Jaffna in celebration of the unique and diverse traditional musical heritage of Sri Lanka and the world\textsuperscript{17}.

Film and cinema have also been employed as a means of sending a message of unity to a wide audience. For example the documentary film The Art of Forgetting (2006)\textsuperscript{18} by Lisa Kois (available in Sinhala, Tamil, and English versions) was used throughout Sri Lanka as a part of peace building programmes. Also, Chandran Rutnam's award winning film The Road from Elephant Pass is worth mentioning as a means of promotion of harmony in the country.

Talking about culture, the feeling of interconnectedness of religion or language greatly facilitates the process of communal harmony. Due to inter-mixing of populations and migrations dating back to ancient times, there has been inter-mixing of languages between Sinhala and Tamils. The Hindus and Buddhists share several religious customs and important places of worship, as well as similarities in the laws, the caste system, and social structures including common elements in the habits and customs of the Tamil and Sinhala communities.\textsuperscript{19} Such examples of inter-connectedness pave the way for communal harmony.

**Extended Kinship and Culture of Ubuntu in Africa.** The concept of extended kinship has played a crucial role in the promotion of harmony amongst the African nations. This idea of extended kinship is based upon the importance of connecting and sharing with others. Also it stresses that people do not live in isolation. Humans need other humans to be truly human. In other words, “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (a person is a person through persons).”\textsuperscript{20} This

\textsuperscript{17} Id.
\textsuperscript{18} It focuses upon the stories of ordinary people across Sri Lanka between 2002 and 2005.
\textsuperscript{19} Supra note 14.
\textsuperscript{20} Joseph Omokafe Fashola, Reawakening African Cultural Practices
practice has promoted inter-dependency and harmony amongst the individuals. Thus, this model proves to be a way for promotion of communal harmony.²¹

Ubuntu pertains to the ongoing process of becoming human.²² Metz defines ubuntu as “An action is right just insofar as it produces harmony and reduces discord; an act is wrong to the extent that it fails to develop community”²³. Ubuntu underlies the obligation of the person towards the community and also his duty to promote harmony of the community.

I Am Karachi Youth Festival. The youth festival named I Am Karachi Youth Festival was aimed to promote the goal of communal harmony, through various activities, in which youth participated. It was organised by Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi, in March 2015, wherein a variety of theatre plays, debates and music was performed by youth groups from various communities, localities and universities.²⁴ These performances highlighted peace and communal harmony for celebrating the cultural, ethnic and linguistic pluralism and diversity of Karachi.

Notable examples from India. The Preamble of the Indian Constitution states a resolve to constitute secularism as an essential tenet of India, promising to secure to all
citizens' liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship.

As part of Chapter-III of the Constitution,²⁵ articles 25 to 30 guarantee the right of freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, and the right freely to profess, practice, and propagate religion. However, the problems like communalism, casteism, linguism, and regionalism have always tended to rip apart the unity and integrity of this nation. Under Chapter-IVA of the Constitution, the fundamental duty has been laid upon the citizens, which includes the duty to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic, and regional or sectional diversities.²⁶

Art and artists have made a major contribution towards national integration, and works like Sare Jahanse Achha Ea Hindustan Hamara,²⁷ Hum Bulbul hain iski ye gulsitaan Hamara and writings of other Urdu poets have left imprints on the lovers of nation. Some of such works are:

**Shahar Ashoob**. It is a form of Urdu poetry to mourn the destruction of a city, which played a crucial role reviving the patriotic emotion during India's freedom struggle. It was penned by pioneering poets like Bahishti, Shakirnaji, Sauda, Mir and Nazir after the massacre and destruction in Delhi in 1857.²⁸

**Works of Allama Iqbal**. Iqbal was the first Urdu poet to present the concept of patriotism in Urdu poetry in its pure

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²⁵. Chapter-III guarantees Fundamental Rights.
²⁶. Art. 51-A
²⁷. The poem was strong symbol of opposition to the British Rule. It was written for children in the ghazal style of Urdu poetry by poet Muhammad Iqbal.
social context.²⁹ He has dedicated his hymns for the nation in his work Tarana-i-Hindi (Song of India). A part this work is as follows:

_Hubbe watan, samaaye, aankhon men noor hokar_
_Sar men khumaar hokar, dil men suroor hokar._

_(May love for the nation pervade all, becoming light of the eyes, Exhilarating the mind and intoxicating the heart.)_

Prior to Iqbal, poets like Hali and Azad also contributed towards development of patriotism through their poems, but their concept of patriotism was not as reinforced as in Iqbal's poems.³⁰

Several examples of cultural expression for the promotion of communal harmony can be found in the history of the freedom struggle as well.

1. After the declaration of partition of Bengal, during the Durga Puja national festival in Bengal in September 1905, people gathered in the Kali temple at Kalighat despite a heavy rain. They unanimously vowed not to purchase or use foreign articles or to employ foreigners.³¹

2. National festivals like Independence Day, Republic Day, and Gandhi Jayanti are festivals that are celebrated by all Indians and in all parts of the country, regardless of language, religion or culture. Also the National Integration Day on 19 November every year, which is known as “Qaumi Ekta Divas”.³²

²⁹. Id.
³⁰. Id.
3. Our National Symbols like the National Flag, the National Anthem, and the National Emblem also promote common identity of Indians. This is the reason that the Indian Constitution puts stress on showing proper respect to these symbols as they act as strong unifying forces both in times of celebration and adversity.³³

4. Lokmanya Tilak, the renowned leader of the Indian Independence movement, organised the Ganesh Chaturthi as a stage for regional and national integration. On this occasion, speeches and public gatherings were organised to stir up strong emotions of patriotism in the people, uniting them against the British colonialism of the 20th century.³⁴

The film and entertainment industry has also promoted the idea of unity in diversity by giving us several movies like Karma (produced by Shubhash Ghai), Krantiveer, Border, Lagaan (wherein the members of village united irrespective of religious identity to play cricket against the British rule), Swades, Rang De Basanti, Chak De India!, etc.

Through these films, various actors and movie producers have attempted to present a model for intermixing of various cultures in India, and several personalities in the Indian movie industry have multi-religious backgrounds. Some of such examples are:

1. Family of Salman Khan, wherein, the screenwriter Salim Khan(Muslim By Religion) married Helen(Christian By religion). Also, Salman has two sisters, Alvira and Arpita. Alvira is married to actor and director Atul Agnihotri (Hindu by religion).

³³ Id.
2. Sunil Dutt and Nargis Dutt (who was Muslim by religion).

3. Shah Rukh and Gauri Khan (earlier named Gauri Chhibber) and their children Aryan who is taught about Lord Ganesh as Ganpati Allah.³⁵


Some other examples. Apart from the famous celebrities, local communities across India have presented several models of promotion of communal harmony. These are:

1. In Champaran district of Bihar, Muslims have donated land to help build the world's largest Hindu temple.³⁶

2. Local Muslims of Kashmir came helped the Hindus to rebuild the Bod Mandir, which was damaged in last year's Kashmir floods.³⁷

3. The people of Hadapsar came ahead to heal communal rifts in the area by deciding to defend each other's places of worship from outside attackers.³⁸

4. At Gobind Sadan, people celebrate Eid-Ul-Fitr and Navaratri Puja.


38. Id.
5. Some Hindu traders in Old Delhi’s Kinari Bazaar organised an "iftaar" celebration at the local Pipalwali Masjid.⁴⁹

6. Hindus and Muslims together pull the chariot during the Chariot Festival (Ratha Yatra) in Puri, Orissa. Also, Hindus celebrated Eid and members of both religions attend each other’s marriages in Puri.⁴⁰

7. For past forty years, Hindus and Muslims in Chowk locality of Lucknow celebrate Holi together. Also, in Lucknow's Aminabad market, Muslims not only play Holi, but are also part of the prayer ceremonies.⁴¹

8. Since 1930, the Hindus praying at the Lord Hanuman Temple (Gaddeajipur village of Uttar Pradesh) also need to pray at the Jind Peer Baba Mazar according to the local customs.⁴²

CONCLUSION

It is an undisputed fact that freedom struggle of India was a very long process, involving the equal participation of people from all sects and communities in India. Had there been no cooperation of these people or had they not come above their religious and ethnic identities, this process of independence would not have been possible. It is true that Indians have witnessed various rifts in the past years including communal riots. Similar situation has occurred in various countries, which have diverse communities. The wounds of violence and civil wars cannot be undone. But for the progress of the nation, these bitter experiences have to be washed out. Arts and cultures are the best means of communal harmony in the world. The government must also strive to utilise these as means of communal harmony.

39. Id.
40. Id.
41. Id.
42. Id.


15. Sanderson Beck, **India's Freedom Struggle 1905-1918** http://www.san.beck.org/20-4-India1905-18.html


18. THE TELEGRAPH: Son shows Shah Rukh Ganpati Allah - Amar Akbar Antony in real life

19. THE ECONOMIC TIMES: Bihar's Muslims donate land for world's largest Hindu temple,

20. INDIATIMES: Muslims Donated Land For The World's Largest Temple. Here Are Some More Examples Of Communal Harmony That Will Make You Proud,
Pluralism and Islam: A Quranic perspective

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Abstract:

In a country like India we have to learn and understand how Islam and Islamic tradition viewed religious pluralism. In the last 50-60 years there has been a drastic change in the way people think and perceive Islam. The post 9/11 period has witnessed an increase of interest in the Islamic world. Unfortunately most of the Ulamas are keeping aloof from social and humanity sphere. They are only spending time as answering to the allegations against Islam. Wherever Muslims are a minority demographically, their Islam will be confined to do something that comes at a very personal level. At the same time, there are other socially related issues too. Identifying the problems faced by the society and working to solve it was the most important aspect of representing Islam by prophets. Prophet Yusuf (a) after proving his capability to resolve a crisis faced by the country, claimed that “I am a good keeper and knowledgeable” (12:55)

In this paper I would like to discourse the Islamic view in Pluralistic society. I am giving special reference to the Quran with Islamic traditions.

Keywords: Quran, Pluralism, Community, Cultural diversity, Multiculturalism
Introduction

There are three main criteria for human greatness. We can divide them as essence, faith and action. Every person is born with the essence of greatness. The Quran says: “We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our Creation”¹

But the faith and action of man should be proved by his good deeds and intentions. Quran says about the nobility of the faith: “But honour belongs to Allah and His Messenger, and to the Believers;”.² And pointing out about the deeds of man that: “And to all are (assigned) degrees according to the deeds which they (have done),”³. This essential glory is a manifestation of God's compassion, and is inherited by every human being. There is no cast, religious, or class differentiation. Quran uses the word 'Bani Adam', which includes all humans regardless of religion. The Quranic terms for man, 'Insan, Annas, Bashar', also indicate the meaning 'Humankind'. Therefore their life, pride, wealth, faith-worship freedom is noble and should be protected.

Humanity

Islam is able to embrace the whole of mankind because of this wider canvas of humanity. Islam has given the largest contribution to Humanity in the theory of Tawheed, because, if the God or Creator is one, the creatures naturally are His own, and every human possesses the sense of equality towards all others. Thus Tawheed leads to universal humanity. Islam does not allow communalization of God, prophets, books, and natural sources. 'The God of the whole of mankind' is the Quranic concept of Allah. “Praise be to

1. Surah isra:70
2. Surah munafiqun:8
3. Surah ahqaf: 19
4. Surah al baqarah:2
Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds;"⁴ “Say: I seek refuge with the Lord and Cherisher of Mankind, The King of Mankind, The Allah of Mankind”. ⁵

Islam does not agree the concept that, Our God is one and yours is another one. Quran says: “Allah is our Lord and your Lord”.⁶ “It is Allah Who is my Lord and your Lord”.⁷ The Da'wat of every prophet was to believe in 'your God'⁸. Muhammad(S) is introduced not as Muslim community's prophet, but as 'universal Messenger'⁹ and the Holy Quran introduces itself as the 'right path (hidayat) to humankind'.¹⁰

There is no discrimination in the provision of solar energy or water resources. When prophet Ibrahim prayed that “My Lord, make this a City of Peace, and feed its people with fruits,-such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day." Allah correcting him as “He said: and such as reject Faith, - for a while will I grant them their pleasure".¹¹ The Quran carefully closes all the doors of communal thought in this way. Like the oneness of God, the parents of humankind are also one.¹² With this Islam seeks to establish the universal brotherhood.

**Pluralism**

There is a deeply rooted misunderstanding in society that Islam does not accept the religious and cultural diversity. Muslims are depicted as bigots and Islam a menace to society. This misunderstanding, which stems from the incorrect reading of documents and from the narrow traditions of thought found in a lot of the Fiqh literature of

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5. Surah naas:1-3  
6. Surah shura: 15  
7. Surah al imran: 51  
8. Surah al a'araf:3  
9. Surah sab':27  
10. Surah al baqara:2  
11. Surah al baqara:126  
12. Surah an nisa':1
medieval age, is an injustice towards the Islamic faith and the early Muslim history.

Islam has rejected the concept of single community and declared diversity as God's decision. Furthermore Quran declares a mandate to protect other religions, places of worship, symbols, cultures, religious believers and their life, property and honor. In doing so Islam encourages the maintenance of pluralism. “If thy Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one people: but they will not cease to dispute.”¹³ (4:1, 5:2, 8, 17:70)

Surah Al-Hujurat: 13 encourage us to explore this diversity of ethnicity, culture and faith, engaging respectfully with different groups. The verses concerning difference of faith can be understood as encouraging Muslims (i) to accept that some individuals and groups will not believe in your faith however much you may desire them to; (ii) to live with the resulting differences in compassion and acceptance; (iii) to explore each other's faith and religion with respect and in an attempt to understand one another; (iv) to wait patiently until God explains what people have differed about and why.

Quran has forbidden religious conversion by force and allowed the freedom of worship. Islamic countries and Muslims have agreed to this multiculturalism throughout history. The most marvelous examples can be found in the Islamic state established in Madina by Prophet Muhammed (s) and the days of the administration of the Caliphate Rashid. Madina Charter was one of the first ever written constitutions in the world. The relevance of the Charter is not only as the first written constitution but also as a document that provides equal citizenship and rights to the Nationals of a pluralistic society. Karan Armstrong remarked that: “The mere formation of the Charter and peace were tremendous feats, and the content of the Charter itself

¹³. Surah hud:118
reflects this magnitude. The formation of an ummah through respect and acceptance resulting in pluralism shows us one of the ways in which the Prophet combated jahiliyyah, or ignorance – the state of mind causing violence and terror."¹⁴ There are other examples during the Umayyads-Abbasids, and even the later part of the Muslim administration.

Medinan Jews, Egyptian and Palestinian Christians, and Indian Hindus are witnesses of it. Many Western and Middle East scholars have quoted several beautiful pictures from history on this. The discussion of stands and attitudes of Muslim towards a multi religious society should be taken into consideration of Islam’s accepted reality of pluralism and multiculturalism. In fact there does not have to be any big differences in Muslim approach towards other believers, whether they are a majority in the society while they have power or not.

Islam creates an obligation to have a human relationship with all believers beyond every sectarian difference, and to reject the attitude of 'otherness' while maintaining family, neighborhood and social relationships. Islam insists on adoption of a broad approach to issues like protection of the helpless orphans or widows, charitable activities, poverty alleviation, implementation of justice, and social security. And we can add this to the Quranic underlining of the Muslim mission being 'to the whole of mankind'.¹⁵ The Muslim community’s keeping aloof from society and its problems will be contrary to Allah’s order. The attitude of many contemporary Muslims to look inward and keep away from social engagement runs counter to the insistence of Islam.

Social harmony and safety

Islam forbids unhealthy conflicts between religious

¹⁴.  Muhammad : A Prophet for our times, P.19
¹⁵.  Surah al imran:110
groups, and the Quran prohibits dishonoring the religious customs and worship of others. “Revile not ye those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they out of spite revile Allah in their ignorance. Thus have We made alluring to each people its own doings”,¹⁶ “Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure.”¹⁷

There is an interesting incident from Khalifa Umar’s conquest of Jerusalem, relating to his discussion with Sophronius which was held in the Church after the Muslim army had already gained control of the city and Khalifa Umar had arrived as its new ruler. When the time for prayer came, Sophronius invited Umar to pray inside the Church, but Umar refused. He insisted that if he prayed there, later Muslims would use it as an excuse to convert it into a mosque – thereby depriving Christendom of one of its holiest sites.¹⁸ This is one of several such incidents in the history of Islam.

Quran recommends a peaceful cultural dialogue among religions. “And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputations), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): but say, “We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our Allah and your Allah is one;“.¹⁹ And to believe in prophets and the Holy Scriptures which other religions considered as holy men and sacred books.

Muslims have the obligation to believe in those Prophets that Jews and Christians believed in. Indeed,

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16. Surah al ana’m:108  
17. Surah al hajj:40  
19. Surah al ankabut:46
Prophets such as Moses, Jesus and Joseph among others are also mentioned in the Quran. Similarly, the Quran enjoins upon us to respect their holy books as they have also originated from God, even if today they are not maintained in the original form. But the Hindu society in India will also be included in the same category in a sense. That is because they believed in the Vedas and the holy men as they considered those sent by God. Perhaps the Vedas and holy men were indeed sent and appointed by God. There is no evidence to assert that they were not, nor any that they were. But there are a lot of causes to consider Vedas are originally divine. Quran itself says the prophets were sent to all places of human habitation on the earth and thousands of prophets were sent which Quran does not mention the name. Perhaps these are their distorted or altered shapes.²⁰

The Muslim community must provide security, safety and comfort to other religious groups. The Muslim should not be viewed in fearful and suspicious conditions in front of his neighborhood, colleague and any member of the society. When unable to endure the harassment of people of Makkah the Prophet decided to migrate to Medina. Before leaving he ordered his nephew Ali to return all objects that were deposited under his trust, even those many of those objects belonged to people who were cruel to him and to Muslims. The Prophet was an incomparable personality in history. Muslim should learn from this example and maintain brotherly relationship with believers of other faiths, because the Quran introduces the Prophets as 'brother of nation'. The nation included the unbelievers also. For example Quran says about Nuh(a): “their brother Noah said to them: 'Will ye not fear' (Allah)?”.²¹ The same word used for other prophets too.²²

20. Bharathiya Samskarathinte Adiyozhukkukal.(Malayalam) P.9
21. Surah as shura:106
22. Surah al a'araf: 65, 73, 85 and Surah hud: 50, 61, 84
The Prophet Muhammad once said: “You cannot enter heaven until you believe, and you will not truly believe until you (truly) love one another.”²³ Another Hadith: “The Merciful One shows mercy to those who are themselves merciful (to others). So show mercy to whatever is on earth, then He who is in heaven will show mercy for you”.²⁴

The Mutual Relationship

Muslim should strive to ensure collaboration and ties with neighborhood, family, and social relations. Religious differences should not cause us to cut family ties and relations. If somebody embraces Islam, there is an incorrect perception that they have to disconnect all relations with the family. One could live as Muslim and keep their relationship with non-Muslim parents, but that should not be compromised in the faith.

Famous companion of the Prophet Sa'd bin Abiwaqas's mother was not Muslim. Quran urged him to grant her all rights as a mother, ad at the same time to not obey her incorrect instructions in faith.²⁵

The Ayat number 15th of Surah Luqman sent down in this context. Islam suggests the convert not to cut the ties with family. There is a scope for a serious and wide debate on this subject.

When we maintain the neighborhood relationships as Islam duly required, the atmosphere of religious amity will happen. Quran mentioned to be kind and polite to neighbors. “Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good- to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what

23. Muslim, Al-Iman (Faith): 93
24. Abu Dawud: Book 41, Number 4923
25. sahabastories.blogspot.in :http://sahabastories.blogspot.in /2014/02/saad-ibn-abi-waqas-r-a.html
your right hands possess." ²⁶ Here Quran uses the term 'neighbours who are strangers'. The Quran exegeses like Qurthubi pointed out that means 'the non-Muslim neighbors'.²⁷ The Quran took special attention to 'non-Muslim neighbors relations' while remarking the worship to Allah and the liability to parents.

Prophet(s) said: “Shall I not tell you of the biggest of the major sins?” They said, “Of course, O Messenger of Allah!” He said, “To join partners with Allah and disobeying one's parents.” He said: He sat up, and he was reclining. He said, “And false testimony, or false speech.” And Allah's Messenger (s) would not stop saying it until we said (to ourselves): I wish that he would stop He said: “He will not enter Paradise from whose harm his neighbor is not safe.”²⁸ And prophet said: “He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while the neighbor to his side goes hungry”.²⁹ We could not see any religious discrimination in this issue.

Regarding the etiquettes and attitude towards the non-Muslims, the nature of Islam is accommodative and inclusive, unlike the dominant ideologies of secular modernity like communism or capitalism or Hindutva which believes in eliminating their ideological enemies. “Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loveth those who are just.”³⁰

**Charity works**

Islam call for the struggle against injustice, to release the oppressed, elevation of backward class, the eradication of poverty, humanitarian and disaster relief activities, to
protect the helpless orphans, elimination of social evils and implementation of justice. There are a lot of examples of this in Islamic history. From every one of these events we can get the moral that not to shrink to our own community but to enlarge towards humanity.

The problems of poverty, unemployment, moral decline, corruption, alcoholism, disasters of globalization, environmental issues, water shortage and any such issues are not related to only one community. The problem affects the whole country and people. There is no need to wait to deal with such issues until the formation of the Islamic nation. It is the duty of the Muslim to struggle against inequality and injustice in society and to cooperate with other protestors who are struggling in the same field. A wrong perception has entered into the Muslim mind that they have to consider only the poor and the needy among the Muslims, and not towards non-Muslim society. They believe that to spend in the way of Allah is only to help the 'Muslim poor'. They argue that there are so many poor in Muslim community itself, so there is no need to think out of community. “It is not required of thee (O Messenger, to set them on the right path, but Allah sets on the right path whom He pleaseth. Whatever of good ye give benefits your own souls, and ye shall only do so seeking the "Face" of Allah. Whatever good ye give, shall be rendered back to you, and ye shall not Be dealt with unjustly.”³¹

There are plenty of examples of the Prophet's struggle for repressed people. A very famous incident relates to when he himself approached Abu Jahl for the rights of an orphaned child.³² There is no proof that the child was Muslim. There were only men who had been denied justice in front of Prophet, and he did not consider their religion and community.

³¹ Surah Al baqarah:272
³² A'alaamu Nubuvva: p.309.
The Alms and the Humanitarian operations

Quran recommends the believer to always intervene in welfare activities for the people's goodness. Man should spend his favorite wealth because of his love to Allah for family, poor, the needy, wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves.³³ There are several kinds of alms in Islam that are sometimes Wajib (obligated) and sometimes Sunnah (one's will). Quran does not mention anywhere that these are for a community or a specific religion. Racism is the enemy of Islam.

Allah will reward all the righteous deeds who desire to seek Allah's pleasure. He is not looking into the sect or religion which you have did. This Ayat is undoubtedly proving that Allah will accept your alms even if it is give to non-Muslims. 'But some scholars arguing, it intends only to Dhimmis, and prisoners of war. It is the argument of narrowness. The prisoners of war are from the enemy, If you can help them then why not the society who are corporate with you.'³⁴ Guidance provided by Allah. If somebody is not in right path it is not justice to deny them Allah’s resources.

The Mushriks in Makkah declared Muslims as their enemies and punished them in all ways they could. The Muslims had to move from Makkah to Madina for refuge. But when Prophet Muhammad comes to know that the people in Makkah are in famine, he sends food from Madina to feed the enemies.³⁵

The distribution of Fitr Zakath, sacrificial meat and the charity works which is being implemented only in their own community should be a serious think of the Muslim community. Allah says: “Allah forbids you not, with regard to

33. Surah al baqarah: 177
34. Qurthubi: 3-4/337-339
35. sahabastories.blogspot.in. http://sahabastories.blogspot.in/2014/02/prophet-mohammad-s-w-a.html
those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loveth those who are just.”³⁶ The use words Birr and Qisth is to describe the co-existence with non-Muslims. The word Birr generally translated as good and virtue, as well as the word has lot of meanings. As per the Quranic description, Birr is to bring relief to the weak people and such activities. It is the main way that spends the wealth for the poor in order to seek Allah's pleasure. (2:177, 3:92).

That Allah does not ban doing of good to Non-Muslims is proof that you can also do the charity to them. Now the second term Qist, generally means “justice”. But some of the exegetes (mufassirs) explain the word as “the share of wealth”. “Keep the justice to Non-Muslim is meant that, the true believers give them a portion of their wealth, as the part of their human relations. The purpose here is not to show justice, because the justice should be the same as enemy or aid.”³⁷ There is a report which that Umar had sent a gift from Madina to his Non-Muslim brother who lived in Makkah.³⁸ Abu Ubaid and Ibnu Abi Shaiba have reported, some of the Christian priests belonging to Tabi’e have given the Fitr Zakat.³⁹

### Implementation of justice

Whatever the case of any conflict between the Muslim and Non-Muslims, the Muslim community should make stand on the side of justice. There needs to be no change in this attitude even if the non-Muslim have hostility towards Muslim. It is a strict order of Quran. “O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both.

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36. Surah Al mumthahina: 13
37. Qurthubi: 17-18/59
38. Fathul bari: 5/275
39. Al Amwal: 613,614
Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.”⁴⁰

“Allah doth command you to render back your Trusts to those to whom they are due; And when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice: Verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! For Allah is He Who heareth and seeth all things”⁴¹. The Ayat emphasizes justice as a God's entrusted responsibility of “giving everyone what is due him.” For instance, in political exercise, such as election of a leader, the elector is under moral and legal obligation to render his vote for him to whom it is due (e.g., the best among the contenders). This is so because in Islam, unlike in democracy, suffrage is not a right, but a trust from Allah and for that matter, it is a heavy responsibility. So it must be rendered to whom it is really due, such as the one who possesses the necessary qualities prescribed by Allah, which include physical and mental strength and honesty.

As an attribute of Allah, justice is something for which man must stand out firmly being witnesses to God. He must judges or testifies in such a manner that if he upholds the truth and thus, judges justly and testifies correctly and truthfully, it is the same as if he testifies to the truth of the existence and oneness of Allah and that Justice is His attribute. So being a trustee and a witness of Allah, man must uphold the truth even as against himself, his parents or kin, and whether it be against the rich or poor. Judging justly and correctly however, is not absolute. It does not mean that man must always be able to hit the truth. As human being, ours is only approximation of the truth and this is so, because as 'Adil' (Absolutely Just), He is Allah alone who knows what is absolutely just and unjust. He alone knows what is perfectly good and bad for mankind. It is therefore, enough

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40. Surah al nis’a: 135
41. Surah al nisa’: 58
that a judge or a witness must strive to the utmost to reach the truth according to the established procedure. From a Hadith of the Noble Prophet Muhammad (s) we learn that “if a judge strives harder and thus, judges correctly, he shall have two rewards, yet, if after striving, he judges wrongly, he still deserves one reward”. ⁴²

Ayat number 8th of Surah Insan says: “And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive”. This Surah has sent down at Madinah. But Ibn Abbas, Muqathir, Kalbi, Yahya bin Salam are remarking that 8th Ayat has sent down at Makkah. The majority of the poor and slaves of Makkah at the time were non-Muslims. Everybody has contained in this Ayat.⁴³ In the minute analysis the poor and needy have the same condition is exist in such as India's pluralistic society. The followers of the Prophet Muhammad obliged to protect and uphold the rights of Dalits, tribals, Scheduled Castes and etc... Muslim should inherit the title of prophet as a redeemer which mentioned in Surah Al A’araf 157.

A beautiful example from Ibn Taymiyya's life is from when the Tartars attacked Syria and many people were enslaved. Those included Muslims and non-Muslims. Ibnu Taymiyyah was commissioned to conduct the peace talks. They were ready to release Muslims but the Shaikh refused. He demanded the release of non-Muslims too. “We should not be able to avoid any non-Muslims who are under our protection”. In the end Tatars accepted the Shaikh's demand.⁴⁴ The inspiration of Shaikh Ibn Taymiyya was nothing other than the strict remark of Islamic teaching. Allah says: “Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion”. ⁴⁵

⁴². Bukhari Vol. 6, Book 49, Hadith 5383  
⁴³. Taimul Quarn: Surah insan: 8, Ref. num. 12(Malayalam)  
⁴⁴. archive.org:https://archive.org/stream/dbq_7/DABIQ4_djvu.txt  
⁴⁵. Surah an nahl:90
From clash to Dialogue

Conversation and dialogue are very important as a medium of interaction. Particularly, Muslims are today questioned in all aspects of life. The verses of Quran encourage Muslims to engage in dialogue with others, along with their interpretations. The following are a few examples of these verses: (49:13, 5:48, and 29:46) particularly to engage in dialogue with those closest to them in belief, the People of the Book. This was, essentially, encouraging dialogue based on commonality. However, as we have shown from these verses, the Qur'an also emphatically underlines our common humanity, our single ancestry, as the ground on which to base good relations, justice, respect and civility. What is more our primary commonality is our humanity, and dialogue must be based on that single, fundamental truth: that we are the same. Whatever created one human being created the rest of humanity. Our source of creation and the innate disposition with which we have been created are one and the same.

The diversity among mankind mentioned in al-Hujurat 49:13 is mentioned with a comprehensive affirmation that its purpose is that different groups and individuals are thereby enabled to know each other. This point is underlined in several verses teaching that diversity in ethnicity, colour, faith and culture was intended by the Creator. (5:48, 11:118–19, 10:99)

God wills His creatures to engage respectfully and kindly with each other, in a dialogue parallel to their dialogue with Him, is shown by a number of verses in the Qur'an, including the following: “And He does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with anyone who has not fought you for your faith or driven you out of your homes: God loves the just”.⁴⁶

⁴⁶. Surah al-Mumtahana:8
Another notable point is that, regardless of the quality of the opponents comment Qur’an gives them the full opportunity to present their views. Quran teaches this method in order for us to follow. The Qur'anic style of dialogue is unique, promoting subject based interaction rather than personalizing the issues. Qur'an extensively uses 'Ism Mawsool' (relative pronoun) when referring to the dialogue with others. By this the Quran teaches us to concentrate on the issue instead of the individual. The Qur’an engaged in an ideological debate with the Polytheists of Mecca for a long 21 years, but never mentioned their name except for Surah Quraish which denotes their tribal name. Even the Surah's content is to remind them of Allah's grace. (2:96, 3:186, 5:82, 6:148 etc.,)

Conclusion

After 9/11 the pluralistic view of Islam is constantly being question. Islam has retained the cultural forms of whichever country it entered. At the same me, the majority of Western intellectuals are not ready to admit that Muslims have a different culture and civilization.

Quran sees humans as brothers and sisters created from the same soul. Every human being deserves to be honored for the sake of being a human, the difference between belief and customs notwithstanding. Quran considers diversity and differences among men to be the procedure ordained by God in the universe. By recognition of the right to disagree in Islam, that right becomes legitimate. Belief or disbelief doesn't matter' the criterion of the relationship depends upon your attitude. It is a compulsion for Muslim to cooperate with everyone in all goodness.
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