

# Communal Harmony and the Role of Teacher

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## ABSTRACT

Humans are not born. Humans are created. We all are born as either men, women or as third gender. No one is born as a human. To become humans we graduate from biological beings as men, women or third gender to beings of empathy called Humans. We go through the transformational state of biological-beings to beings- of- empathy once we realize that we all belong to each other, we cannot survive without each other, and we all are the collective units of the global society like cells are the basic units of life. No one of us can deny that we do experience pleasures and pains in life in the same manner. We share the commonness in being mortal. We are here for a limited time span to be of some help to each other. Until we reach to this level of understanding and maturity we go through various stages of development where agreement and disagreement go parallel. Sometimes, the gulf of the disagreements becomes so wide that it may lead to chaos, conflict and violence. Disagreement in itself is not the problem. Problem lies in the understanding of being right every time, the tendency of proving our point beyond logic and reason many a times, the urge to feel superior in terms of gender, caste, religion, creed, nation, or colour. To retain the state of harmony becomes a challenge not only in countries but in homes as well. In the times of crisis, one institute that may serve as the platform of peace and harmony is the School, and there we have the harbingers' of peace-making called Teachers. In this article, the author will be highlighting Human thought leading to disharmony in the life of individuals, families and societies at large. In addition, the role of the teacher in promoting peace and harmony will be discussed in the lives of our future generation ; thereby forwarding the concept of peace and harmony outside classrooms to the community and society in general.

**Keywords:** Group formation, harmony, Communal Harmony, & role of teacher.

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## INTRODUCTION

Human beings are social entities. Every time we walk past along each other, meet, talk, or assemble; we give rise to groups, communities or societies. Group formation by human beings has a history as old as the evolution of human beings. Group life at a lower level provides us the opportunity of having the company of other mates in times of joy or dismay. We need company of other beings or mates for the communication of ideas, for expressing ourselves, for the regulation of our emotions, or at least for feeling the mere presence of each other. Social psychologists have elaborated that we human beings feel and need the presence of each other even if we do not interact with each other. Mere presence of other human beings and mates give meaning to the life of humans. We cannot survive in isolation. This is the basic reason why we humans do form groups, communities or societies. The advanced reason for what we humans make groups or communities are for meeting our higher needs of existence like protection, security, belongingness or identity. We enjoy these benefits from groups or communities that we form as long as we do not trample the state of harmony.

Harmony is simply the state of Peace. The state of peace does not guarantee the complete absence of chaos or conflict. Peace and conflict go parallel in the life of individuals, families or societies. To promote peace in the life of individuals, families and societies we need to understand the dynamics of conflict. Conflict may be inner or outer. It could be positive or negative. Inner conflicts often lead to external conflicts. For example, if you are stressed or tensed you may have the tendency to lose temper. So far, positive conflicts are concerned, these generate new ideas, helps to find solution for the existing issues or problems, directs one in taking decisions and increases participant involvement in the families or societies. For example if you are not satisfied with your performance at your workplace you work on your skills to perform better. This way positive conflict works productively. On the other hand negative conflict is unproductive. For example, you are angry and you yell at someone leading to a fight, injury, death or murder of someone. As such negative conflict brings disharmony in the life of the individual and community in general. If only we become socially responsible citizens there will be no divide and gap in the name of class, caste, creed, sex, religion, gender, etc. Need is to keep prejudices and biases at bay. We need to be pro-social in our attitude arranging help both for in-group and out-group members of the society.

Afandi mentions the inter-group relationship as the relationship of the members of a group with the members of the other group. The author highlights that the inter-group relationship relies on the perceiving, thinking, feeling and behavior of the members of one group towards the members of the other group. This inter-group relationship of the groups and of the members of the group reflects the state of the individuals in the particular group on a day to day basis report.

### **Human Thought and Disharmony**

Human thoughts are subjective, vague, evolving and varied. No two people may have same thinking pattern and as such may not have the same thoughts. Each one of us have our own set pattern of thoughts guided by our heredity, environment and pre-conceived organized set form of beliefs and thoughts. Although critical thinking helps us in understanding things objectively and unfolding the truth beneath or behind. Still, we show resistance in appreciating others thoughts most of the times. Reason we have got conditioned to acknowledge our thoughts and beliefs over everything else. We go any extent to prove our point even if that goes beyond logic and reason at times. Since no two individuals may have same set pattern of thoughts and no one of us has developed resistance to listen and appreciate others thoughts , as such chaos and conflicts continue to threaten the existence of peace and harmony in the life of individuals and societies at large. At times, the variety and vagueness of thoughts of an individual from inner chaos gets transformed into outer chaos or outer conflict once other human being or external agency does not synchronise with our established pattern of thought. Disagreement of thoughts of two or more than two human beings leads to friction or disharmony in social life. From the evolutionary records human beings are peace loving creatures on earth. By our natural instinct we are creatures of care and concern. Unfortunately we have become intolerant, impatient, and toxic in terms of showing our regard to people of different thoughts. Neuro-science of social harmony stresses on the fact that human beings are the first species to not only care for their own species but for the other species as well. What wrong has influenced and dominated our natural instinct is to be washed out.

Today's world is the global enterprise and here we humans make social circles and social groups beyond geographical barriers. Our thoughts via social networking sites reach to the entire sphere of the earth. Now, in the moments of disagreement of our thoughts, results are alarming and a threat to the whole human kind. One status uploaded on social networking platform may spread the message of harmony or disharmony in no time. In these times of active social networking sites we as responsible citizens have to work better for peace to prevail in our lives and in our communities and societies. Random elements of disharmony are invisible on the social networking sites. It is high time that every responsible citizen keep an eye and their senses open not letting rumors travel across boundaries. Let us filter the messages before forwarding or sharing with others. Let us become medium of affection and understanding not the reason of discord and disagreement. Even if we disagree let us find better ways to disagree to agree and to agree to disagree.

### **Communal Harmony**

Communal harmony means agreement of ideas, thoughts, feelings or sentiments of people in a community. In the present times, with all the advancements in socialization and technologies, world is one big community. Now disagreement of thoughts, ideas, and feelings of people has far more reaching consequences than before. Community in simple terms means the group of the people who communicate and live together. People in community influence and affect each other with their thoughts, words and actions. In the name of class, caste, creed, sex, status, religion disagreement with others we have threatened the social order and peace in communities since times immemorial. Social movements for gay rights, women rights, environmental pollution, and the rights of the minorities have emerged from time to time. One of the major causes of disharmony in a country of people with multi- cultures and faith like India has been of religious disharmony. In the name of religion we often witness conflict and disharmony in communities. Reason goes to our thought processing only. As Sir Muhammad Iqbal in this regard has said religion is simple "Human Thought". We take no help of critical thinking to come to consensus with people having different thought. We struggle to respect other thoughts and ideas which are different from our set patterned thoughts. To conform our viewpoint and stand we manipulate religious teachings the way we like. No religion has taught us the lesson of violence and hatred. All religions advocate for peace and non-violence. We are not divided as people of different religions, beliefs and faiths only but we are also gulfed at intra-religious level as well. We need to relearn our own faith system and different faith systems as well.

Muslims believe in Islam, Quranic teachings and Sunnah. Hazrat Muhammad (saw) has said, "Allah is Kind and he loves Kindness in all matters". There is no mention of Allah is kind to muslims only. Yeakub highlights that in Islam there is no discrimination of people on the basis of caste, class, sex, creed, region, religion or location. He declares that Islam calls upon the people of the whole world that they all are belonging to one family of the world. This is the message of harmony, peace and solidarity to the people of the world. Upanishads give us the message of Ekam Evaditiam Brahma which means Divine is one. Quran mentions the same that Allah is one. In these times of communal riots Guru Nanak Dev ji's teachings and lessons of humanity are the solution to the growing intolerance and disharmony.

Humanity is the main dogma of every religion and of every way of life. No religion supports bloodshed and violence. No religion advocates for female foeticide, rape or harming public assets in times of crisis anywhere. Worshipping places are the abode of lord but our myopic vision make us disrespect the faith system of others. Religions are here to bind us not to divide. It is we people who fight in the name of sect, religion, region, gender, class, color or race. We do so because we are caged in the notion of the superiority of ourselves, our thoughts, ideas, and of our set patterned beliefs. We need to unlearn many things and there teachers and guides have to direct us to the right path.

In the text titled “The way to Communal Harmony” Gandhi’s perspective on the problems which divide mankind are highlighted. Fear, suspicion, and hatred are some of the elements that divide individuals and create disharmony in the society. It was during the stay of Gandhi in South Africa that he felt need for community unity. The ill treatment he received on the basis of color made him think in terms of solidarity among the members of the community. He did not think of riots or violence on receiving ill treatment based on racial discrimination because he was a firm believer of peace and harmony. Gandhi stressed on the fact that achieving harmony in diversity is not difficult if one becomes friends with each and every member of the community. Love and peace between the members of the community breed harmony, cohesion and solidarity among them. In the way to communal harmony Gandhi speaks of regarding the whole world as one family. He stresses on returning evil with not evil but with kindness and good deeds. This was how Gandhi spread the message of universal harmony not only in the nation but in the world.

### **Communal Harmony and Teacher**

As we know school is described as the miniature society. Here we see the diversity within the classroom. Students belonging to different families are enrolled and offered a chance to study in the same classroom. But research studies in gender have proved that students in the same classroom learn different things at the same time (Myra-Sadkar). Reason goes to socio-political forces operating in the classroom either in curriculum, administration or found in the conduct of the teachers. Many a times teachers use language that is gender sensitive, caste sensitive, or prejudiced at times. This disturbs the harmony in the class room. Teachers need to process their thoughts before delivering their lecture in the classroom. That may help teachers to promote harmony in the classroom. In this regard workshops for gender fair language must be organized.

Colbert. J.P. et.al, report in culturally responsive classrooms is found a solution to develop resistance in diverse cultures. Culture is simply the way of living. In the student-teacher community we need to foster a feeling of belongingness and love. The authors stress that teachers need to examine their own cultural backgrounds to address diversity in the classrooms. Teachers need to understand how biases enter in the classroom and affects harmony there. Teaching-learning in culturally diverse classrooms require an in depth understanding of students perspectives of values and beliefs. Whatever students read and listen in the classroom affects their understanding and expression. UNICEF (2011) acknowledges that teachers must play an active role in peace building and social cohesion. In order to create the conducive conditions for peace, conflict is to be resolved by bringing behavior change among students via teaching learning modules, skill development and value orientation. Chittaranjan Subudhi speaks of the role of the youth of a nation in promoting the peace and communal harmony. For the world to enjoy harmony its young members are to be trained in the methods of peace promotion and spreading harmony. In this regard, teacher has to play the pivotal role in securing peace and harmony for the future generations. Teacher will not do everything wholly and solly but will act as the center head for spreading peace across the boundaries.

A secular curriculum needs to be reconstructed. What we read and what we learn shapes our thoughts to a great extent. It is mandatory our curriculum must be constructed on the principles of secularism and world peace. In this regard teachers must contribute their share of understanding with the curriculum designers. The text books must be screened by school- college committees for language sensitivity and conflict arising imageries.

Teachers are to become the peace makers of the society by practicing peace making attitudes and language in the classroom. Teacher must be symbol of humanity as recommended by new educational policy. Now we are producing teachers for humanity to inculcate human attributes among our learners. Teacher’s main goal is to educate the educand. Education is the enlightenment. With reference to Sikhism, God is described as the “wondrous enlightener”. In the educational set up, this role has been given to the teacher. Therefore, teachers must be the facilitators in helping students to enlighten themselves by practicing tolerance and by respecting others’ ideology and thought patterns. Teachers have to become themselves the symbol of peace in the classrooms by accommodating students’ ideas by writing them on the white-boards. This small gesture surely will go a long way. By accepting students’ words, suggestions, open to discussions teachers can promote peace in the classroom.

Alarming crime rates among young people, drug-addiction, increased drop-out rate, suicide, rape, and student unrest are the current issues our student community is facing in the contemporary times. Recently, girl students of Vishwa-Bharti College in Rainawari Srinagar of JK UT protested for not being allowed to wear abbaya in the college

premises by the college administration. Delhi University Hindu College students protested in the month of May 2023 for limiting the days of cultural fest from three to one and the college administration suspended 25 students for the same. Be that Delhi gang rape case 2012, or the academic issues of students that led them march out of the educational institutes on roads. Protest of students in Shaheen -Bagh, anti -corruption movement of 2011 or the protest of Ashoka University ; students are registering discord in their own way. There have been reports of student-college/university administration issues leading to class boycotts to street clashes. Be that students protesting against citizenship amendment act or protesting before Lokpal Act in 2013. These are not only socio-political, administrative issues but a reflection of inactive role of teachers in channelizing the energy of youth in positive direction. History is full of records where student issues have disrupted the social harmony like Vietnam student protests.

Teachers have to take the lead in promoting peace in society. They have to be the symbols of harmony. In this regard administration must support teachers in every possible way.

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