

VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM: INDIAN MODEL OF MULTICULTURALISM

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ABSTRACT :

'ā no bhadrāḥ kratavo yantu viśvato ' Let good thoughts come from all around; inspired by this timeless epic of Rigveda. India has presented an excellent model of Multiculturalism to the world. The multiculturalist model of the West, as established by contemporary thinkers like Wilkymalika, is based on the separate political existence of different cultural classes. However, India's cultural nationalism has shown how diverse cultures can co-exist with a common socio-political thought over the centuries. Sakas, Huns, Kushans, Turks, Afghans, Iranians, and Mughals all got absorbed in Sanatan Indian culture. Not only this, it also gave place to the different cultures to come and made the model of coexistence alive. In the name of nationalities like French, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, German, and Europe got divided into many nation states, but in India, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Oriya, Bengali, Punjabi, Assamese, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam nationalities were not divided into nation-states. Instead, coexistence has been made for thousands of years. India has maintained Multiculturalism not only at the socio-cultural level but also at the political level. Through federal structure, universal suffrage, constitutionally guaranteed civil rights, with other constitutional institutions and provisions, multiculturalism is being addressed at the political level for a population of 13 million people . Thus, In India, Multiculturalism is not only a political tool for diversity but also a socio-political concept. Therefore, Indian Multiculturalism presents a comprehensive, effective, and more sustainable model which have to be discussed .

Keywords: Coexistence, Indian culture, Multiculturalism, pluralism, Sanatan, sustainability.

The eternal concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam has been providing energy to the Indian people and society since time immemorial. It has been the backbone of social harmony and cultural unity. For this

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Introduction:

Despite being divided into small political units in the past, India has always been a cultural nation. Due to the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, there remained a continuity in different opinions, languages, and subcultures. In the context of G-20, in the changed political global environment of the 21st century, where violence, terrorism, expansionism, and hegemonic politics have emerged as a problem, India, through India's Sanatan ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, is presenting a cohesive way of living and survival of global politics and new direction in which India had provided leadership and given a new direction to the newly independent, underdeveloped and developing countries through non-alignment and Panchsheel in the bipolar world in the Cold War period after 2nd world war. Therefore, India's multiculturalist model is not new like the West but is eternal. Even today, contrary opinions, multilingualism, and Multiculturalism are cherished in cultural nationalism.

VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM : CONCEPT**There are two primary sources of this verse.**

Ayam bandhurayam neti ganana laghuchetasam udaracharitanam tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam

(Mahopanishad, Chapter 6.71-72)

It means: "Only small men discriminate saying: One is a relative; the other is a stranger. For those who live magnanimously the entire world constitutes but a family." This verse is inscribed in the entry room of the Indian Parliament. A similar verse is found in the Hitopadesha:

Ayam nijah paro veti gananaa laghuchetasam

Udaar charitaanaam to vasudhaiva kutumbakam. (Hitopadesha, 1.71)

"Only people with a narrow outlook differentiate, saying, this is mine, and this is others, But for those with a liberal and magnanimous mind, the entire world is one family." Both of these are very ancient, which makes it clear that Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is the eternal ideal of Indian culture and has followed Indian culture since the beginning.

Why Multiculturalism: Western model

Multiculturalism in the West is a modern political concept that is not even a century old. However, the question is why there was a need for the concept of Multiculturalism in the West. If we analyze this, it becomes clear that Multiculturalism is a necessary reaction to the evils of individualistic liberalism. The way individualistic liberalism developed in the West pitted the individual and society against each other. The political philosophy of individualism is complete with the capitalist philosophy. Therefore, individualistic capitalism gave birth to nation-states for their security and prosperity. In Europe, these sovereign nation-states destroyed the multicultural character of Florence and Venice that arose from the Renaissance. These nation-states advanced capitalism, the consequences of which became apparent in the twentieth century. To overcome the essential defects of individualistic liberalism, collectivist thinking came to the fore. Multiculturalism is also a similar type of thinking, the problem of which is that just as individualism pits individuals and society against each other, similarly Multiculturalism also

pits minorities. In the name of the multiculturalism approach of the natives, it appears to be standing against the individual. That is why the political concept of Multiculturalism itself is facing a crisis.

After the Renaissance, the way the concepts of freedom and equality evolved in the West gave birth to individualistic political thinking, which pitted the individual against the society; this individualistic political thinking led to scientific progress and inventions, which led to the mechanization of the society and promoted the industrial revolution. The Industrial Revolution and the profit motive of individualistic thinking increased social exploitation, resulting in a socio-political imbalance. As a result, alternatives to idealism and a state-controlled economy emerged very soon in political thinking, which resulted in the communist movement and Nazism; and to avoid all this, individualistic capitalism adopted or experimented with new political concepts. Multiculturalism is also how individualism broke the family structure and pitted the individual against society's disintegrated community life. To avoid all these disorders, egalitarian thinking, communitarian thinking, and multiculturalist thinking came to the fore. In front of the rights of the individual, questions were raised about the rights of the group, the plurality of cultures, and the protection of their existence. Wilkimalika, Taylor, Sanders, Maudood, Bhikhu Parikh, and many more became its prominent interpreters. However, in just two to three decades, questions were raised about Multiculturalism, and today, there is a debate in the academic world about whether Multiculturalism has failed. Liberalism supported Multiculturalism to the extent that Multiculturalism itself threatened liberalism. The problem with Western Multiculturalism is that it is political Multiculturalism. It presents Multiculturalism as a political solution.

On the contrary, India's Multiculturalism is a social ideal based on Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. Since we consider the world as one family, every successive culture became one with the eternal culture of India. It continued to flourish in coexistence in the cultural nationalism of India. Therefore, the Sanatan model of Indian Multiculturalism is perfect and ideal for the West to deal with political ills.

Multiculturalism : sanatan model

If we decode its true meaning, it becomes clear that the verses mentioned above of Vasudev Kutumbakam and considering the world as a family also believe that the attitude of 'yours and mine' is narrow. Apart from this, it is also a narrow tendency to look at others in isolation. Therefore, the feeling of belongingness with everyone is the specialty of people with a generous character that they are free from the feeling of 'mine and yours' and consider the entire Vasundhara, i.e., the entire earth, i.e., the entire world, as their family. Some of its characteristics or elements become clear from this exploration.

The idea of pluralistic unity is a significant feature of Indian culture. There is a sense of this unity in spirituality, religion, culture, and all the physical aspects of life. This pluralistic unity has been explained everywhere: in the soul, in the soul, in the body, in the individual, and society. This unity, which is prevalent in multiplicity, is not only considered ideal but is also the universal Truth. Vaade Vaade Jayate Tattvabodh: accepting various leaders of thought, but despite this ideological diversity and philosophical difference, unity has been established in it too, and it has been said that Ekam Sad Vipra: Bahuda Vadanti, i.e., the same Truth. Which has been said again and again. Today, the West calls this concept postmodernity, which has been the ideal of Indian culture for five thousand years. Thus, it is clear that seeing and accepting a kind of equality and harmony in all living beings, human beings, communities,

societies, species, and countries, without discrimination, has been the essential characteristic of Indian culture, which is the basis of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. What the West calls globalisation today was accepted here thousands of years ago.

The idea of oneness or Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is also reflected in the Vedic saying – “*yatra vishwam bhavati eka needam,*” or "The world is a nest".(Chaturvedi, 2015)

“*ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti,*” which means "Truth is one, the wise call it differently (Rig Veda 1.164.46)

'ā no bhadraḥ kratavo yantu viśvato ' (Rig Veda 1.89.1) Let good thoughts come from all around (Gupta A 2017)

One element in how political thinking has developed in the West is individualism, that is, an individual's identity, the individual's rights, and the state's role as a mediator of those rights. It is in this background that individualistic thinking developed. However, in India, unity means an underlying common element everywhere. Indian literature is full of such philosophical statements.

The famous Smaran-Sukta of the Rig Veda describes the fundamental aspects of socialist ideology and principles of unity.

The mantra says-

saṁ gacchadhvaṁ saṁ vadadhvaṁ saṁ vo manāmsi jānatām | devā bhāgam yathā pūrve saṁjānānā upāsate || (Rig Veda 10.191.2)

It means "Meet together, talk together, let your minds apprehend alike; in like manner, as the ancient gods concurring accepted their portion of the sacrifice."

unity among people of different beliefs. Ishopanishad Upanishad says-

yastu sarvāṇi bhūtānyātmanyevānupaśyati |sarvabhūteṣu cātmānaṁ tato na vijugupsate ||

It means Who sees everything in his Atman and his Atman in everything, so he feels no revulsion. (Ishopanishad vers 6)

Moreover, the one who sees all the beings within himself and himself as equal to all the beings does not get repelled there (i.e., from the living beings). (Rajendra, 2019)

Pluralism

There is more than one member in a family, and there is a kind of companionship among them; hence, plurality and diversity are eternal truths, and Indian culture has always accepted this eternal Truth of plurality.

"India has nurtured a variety of spiritually based dharmic traditions over many centuries and many millennia, marking the unique contribution of its civilization to the world at large. These Dharmic traditions have lived together in peace and mutual respect, sharing a common Dharmic culture and a common aspiration to the highest truth" (Frawley, 2012)

This abundant nature and diverse world have been accepted as one family. Therefore, Vasudev Kutumbakam and plurality are mutually complementary.

Multiculturalism

The natural meaning of considering a world as a family is that the different cultures prevalent in the world should also be considered a part of the family. Hence, Multiculturalism is an essential part of the global family. What the West calls globalisation today has been the main feature of Indian culture since time immemorial in the form of the globalization family. Hence, Multiculturalism is not only essentially inherent in Vasudev Kutumbakam, but it is also its necessary result. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the global family or Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam in the context of Multiculturalism, which is an essential aspect of contemporary political thinking.

Coexistence

Co-existence becomes a prerequisite of Vasudev Kutumbakam; because the existence of more than one culture, plural societies, different ideologies, and a global family encompassing many kinds of diversity is not possible unless there is a feeling of coexistence in it. Therefore, peaceful coexistence is an essential part of the life of any civilised society.

samānī va ākūtiḥ samānā hṛdayāni vaḥ | samānam astu vo mano yathā vaḥ susahāsati || (Rig Veda 10.191.4)

It means “Common, be your intention; common be (the wishes of) your hearts; common be your thoughts, so that there may be thorough union among you.” Coexistence is the basis of Multiculturalism. A severe difference exists between making somebody your and making somebody like yours. Making somebody your means that you accept it as it is. However, making someone like you means completely transforming the other into your form. This feeling gives rise to conflict, violence, and unrest. Wherever there is unrest and violence in the world, the primary reason for this violence and unrest is that the condition is set to make other people like us, and the existence of others is not accepted. However, in Indian culture, there has been a tendency to make people ours rather than like us, due to which different cultures, opinions, different languages , and different religions have always co-existed in India. Coexistence is the basic mantra of Multiculturalism. Coexistence means having more than one with a different identity, an essential characteristic of Indian society and culture. This has been repeated again and again in Indian culture.

*Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah Sarve Santu Niramaya,
Sarve bhadraani pashyantu ma kaschid dukha bhagabhavet.*

This means, "May all be happy, may all be healthy, may all be well, may no one suffer."

Sustainability

In Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the entire earth is considered a family, which includes other living beings besides humans. Living beings and physical and non-physical variables are all part of this global family. Hence, the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is comprehensive; it not only calls for companionship and unity among human beings and in human communities but also considers all living beings as part of one family and advocates peaceful coexistence among all living beings. For this reason, in the peace lesson of Rigveda, the oldest text of Indian culture, peace has been wished for all living beings everywhere.

Prithvi Shantirapah Shantiroshadhyah Shantih.
Vanaspataya: Shantirvishve Deva: Shantirbrahma Shanti;
Sarvam shantih, shantirev shantih, sa ma shantiredhi.Om Shanti: Shanti: Shanti: (yajurved 36.17)

It means "May peace radiate in the sky and the vast ethereal space everywhere. May peace reign in water, herbs, trees, and creepers all over this earth. May peace flow over the whole universe. May peace be in the Supreme Being Brahman. Moreover, may there always exist peace and peace alone.

Aum, peace, peace, and peace to us and all beings!

Thus, the wise use of the earth's natural resources, vegetation and kindness towards living beings, peaceful coexistence, and respect for the feelings and rights of others, which are currently included in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, are Indian culture. It has existed thousands of years ago. It is expected that the earth's resources should be used so that they continue to exist with the global family, i.e., Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

India's leaders have often evoked the phrase vasudhaiva kutumbakam (the world is one family), taken from the Maha Upanishad, to elucidate the country's global outlook. While the term has become a mantra of India's diplomatic lexicon, it has remained ambiguous and rarely elaborated. Indeed, despite their differing political and religious hues, almost every leader has used the phrase to convey varying concepts and address different issues at different times. For instance, in 1989, Rajiv Gandhi cited Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam to challenge the concept of first, second, and third worlds and revive the idea of "One World." He put forward the vague notion of an "Earth Citizen." In 2002, Atal Bihari Vajpayee employed the phrase at a meeting of the national human rights institutions of the Asia Pacific Forum to assert that "India's understanding and advocacy of human rights are as universal as they are ancient." In 2007, Manmohan Singh deployed the term to defend India's approach to climate change and global warming while accepting its global responsibility at the Heiligendamm G8 summit. Finally, in his maiden speech at the United Nations in 2014, Narendra Modi used the locution to reassert India's fading case for reform of the Security Council and lament the inability of the world body to deal effectively with cross-border terrorism. Vasudhaiva kutumbakam has become a catch-all notion for India's diplomatic orthodoxy to be deployed in numerous scenarios. Although it might be open to myriad interpretations, it has been used to broadly

convey India's ideal and liberal concept of global norms, themes of globalisation, or global commons. In doing so, it suggests that this is an ideal world worth achieving and can be created through negotiations alone." (wahegurupal S. 2017)

CONCLUSION

The Indian concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is not just an ideal but a realistic option that illuminates the path to establishing global peace through global peace and peaceful coexistence. Just as Gandhiji's concept of non-violence is practical, India's concept of Vasudev Kutumbakam is also efficient. Its various characteristics have been included in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, which establishes its usefulness.

Multiculturalism is integrally linked to Vasuddhaiva Kutumbakam. Considering the world as a family implies that more than one culture exists, and all of them can exist in peace and health.

The Western model of Multiculturalism presents Multiculturalism as a political solution to a political problem, due to which, like other political solutions, it quickly loses its usefulness as a solution. This is the reason why the multiculturalist model of the West is facing a crisis, and its alternatives are being considered.

The Indian Sanatan model of multiculturalism states that multiculturalism is not a political problem nor is there a political solution to the problem, rather multiculturalism is a social ideal and a way of life. In the eternal model of multiculturalism, individual and society, individuals and groups do not stand against each other but exist in companionship and cooperation with each other. If this had not happened, 130 crore people speaking different languages following different religions and having different opinions would not have been the bearers of a great culture for thousands of years, they would have been shattered.

In this way, the multicultural Sanatan model of Indian culture, which has existed for thousands of years, has incorporated various subcultures, diverse opinions, and differences in its journey over centuries and continues to exist peacefully. This Multiculturalism took inspiration from the cultural nationalism of India, and the journey of coexistence of different cultures and subcultures under the auspices of a broad cultural nationalism continues. Therefore, India's multicultural Sanatan model presents a perfect model of peaceful coexistence before the world, following which it is possible to curb worldwide violence, expansionism, and terrorism.

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