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Migration, Muslim Identity and Human Rights

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Abstract

Identity crisis is one of the major debacles of personal nature of universal human rights. After fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism identity crisis had generated heated debates in Western countries about Muslim migrants who represent not only One God centered morality but also territorial allegiance and strong group identity? Lack of Islamic State, especially in the atmosphere of persistent recurring political turmoil in Muslim heartlands has further exacerbated the problem. Ironically, in group solidarity a group cultural divide is giving way to Islamophobia while continued influx of Muslim migrants is adding plethora of usual problems of migrants at an unprecedented scale. Several old tactics like false grudges and hostile pretensions are no solution to the problem as cultural rigidity cannot be denied for long. With peace and stability on the agenda, this is high time that human rights are given due care and attention in order to strengthen effective understanding between alienating culture by smoothing and preserving a tolerant fabric of non discriminating man.

Keywords: Identity crises, migrant Muslims, Human

World Migration Report 2010 issued by International Organization for Migration reveals that the number of international migrants was estimated at 214 million in 2010, which could reach 405 million by 2050. This data foreshadows impending human rights crisis. However, official efforts have remained confined to emphasizing the need to give workers improved access to market information, certification of political identity, housing and education. Cultural and identity issues are yet to be addressed. Present provisions, for instance, Rights of refugees, Rights of Displaced Persons, Rights of Minorities, and Right to Legal Identity are

beneficial but only as a starting point so far identity-related issues are concerned. Major contentious issues like the Right to Sanctity Religious Personage, Places and Emblems, the Right to Collective Identity find at the most a dormant place in human rights agenda though their infringement has several times wrought unnecessary havoc and uproar across the globe.

The post-9/11 world is duty bound to address the changes imposed on Muslim communities, at home as well as abroad, and come to terms with the reaction of non-Muslim populace by enriching and upholding human rights agenda. This requires not only

Introduction

Globalization in the footprints the 'New World Order' scaled up world immigration from the peripheral countries to United States, Canada and European nations but it also added to acerbity of 'migrants' problems arising out of their identity crisis that often leads to human rights predicament.

Identity

Since Muslims migrants from the traditional heartland of Islam constitute a major chunk of the new influx, their presence has stimulated different scenarios in different countries, not only economically or politically but also religiously and culturally, which grossly impact Muslim migrants' identity. Whereas some of the trans-located people, for instance aspirants of higher studies may be taken as a temporary phenomenon but a huge number of them settles there permanently for employment and business purposes or as asylum seekers. This macro-level phenomenon not only transpires highly visible changes in local demography but also generates unprecedented influx of different faiths, ideologies, cultures and ethnicities resulting in identity problems.

Islam and Muslims have long been debated in western countries since the rise of allegations of 'fundamentalism' and 'extremism' but Muslim migrants first came to be focused in global media in the aftermath of terrorist attack on 9/11, with the added label of 'terrorism'; a label that served as a blanket to palm off their muddle. No doubt terrorism has not only questioned peaceful co-existence but thwarted world peace itself but vested analyses are no solution to any problem.

Significantly, Fukuyama and other intellectuals have emphasized that recent growth of terrorism is an outcome of 'Identity Crisis', specially in relation to the religion of Islam. For thinkers of individual liberalism, identity means personal identity. But Islam also accredits individual's adoption of group

identities dependent upon positive self-esteem and his sense of community and belongingness and negates any discrimination based on 'in-group' and 'out-group' membership. Consequently, it prescribes an identity rooted in its moral principles that render its character independent of territorial allegiance or ever-changing social experience. Religion, especially Islam, at least theoretically, transcends geographical boundaries and constructs a trans-cultural and trans-national identity. Muslims do belong to earthly markers like race, tribe and country but only for the purpose of introduction. Divergence of the definitions of identity creates unnecessary problems for migrants Muslims.

Islam stands for absolute oneness of God, the unity of humankind and the responsibility of human beings to realize the prime intention of the Creator:

I am only a human-being like you, [the difference being that], it is revealed to me that your God is only one God. So let him who hopes to meet his Lord do good deeds and let him associate no one else in the worship of his Lord.

O mankind! Be careful regarding your Lord, who created you from a single soul.

Your creating and your resurrection is just like creating and resurrecting a single soul. Truly, God is Hearer and Knower.

And recall when your Lord said unto angels, 'I am about to place a successor [to behave responsibly] on the earth.' They said, 'Will thou place therein one who will cause strife and shed blood, while we glorify You with Your Praise and extol Your Holiness?' He [God] answered, 'Surely, I am best knower of what you do not know.'

Accordingly, Muslims must continuously remind themselves that they belong to Him i.e. always love Him, have His fear and have to live a life of a Muslim devoted to His cause in the expectation of His goodly rewards.