Culture, Religion, Nationalism and Fundamentalism in the Post-modern and Globalized World Today

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1. Introduction

Many social scientists characterize the present world as the Post-Modern and Globalized world. They have their own distinguishing features and characteristics. Religions in this post-modern and globalized world show two contrasting phenomena; on the one hand it shows a lot of relativistic and secular tendencies, on the other hand it manifests rigid and fundamentalist qualities. This paper tries to study the complex reality of religion in the post-modern and globalized world of today.

2. Major Cultural Trends of our Times

There are two major ideologies dominate the present global world scenario. The future of the global world, according to some scholars will be unidirectional that is to imitate and incorporate the ideology of the triumphant global free market capitalism and its consequent economic, social, political and cultural paths. This position is articulated by Fukayama in his celebrated volume "End of History" (1992). Opposing this view some other scholars are of the opinion that today's world is a diversified world. We cannot trust any of the major ideologies posing to be the future. We need to recognize, and further multiculturalism and suspect and oppose the ideologies which try to homogenize cultures, peoples and religions. In today's world both these ideological trends co-exist with their variations. Thus we see the dominance of the Globalization of culture led by the market economy and politics on the one hand, Post-modernism, Multi-culturalism, Nationalism and Fundamentalism on the other. Religions are interwoven in the midst of the above processes of globalization, sandwiched between these conflicting and contradicting trends of world history.

All these ideas and processes have brought two major trends with regard to religions of people, one, secularization and relativization; and the other is religious fundamentalism.

2.a)   *We live in a Globalized World*

Whether we like it or not, globalization is the determinant material and social force of our times. Globalization refers to the expansion of global linkages, the organization of social life on a global scale, and the growth of a global consciousness, which leads to the consolidation of a world society. In the context of the end of the Cold War era and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Francis Fukuyama rhetorically and smugly put forth the thesis of the "End of History" (1992), celebrating the triumph of the West-driven free market system, democracy and individualism. Fukayama felt that globalization is the embodiment of rationalism, efficiency, material abundance and liberal democratic values.

It is supposed that the world has no other choice but to imitate these values in the course of its history. Thus, the process of globalization is said to be the impact of the rapid transformation of cultures currently underway in the world, effecting, churning and bringing about change everywhere. No corner of the world is untouched as globalization carries on its conquest of the world. Globalization is said to lead to cultural homogeneity. Interaction and integration diminish differences; and global norms, ideas or practices overtake local mores and many cultural flows, such as the diffusion of news.

Globalization takes the whole world as a single economic unit and the market as its instrument. The economy in a globalized world is characterized by open, liberal, free market and free trade with less regulatory barriers. It is marked by international investment and instant capital flows. Due to this, multi-national companies move into different locations where labour is cheap. People from different national boundaries shift their places of work and residence exposing themselves to different cultural worlds. As a result the world is becoming a highly interconnected world through economic, social, political and cultural contacts. As a consequence, the

world is shrinking in terms of time and space making the world feel smaller and distances shorter. The intensity and the momentum of this process are further enhanced by the sophisticated instant communications and ever-expanding fast travels. Globalization symbolizes a world in motion providing people with resources to new ways of being human in the fast changing world (Hall, 1996:619).

In cultural terms, globalization implies an increased cultural interconnectedness across the globe, principally as a result of the mass media, and also because of flows of people in migration, tourism and the global economic and political institutions leading to similar life patterns in different parts of the globe. Globalization opens up the local culture to other ways of living and gives alternatives. As a result of the accelerated pace of life, transience seems to have acquired an edge over permanence and durability. The cultural baggage of globalization is reflected in the world-wide diffusion of American pop culture. Entertainment around the world is dominated by American movie corporations and American-made products.

Thus, globalization also produces new understandings of culture, nationality, environmental relations and many other aspects of social life. All these affect our traditional ways of living and managing world affairs. Globalization excludes a whole lot of unskilled groups of people, giving rise to the impoverishment of a lot of people. Due to privatization, there is a loss of guaranteed employment. Many people are in an uncertain position with regard to their secure and worthwhile future (see Jogdand and Michael, 2003).

2.b)   *We Live in a Post Modern and Relativistic World*

The globalization project is based on the principles of modernity of the 17th century Enlightenment philosophy. Overall Enlightenment was characterized by rationalism and scepticism about traditional doctrines and supported the empirical methods of science. The proponents of Enlightenment had supreme confidence in the capacity of human person as a rational being and believed in a rational, scientific approach to religious, social, political, and economic issues. They promoted a secular view of the world and a general sense of progress and perfectibility. Such

ideas of civilization promoted by globalization dominated the thinking of the intellectual world during the 19th and up to the middle of 20th centuries. Science and technology were becoming increasingly powerful. Secularization was accepted as the natural and inevitable process in the development of human society.

All the same, a close look at the process of globalization will show that the triumphalism and complacency of globalization is proving to be premature and myopic. The supreme confidence in human being and his/her rationality came to be questioned by the middle of the 20th century. The immeasurable devastation and consequent misery of the two world wars and the increasing depletion of resources and environmental problems of the contemporary world began to question the assumptions of the globalization process. Science and technology have failed to give meaning in both the personal and occupational lives of individuals, and have failed to resolve some of the institutional problems of global society. They have also failed to provide a guide to the human quest for ultimate meaning. In a lecture delivered at Georgetown University in the United States in the late 1990's, the former US national security advisor ZbigniewBrzezinsky wryly remarked: "Democracy has won. The free market system has won. But what in the wake of this great ideological victory is today the substance of our beliefs? What is the human being in the democratic West now truly committed to? Is it to hedonistic relativism? …. I think this emptiness, this potential emptiness, if not yet the reality is dangerous" (quoted in Acham 2000).

Moreover, the rise of nation-states in Asia and Africa after World War II, and the ever expanding communication system, with the migration of people from one cultural area to another have led to Multicultural societies. Migrations and population shifts in the wake of wars and natural catastrophes as well as new job opportunities in technologically developed countries have become a common phenomenon. This has added a new dimension to the debate on multiculturalism among Western scholars. In U.S.A., England, and the rest of Europe the population composition is undergoing rapid change in these years. A few years or decades ago the Western world consisted mainly of Whites with a common civilization and Christian by

religion. But today the situation is fast changing. Immigrants from Asia and Africa are settling down in U.S.A., England and other Western countries. The racial and religious composition of the population and the socio-cultural components of these countries are no longer the same. This is a new situation in America and in Europe, which were traditionally mono-cultural. For example, in England today there are a substantial number of Indians, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and Afro-Caribeans. The internal make-up of the country is undergoing transformation. As Bhikhu Parekh points out, "Today you have a landscape with as many mosques as churches. As a result, the Brits are beginning to ask themselves: What are we? Who are we likely to become?" (Parekh, 2001:5). They are being confronted with the new situation of multiculturalism. The subject of multiculturalism is often in the headlines in the Western media these years.

As multiculturalism increases in many parts of the world, each culture and religion claims space and autonomy. They compete with one another as the best culture or religion for the future. As a result, the modernist's quest for a universal culture is under doubt. This has given rise to a Post-Modern cultural situation.

Postmodernists question the philosophical assumptions of Modernism, namely rationality, positivism and empirical methods in science to know the reality. Postmodern culture sees doubt as a form of health. It often derives meaning or excitement through experiments with sensation, sex and drugs, and if confronted with the teachings promoting traditional values or Wisdom of the Ages it proudly rejects them as outdated and no more relevant to contemporary humanity.

One of the things that characterize the post-modern world we live in, is the breakdown of absolutes - in morals–sexual anarchy; in metaphysics–doubt; in epistemology–confusion and ambiguity. Symptoms of this cultural and intellectual malaise are everywhere discernible. Postmodernism doubts any grand theories and generalizations. A coherent general understanding across cultural boundaries is seen as virtually impossible (Bhargava, 1999). Key analytical categories may not be as universally applicable as in modernism, as we had once imagined. Paul Heelas explains this by: "The cultural becomes disorganized; less black and white.

The distinction between high and low fades away. The claim that one tradition should be adhered to because it, and it alone, is valid, is rendered invalid. And rather than authority and legitimacy resting with established orders of knowledge, authority comes to rest with the person" (1998:3-4). In the words of James Beckford, post-modernity consists in a "willingness to abandon the search for over-arching or triumphalist myths, narratives or frameworks of knowledge" (as quoted in Heelas, 1998). Post-Modernism is a revolt and a reaction against Modernism. Post-modernism is imbued with the sense of a "collapsed signification and challenged humanism". It is amorphous, eclectic, pluricultural and ideologically and aesthetically not clear cut.

The implication of the postmodern understanding of "truth" in a wider cultural perspective has been that all is relative, nothing is sure, not fixed, all is in a flux. Post modernity goes against certainty and objectivity. It rejects order and certainty. It is sceptical about categories and any idea of a stable meaning. Instead, ambivalence, variation, fragmentation and emotion are celebrated as guidelines for how we should understand the social world. Sometimes, post-modernism stresses instincts and the drive for pleasure as central to how an individual should function. Post-modernism believes that meaning is not universal and fixed, but precarious, fragmented and local.

Post-Modern ideas and values are projected in the powerful media. The media has a tremendous impact on the young. In recent years, television and other modern gadgets have begun to dictate terms in our homes. Children often remain glued to them often replacing the normal conversation in the family.

Today, a large number of world population, specially the youth are affected by Post-modern culture and its value system. Post-Modern liberal ideas hold that what is morally sound and desirable is to be determined by each individual and that one should not judge the actions of other people in terms of one's own moral values. Thus liberalism inherently entails moral relativism. Karl Acham points out that the root cause of the cultural crisis in the Western world is related to this moral relativism leading to exaggerated individualism (Acham, 2000).

3.   Responses and Reactions to Globalization and Post-Modernism

a) Cultural Nationalism and Religious Fundamentalism

While globalization as a homogenizing process is active, we also observe cultures and religions asserting their separate identities. Globalization creates a troubled relationship between the native and the international. The claim of the emergence of a global culture is accompanied by cries of alarm that local values and nation-states are suffering a sense of threat to identity (Hall, 1996:619). This has given rise to ethnic revivals, struggles for indigenous rights and religious fundamentalism as defensive reactions to globalization and relativism. They have risen from a desire to defend and preserve valued ways of life against what are seen to be pernicious effects of foreign and global influences. Fundamentalist religious movements and cultural nationalism emerge in order to strengthen the identity of one's nation and culture.

3.a)   (i) The Rise of Christian Fundamentalism

In the context of modernists questioning some of the fundamental tenets of Christian faith, several booklets were published between 1910 and 1915 by the title *The Fundamentals* (see Madan 1997). During 1920s, *A World Christian Fundamentals Association* was formed. In the 1960s and 1970s a certain group of Christians began to assert themselves in the context of the U.S. Supreme Court banning prayer in public schools (1963), and permitting abortion on demand (1973). They began to voice their concern about the fundamentals of their faith.

Thus, we see fundamentalism was a reaction to modernism and certain scientific trends questions the very foundation of Christianity. Darwinian concept of evolution explained the origin of the universe to the natural processes which some orthodox Christians considered went against the biblical notion of creation. Fundamentalist were now being asked defend the Christian fundamentals which were chiefly doctrinal and intended to

ward off 'the havoc' that 'rationalism' and modernism had unleashed (see Madan 1997; Marty 1986: 237).

The Christian Fundamentals Association questioned the scientific explanations of the universe as proposed by Darwin and others. They began to develop their own scientific explanations in accordance with the Biblical revelation. Even today, these associations and a few new ones try to influence the American politics with their fundamentalist ideas.

Following the Second Vatican Council's efforts (1962-1965) at ecumenical reconciliation, and the perceived *compromise* of the Catholic Church with modernity, conservative Catholics also began to voice their concern about the fundamentals of the faith.

Similar trends emerged among other religious followers of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and others in the context of increasing nationalism and religious revivalism.

3. a) (ii) Islamic Fundamentalism

The book *Fundamentals of Islamic Thought* came to existence in 1985 in the context of Iranian Revolution. It has its roots in the modernization process in Iran by Reza Shah Muhammad Pahlavi after World War Two. This modernization process of Iran was a follow up of the earlier attempts carried forward at the beginnings of the revolutionary changes that occurred in 1905-11 in the Islamic world. Secularization in Iran had been rapid and fairly wide-ranging, and yet it was partial. Most importantly, the civil code continued to be based on Islamic holy law (*sharia*), and Shia *ulama*, whose importance in Iranian public life dates back to the beginning of the sixteenth century. In spite of efforts to modernize Iran, the Islamic law remained powerful. Some conservative Muslims in Iran began to question the secularization process of Iran by Reza Shah. Thus, gradually, a reversal of modernization began to gain momentum around 1970s. It

ultimately led Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to be the supreme religious leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 following many years of resistance to Shah Pahlavi. Ayatollah Khomeini sought to destroy the 'modern' Iran that the Shah and the urban, propertied, ruling class had tried to build. It was, first, a bloody reaction to the present and a call to return to the past or the fundamentals of Islam. The idea of an autonomous secular state was rejected. The book *Fundamentals of Islamic Thought* (1985), authored by Ayatollah Mutahhari served as a manifesto of the revolution.

In recent times, the Islamic fundamentalism shocked the world by its cruel and inhuman and horrifying images of hostages being beheaded by a group calling itself ***Islamic State of Iraq and Syria***, or **ISIS.** Today, this fundamentalist organization and movement wants to establish a Islamic Caliph.

This nostalgia to establish a World Islamic Caliph has a long history. Within 20 years of Muhammad's ministry, he united almost all of Arabia under strict monotheist faith. Muhammad's first few successors, the Caliphs, defeated the mighty Persian and Byzantine Empires. To many in the Arab world, this is evidence of the greatness that Muslim kingdoms (caliphates) can achieve if Islam is strictly practiced.

Since the beginning of the colonial era and of the enduring domination of the West over Muslim countries as well, many Muslim intellectuals and scholars have been lamenting the loss of Muslim Empire, Muslim power and Muslim glory. The disappearance of the Ottoman Empire and the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 constituted in the Muslim psyche the crystallization of such threefold decline. Since then, many Islamic movements have emerged having as their explicit goal the revival of the Muslim *Ummah,* the reform of Muslim societies

If there is no consensus about the primary reason for the decline of Muslim power, according to some Islamic scholars and religious leaders, the reason behind the loss of their power and glory is because they have abandoned God's revealed law the *–Shariah–* this being the best way to order society. Therefore, they hypothesize, if Muslims implemented *Shariah*, they would certainly once again be glorious, like their forbearers. A systematic implementation of the *Shariah*, they believe, will once again restore global leadership and moral sovereignty to Muslims. An Islamic state, they envisage, is the vehicle that will re-implement *Shariah* in the lives of Muslims, re-establishing Islam as a global power. This is the basic premise behind the movements broadly defined under the rubric of political Islam, such as *Jamaat-e-Islami* in South Asia, and the Muslim Brotherhood – *al-Ikhwaan al-Muslimeen–* in the Arab World. Geographically speaking, these movements can be global, seeking to establish a global Islamic Caliphate (Akasheh, 2015).

Muslims believe that every action of theirs is governed by Islam; a government is a public expression of this action. The Muslim fundamentalist asks, "How can there be a Muslim government that is not Islamic?" They believe that, not only does Islam have a built-in political system, but also that all Muslims are religiously required to follow this system. Geographically speaking, these movements can be global, seeking to establish a global Islamic Caliphate. This is the basic premise behind the movements broadly defined under the rubric of political Islam, such as *Jamaat-e-Islami* in South Asia, and the Muslim Brotherhood –*al-Ikhwaan al-Muslimeen–* in the Arab World and *HizbutTahreer.* There are some other militant organizations which are country-specific, seeking to establish an Islamic state, such as *Hamas* in Palestine, or *Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP) in Pakistan (Akasheh, 2015).

The Arab Spring –region wide mass uprisings in 2011– transformed Arab politics by bringing to an end long enduring dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt,

and Libya, and precipitated reforms in Jordan and Morocco and brought civil war to Syria. The initial euphoria of revolution and early transitions to democratic governance underscored the immense popularity, organizational acumen, and depth of support for political Islam as they won elections in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco. In 2012 it appeared as if the future of the Arab World was political Islam in power, sustained by democratic legitimacy through electoral victories. Across the region political Islamic parties were getting the opportunity to shape the political future by writing constitutions and shaping regimes (Akasheh, 2015).

It is in this context the present Syrian conflict began in the early spring of 2011. It began as a democratic desire to dethrone President Bashar al-Assad's government as a nationwide protest. The government forces responded with violent crackdowns. The conflict gradually progressed from mass protests to an armed rebellion after months of military sieges. A United Nations report released in December, 2012, stated that the conflict had "become overtly sectarian in nature" between Alawite – dominated government forces, militias and other Shia groups fighting primarily against Sunni -dominated rebel groups. Initially, the Syrian government relied mainly on its armed forces, but since 2014 local protection units made up of volunteers known as National Defence Force have come to play a larger role, gradually becoming the primary military force of the Syrian state. From the early stages, the Syrian government received technical, financial, military and political support from Russia, Iran and Iraq. In 2013, Iran-backed Hezbollah entered the war in support of the Syrian Army. These violent conflicts gradually led to the formation of Islamic military state of `*Islamic State of Iraq and Syria'* (ISIS) led by **Salafi Jihadist** which follows an Islamic fundamentalist Wahhabi doctrine of Sunni Islam. This group calls itself `**Islamic State'** (IS) ever since it proclaimed a worldwide Caliphate in June 2014 and named Abu Bakr al –Baghdadi as its Caliph.

As a caliphate, it claims religious, political and military authority over all Muslims worldwide. As of December 2015, the group has control over vast landlocked territory in Iraq and Syria, with a population estimate ranging between 2.8 million and 8 million people and where it enforces its interpretation of Sharia Law. ISIL affiliates control small areas of Libia ,Nigeria, and Afghanistan, and operate in other parts of the world, including North Africa and South Asia (Akasheh, 2015).

There are many other groups that are seeking to establish some form of government Islamic polities, states or caliphates– not as end in themselves, but as instruments for global Islamic resurgence, and even political unification.

The rise of Islamic State has caused immense destruction and loss of life. The six years of war in Syria according to the UN, over 250,000 are dead, and well over a million wounded. But officials acknowledge that that figure has not been updated in months. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based opposition group that monitors the war, puts the death toll at more than 270,000, while a recent report by the Syrian Centre for Policy Research, an independent think tank, said the conflict has caused 470,000 deaths, either directly or indirectly (Indian Express, March 17, 2016).

3. a) (iii) Emergence of Hindu Cultural Nationalism

The emergence of Hindu cultural nationalism has its roots in the nineteenth century Hindu revivalism and may be seen as awareness to the Christian challenge to its culture and tradition (see Madan, 1997: 207). The Christian view of human person as being created in the image and likeness of God is in contrast to the hierarchical social system of *varna* and caste. The ideal Christian vision that every human person is created in the image and likeness of God endowed every human being with inherent dignity. This vision helped to bring about reforms such as the abolition of Sati, child

marriage and challenged the unjust caste oppression and untouchability. Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833), the father of Modern India, recognized the need to have rational approach to Hindu culture and promoted reform within Hinduism by his BrahmoSamaj movement. On the other hand, DayanandSaraswati (1824-1883) by founding Arya Samaj in 1875, wanted the regeneration of Aryavartha. Dayananda's attack on Christianity and Islam was vigorous. The Arya Samaj had two items in its manifesto: Shuddhi, the meaning of which is purification, a term for the ceremony by which non-Hindus were converted to Hinduism, and Sangathan which literally means union, that is the promotion of solidarity among Hindus.

A striking feature of the revivalist movements was their concern with the identification of true scripture and with scriptural authority. These efforts reached their climax in the later writings of Dayanand Sarasvati. The Arya Samaj movement (1875) sowed the seeds of Hindu fundamentalism (Anderson and Damle, 1987 ; Jefferlot, 1996). The outcome of this ideology is Hindutva (Hinuness) (see Michael, 1996:294-310).

Later, in 1885 the Indian National Congress was founded by Allan Octavian Hume. Among the Congress leaders there were two factions – the reformists and the revivalists. While the reformists such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Madhava Govinda Ranade and Gopal Krishna Gokhale promoted reforms in Hindu culture, the revivalists like the followers of Arya Samaj and Bal Gangadhar Tilak and his Congress faction opposed any kind of reform. They promoted solidarity among Hindus by organizing a ten day Ganapati festival in 1893. After the death of Tilak in 1920, when Mohandas Gandhi publicly emerged on the Indian political scene as the Mahatma, he received widespread support from the revivalists. But soon the revivalists were disturbed by Gandhi's ascetic non-kshatriya style of leadership. The style of the revivalists was aggressive and tended to reflect a Kshatriya (warrior) world-view. The concern for social reform at the beginning of the Indian nationalist movement was given a back seat

with the emergence of militant Hindu cultural nationalism. The (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) was established in 1925 by Dr. Keshab Baliram Hedgewar. The Hindu nationalists identified 'nation' and 'national culture' as basically Hindu, as deriving from Vedic times, and as fundamentally a creation of the Aryan people. And with this they tended to accept as an inherent part of their culture some form of the ***varnashrama dharma*** and to relegate other Indian cultural traditions to a secondary and inferior position.

On the other hand, the Sudra (lower caste) thinker, Jotirao Phule, the first Indian to proclaim in modern India the dawn of a new age for the common man, the downtrodden, the underdog and for the Indian women had a different vision of India (see Keer, 1964). It was his aim to reconstruct the social order on the basis of social equality, justice and reason. As we just mentioned, the 'Aryan theory of race' constituted the most influential common discourse for discussing caste and society in Phule's time. It was the confirmed and sincere view of Phule that the ancient history of India was nothing but the struggle between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. He worked tirelessly to uplift the non-Brahmin castes. To establish a casteless society, Phule founded the Satya Shodhak Samaj on 24th September 1873 (Keer, 1964).

Ambedkar, the great liberator of the Dalits, was very much inspired and guided by the noble example set by Mahatma Jotiba Phule. At the beginning stages of his public life Ambedkar wanted to reform Hinduism, especially in the context of the untouchables in Hindu society. In 1927 he revolted against the caste rule which prohibited the untouchables from fetching water from the wells of the upper castes. He organised a satyagraha in Mahad and led a large number of untouchables to drink water from the town tank. Though he was unsuccessful in his attempt, that became one of the first "untouchable liberation movements," which ended with the public burning of the Manusmruti. Ambedkar's analysis of the reasons for

caste and untouchability revealed that the Hindu scriptures are directly linked to the degrading status of the untouchables in Hindu society. So, in 1929 Ambedkar advised the untouchables to embrace any other religion that would regard them as human beings, give them an opportunity to break off from the oppressive structures and enable them to act, eat, walk, and live like men.

In spite of this suggestion, he was still emotionally tuned to Hinduism and was making efforts to reform Hinduism. In 1930 he led a "temple entry" movement in Nasik. Ambedkar asserted: "So long as we consider ourselves to be Hindus and so long as you consider us Hindus we have a right to enter a temple and worship the idol. We do not want separate temples". The Nasik Satyagraha for entry of the untouchables to the Kalaram temple went on for six long years until April 1936 without gaining its specific objective. During this time he realized the limitation of Hinduism and its impossibility to be reformed, and so he declared in 1935: "I born a Hindu but would not die a Hindu".

Ambedkar embraced Buddhism on the 14th October, 1956 with his five lakh followers (Keer, 1974).

Thus we see the concept of culture, nation and religion in India is very complex. This complexity was to a certain extent integrated in the formation of Indian Constitution in 1950. The Chairman of this drafting committee was none other than Dr. Ambedkar. The Indian Constitution recognizes cultural, religious, linguistic, ethnic and ideological pluralism. Indian Constitution is the foundation of Indian unity.

But, in spite of this equalitarian Constitution, a certain Hindu fundamentalist question the existence of other religious groups in India. Hindu militancy organizes itself politically to assert its view of India. On December 6, 1992 through a long process of political and cultural mobilization, the

Islamic ancient iconic heritage, the Babri Masjid which was built around 1527 was destroyed by the Hindutva political-cultural movement.

With the forming of Central Government by the political wing of RSS in 2014, reports are emerging that the present Hindu government is taking all steps to Hinduvize the culture of India by bringing changes in the educational system. The Indian news papers are filled with reports (see the news papers 2014-2016) of Hindu cultural nationalism which is trying to impose of its idea of nationalism compelling that one is a nationalist only if he/she utters certain slogans like "***Bharat Mata ki Jai***" or if you are refrain from eating "cow" meat. According to P. Chidambaram, the "new champions of the slogan have a purpose in mind: they use the slogan to peddle the specious argument that those who raise the slogan – and only those – are patriots and those who do not are not patriots and are, therefore, anti-national" (2016:12). He further cautions that "'Project Nationalism' seeks to bludgeon the people to submerge their individual identities in a presumed national identity – that there is one history, one ethnicity, one race, one culture and one system of values that binds the people of India. It is this presumed national identity that emboldens self-appointed leaders to lay down rules on what one should eat or wear or read or view; or who one should love or marry; or who should be included or excluded or punished" (Chidambaram, 2016: 12). The violence against the minority religions is also showing an increase in the last few years.

4. Future of Culture and Religion in the Globalized and Post-Modern World

a) To distinguish between 'The Fundamentals' (Foundation of Faith) and 'Fundamentalism' (Fanaticism – Religion based Extremism)

The rise of fundamentalism is related to the question of meaning, identity, power, dignity and self-esteem. It is religious politics. Fundamentalism is partly a reaction to the spread of the relativistic outlook and it asserts that faith must be taken seriously; if not, it ceases to grip the mind or to orient or guide the person. Hence,

paying only lip-service to it is to defeat its potency and purpose. The fundamentalists, who today predominate in many parts of the world accuse the relativists of diluting moral conviction and fervour and of thus weakening the moral fibre of man in his fundamental essence.

It is important to understand that the vast majority of those who lend their loyalty to a religious outlook are not fundamentalists, and this applies correspondingly to their moral orientation. This majority can be regarded as representing a methodological or philosophical point of view which is the very antithesis of the relativistic point of view. Hence, we need to distinguish between 'fundamentals' of a religion and 'fundamentalism'. When religion is used narrowly for selfish power, and to oppress people due to socio-political and other reasons, it may be named as fundamentalism (Barr, James 1978:2). All the same, a deep commitment to faith in the 'fundamentals' of a religion cannot be called fundamentalism.

Hence, we need to distinguish between "faith foundation" i.e. `fundamentals' of a religion and "fundamentalism" which connotes rigidity, intolerance, arrogance, hostility, divisiveness, prejudice and other negatives to describe narrowness, bigotry, obscurantism, and sectarianism (Barr, 1978:2). So when one talks about fundamentalism, one is actually talking about experiences, situations, and an environment that does not promote harmony, tranquility and brotherhood but encourage a context of growing hostile, divisive, separatist tendencies.

Clarifying the foundation of one's faith in terms of religious life in the complex and ever-changing and challenging world scenario of today cannot be called fundamentalism. On the other hand, using religion for the sake of narrow and selfish power games and economic interests is 'fundamentalism'. Fundamentalism in the negative sense is an aberration of religion. It is linked to political and economic interests of certain vested parties to maintain influence, power, wealth and status. It is invoking God for their inability to find a way out and to lead the people to light. Fundamentalism is one of the more dangerous tools of interested parties because it uses, or rather abuses religious beliefs which have an intrinsic mass appeal.

Hence, we need to be very careful to distinguish between "the fundamentals" or Foundation of Faith in a religion and "fundamentalism", which is a direct use of religion in politics for a narrow purpose leading to fanaticism.

b) ***Going Beyond Ethnocentrism and Relativism***

Evaluating other religions and cultures in the light of one's own is known as 'ethnocentrism'. This tends to foster claims of superiority vis-à-vis other religions. The other important attitude towards religion is 'relativism'. It is an intellectual position that holds that every religion is equally valid and we should not compare religions. The relativists stress the validity of all claims to truth and regard them as equal, since the world is moving in the direction of equality among men, cultures, nations, as well as genders. Therefore, to try and pursue a claim to any kind of unique truth is merely a cover for domination. It is the stand of the relativist that each religion has its own integrity, its own system of values. What is 'good', what is 'right' what is 'beautiful' do not exist by themselves. To hold that any religion is intrinsically better than another is felt to be somehow wrong, offensive, and narrow-minded. Hence there should be no value judgment on religions.

A blind belief in the superiority of one's own culture or religion is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism leads to fundamentalism. Hence, we need to go beyond ethnocentrism. The relativistic worldview, on the other hand, making all cultural and religious values equally good is also impossible to hold. It is because this will justify some of the values such as human sacrifice (*sati*), female infanticide, headhunting, religious wars of aggression (*jihad*), religious murders, religious castes (*varna-dharma*), untouchability etc. present in certain religions. All these are justifiable according to a logic that stems from within the system itself. Relativism leaves us as separate islands of subjective being. The practical and effective alternatives are not ethnocentrism versus relativism, but rather rational norms with a potentiality for universal acceptance and realization. That means we must endorse some ultimate and absolute values. This presupposes a *normative* ethic.

c)   ***Priority of the Dignity of the Human Person and towards Inter-cultural Transformation***

In the context of religious fundamentalism and relativism, we need to place the priority of human person over all other considerations. We need to safeguard the dignity of man/woman over all other considerations.

Today, religious fundamentalism in India manifests itself in the form of cultural nationalism. In fighting religious fundamentalism today, we need to ask ourselves what does nationalism mean for the poor, oppressed and marginalized? Are they able to experience a sense of common humanity in the indian nationhood? Or is nationalism the luxury of the rich and the powerful? As citizens, we need to be concerned about human dignity and the integration of all indians. In the context of hindutva and exclusive and narrow hindu nationalism, we need to define nationalism in such a way that the poor and the downtrodden receive their due attention and care. As concerned citizens we need to ask what nationalism means for the poor; dalits, tribals and other weaker sections. behind the dreams and aspirations of these marginalized groups lingers the hope that a nation of fairness and justice will be realized, a nation, humane and inclusive.

5.   Conclusion

By way of conclusion, we may say that the wind of change due to globalization has gradually reached the whole world. The world has become small. Every aspect of human life is being affected by this process. Religion, culture and nation are challenged to reorient themselves to the newly emerging global order. Economic activities and power relationships are also adapting themselves to this process. Globalization is a double-edged sword. It has exciting possibilities but can also usher in unprecedented miseries. Globalization, which supports a secular and liberal culture also, creates a troubled relationship between the local and the international. The spread of a global culture is accompanied by cries of alarm that local values and nation-states will suffer a sense of threat to their identity. Fundamentalism feeds on this sense of a weakened identity.

Resurgence of religion in the globalized world is associated with the new emerging socio-political and cultural patterns. It is an outcome of cultural crisis and a sense of loss. It is related to the question of meaning, identity, power, the dignity and self-esteem of human person. It is a revolt against cultural relativism. It is a response to a changing social order.

In this context, the future of religion in the globalized world should be not one of fundamentalism but based on the foundations or fundamentals of one's religion. Globalization and post-modernism lead to either cultural and religious ethnocentrism or relativism in the minds of people. But both these approaches have their own limitations. Our search must be towards seeking truth rather than a blind adherence to a religion. Lastly, in the context of raising cultural nationalism, we need to ask what nationalism means for the poor; Dalits, tribals and other weaker sections. In building a nation, there should be fairness and justice for all the citizens of the country.

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