

The Religious Harmony: Social Responsibility of Religions in the Age of Globalization

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Abstract

Globalization has amplified the interactions among believers of different religions. This enhancement of relations provided opportunities to exchange ideas, understanding of different religions, and co-operation. It also intensified religious diversity and even conflicts. The objectives of the research are to highlight the significance of religious harmony for the attainment of global peace and to analyze the role of religions in the achievement of religious harmony as their social responsibility in an age of globalization. This study is qualitative in nature and interpretive research method is used for this research. For interpretation of data analytical style is applied. Secondary sources of data are used for data collection. Based on data analysis conclusion that to meet the challenges of globalization endorsement of religious harmony could be played a significant role in promotion of global peace is drawn. On the base of conclusion recommendations that the principles of “harmony without uniformity”, recognition of religious diversity, and respect for other beliefs should be promoted are given.

Keywords: Globalization, Religious Diversity, Religious Harmony, Social Responsibility

Introduction

Globalization is a multifaceted concept generally, defined as economic, and political interconnectedness and cultural homogenization across the globe (Rourke, & Boyer, 2008). In globalized world relations are not restricted to geographical boundaries so, it has a deep impact on culture (McCorquodale, & Fairbrother, 1999). Usually, globalization is explained from a political and economic perspective, as a capitalist movement spreading across the world. It identifies the “homogenizing of American exports” such as McDonald’s and Nike (Espín et al., 2013). In the process of homogenization of culture, people are searching to maintain their identity, in which religion is most important (Kinnvall, C. 2004). The word religion is derived from the Latin word “religare” which means “to bind together (Perry, 1998). Religion is a collection of beliefs and practices (Hopkins, 2001). In this study, religious harmony is considered a mutual understanding among religions (Stewart, 2006) and acceptance of religious diversity through negotiation, dialogue, and discussion for the maintenance of peace (Mani, 2012). Religious communities feel a responsibility to recognize and understand religious diversity, particularly in the globalized world.

Literature Review

According to a study by Azzouzi (2013), globalization has paved the way for religions to flourish. Advancements in technology made contact between religious communities easy and speedy. Because of this frequent interaction different cultures are influencing each other and promoting the process of Hybridization poses a challenge to religion. Religious communities consider this hybridizing as a threat to their culture as well as religious identity. The author discusses the impact of globalization on religious identity and identifies it as a challenge for religion. He only discussed the religion of Islam and did not explain its effects on other religions and well as did not highlight the need for religious harmony to face this challenge.

Zuo'an W (2010) describes in his study that to face the challenges of religious diversity a big threat to peace in the age of globalization, religious harmony should be promoted. For the propagation of religious harmony and tolerance new thoughts, ideas, and concepts should be presented. Cooperation and Understanding can be created by negotiation, dialogue, and discussion among different religious

communities. The author discusses the challenge of religious diversity in a globalized world and recommends that by promoting religious harmony, this challenge can be faced. However, he did not mention the universal values through practicing that religious harmony can be achieved.

Reuter, T. (2012) writes the significance of religion in a global world. According to him, religion has a significant place in the individual as well as the collective life of a nation or community. In a modern industrialized and globalized world because of modern means of communication and information technology where geographical boundaries have been blurred the issue of religious diversity and distinctiveness has been highlighted which poses a challenge to harmony and unanimity of the world. His study is only limited to a case study of Indonesia.

Kung, (1997) discusses the importance of global ethics in a globalized world. According to the writer, globalization is a continuous and unavoidable process or phenomenon. For survival in a global village, there is a need for the promotion of global ethics. By application of these ethics challenge of diversity can be addressed rationally and logically. In this study, the author explains and analyzes global moral values or principles. This study is only limited to the need for the promotion of global ethics and ignores the discussion of religious harmony to face the challenges of globalization.

Material and Methods

This study discusses religious harmony in a globalized world. This research explores the challenges of global peace from the perspective of religious diversity. The social responsibility of religion to create religious harmony is analyzed in the background of globalization. Religious harmony is defined as respect for religions as well as acceptance of religious diversity. The nature of the study is qualitative. Epistemology of this study is post-positivist employs both theory and practice and defines many features of research (Schratz & Walker, 2005). Epistemology describes Methodology whereas methodology defines methods (Bown et al.,1981). The reason is that the nature of the study is qualitative so, the qualitative research design is framed which is demonstrated as a non-statistical research method and process used to collect data about the concept. As a qualitative research design interpretive research method is used for this research. For interpretation of data analytical style is applied.

Secondary data is used for this study. For data collection, both print and electronic source is used. Print material like books, research papers from research journals, Newspapers, published Reports, and past studies are studied and electronic source like the internet is also used. Because the analytical model is used for this study, an analytical method of integrative review is employed. It is a kind of review in which the researcher explains and comprehends the existing status of research, giving details of harmony and differences inside it (Neuman, 2011). The limitations of this study are to get access to real facts and documents regarding the Social Responsibility of Religions in the Age of Globalization. Due to time and financial constraints, this study is delimited to “The Religious Harmony: Social Responsibility of Religions in the Age of Globalization”.

Study is based on following objectives

- To analyze the role of religions in the achievement of Religious Harmony as their social responsibility.
- To explore the peaceful strategies for the achievement of religious harmony.

Following research questions are posed on the base of objectives of study.

- What is the role of religious communities in supporting efforts to resolve religious conflicts and disputes for the achievement of global peace?
- How religious harmony could be achieved through the use of peaceful strategies by followers of different religions?

Religion and Globalization

Economics and political globalization create feelings of insecurity people do not feel secure “as the life they once led is being challenged and transformed at the same time.” Therefore, for an individual to uphold psychological well-being and evade stress and existential anxiety, a person is attracted to religious teachings and scripture stories that give a vision and idea about a rapidly changing world (Herrington, 2013) and how they can be assured of a “meaningful world.” There are three main important viewpoints on religion in perspective of the role of religion in globalization. First is the modernist perspective which has an unusual opinion of secularization. According to them, all secularizations reflect similarities, and they have the view that the different faith would all end up as the alike secular as well as "rational" philosophy. The modernist paradigm perceives religious renewals as sometimes being a response to modernization and enlightenment.

Secondly, the post-modernist paradigm discards the traditional, pre-modern religions. It also throws out the modernist principles of rationalism, Enlightenment, empiricism, and science, capitalism, and liberalism. The main theme of the post-modern perspective is communicative individualism. It is mainly hyper-secularism, and it connects modernism in forecasting, excitedly anti-adapting, and the vanishing of traditional religions. Henceforth, Globalization, in breaking up and melting every old, indigenous, and national structure, will receive the worldwide achievement of communicative individualism.

The third perspective on religion in persuading globalization is the premodernist paradigm. According to this pre-modernist paradigm, various modern, secular philosophies have failed by the 1970s - 1980s. Examples of that were Arab nationalism and socialism, the modernization plan of the Shah's Iran, and nationalism. These developments propose that even if globalization carries more secularization, it will not quickly succeed in building one common, international worldview (Ottuh, 2020). Globalization has altered the traditional ways of thinking (Scholte, 2017), and in this way, it affected religion as well. It is based on the values of modernism which favors change instead of continuity, and liberty instead of constraint (Beyer & Beaman 2007). This has promoted the secular culture and religious fanatics consider this blasphemous, intolerable, damaging to society, and harmful to traditional religious values (Chepkwony arap, 2022)

Thomas Friedman (2005) describes the evolution of globalization happened in three phases. The first was recognized as the age of colonization and mercantilism which covers the period of 1492 to 1800. During this phase, the world contracted from a large size to a medium size. The second phase of globalization consisted from 1800 to the 2nd world war. This stage was labeled as the age of Pax Britannica and minimized the world from medium to small. During this period multinational companies, new institutions, and global markets emerged (Nau, 2009). The current stage of the evolution of globalization started in the mid of last 20th century. This is the age of Pax Americana reducing the world from small size to minute and crushing the playing field simultaneously. The digital revolution acted as the driving force of globalization during this current phase (Karner & Aldridge, 2004). Friedman declares technological revolution performed as the rocket booster during all three phases and forms of globalization, but he labels the current phase as a more combative age when he considers the technological advancement as destructive for the playing field for all people and all civilizations, irrespective of ideological differences.

Globalization on the one side because of modern means of communication has created new opportunities for religion and on the other hand has posed challenges to maintaining religious identity for people of different religions (Twiss, 2018) and it entered into a state of conflict to resist its opposite power (Haynes, 2006).

In the renewal and renaissance of religion, globalization has played a significant role (Fisher, 2008) because, in a globalized world, they are not consigned to only those areas where they originated but sprinkled at the global level. (Casanova, 2001). The fast speed of the process of globalization has made it easy for followers of religions particularly co-religionists contact them easily and frequently across the globe (McGrew, 2001). The communication revolution and advanced means of communication have made it possible for different religions to broadcast their religious

thoughts(Jinguang, 2013).For example, innumerable websites provide information regarding different religions and make it possible for every individual to get the required information about any religion according to his choice regardless of his geographical compulsion and provide forums for religious debates that play an important role in the propagation of religious ideas.

Globalization of Religion and Religious Harmony

Mutual respect has a significant place in the teaching of every religion as well and religious harmony and unity are described in all religious doctrines but unfortunately, differences are more highlighted as compared to similarities. If we consult the following Holy verses it can be said that religious harmony is not only a concept it can be materialized into reality.

The Holy Quran states

‘O Mankind, we have created you male and female, and have made you races and tribes, that you may know each other’ (Al Quran 49:13).

In the Old Testament, it states

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them

which despitefully use you and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44)

“May God...grant you to be of the same mind with one another” (Romans 15: 5-6)

In Judaism, it is states

“Seek peace and pursue it.... Seek it where you are and pursue it in other places as well.” (Psalm

34: 15)

In Hinduism, Swami Vivekananda states

“Help and not fight, assimilation and not destruction, harmony and peace and not dissension are the substance of my faith”

Common Values to Create Religious Harmony

Peace	Harmony	Human Rights	Tolerance
Love	mutual confidence and understanding	Truth	Reciprocated respect
Gentleness	Collaboration	Justice	candid recognition
Sympathy	effective communication	Admiration for human dignity	respect and acceptance of cultural diversity
Kindness	effort for promotion of common good	Gratitude to diversity	Resolution of conflict by peaceful method
Appreciation	intention of resolution	Liberty and responsibility	respect for minorities and foreigners
Empathy	aspiration for harmony		

Challenges and Opportunities

In the global world where interconnectedness of people of the world is increasing, as well as interactions among different religious communities are also enhancing. These growing connections and interactions among religions where one side has provided opportunities of global scope rather than local. On the other side are posed challenges to religions.

Challenges

The roots of adoration of nonreligious values and secularism are present in the Enlightenment movement (Green, & Viaene, 2012). that started in the seventeenth century which was boosted by the advances in scientific knowledge and the Industrial Revolution (Lingier, & Vandewiele 2021). The era of this movement is labeled as the Age of Reason. The main objective of the Enlightenment intelligentsias was the promotion of human reason over belief as the primary director of all human behaviors. The Enlightenment authors and thinkers, declared the commercialization of society and industrialization hope for human development and world Development in scientific and technological progress as well as focused on the finding of truth through the observation of nature instead of through the study of the religious texts. They claimed particularly for the elimination of religion from public life and public authority,(Shelley, 2008) upholding that public affairs in a commercial society focused on marketplaces and property, not the protection of souls(Onuoha& Odeke,2020). Business, industry, and happiness developed as the favorite religion in this modern age as a replacement for God or the paranormal(Bruce, 2002).

Use of Religion for Political Purposes.

Many groups, organizations, and individuals trying to use religion for their ill aims, even a state also uses faith to interfere in the internal matters of another state (Zuo'an, 2013). This approach or behavior not only dishonors religion but also damages community interests. When religion becomes part of a conflict or clash it not only makes the situation more severe(Ellingsen, 2014)but also makes the conflicts difficult to manage or resolve because the addition of religious sentiments undermines the arguments and rationality and provides a sacred base to clash or conflicts.

Religious Extremism

All religions preach peace, goodness, and love and oppose violence. But, when people deviate from the true teachings of the religion they might develop thoughts of intolerance and fanaticism and ultimately turn into a supporter of extremism (Ogbonnaya,2013). The provocation of hate or even terrorist activities in the name of religion is dreadfully damaging and has come to be harmful to the peace and security of the whole world (Aslan, 2010). From the perspective of manifestation of extremism, the causes of religious extremism might be social, economic, political, Psychological, and spiritual. The political reasons for religious extremism comprise racial and regional conflicts that are happening across the globe. Consecutively, these differences and clashes provide favorable environments for racial, ethnic, and religious fundamentalist movements, groups, and organizations to grab power as a consequence of ongoing strains and tensions in society and the development of an unpleasant and conflicting environment. Social bases of extremism can also have a national emergence. Though there are dissimilarities in the goals of all extremists and in the organizations or groups that join them, they have the similar personification of the image of the foe.

Religious Xenophobia

Xenophobia means hatred, wariness, or fear of strangers or outsiders. it generally assumed displays of intolerance towards a group that is considered by the mass perception as "stranger" However, it can also be evident as hatred toward followers of another religion or members of another tribe or culture(Aydin et al., 2014)..In a globalized world, the undesirable outcomes of religious xenophobia are displayed in the altering global view, the integration of external cultures, and the act of "permitting all that is not prohibited" in the procedure of international economic and political change, generating the base for national identity. P. Stompka a sociologist describes the abovementioned developments: "Religious xenophobia and extremism are more hazardous than ever, because at the same society has not strong immunity against it. At the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century under the influence of technology, many socio-political, economic, and religious domains have introduced many changes (Martell, 2010) at the domestic and global level sometimes creating internal differences and conflicts.

These changes encouraged the fractions in racial, ethnic religious, and interfaith relations and there is an inclination to make the perception that there is a condition of shared self-protection and crisis among different religious communities, particularly between Muslims and the Western world. Conditions linked to xenophobia, events of violence, and aggression against liberty of faith visible themselves as a power introducing troubling situations and producing instability and disturbance globally (Rustamovna, 2022). Currently, the rise of Islamophobia consecutively has encouraged anti-Islamic feelings as well as psychological hostility emerged and terrorist attacks against Muslims reported in many parts of the world(Mukhammadsidiqov,2021) for example in New Zealand, Canada, Switzerland, Spain, France, and United Kingdom in different attacks many Muslims were killed and injured.

Hybridization

On one side where globalization has enhanced the scope of religion globally, it has posed challenges for different religions through the process of hybridization (Scholte, 2017). According to many scholars, the goal of globalization is to introduce the global culture through the Hybridization of world cultures (da Silva, 2014). Religion considers this process as a threat to its identity and values which are discordant with the liberal values of globalization (Ehteshami, 2007).

Clashes and Conflict

In the globalized world where religions found scope to flourish. At the same time as religion receives a favorable environment to enlarge its range globally (Guvén,2006), it is facing the challenge of hybridizing effects that give birth to resistance among religions to maintain their identity and become a source of conflict(Aydin & Özen2010). Globalization plays a role in hybridization of the world cultures and vice versa it makes world religions more self-conscious of and sensitive about their identities (Samuel, 1996). These conflicting goals are causing erosion and a hurdle in hybridity and religions seem to be inclined towards clash or conflict (Pfaff, (2006;Falk, 2002).

Opportunities

Propagation

In a global village where physical frontiers are already blurred, religion is not limited to geographical boundaries instead Technologies of globalization provide the opportunity for religions to reach every part of the world's global scope(Thomas,2010). According to Aart Scholte, the faster speed of globalization in the present era made it possible for co-religionists on this planet. Have direct, speedy, and frequent contact with each other that was not possible in the past.

Chance of Revival

In a globalized world religions also found the opportunity for revival and resurgence because of this they do not remain limited where they have roots but can expand across the world(Haynes, 2009). Modern means of communication like through the internet people across the world can contact and exchange their ideas and hold discussions and debates that play a role in the propagation of religious ideas. In this respect, different websites are major sources of information about different religions. Likewise, electronic media is also playing a significant role in the broadcasting of religious thought. A lot of T.V channels and radio stations are established only for religious purposes (Turner, 2007). These religious channels also provide visual religious practices and introduce religious teaching in every home all over the world bringing the religions together(Robinson, 2012).

Globalization Promoting Religious Tolerance

Globalization introduces a pluralistic culture where religions interact with each other(Banchoff, 2008) and teaches values like human dignity, peace, freedom, and unity by using them to promote religious tolerance in politics, economics, and society. Politically international organizations like the United Nations Organization and regional organizations such as the European Union, African Union,

and Organization of Islamic Countries etc. issues like peace, security, health, and poverty are discussed by these organizations which are also basic religious traditions (Mishra, 2019).

Likewise, different religious organizations have also participated in interreligious dialogue. In this regard in 1993, The Parliament of the World's Religions invited the representatives of major religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). They talked about using their common values like human dignity, Justice, etc. in international affairs. Economically in a globalized world where the economies of core countries are flourishing, they are providing financial support propagation of their religious beliefs (Tiplady, 2003) and spreading their thoughts all over the world.

Strategy to Create Religious Harmony

Mutual Coexistence and Respect

Harmony among religions can only be achieved through mutual coexistence and respect (Abdul, 2016). Religious communities should evolve principles that can promote and maintain harmony among them and minimize conflict or clashing situations. It is said that it is not essential to have a victor in every race (Fasching, 2018). So, we forgive and forget others if possible because to move back start approaching ahead. For the achievement of religious harmony different religions should be given respect instead of disgrace. Every individual should have the right to spend his life according to the guidelines provided by his religion.

Acceptance of Religious diversity and support of harmony

To achieve peace and cooperation in the global world acceptance of religious diversity is most important (Karner, 2004). Different Religious communities should respect the thought or philosophy of each other instead of trying to influence (Kale, 2004). "There is a proverb that All things on earth grow together without one harming another and all doctrines in the world develop in parallel with each other without coming into conflict (Xu, 2012)." Harmony should be achieved without uniformity because different cultures and religions can only flourish if their identities as well as diversity are maintained

Conclusion

In the age of globalization, there is a need for all religions should feel and share their social responsibilities to maintain peace and harmony on earth and play their role in the welfare of inhabitants of this planet. Nowadays world is facing many problems and issues like terrorism, poverty, the increase and spread of diseases, and regional conflicts. All these issues can only be resolved by the effective role of religion. Through negotiation and strategy of dialogue issues can be managed and conflict can be resolved. A sense of collective social responsibility and mutual understanding will give birth to reciprocated trust and respect among different religious communities which are necessary for the attainment of peace and harmony in a globalized world.

Recommendations

- Respect religious diversity.
- Promote religious harmony without uniformity.
- Promote common values of different religion.
- Encourage interfaith dialogue.
- Encourage co-existence.

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