

BUILDING CIVILITY AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH SHARED VALUES

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Technological advancement is diminishing time and space distances, rubbing the boundaries and contributing towards increased interconnectedness. Nobody can stop this phenomenon. The idea of Ferdinand Tonnies about the transformation of societies from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* is reverting back to *Gemeinschaft* owing to information technology. However, in the absence of common values the idea of *Gemeinschaft* poses a danger of conflicts and clashes to the wired globe. Information technology and new media has empowered audience (receivers of mass media content) as producers of media content, therefore the concept of 'audience' has undergone a drastic change. However, surmounting physical distances appears meaningless without shared values. Values also stem from religions that not only build civility but also level the way to global citizenship. There is a dire need to promote respect, tolerance, compassion, love for humanity in order to peacefully live together. In this regard media can play a pivotal role through shared values of religions in order to build civility and global citizenship.

Introduction

It is believed that mass media has the potential to teach and suggest citizens their roles, responsibilities, desired behaviors, and potential social interaction. Media helps citizens to be active and vigilant as an active citizen is equipped with the knowledge and skills required to evaluate and reflect on the power structures and systems (Kerr, Sturman, Schulz and Burge, 2012). In the contemporary world, the processes of globalization have facilitated the concept of increased inter-connectedness which is making the geographical boundaries insignificant to a certain extent, and denouncing the time-space distances. The pervasive media technologies have enabled audience to develop far reaching worldwide identities which promote the concept of global citizenship.

Global citizenship means certain rights and responsibilities beyond but inclusive of city, state and national level. It starts from taking care of the neighbor to giving respect and dignity to all human beings, protecting environment that is meant for all, fighting injustices, struggling for the well beings of others, striving

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for the sustainable development, critically reflecting and challenging the exploitative power structures at all levels. Various societies, groups and organizations for professional excellence, economic growth, humanitarian aid are actively participating to the concept of global citizenship e.g. Red Cross, UNHRC, UNICEF, WHO, Amnesty International, international professional associations, international legal tribunals. Global issues of environment, trade, health and natural calamities are bringing people closer and concerned to each other irrespective of the geographical boundaries.

Civility:

The word ‘Civility’ is derived from the Latin word ‘civis’ which means ‘the city.’ It explained the code of conduct in a city or how people should live their lives at public and private levels. In the past, people religiously practiced civility considering it a ‘virtue.’ However, in the modern secular societies people practice civility on the basis of ‘humanism’

The concept of civility revolves around the idea of welfare of the self and the others.

Davetian (2009, 6) says that a “a useful, globally relevant theory of civility will have to go beyond our conception of manners, etiquette, and politeness and remain compatible with the emerging realization that civility and ethics may be mutually compatible within a system of interaction that posits no contradiction between loyalty to the well-being of the self and loyalty to the well-being of other selves.”

Antoun (2000, 456) defines civility as “the practices and ideas that generate cooperation and trust for the purpose of accomplishing social goals.” With the advancement of science and technology, living conditions are remarkably improved. However problems and complexities are also rising. At times governments seem to be a failure to tackle certain problems like environmental degradation, human rights violations etc. Castells (2008) says, “The decreased ability of nationally based political systems to manage the world’s problems on a global scale has induced the rise of a global civil society” (p. 83).

There are multiple actors of the (global) civil society whose ultimate goal is perceived to create harmony and extend happiness throughout the society. Due to the transformations in governance, the politics of knowledge, mobilization, and intermediation have

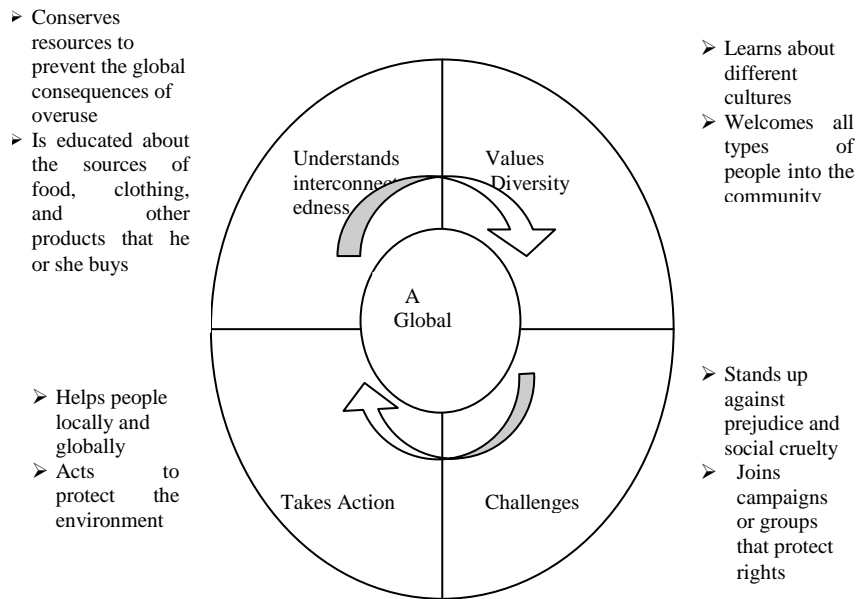
become central to the concept of civil society and global citizenship. There are different indicators to measure the level of civility a society has attained. Krause (2011) suggests trust; tolerance; reciprocity; and cooperation; as indicators for the development of a civil society in a globalized world. These indicators are embedded in the culture and environment of societies.

Global Citizenship:

The root of the word 'global citizenship' is found in Greek philosophy. It was known as 'kosmou polite' which means world citizen. 'Kosmou Polite' explained the idea of citizenship endowed by birth place/local community as well as in a larger community so as to engage in rational and enlightened thinking (Streitwieser and Light 2010: 3). Greek idea of 'Kosmou Polite' embraces the concept of local and global citizenship at the same time (Nussbaum, 1996: 9). The principles of Enlightenment also endorse the concept of human rights on the basis of equality. Later on, Kant (1795) endorsed the idea of world citizenship. He suggests that the law of world citizenship shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality. "Thus the human race can gradually be brought closer and closer to a constitution establishing world citizenship"(Kant, 1795: Section II, para 16). Though global citizens are not backed by any legal power, it is mere associational. It depends on how an individual relates himself to the world in economic, political and social domains. Falk (1994) identified five categories of global citizens which he named as,

1. Global reformers
2. Elite global business people
3. Global environmental managers
4. Politically conscious regionalists
5. Trans-national activists

Global citizen defined by U.S. Fund for UNICEF 2011 as, "Someone who understands interconnectedness, respects and values diversity, has the ability to challenge injustice, and takes action in personally meaningful ways" is a global citizen. The diagram below shows rights and responsibilities of a global citizen.¹



The idea of global citizenship has been perceived differently depending on the perspective. Reysen and Miller (2013) defined the concept of global citizenship “as awareness, caring, and embracing cultural diversity while promoting social justice and sustainability, coupled with a sense of responsibility to act” (858). The idea of global citizenship is related to one’s knowledge and awareness of the world and linking the self to the outer world. Whereas Streitwieser and Light (2010) have associated the thesis of global citizenship with five distinct concepts; global existence; global acquaintanceship; global openness; global participation; and global commitment.

While explaining the idea of global citizenship Reysen and Miller (2013) suggest two antecedents and one outcome of this process. They view individual’s normative environment and global awareness as antecedents; and pro-social values including fellow-feeling, valuing diversity, serving humanity, social justice, environmental sustainability, and a sense of responsibility to act for the betterment of the world as the outcome of this process.

In the twenty-first century, people are engaged at local, national and international levels simultaneously. New spaces for citizen engagements are emerging due to changing nature of governance. Now governance is multilayered, polyarchic, pluralistic, regulatory diverse, structurally complex (Gaventa &

Tandon, 2010). Therefore, the interests, concerns, problems and challenges are multi-dimensional and multi-layered. This interconnectedness for local and global issues increasingly requires multidimensional forms of citizenship to respond to the current situation. Therefore, there is a need to foster more inclusive forms of citizenship (Gaventa and Tandon, 2010: p. 27).

In the light of the literature review it can be deduced that the traditional concept of citizenship is associated with the national and territorial connections in which a citizen has a ‘distinct, bounded’ affiliation with a geographical state. While global or cosmopolitan citizenship means engagement, deliberation and participation of individuals at transnational and cosmopolitan scale.

Shared Values

Consciousness is increasingly seen as the origin of moral growth. The preamble of the United Nations Charter (1945) states that United Nations (UN) is determined to avoid wars, endorse faith in fundamental human rights, human dignity and respect, equality of human beings and of nations, justice, promotion of social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. For the achievement of these valuable goals UN emphasize to “practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.”

The values cherished by UN can be viewed as shared and agreed upon values. UNICEF’s project on ‘Global Citizenship’² (2013, p. 22) promotes the same values enshrined in UN Charter for the rights and responsibilities of global citizens. The values include; freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

Value	Global Citizens’ Rights	Global Citizens’ Responsibilities
Freedom	Right to dignity Right to raise children Right to be free from hunger Protection against violence, oppression, and injustice Right to vote and express political views	Respect others’ rights Educate ourselves about rights and work to protect and extend them for all Value others’ dignity Abide by laws prohibiting violence Participate in government

Equality	Right to an education Right to a job and economic opportunity Right to healthcare Right to an adequate standard of living Right to creative expression Right to gender equality	Support everyone’s right to the opportunity to benefit from development Support gender equality
Solidarity	Right to easy cross borders collaborations	Commit to social justice Be willing to even the playing field, even when it doesn’t benefit oneself
Tolerance	Right to be accepted for who you are	Respect and cherish diversity Promote and participate in a culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations
Respect for nature	Benefit from the use of living species and natural resources	Support sustainable development
Shared responsibility	Right to observe sustainable development.	Support governments’ active and multilateral participation in addressing global problems. Supporting the central role of the UN

These values are also endorsed by all great religions of the world. It means there is no clash between the religious tenets for the values to be observed in general and for the values envisioned on humanitarian grounds. According to Fust (2006), “Development co-operation and humanitarian action cannot afford to ignore the forces of religion and spirituality and the role played by religious organizations...Where religion and spirituality are rooted in the everyday life of people and society they can make an important contribution to sustainable development, to the respect of humanitarian principles, and to human rights” (Pp. 9-10).

Civility and Global Citizenship in Religions:

In 1993, Parliament of the World’s Religions affirmed that, “a common set of core values is found in the teachings of the religions, and that these form the basis of a global ethic.” The idea of global ethics and values is based on the intrinsic nature of human beings. It can help us to rise above and eliminate biases, intolerance, prejudice, narrow-mindedness. To qualify the idea of global citizenship we need to understand that all human beings are equal and have the same basic needs. In the modern scientific world, liberal seculars view religion as an insignificant thing and label them as ‘childish myths.’ Einstein’s often quoted statement, “Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind” beautifully explains the relationship between science and religion. It is with the help of science and religion that human beings get answers to the questions of their existence, of the

universe, and the relationship and purpose of human beings in this universe.

The concept of global citizenship is also found in great religions of the world e.g. Quran says, "Mankind was one single nation" (2:213). "Mankind was but one nation" (10:19). "Verily this brotherhood of yours is a single brotherhood" (21:92) and (23:52). "Oh humankind, God has created you from male and female and made you into diverse nations and tribes so that you may come to know each other" (Qur'an 49:13, Islam). Bible (English standard version) says, "And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place" (Acts 17:26, Christianity). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

The obligation posited by global citizenship is to extend respect and tolerance to all human beings. Psalms (133:1) states, "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity." Likewise Christianity promotes the same idea, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9, Christianity). "No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and God's love is truly in our hearts" (John 4:12, Christianity). Quran states, "Let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression" (2:193, Islam).

The idea of reciprocity that comes from the very concept of civility and global citizenship is also carried by world religions. Christianity affirms this idea as, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Matthew 7:12, Christianity). "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others" (Peter 4:10, Christianity). Similarly Islam teaches, "Do unto all men as you would they should do unto you, and reject for others what you would reject for yourself" (Mishkat-el-Masabih, Islam). Judaism teaches, "What is hurtful to yourself, do not to your fellow man. That is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is but commentary. Go learn it" (The Talmud, Judaism).

Global citizenship demands to fight injustices so is suggested by religions. The Babylonian Talmud states that: "Whoever is able to protest against the transgressions of his own family and does not do so is punished (liable, held responsible) for

the transgressions of his family. Whoever is able to protest against the transgressions of the people of his community and does not do so is punished for the transgressions of his community. Whoever is able to protest against the transgressions of the entire world and does not do so is punished for the transgressions of the entire world” (Shabbat 54b). “Follow justice and justice alone” (Deuteronomy, 16:20, Judaism). “Let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream” (Amos 5:24, Judaism). Quran reinforces the idea of social justice as, “O you who believe, stand firmly for justice, as witnesses for God” (4:135, Islam). “...and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Aware of what you do” (5:8, Islam).

Increased interconnectedness demands cooperation and concern for others. This value is also promoted by religions. “Then the ones who pleased the Lord will ask, ‘When did we give you something to eat or drink? When did we welcome you as a stranger or give you clothes to wear or visit you while you were sick or in jail?’ The King will answer, ‘Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed you did it for me’ (Matthew 25:37-40, Christianity). Same idea is narrated in a Hadith of Sahih Bukhari. This shows that care, cooperation and concern for others is a common cherished value.

Role of media in building civility and global citizenship through shared values:

Technology is shaping the structures and functions of cities, societies and countries. Low tech countries are a victim of media imperialism and electronic colonialism. High tech cities are establishing close connections with each other. The citizens of this global village do not possess equal chances to participate due to their economic, educational, and idiosyncratic factors so is with nations. The concept of ‘electronic colonialism’ (McPhail, 2002) helps to understand this phenomenon at countries level.

We are living in a media saturated world where information knows no borders and the world has been transformed into a global village. In this global village distances do not matter for actions and reactions. One action can affect the other part of the world e.g. those who uphold freedom of expression on religious sanctity can severely affect the emotions of those who primarily believe in

religious sanctity. Therefore, the increased interconnectedness demands to understand each other in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

Ferdinand Tonnies (1887) idea of *Gemeinschaft* suggests 'community' relations where people are united in spite of all separating and diverse factors. Their direct concern, informal (non-contractual) relations and significant social interactions bring them closer to each other. Their consciousness of belonging to each other, realization of moral values, affirmation of mutual dependence upon human beings make them more cooperative towards each other. In the perspective of global village, the idea of *Gemeinschaft* can help to bridge the gap between Orientalism and Occidentalism. The idea of *Gesellschaft* (society) suggests that people are separated in spite of all uniting factors because of their formal interactions and contractual relations. Their cooperation with the external world is driven by the self interest and shaped by the laws and contracts.

In the 19th and 20th century, the trends of industrialization, urbanization and modernization have resulted in the emergence of mass society where individuals are atomized and psychologically isolated. Mass media appeared to be a common platform and binding force. However, mass media divided people into two categories; producers of contents and consumers of contents. The producers had a complete and active control in shaping contents while consumers were mere recipients. The conglomeration trends added to the power of mass media. It is said that the ideology of the ruling class becomes the ruling ideology. Mass media facilitated the ruling class to 'manufacture consent.' With the advent of global media, the ruling class surpassed the geographical boundaries and started disseminating peculiar ideologies, norms and values throughout the world. Sometimes these ideologies, norms and values collide with the recipients and initiate clashes and conflicts for example the dictum of absolute freedom of expression. There is a need to focus on common values in the larger interest of humanity.

Global media is defining and redefining the interactions between and among individuals, societies and nations. Flew (2007) argues that media have a central place in globalization due to three reasons: firstly, that media corporations have increasingly globalised their operations; secondly that the global

communication infrastructure facilitates global information flows; and finally that global media play a key role in how we view events across the world in developing shared systems of meaning. This is true for the media in which audience/receivers cannot be producers. Social media has enabled the audience to play the role of senders and receivers at the same time. Due to this factor it seems as there is a comeback of *Gemeinschaft* society with a new style.

There are three types of communities in *Gemeinschaft* societies: community of locality; community of mind; and community of kinship. Social media has helped to revive all the three communities. The idea of global village has helped to conceive this world as one place for all human beings. This perspective has redefined the community of locality through wired globe. Environmental concerns, nuclear issue and sustainable development are bringing people of different countries together to behave like a community. People throughout the globe are being affected and worried about ozone layer depletion, global warming, environmental degradation etc. Community of mind is restructured by cyber space. Though living at distant places, people of intellect and similar mentalities are connected with each other. The Diaspora communities of Jews are allied and integrated because of the internet and social media. Cyber world is creating new relations and the trends of marriage through internet are increasing. New relations between people of remote and far flung areas are taking place. The increased trends of immigration are dividing the families; however, social media is uniting them and creating *Gemeinschaft* in a different manner.

According to Said (1978) orientalism is a discourse which constituted 'the Orient' through media and literature in the western conscience. It is a discursive approach of the West that degrades Orient and depicts it as passive, static, irrational, incomprehensible, sensual, hegemonic and despondent (Said, 1978). Islam has been depicted as a backward and monolithic religion that deprives women of their basic rights. The approach emerged due to lack of direct interaction of the common western scholars with the Orient. Now e-libraries, e-newspapers, and sophisticated transportation systems are making it easy to approach Orient and have direct interactions. Moreover, social media is also facilitating to minimize the misunderstandings and bridge the gap.

But it must be remembered that everything comes with a good heart. Values of the people producing and using media content are of prime importance.

Conclusion:

Since global citizenship is open for everyone, with easy cross borders collaborations for upholding basic human rights, challenging injustices, actions for collective well being, and collaborating for the larger interest of humanity. People from any nook and corner of the world can take part through social media to build civility through shared values. Human beings are created with a consciousness of good and bad. Therefore, education, gender, socio-economic status, religion and other variations do not affect the quality of differentiating good from bad. The Holy Quran states, “By the soul, and the proportion and order given to it. And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right. Truly he succeeds that purifies it. And he fails that corrupts it” (Surah 91: verses: 7-10).

Social media is empowering common people to consider them a part of this global world, and connect to the world in myriad ways in order to contribute to the ideals of humanity. Now it is the duty of every one to be vigilant through media for the rights and responsibilities of global citizenship. It is often said that man behind the gun is more important than the gun. Same applies on media. William Randolph Hearst was a publisher of one of the largest newspapers in New York City in the late 19th century. In 1896, Hearst sent an illustrator to Cuba to cover the possible outbreak of war against Spain. The journalist reported through a telegraph, “Everything is quiet, there is no trouble here. There will be no war, wish to return.” Hearst quickly replied, “Please remain, you furnish the pictures, and I will furnish the war” (Baran and Davis, 2012; p. 47). It was yellow journalism and the legacy still continues. People who own, control, and produce media content, whether on mainstream media or social media, are more important. Social media has empowered common people to speak their mind. They can spread good words, reflect their concerns and raise their voice against injustice and exploitation.

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