PROMOTING INTER – CULTURAL RELATIONS IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to shed light on the beauty of inter-cultural relations in the third millennium. It endeavours to uplift the academic disciplines like identity, diversity and culture. A mutual understanding is a well known approach/method to develop the beauty of inter-cultural relations. The purpose of inter-cultural relations study is to strengthen social understanding around the world. Such relations play an important role to implement the national and international awareness. Inter-cultural relations, as an integral part of caste, culture, and religion, enlighten people about the distant and distinct cultural relations outside their own cultures. Such knowledge of inter-cultural relations empowers people to protect their own cultures too. The concept of inter-cultural relations strengthens our economic, political and social stability. After the end of the bipolar world, inter-cultural relations have expanded our mutual/bilateral relations. The very interaction on inter-cultural relations becomes the cornerstone of international relations. Arguing in favour of intercultural relations is the way to reach the highest of the high path in human development.

Keywords: Inter - cultural relations - an integral part - competitive world - the highest of the high path - human development.

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE

Intercultural Relations is a relatively new field of knowledge about 'self and other' cultures. It is a pragmatic tool to uplift mutual relations which seeks to enhance peace and stability in society. Intercultural relations deal bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally with a disciplined approach to pursue basic aims and objectives for the enhancement of cultural harmony both within and outside. Mahadev Desai (2008) states that "multi-dimensional intercultural relations heighten peace and stability at their

fundamental levels – security in self and other"(p. 81). Promoting inter-cultural relations in the third millennium preserves self-culture from the perspective or perception of other cultures.

Intercultural relations, as a field of discipline, broaden the area of social science studies. Chris Barker (2002), a critic of cultural studies, argues that intercultural relations interact "with similar cultures as well as different cultures"(181). Going further he writes:

> Culture studies' early preoccupation with Marxism led many writers to be primarily concerned with the problems of economy, capitalism, class and culture, including the possibilities for revolutionary political transformation. Thus, it was with revolutionary call factions that organic intellectuals were intended to forge political links. However, the contemporary trajectory of cultural studies has been to de-center class as a central and determining category. In theoretical terms this has been because culture is seen as having its own logic independently from class. In a more practical sense, the long-term re-composition of class relations and the decline of class as a predictor of politics, beliefs and cultural behavior have led many thinkers to look elsewhere for the agents of social, political and cultural change, (185).

Without such interaction, it is difficult to conceive peace and harmony on the earth. To maintain peace on earth, Priyadarsi Mukharji (2004) remarks that: "The Earth is round; every nation can consider themselves as the center of the earth"(p.75). Therefore, the readers should have an altruistic and holistic approach to deal with intercultural relations. The present study focuses on the following objectives:

a) To explore the historical evolution of intercultural relations and to show how awareness of such relations enables people to interact, effectively and appropriately, with the communities all over the world.

b) To enrich the study of intercultural relations and help promote global integration.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In *Cross – Cultural Impression*, Mukharji (2004) also views that intercultural relation, as a field of study, incorporates the "study of

anthropology and sociology" (p. 35). There are many different academic disciplines like diversity, culture and identity for the study of intercultural relations. They further encompass the study of human development, natural science, political science, psychology, gender studies, urban studies, research methods, history and linguistics. Such subjects provide students and other social groups with the knowledge of intercultural relations. There is a wide range of communication, which encourages the pursuit of social work, law, religion, community and urban development. The authors like Michael Marquardt, Nancy Berger and Peter Loan, in Human Research Development (HRG) in the Age of Globalization (2004), say that inter – cultural relations rely on a good harmony and linkage with the social domains:

> Today, the chaos of a highly competitive marketplace and a politicized world impel all of us to become better informed and educated, more flexible and continuously updated. We must be better prepared for, the enormous transformation that are taking place in the social, economic, educational and religious institutions around the world. We must remark our organizations, revolutionary changes at both the global – strategic and the local – tactical levels. We must prepare our societies for the elimination of slow – learning organizations and non – value – adding – jobs. We must prepare for emerging bodies of information, expertise, skill and knowledge that we can barely imagine today. In brief, we must be prepared for almost anything, (17).

Cultural erosion is an issue of increasing concern since numerous modes of life are being lost and many cultural forms are being eliminated. Without creating peace and harmony in culture, identity, and diversity, there cannot be least possibility of humanization in the world. Barber and Tardif, (2006), state that "there is a widespread sense that globalization is leading to pervasive cultural homogenization, not to say hegemonization of the stealth"(52). Indeed, global events like digital cultures – visual and audio media – influence our immediate vicinity. The influence of these ties between cultural experience and geographical location brings new knowledge into people's living standards. The knowledge of digital media generates impact on both social and cultural identities, generally the youth generations. Sassem, (2001), and K. A. Appiah, (2006), mention

"an attitude of cosmopolitanism is developing, especially in the world's megalopolises"(76). In the same case, this attenuation of ties to place may be experienced as a source of opportunity; in another case, as a source of loss and worry of certainty and marginalization, leading on occasion to identity backlashes. Still, as our identities are inextricably bound to the environment in which we grew up and that in which we live, the effect does not generally amount to a radical change with our cultural background or to cultural homogenization. Both national and international migrations have become a major factor in intercultural relations.

The root of multi-disciplinary intercultural relations can be traced back to the colonial period when Christian missionaries were prominent actors of the British Empire. Intercultural relations existed between the Christian gospel and other religions through ethically and culturally sensitive ways. *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (2005), even defines the concept of intercultural relations was first "propounded by fervent Christian philosophers like Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John"(p. 17). These days training in theology and evangelism is organized in the world as a whole. Broadly speaking, intercultural relations attract people from several social and religious backgrounds with many different career goals and objectives.

Culture is a medium for inter- personal relations. People of one culture do not appreciate and speak in favour of other cultures because they are not acquainted with the culture of other people. In this regard, we need to promote both our own and other cultures for the betterment of inter-cultural relations. And same factor applies to religion, politics, history, society and culture. Another fact and reason is that the followers of Jesus Christ are spreading messages of their religion to the Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Jains, and other religious communities. They rely on their religion which is good for them but their notion to motivate and influence other rights is considerably offensive. Imposing or luring people of one culture into another culture is not ethically right. Such way of thinking and motivating others to give up one's own religion and imitate other cultures and religions might create a rift among cultures. Such activities of religious propaganda harm people of other cultures or religions directly affecting their mind set, skill set and heart set with feelings and thoughts. Jean Jacques Rousseau

reports that "equality before the law is probably the most important element of that society"(79).

METHODOLOGY

The approach of the study is based on Subaltern theory propounded by Gayatri Spivak (1990), a practitioner of the very post modern scholarship. She attaches "due importance to a text that we come across in cultural studies"(255). The researcher is influenced by a fervent peace activist Bruce K. Gagnon, an American peace activist, who attributes full time service to connect individual relations with intercultural relations. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used for the study to wipe out the misconceptions among the rich countries like America, Russia, Germany, France, and other European countries in the world. William Griffin (2019), a member of Global Network against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, strengthens "such frail voice of subaltern people would be united to save space and earth for betterment of healthy body, mind and knowledge" (7). Their efforts for peace and harmony would encompass intercultural relations to develop knowledge of rich countries so that they may be induced to spend their budget on building health, mind and education rather than possessing weapons including nuclear arms and armaments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Intercultural awareness

In the light of above discussion, we become aware of intercultural relations, a kind of power, to interact, effectively and appropriately, with people all over the world. International relations are analytically divided into three sets: as a mindset, as a skill set and as the heart set. The mindset wants readers to understand intercultural relationship between self' and other cultures. There are two components of the mind set - one is 'cultural awareness' and another is 'self-awareness. The skill set presents the ability of an agile mind. It helps to attain interaction – related goals by communicating with people from other cultures. Other components of skill set are called message skill, appropriate self-transparency, behavioral flexibility and interaction capability. The heart set dimension of intercultural relations is that it helps people to acknowledge, appreciate and accept cultural differences between two individuals and groups. Other assets like

self-esteem, self-monitoring, empathy based judgment, social harmony and open mindedness are fundamental components that promote and enrich intercultural relations. They are further helpful to promote and strengthen global integration. Thus, intercultural relations focus on the social as well as organizational dynamics where peace and stability remain the central issue between states. The very notion of peace and harmony is a lofty ideal which is enshrined in the preamble of the United Nations Charter. The difference between peace and conflict is a major challenge and concern to the world organization ever since its establishment in the aftermath of World War II. Leo E. Rose (2010) mentions, "the situation of tension or conflict was not only due to economic and political instability"(p. 14). This cause of tension or conflict between states and communities often arises due to the complex setting of social, cultural, historical, religious and political interactions and upheavals as well. Further, Leo Rose (2010) comments on inter – cultural relations between states and communities:

> In modern times it is neither possible, nor desirable for any state to keep itself in isolation from the world's affairs. It shall be our policy therefore to enter into diplomatic relations with all such countries that seek our friendship. It is evident that we shall require much help and co-operation from abroad in our nation –building project. We hope we shall obtain such needful assistance and co-operation from our neighbouring and friendly countries, (25).

In the novels of western writers like E. M. Forster and Rudyard Kipling, one can come across a kind of tension arising from racial and social turbulence. The novelist E. M. Forster (2005), intends to educate the people in a friendly way on the key note of human unity and integrity rather than the colonial attitude toward an Indian character expressed in the following way: "How should you think of crime when you think of English crime" (p. 76). Richard King (2005) records: "Read any of the Mutiny which, rather than the Bhagavat Gita, should be your Bible in this country"(p. 95). Michel de Certeau (2001) finds that "Even where it conflicts with the mystic's philosophy as in Hinduism and Neo-Platonism – it is still present"(p.7). Rudyard Kipling (2007) incites them to behave like a "rational being rather than a beast of the jungle"(p. 14). The novelist, as a mentor in his novel, fosters inter-cultural understanding through the eyes of others.

An integrative approach

The 2005 United Nations Declaration on the promotion and protection of intercultural relations states that these relations should be systematically developed in accordance with the international law in all its aspects. The industrialized states have acceded to or ratified the declaration for fostering intercultural relations. The integrative approach should be related with a global dialogue among the civilizations as mentioned in Article 4 (p. 8) of the Convention, where it emphasizes "existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect"(p. 15). Such voice is the core voice of the UN preamble in the charter in the third millennium.

To save the beauty of inter-cultural relations, the Global Network's Coordinator Bruce K. Gagnon (2017), a fervent American peace activist, argues in favour of Nuclear Weapons Free Space. Bruce Gagnon further elucidates in the *Space Alert:*

> The Global Network is integrating the need to heal the broken spirit in the collective mind and spirit of people around the world. Peace of mind is necessary for the human being, he mentioned. "We must make people human beings again…money is everywhere…we must gather the good people, good minded people…selfishness is an epidemic across the world. This is the time. Let us accept all the people of the world". With tear in his eyes he thanked the citizens who attended the event from throughout the South Asia Region. This is indeed a message that is part of our work at the Global Network. We agree that we must heal the broken circle – we must heal our relationship to Mother Earth, (34).

Today, the world is facing problems, not encountered in the past, mainly because of the growing state of mistrust among the nations possessing nuclear powers. If a conflict among these countries leads to a breaking point, the world would see a catastrophe, not seen and experienced before in the history of humankind. To avert any such calamity in the world, nations and their people should come closer to each other culturally to develop a sense of harmony, mutual cooperation and mutual trust. John Lukacs (1968) critically analyses that "new social humanism bridges the gap between life and beauty and create a new worldly harmony"(179). It

is in this light that intercultural relations have assumed special significance in today's world. If we fail to bridge the growing gap among the nations having different cultures, we may have to pay a heavy price. My paper is an attempt to highlight the same in the present context of world situation that warrants an immediate and constructive response. It is my firm belief that only an intercultural relationship based on mutual understanding can save humanity from total annihilation.

CONCLUSION

In a new social media domains, marked by internet and other technological devices, wealth of information and educational materials are the easy access to the global societies and states. But their value for intercultural relations is insignificant. Instead, they should speak in favour of interconnectivity to promote intercultural relations in the cosmic space. Are the advantages of science and wealth not misused today? People would like to contribute to fostering a more mature and lasting acceptance of intercultural differences reflected in their literature, art, culture and religion. The world, at present, is seeking an intrinsic environment to promote universal values. The crux of this essay, it is hoped, will enlighten the readers about the inter-cultural relations. It suggests that one's culture cannot flourish unless he/she respects others' identity, diversity and culture.

As organizations struggle to remain viable and competitive globally, intercultural strategic planners and human resource professionals need to collaborate more intensely in designing and developing strategies that are at once productive and humane. The most successful community organizations will be those that pursue a focused and integrated learning process and incorporate skills and strategies in the global domain. To accomplish the objectives of the inter-cultural relations on the global level, the rich countries of the world should develop a balanced policy to strengthen the self and others' identity and diversity too.

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