

Multicultural Societies: Future of Human Civilization

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Abstract:

Globalization has made this world inter-connected. World is turning into global village, where there is an amalgamation of various cultures. Migration has been a part of human history. Due to such mass movements multicultural societies came into existence which is quickly changing the face of the modern world. Though there are many challenges in the way of peaceful establishment of such societies but still these are rapidly blooming in the various parts of USA, Canada, Australia and many European nations. These multicultural societies make world vibrant as these have a lot to offer from knowledge, values, customs, beliefs and to new perspectives. Thus, proliferation of multicultural societies should be motivated by the governments and the people in general. These can make further strengthen relations between different communities so that all can work for mutual progress and thus world peace is achieved.

Key Words: Globalization, Migration, Amalgamation, values, customs, multicultural societies, world peace.

In the dawn days of life on earth, it was all about survival for every form of life on the planet. So the thing with the humans. It was gradually that humans began to find comfort in groups for the sake of security and easy find of food. With time their groups began to be enlarged. Small groups turned into bigger ones and those evolved into tribes, villages and communities. According to Sociologists Society is

Every individual is different from the other and carries a different identity also. When humans start living in groups, they are required to lose a part of their individuality in order to blend in the group. To strengthen the group and make it work efficiently, it is needed that people develop some common thought processes and behavioural patterns. However, this process of generalization also occurs naturally as when we live together as a group we get influenced by each other's way of living and life lived together builds them.

When a group of people live together over a period of time, they tend to develop certain set of beliefs, some do's and don't's, ideologies and philosophies of how life should be lived. These are transferable from one generation to the next one and becomes a part of their identity. Every community gets affected by their surrounding environment and circumstances. These also moulded the values of the communities. Since environment and circumstances may vary for different communities so do their belief system.

Human is a social animal who loves to live in groups. Early man was confined to himself and his survival. Gradually, things

changed and humans evolved. From hunter gatherer society to a modern globally connected world, we learned a lot and also forgot a lot. If we go by definition, same culture, customs and institutions has a lot to do with the societies where a group is seen following all these traditions. Earlier, movement was not regular so we as societies were close societies, nothing came in and nothing went out. With time, air of change blowed and rigidity of cultural bondages began to melt. Societies and communities as groups began to imbibe a lot from the outer environments. Those outer things then began to mould the inner scenario of these different societies round the world.

Soon societies started to mingle and move. Quest for opportunities, employment, and civil wars and many such difficult conditions made people leave their homes and settle somewhere better. This immigration happened in waves. People reaching new places had to encounter many struggles in their daily lives. They were needed to assimilate their culture and identities into the existing predominant culture. This assimilation is an uphill task. A lot was demanded for this. This act of rooting at the new place required to acquire new behavioural patterns to fit in the new atmosphere.

Humans are social beings and they are designed to live and prosper in groups. Early humans themselves were equivalent to an animal who just managed to eat and survive. Gradually, his consciousness expanded and new things started to happen. For security purposes humans started to live in groups as it was convenient to find food and also better for their protection.

With time and many new inventions and discoveries like fire, wheel and weapons, the dynamics of requirement of togetherness changed. Temporary settlements turned into permanent ones. Permanent closeness gave rise to many shared beliefs, behaviours and ways of living and thinking. Sooner these started to pass on to the next generations and became non separable part of the group's life style.

Every such group has their unique life styles and customs which made them stand differently from each other. Soon competition for new lands and power has always been an inevitable part of human society and history. Wars and clashes for such dominance remained present even today. Supremacy of cultures was also a practiced after wars. So, a mingling of cultures did happen however not in a respectable way but it was there. Forcefully, people were made to respect and adopt alien cultures and religions.

As means of transportation advanced, world started to have connections which were never before. Political ambitions rose equally which gave rise to many large scale wars including building of new empires and world wars. After World wars, mass movement of people took place as a consequence of post war effects. Since, different racial identities being one of the reason of these wars, people for new job opportunities and safety of their lives moved to new places.

Western nations were first to industrialize so they were the first ones to be modern nations. This modernity worked as a magnet attracting many jobless and better life seeking individuals towards themselves. As a result mass movement of people took part across the world. Efficient travel services and a revolutionized information technology too played its part in this course.

Now, came the time of multicultural societies where many cultures started to thrive and prosper and co-exist, which earlier was unimaginable. In today's highly connected world, societies and people came closer like never before. The mist of suspicion and doubt regarding each other's culture and way of living which in a way stopped us from mingling, now started to shed. All thanks to the revolution of information technology which shrunked the physical world but has broadened our mental spaces.

We have now the liberty of knowing each other better. We are having knowledge of various cultures and customs round the world. Living in groups is a basic human instinct. Early man required each other's company for security reasons but slowly when man started to live in permanent settlements grouping became a societal necessity. Societies and tribes' originality soon started to get mixing of other cultures from outer world as travels increased.

Travels and migration were encouraged by the demand of the time. The quest of new opportunities made sailors and invaders to go in search of new lands. In new areas people take their values with them and also learn new things from there. This gives rise to a hybrid culture having a blend of many cultures and life styles. People share their beliefs and way of living and also receive new notions which enrich their knowledge and also enhanced the

quality of their living. Multicultural societies are new reality of the world.

The concept of multiculturalism started to flourish with the rise of the 'black politics' in 1960s. Mass movement brought new cultures along with them. However, it was not easy for these alien cultures to get rooted in the new places. Change is good but change is hard too. To accept something new than the usual is always tough. Same thing happened when new cultures tried to mingle with the existing cultures.

Multicultural societies:

Since it was impossible to completely erase all the cultural practices, so many of them were carried on by these new inhabitants in their families and homes. The first generation showed less changes and adapted with least changes in their culture. The second generation was seen with lesser proofs, as compared to their elders, of their identities and uniqueness. Meanwhile, the process of amalgamation continues to toil and there becomes alive a new amalgamated culture which is actually a blend of two or three cultures.

Sociologists have put forth two theories in the light of these amalgamated societies, one being the 'Salad Bowl' theory and other being 'melting pot' theory. According to the Salad bowl theory just like a bowl of salad which contains vegetables of different taste and colours in one common bowl, an amalgamated society. According to the 'Salad Bowl' theory, as in a salad bowl there different vegetables mixed together, each having its different taste and colour similarly in a multicultural society there are people of different cultures and backgrounds. There is a living together scene but all of them carry their distinct identity. "Little India", "little Odessa" and "China town" are the ethnic communities of New York city, USA.

On the other hand in a melting pot a variety of stuff is put together to melt into something new having the characteristics of the stuff which is put into the pot. So here something new comprising all the uniqueness of different cultures comes forth and this amalgated version becomes a new culture in itself. So the mixing is intense in the melting pot theory as compared to the salad bowl theory and so its closure to the concept of multicultural societies. In 1782, French-American immigrant J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur wrote that in America, "individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world."

Multiculturalism brings both diversity and struggle in the society. A society having a range of cultures will surely bring an amazing richness into the society. This enrichment lets the society work better and beautifully. As there is a vast reservoir of knowledge and shared experience which can help people in making their lives better. We all know that every culture has their own unique characteristics. It may be anything, from knowledge of herbs and their health benefits to eating habits for overall health or innovative agricultural practices or animal keeping. Multicultural societies can

lead us from a limited to a vast source of knowledge. We can excel as humans by dint of that knowledge. Just because a certain community has devoted time on gathering certain skill, it can be beneficial for the entire humanity. This can aspire the modern societies to be multicultural societies as modern societies are progressive and want to excel in all fields. And this exchange of knowledge is a two way process where both the cultures are modified into their better version.

Information technology has played a major role in this mingling. The spirit of multiculturalism is not only experienced in the countries where immigrants come and settle and then happens the amalgamation of cultures. Technology facilitates us to experience or know things without actually visiting that place. So throughout the world people are being fed with views and ideas of cultures other than theirs, and this is actually affecting their thinking. Non-Christians have started celebrating Christmas, Americans have started taking interest in Asian traditions and customs. Similarly, people enjoy Korean music, continental food, Mediterranean wine throughout the world. So, we are comfortable with new ways of living. However, it is a different thing that hate culture is also on full swing where people show their dislike for other culture. Still, multiculturalism is our carrier of hopes for the better future of mankind.

Living in a multi-cultural society can be challenging but the advantages are worth trying this concept. Some of the key advantages are listed below:

- Adaptation becomes easy: New situations can be easily tackled by a citizen of multicultural society. As co-existence is required so people develop an attitude of understanding though having completely different set of beliefs and values. People here are accustomed to change as their multicultural environment is added with new cultures with every new entries of immigrants. When a person is used to an ever changing society, changes in other fields of life such as work and education are easily adopted (Benet, 2012).
- Mental Expansion: Concept of multiculturalism is a tough strike on racism. Racism is something which is aired by the misunderstandings developed based on our prejudices. When an individual gets chance to mingle with others having different backgrounds, an understanding will be developed. This understanding alone will dissolve all the boundaries of race and difference. Every culture has its boundaries and new ideas have to struggle hard to be part of it. But when we have many belief systems mingled together, then it provides a fertile ground for the germination of ideas which are new in the league. Different ways of living become acceptable. When living in a multi-cultural society, a community that does not have the same belief system would help in understanding and supporting the abandoned individual (Foster, 2013)
- There's a lot to do: Multicultural societies which are the new age global villages, have a lot to offer. These provide a range of living styles which is different from the mundane way of everyday life. A bit of all the goodness of world's best food, fashion, philosophies, clothings and festivals is clubbed together and available here.

- Sprouting of new perspectives: When people with different backgrounds meet then there is change that existing things are seen with new perspectives and new light is shed on the old worn thinking processes. This will bring openness which would be further an open invitation for creativity in the world. Many people believe in this and find multicultural societies good for the world health. Multicultural societies are a reality today itself is a proof today that they being accepted with an positive attitude. "New Zealanders value a strong multicultural society, with 89% agreeing that it is a good thing for society to be made up of people from different races, religions and cultures." (Victoria University of Wellington, 2012 page 1).

As a coin has two sides, there are some drawbacks of multicultural societies. First of all social conflict is a common phenomenon in such societies, the harmony of the social fabric is at stake. The refugee riots in Europe recently being one of the recent example, a cause of many casualties and social turbulence. "There were around 3,500 attacks on refugees or refugee shelters in Germany in 2016" (Larsson, 2017 page 1).

Other than this, there is a good possibility of weak minority groups losing their ethnic and cultural identity. And if the influence of the dominant culture is too strong than this possibility further multiplies. Further, a member of minority group, finds it a challenge to adjust in the new atmosphere which is usually anything but friendly. They feel and actually become marginal in the mainstream society. Again, foreign language is a hurdle to their children's learning at beginning. Also, the existing people find it hard to adjust and build trust.

In conclusion it can be said that it is undeniable that multiculturalism has its advantages. Apart from acting against racism, it gives space for social creativity. Presence of different cultures brings vibrancy to the society. Above all, it boosts the economy of a place where this concept blooms. The multicultural societies' advantages weigh more than its disadvantages only proper handling of problems is needed there. In general, the multiculturalism is a great opportunity for taking human civilization to the next level. People are supposed to embrace it, with a kind positive comprehensive state of mind. People, governments and various existing communities of a place need to understand the power and need of multiculturalism and then embrace it for the greater good of humanity. Here knowledge can be shared and prosperity can be achieved for all the cultures co-existing in such societies.

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