Struggle for Identities: Critical and Contemporary Approach

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Eternal sameness is one of the essences of identity. It may be either individual or collective. When a person or community has been continuing the same culture, religion, language etc. then the struggle for identity does not arise. But at present, the identity of both the individual and the community are facing a struggle in the continuity of their own culture and other aspects. In the contemporary global era, the struggle for identity primarily occurs from a constant conflict in an individual due to the questioning of who they are or their role in society. It leads to an insecure and unstable personal sense of identity in each individual. The Struggle for Identity discusses an ever-growing fission between who we are, and who we believe ourselves to be.

Now the problem is why people are struggling for their identity. In this regard, if we analyze the flux theory of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus and khanikvada or momentariness of the ancient Indian thinker Gautama Buddha; we see that everything is changeable from moment to moment. The world we live in as we all know is forever changing along with the human race's evolution to an extent of the global union. Due to globalization and easy communication, every window is connected in the spectrum overseas and land, all

individuals of the human species are imported and executed submerging traditions of global culture. The human race is now an ambiguous state of ideologies with too many religions, cultures, languages and heritages trying to overpower each other. Maximum people are in confusion. They don't know what to believe, how much to believe and even if the sources of our belief system are valid or not. People are losing out on their adherence to their roots in an overview of overwhelming identities and values. Society and its core values as a whole is changing and so is the understanding of its expectations from the people who form it. Nothing remains permanent. As a result, our identities are also have been changing in the same way and facing a struggle.

Here we can take the example of Assam. The people of Assam are more struggling for their identities in various fields. If we study the history of Assam, we see that a maximum number of Bengali-speaking Muslim and Hindu people have migrated from Bangladesh. Before partition, Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan and Pakistan was a part of India. Geographically the Bengali people followed the Indus Valley civilization and culture and used the Hindi language before the partition. And after the partition, first, they followed the Pakistani culture and used the

Urdu language, then the Bangladeshi culture and used the Bangla language and now following the Assamese culture and use the Assamese language. Thus the Bengali-speaking Muslim and Hindu people of Assam are struggling for their identity in a series of changes. Besides language and culture, they have lost their religious identity also. Due to the interreligious weddings among the various caste and communities, some people of Assam as well as the other parts of the country have lost their original identity. Sometimes it is heard that Indian parents who are residing abroad request their children to choose at least an Indian life partner belonging to any religion or caste for safeguarding their Indian identity.

Religious identity and cultural identity are both practical disciplines. Identities are to be lived. As practical disciplines they need a theoretical foundation. The task of a theoretical foundation is to clarify a number of issues, especially conceptual issues, the collective and normative character of both identities, a brief historical perspective together with the impact of the ongoing secularization process on religious and cultural identity. To speak about religious identity (RI) and cultural identity (CI) suggest that the two identities are distinct. RI, in one interpretation, points to an individual or a society who

acquires their identity from a belief in God or some transcendent, absolute entity. CI, then, point to an individual or a society who get their identity from a belief in man and the values in human relationships. However, when speaking about ancient cultures and their identity we usually mean a religious culture in some sense, to the effect that RI and CI are synonymous. History, in either case, clearly shows that no society has ever succeeded in cultivating its entire population in one way or another. Even in the Middle Ages just a small percentage of the population is said to be genuinely Christian – despite the strength and wealth of the Church. The culture of selling and buying has recently been shown to be a pervading force in the Middle Ages.

Due to globalization, the people of the contemporary world have lost their identities in respect of language, culture, tradition, wearing, food etc. Only the religious identity is surviving more or less. According to the survey by the **CEOWORLD** magazine in Partnership with the Global Business Policy Institute, the following 10 countries have the highest religion believing people-

Top 10 Highest Religious Countries (by percentage) - survey by the **CEOWORLD**

Sl. No.	Country	% Percentage of religious people	Remarks
1	Somalia	99.8	India is placed in serial number 54 with 90% of religious believers
2	Niger	99.7	
3	Bangladesh	99.5	
4	Ethiopia	99.3	
5	Yemen	99.1	
6	Malawi	99	
7	Indonesia	98.7	
8	Sri Lanka	98.6	
9	Mauritania	98.5	
10	Djibouti	98.2	

Again, According to a Pew Research Center study, the top 10 Least Religious Countries (by percentage) are as follows-

Sl. No.	Country	% Percentage of non-religious people	Remarks
1	Czech Republic	78.4	
2	North Korea	71.3	
3	Estonia	60.2	
4	Japan	60	
5	Hong Kong (China)	54.7	
6	China	51.8	
7	South Korea	46.6	
8	Latvia	45.3	
9	Netherlands	44.3	
10	Uruguay	41.5	

Thus from the above table and entire discussion we see that the atheist people in different countries are gradually increasing. As a result, religious identity is also under threat. The present generation has no time to think about their social or spiritual identity. Most of them are engaged in a race for their daily earnings based on science and technology. If the tradition is continued then human beings will have only two identities- either male or female.

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