

Conflict Between Islam and West and Role of Media

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A man is compelled to lead a communal life. To live together, speaking is the best tool to communicate. In communication, speaking is a great blessing of leading a mutual life through communication, a man not only expresses his necessities, emotions and desires but also he conveys his experiences and traditions to next generation. According to communication is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, visuals, signals, written, or behavior. It is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more living creatures. (1)

Man is the supreme creation of Almighty Allah and Allah says in Quran that "He created man. taught him the speech.

(2) ﴿خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ﴾

Renowned scholar Mufti Shafi commented on this ability of human beings with reference to above mentioned verse of Quran That the word "bayan" (how to express himself) comprehends all the means of communication created by Allah, like speech, writing etc. There are various languages and dialects of various nations in various regions of the world. All these are constituent parts of linguistic knowledge which is the practical interpretation or application of the verse:

(3) ﴿وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا﴾

"And He taught Adam the names, all of them."

In this regard man has shown his excellence in eloquence, poetry, literature and journalism. Apparently it merely seems an art of speaking, but written abilities cannot be ignored as well. Nevertheless, in conversation and dialogues: selection and use of words, situations and modulations in voice are very significant Words have their own effectiveness. Through ability of speaking, a few words can win the hearts while little can even lead to the action of killing.

John Fiske is of the opinion that probably the most characteristics feature of communication is its diversity. It ranges from the mass media and popular culture, through language to individual and social behavior, but it identifies links and a coherence within this diversity. communication has existed since the start of human life on this planet but as an academic discipline and program it was projected after world war I and it was considered as a formal and legitimate subject after world war II.(4)

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Today communication studies is a popular subject which includes verbal, non-verbal, oral, business and written communication. It is being taught in all corners of the civilized world and in all prominent universities. As an academic field it has variety of fields associated with different spheres of human life and subjects and universe as well. As a social science it also examines how news and information are interpreted through social, economic, political and cultural dimensions. As a subject it has very large scope because it has common areas of research and studies with many other social sciences like sociology, political science, economics, psychology, public policy and anthropology etc. Therefore it provides different career paths like teachers, marketing professionals, media experts, journalists, resource persons actors and managers. This scope makes it popular social science.

Despite wonderful and strong base of communication studies are under the impact and influence of secular approach like other significant social sciences. Muslim world is supposed to ensure high standard of contemporary education like communication studies on one end and on other end Muslims are always looking for blend of modern quality education along with moral and spiritual training in accordance with the teachings of Islam - to reflect the goods of both worlds. In this regard Muslim world has confused strategy because their religion based dreams are being threatened by Media campaign projecting materialistic approach day and night. Samuel P. Huntington makes valid analysis that the expansion of the West has promoted both the modernization and Westernization of non-western societies. The political and intellectual leaders of these societies have responded to the Western impact in one or more of three ways: rejecting both modernization and westernization; embracing both; embracing the first and rejecting the second.(5)

Media and communication studies with liberal and progressive approach in our age is now being observed as a threat to human liberty and freedom because any guidance based on values or religion is missing. Dr. David in his latest book mentions that the Hutchin's Commission Report led to the publication of several books and it was assured that progress rested on responsible journalism to convey truth and enlightenment.(6)

Without professional honesty and truthfulness media has become serious threat to interfaith harmony and global peace. In our times media played effective role as an important source of informal education. Sometimes it was more powerful than parliament, administration and establishment and judiciary through media persons and scholars were not elected and ironically they are not accountable to any authority. As a result

in most of the cases media fails to present true and right picture of the issues, events and day to day problems.

Facts are under reported and events are misreported. Muslims have to spend lot of energy to clarify and defend their image presented by global media. Distorted image of Islam is burning issue of 1.6 billion Muslims. Muslims have spent almost two decades to prove that they are not intolerant and trouble creators but mutual distrust between the Muslims and the non-Muslim world is at its highest level. Though other walks of life and relevant issues are important but media has played leading role in presenting negative image of Islam. The Western press day and night reflected hostility and unfair discrimination against Muslim societies, individuals and groups. Unfortunately in countries like Pakistan print and electronic media is playing its role under the command and influence of Western powers. Shaukat M. Zafar recently wrote an eye opening essay and he identified that power of the media can transform the whole society or it can be used as a weapon of mass destruction. The media in Pakistan is playing negatively. It should have been the mirror of the society it is operating in but our media has become the mirror of U.S, India and the West. Working on American agenda, for few dollars corrupt anchors and TV channels are propagating the negative image of country in front of other world.

Our media anchors often divert the attention of the people from the real issues to non- issues behest of the people they are working for. The media is focusing more on sensationalism than truth creating a negative world view and only highlights the individual sort of issues that disrepute the society.(7)

Pakistan is an ideological state established to uplift Islamic cause infant of rest of the world by developing peaceful society but unfortunately situation is very disappointing. Though Pakistan was supposed to uplift torch of peace and harmony but its society particularly youth itself is under the impact of digital technology. Aggressive role of digital technology can not be stopped by slogans and emotional criticism but it needs serious attention at state level because state is the only power which can be effective. It is not difficult to notice that people learn, communicate, relate, work and spend their leisure time with digital media therefore a wide range of negative social impact can be easily observed including internet addiction, cyber bullying, privacy risk and cyber crimes. As the roots of technology and media tools are in Western thought so media leaders and

professionals from Muslim communities are going wrong by considering that religion should not have any concern with liberal media strategy.

As a result media represent information more as a commodity than as a social good it is the result of consumerism and commercialism of West.

Media is fashioning the life – pattern of the individuals and society but all the society fabrics are based on materialism. Syed Maududi has discussed the nature of problems and issues caused by West exclusively in his writings and he is of the view that it is obvious that social evils make their appearance on a vast scale when moral degradation of the individuals is steep, when the grip of moral values becomes lax and when fidelity to the standards of discipline is shattered. You can not conceive of a society possessing a majority of morally robust individuals and collectively exhibiting signs of moral corruption. It is unconceivable that a community of virtuous people should entrust its leadership to a group of unscrupulous persons and remain passive spectators when their commercial, national and international affairs are conducted in flagrant violation of moral principles. Therefore, if the people of the world are exhibiting on a large scale the seamy side of human nature through their collective institutions and policies that can only lead us to the view that, in spite of all its intellectual and material progress, mankind is passing through a period of intense moral decadence which has gripped by for the greatest majority of human beings.(8)

Professor Khurshid Ahmad has very rightly pointed out that our complain is not that the Western Scholars have adopted a critical approach- this they have every right to adopt. Our complaint is that their approach has mostly been prejudiced, partial, coloured and unscientific; their informations, wrong, inaccurate and exaggerated, sometimes even imaginary and fabricated; their attitude, dogmatic, unsympathetic and even hostile. Certainly they have every right to criticize Islam – but in a decent, sober way.(9)

Samuel P. Huntington mentioned key factors which caused conflict between Islam and West in his famous book “The Clash of Civilizations”. His book provides food for thought and makes media war against Muslims understandable samual wrote that a comparable mix of factors has increased the conflict between Islam and West in the late twentieth century. First, Muslim population growth has generated large numbers of unemployed and disaffected young people who become recruits to Islamist causes, exert pressure on neighboring society and migrate to the West. Second, the

Islamic Resurgence has given Muslim renewed confidence in the distinctive character and worth of their civilization and values compared to those of the West. Third the West's simultaneous efforts to universalize its values and institutions, to maintain its military and economic superiority and the intervene in conflicts in the Muslim world generate intense resentment among Muslims. Fourth, the collapse of communism removed a common enemy of the West and Islam left each the perceived major threat to the other. Fifth the increasing contact between and intermingling of Muslims and Westerners stimulate in each a new sense of their own identity and how it differs from that of the others. (10)

As we discussed the paramount technological change which introduced new subjects, issues, areas of research and points for discussion, our world has shrunk like a city and it is commonalty said and understood that present world is global village. Despite all this development understanding of the winds and souls of different communities is missing. Mankind is lacking in peace and glory. In this perspective it is more important to analyse, measure and gage the role and impact of media, which is no doubt very strong tool of West and its irresponsible role claims universal agenda of globalization but actually promotes disharmony between West and Muslim world. Professor Khurshid identifies that for long time Islam has been misunderstood and misinterpreted in the West. It is one of the most queer facts of history that despite the annihilation of space and time, despite West's stupendous strides in quest of knowledge and learning, despite the centuries of contact between the world of Islam and the West, Islam is perhaps the least known and the most misunderstood religion in the West. (11)

The core message of West through media is a strong conviction that Muslims should must adopt uncritically all dimensions and aspects of modernization if they are to compete successfully with the West. This conviction convinced the rulers of Muslim states to promote Western Strategy and Media was the channel to make things happen successfully. Modern educated scholars, anchors and professionals spent no time to learn and understand Islam as a wonderful code of life but they chanted the slogans of the West and tried to reshape Muslim mind. Slogans are attractive like elimination of poverty, disease and illiteracy but time has proved that it is almost universally accepted delusion. On the other hand if true picture of Islam could be projected and showed through Muslim

societies and states conflict between Islam and West was reduced. Islam is for all mankind as Quran says:

﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ﴾ (12)

Responsibility goes to Muslims in each corner of the globe to propagate it very positively that it is the only religion which was sent for all races, all nations and for people of all colours and social classes. Most of revelations of Quran are directed to all mankind to unify. Islam does not divide the world in East or West but focus on equality and grace of all human beings.

﴿وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ﴾ (13)

“Indeed we have created man with the best measurement.”

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾ (14)

Mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you in right of Allah is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is knower, Aware:

Muslims should admit that they themselves have not always been able to present their case in a manner that is both understandable and acceptable to Western society. (15)

Of course scholars like Alvi have the right to identify gaps but it is proved fact that Western media is promoting biased and prejudiced picture of Muslims. Western academicians and researchers need to approach basic sources of Islam to understand the both sides of the situation between Islam and West.

Alvi Further writes that Islam as vividly presented by Quran, is a universal teaching that does not limit itself to geographical boundaries or ethnic and racial backgrounds. (16)

Muslims living in my area of the globe are under on title of Ummah and this Ummah is not only for believers but disbelievers as well.

Therefore, Ummah is responsible to make Islam look good to the rest of the world by its dealing, societies and states. In this regard, misinformation through powerful media campaign is challenge of Muslim world.

Margaret Marcus born in 1934 in New York embraced Islam and her name was changed to Maryam Jameelah had exclusive study of all significant religions of the world and variety of civilizations.

Her analysis needs attention from Muslim preferably to get restored their confidence in Islam and to uplift noble cause of peace. Maryam writes that before European imperialism arrived on the scene in 16th century, the civilization produced by Islam was the most cosmopolitan, international and extensive in area that had ever appeared in recorded history. For more than a thousand years, politically, and culturally. Islam realigned supreme over all of Northern Africa, Western Asia, Large areas of central Asia, spread rapidly to India, even into China, clear into the Pacific Ocean to Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Spain was under Islamic rule for seven centuries and due to the rising power of the Ottoman Turks, Islamic culture strongly influenced much of South Eastern Europe as well. Converts flocked to the fold of Islam from all races – black, brown, yellow, and yellow and white. Economically the Islamic world prospered by its intensive, long distance international trade and commerce. Muslim merchants and tradesmen who were often zealous missionaries, were the most adventurous and daring travelers and explorers. (17)

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