Editorial

Between Individualism and Collectivism: Charting Way to 'Conflict to Peace Continuum'

Everyone should agree that conflict's precursor is ideology. Ideology is not an abstract notion. It is taking decision about social structure and social order and charting a pathway to achieve it or stabilise the achieved. The stabilisation comes from normative behaviour of people through generations. Individualism and collectivism are the two norms directing the path of human excellence in broken and continuing old civilisations across the globe.

Rethink on Domination of Individualism

The individualism in Europe and its settler colonies across the globe gradually became the dominant global norm as western education promoted the goal of individualism and money-centric economics. This engulfed almost every country breeding alarming levels of selfishness in individual, family, community and state. Several decades of reductionist learning for occupation and ideology offered logic and morality fuel. We find how it adversely affects country after country, block after block of sovereigns. States swearing by humanity, sovereignty, equality, fraternity, religion and cultural affinity are actually going against these ethico-moral norms.

Otherwise, why not all Arab countries stood against the Jewish state for war in Gaza Strip? Why they were not unanimous in denouncing and acting against Hamas for its provocative killings of Jews and taking Jews hostage which could have stopped the chance of imminent war? This immediate action for assurance to Israel whose people were killed was a great religious duty. On both sides, common man suffered and got killed. This suffering will last too long in the memory on both sides as there is hardly any chance to inculcate a mindset of peace and non-violent *Satyagraha* in current educational approach. It would breed animosity further where no one emerges the winner. It seems as if we are in replays of the vengeance films of Hollywood and Bollywood in the world frame.

This is transgression due to narrowing down our capacity to think in broadest of vision which all our prophets worked upon to restore the spirit of respectful coexistence. Essentially, they inspired and guided us learn utilising faculty of discrimination between past, immediate and a better future for all. Discrimination helps us to pacify nerves to touch consciousness within, so that we let go many of our bitter memories collectively to avoid act following the animal instinct called revenge without letting our guard down. This is where we become humans in action in journey of *being & becoming* in contrast to only *being* journey in other animals. Animals and plants, even in their only *being* journey helps us to thrive in joy without letting guard down. What are we into?

Presiding paradigm of Individualism brought Devastation

The presiding model behind wars in contemporary is the vengeance wars between Greek city states where individualism of harangues, by induction transformed each state into selfish individual in search of colluders and army recruits for wedging war. The Greek civilisation got devastated in this way. Much prior to this, city states emerged by destroying the bardic culture of the rustic Greece. In this era, we are following the same

model in several fronts. Besides in wars today, there is reverberation of the model in modern day's aggressive urbanisation and industrialisation worldwide where rural is represented in terms of poverty and inhuman.

This is visible in modernisation paradigm's urban against rural, forgetting that dichotomy is the reality of space and breath of both. Village resides in urban on many aspects and in city interstices. However, most of the modern era states are biased in favour of creating city mindset in rural areas while ignoring the passage of the goodness of villages to enter into the city mindset. What happened to Greek city states should have been the sharpest lesson in today's history reading and political training.

Even the lesson of balance presented by India's historic paradigm of city within nature in trans-generational existence with is almost forgotten in the same land too, where 'urban' or almost everything urban in villages is followed in planning with vengeance. In 2020, India pledged to bring back holistic approach in national education. Loss of holistic vision has already taken toll of its forests, hills and villages to a great extent.

Holistic Approach: Two Challenges of Preparedness

Making holistic approach revive the spirit of collective with windows for individual faces two challenges. The first challenge lies in rediscovering, developing and implementing holistic approaches in education with space for reductionist practice at research level for generating inputs to enlighten decision making from all angles. Holistic approach should be introduced at a fast pace in education so that we can redraw our plans for all-round development at several levels with holistic vision.

The second challenge lies in shifting our economic vision from money-centric to human-centric, and inculcating this spirit through education from home to school to institutions of higher education and research. The holistic vision with money at the centre is like making a gold bowl with brass metal, an absolute absurdity. The capacity of people all over the world to dare to live well without 'money as the only means' would be able to challenge all notions of dependency, block, and corporatism without having annihilation of state and corporates. This capacity of community lies in collectivism in traditional societies ensuring social capital replacing financial capital in good degree. Many great scientists whose discoveries and inventions came out of their own innovative measures at very low cost, wrote drawing inspiration from common man's everyday innovations to solve problems, and sharing of burden together. This should be incorporated in study and practice from home to school level in the formative years when neural development is rapid.

Most of the states even today, in a misdirected practice of real politick are actually not able to respect the bigger picture: where every escalation stops before small conflict turns big. Developed states still feel cozy within protections from very few big others within protective umbrellas. They return this favour by mostly towing the big brother's line with sense of ideological proximity and compulsion of networks. This system may not last long because every mechanical system has its elasticity. When conditions change for no return to earlier by dint of our own actions over years, we all need to change for 'ecologically sustainable trans-generational progress'. This calls for a shift in approach of education worldwide to lead into a new balanced state of affairs.

Re-imagining Role of United Nations Organisation

UNO has to posit itself in dichotomous space as the discriminator between the big picture and the narrow one. The big one is that the conflict arises; it is natural but it brings aspiration for peace i.e. the 'Conflict to peace continuum' is the reality. This is also a journey from outside to inner spirit of equity in existence for individual to state equally. As human, we are having intricate neural endowments and the process called mind, the real leader of all ecosystem developments. As collective, we have racial memories: the integration of human memories where the whole memory far exceeds the sum total.

In the backdrop of deep conflicts globally, it demands great leadership as the big picture is in between individualism and collectivism; let us call it middle path. The arms of the United Nations such as UNESCO

has to work in holistic manner where its solutions in social, cultural and educational sphere are required. Collectivism in natural ecosystem and high social capital countries of Asia, Africa and South America has much to offer only when its wisdoms are accepted in context. Then it is possible to find out the middle path as middle path emerges from appearance, disappearance and neoappearance of the whole.

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