Globalization and Islamic Culture

Aasif Rasool Raina

Research Scholar School of Social Sciences, Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore (MP),

Accredited NAAC Grade "A[+]"

Email id: asifraina040@gmail.com

Abstract

Globalization is a buzz word as it is differently interpreted by different people in varied contexts. People talk of globalization of culture, communication, information, media, religion, crime, social movement, environmental concerns, conflict and politics etc. So globalization may be thought of as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life from cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual. Today's tensions should lead to tomorrow's aspirations. What we need now is a culture of peace that would help to broaden cross-cultural understanding between Islam and the West. With proper knowledge of the culture of the Arab and Muslim world, this understanding would help to foster tolerance and resolve conflicts. We need to sustain a diversity of cultures, not a diversity of imagined clashes and conflicts. This paper would explore the impact of globalization over the Islamic world and the cross cultural clash between the ideology of the west and orientalists.

Keywords: Globalisation, Muslim, Islamic, Arab, Western culture

Viewpoint:-

Globalisation and Islam

Globalisation can be defined as a process of aggregating global connectivity, incorporation and interdependence in the cultural, political, religious, social, economic, technological and all other intellectual spheres beyond the geographical boundaries across countries and territories (Khaled, 2007). Hence, globalisation always brings out changes and links connectivity among different parts in the world. The basic changes are visible in the physical transportation with various communicational means coupled with numerous dimensions of information technology. So, Giddens Anthony, remarks (Anthony, 1990) it as the rapid development in the trend of information technology, communication, transport and infrastructural development by which the world's remotest parts are now easily reachable, no

matter how distant they are. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, globalisation is a process that makes the experience of everyday life more standard everywhere in the world. For example, local economies are incorporated into the world economy through the process of globalization (Tapper, 2000). Even globalization can be defined based on different ideological backgrounds. Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk proved that definition of globalization is to be categorized into five varied and broad forms of ideologies as internationalisation, liberalisation, universalization, westernization and de-territorialisation (Abushouk, 2006: 487-489).

Basically, one can argue that the above-mentioned each definition relating to globalisation explores the term from a certain standpoint, but finally all the collective meanings accumulate that today's globalisation emerging from the Anglo-Saxon model ultimately gives the phenomenon a complete shape. Our planet is now treated as a global village mainly because of the driving and guiding forces through squeezing distance, cultural homogeneity, minimising the significance of political borders and tempering national sovereignty (Abushouk, 2006: 489).

Alternatively, in recent years, many scholars have succeeded in remarking westernisation as the origin of globalisation and the western culture is being globalised as the components of globalisation. Here westernisation and modernisation are verified as globalisation, but it is neither an individual development nor a separate process like globalisation. Appreciating globalisation as westernisation and modernisation creates an appeal and draws attention to its origin that consisted of destructive colonial expansion of European imperialism. Therefore, no need to mention that western power is to intend monopolising modern process of globalisation and establish the trend of developments with various policies. So, globalisation is regarded by the west as a springboard for social, political, economic, cultural and technological advancement. On the eve of westernisation or the post-World War II decades, many non-western members were able to be free themselves from the colonial jurisdiction of western power or westernisation. But unfortunately, they failed to achieve a strong position of economic development, modern technological advancement and cultural freedom from the supremacy of western imperialism (Pakeeza & Chishti, 2012: 728).

In fact, now Muslims have a great tendency to follow the western life and culture without thinking its affects in future (Nurullah, 2008). In appreciation of such western influence on globalisation, a good number of Muslims in the modern world also believe that globalisation is being ultimately dominated by the west and the countries that are influential

in the western circles like Japan and some states of South-East Asian territories (Pakeeza & Chishti, 2012: 728). These dominated states are positioned in such a way that no scope is there to debate in this regard. Actually, leading industrial states promote the technological and administrative developments as the focal point of global impact. So, it is also reflected in the economic and commercial policies that are exercised by major developed states. But historically, the Muslim *ummah* is the best example of a universal community where Islam emerged as the greatest revolution in the 7th century in the world through the process of globalisation. The people of Arab Peninsula, Asia, Africa and Europe revered and fostered with the Islamic culture. Since then, Islamic civilisation emerged as the most beneficial and humanitarian by the process of globalisation over all conventional civilisations, cultures and ideas in the contemporary world (UNAFEI, 2006).

It is perceived that the comparative changes in the global order are not visible in Islam and its cultural life like the western world in any respect of modernity. Since the beginning of the 19th century, Muslims have made efforts to develop their traditional and religious relationship with the emerging demands of the modern world (such as religious, political, economic and social demands). The trend was observed from pre-modern to post-modern time. But these remarkable changes of the modern world are deeply related to westernization or the western values, ideas and institutions (UNAFEI, 2006). So, *ummah* reacted to modernisation and took the efforts to reform Islamic cultures maintaining a space from secularism. But in their contributions to reforms of Islamic cultures, they were divisioned into the Islamic modernists, traditionalists and conservatives.

For the flourishing of different civilizations as well as cultures over many centuries in the history of the world, the term globalisation can also be applicable to the expansion and assimilation of cultures around the world, predominantly right through religious and ideological trends. Generally, every act and aspect of human life is part of culture rather than evolution in the context of globalisation or Islamic standpoint. Islamic culture depicts itself in its unique approach to dealing with each individual as part of *ummah*. The term *ummah* is used for the people of the Islamic community having emotional, moral and social ties that are stabilised with the personal relationships over time (Pakeeza & Chishti, 2012). To consolidate interstate bonds, there are 57 independent Muslim nations in the world. The countries are peopled by more than 900 million Muslims in addition to an estimated 400 million more Muslims settled throughout the rest of the world.

The spread of Islam has played a pivotal role in the well-being of all aspects of temporal life of the peoples in addition to its contribution to the development of spiritual

prosperity in many societies in the context of cultural globalisation in the world. Therefore, in the common global scenario, it is seen that the civilised people are closely related to the basics of Islamic doctrine, ethics, values, morals, laws and customs (UNAFEI, 2006). It is also seen that Muslims do not share similar cultural trait among themselves, but they are identified as Muslims due to their same religious practice and cultural identity (Nurullah, 2008). In spite of some cultural variations among Muslims in the world, Islam is the fastest-growing religion and the second-largest faith in the earth. As a result, the Muslim populace is growing everywhere in the world towards cultural and religious globalisation. Rationally, this index is a substantial issue related to the basic world orders of the time (Ahmad, 2006).

Against this backdrop, Muslims among the nations meet with the critical challenges of how to face and adjust globalisation with the new global tides. The challenges are also being posed to face modernity where Muslim nations are concerned to establish a linkage between Islamic values with secularism, democracy, westernisation and liberalism. But expectations are rising from *ummah* that the challenges should be for the betterment of Islamic culture with singular influence over all other cultures. At the same time, the linkage does not degrade or pale Islam in the face of cultural globalisation and westernisation as well.

Literature Review

Muslims must regain their lost glories in the development of civilisation and moral identity. Western media intentionally propagates Islam as a threat to life and society. Despite, the recent scenario in the world is reflecting a huge number of western people's overwhelmingly conversion into Islam. London, Paris and New York will become cities of Islam in the coming decades. Islamic culture is incumbent to meet the challenge and resolve this clash between Islam and westernisation. This is the successive result of cultural globalisation of Islam. (Ahmad, 2006), (Esposito, 2016), (Forid & Khan, 2008). (Inayatullah, 2005), (Hassan, 2006), (Hassan, 2003). Islamic scholars emphasize on acquiring knowledge for Muslim *ummah* meeting all types of challenges to Islam. Without intellectual advancement, Muslims will not be capable to transmit and accelerate cultural excellence of Islam against westernisation. (Ibrahim, 1991), (Forid & Khan, 2008), (Hassan, 2006), (Inayatullah, 2005).

Primarily globalisation is defined as a process of aggregating global connectivity, incorporation and interdependence in the cultural, political, religious, social, economic, technological and all other intellectual spheres. It is a development that makes the experience of everyday life more standard everywhere in the world. But, it is regarded by the west as a

springboard for social, political, economic, cultural and technological advancement. (Ahmad, 2006), (Abushouk, 2006), (Anthony, 1990), (Khaled, 2007), (Tapper, 2000).

Muslim *ummah* is the best example of a universal community where Islam emerged as the greatest revolution in the 7th century in the world through the process of globalisation. Muslims have made efforts to develop their traditional and religious relationship with the emerging demands of the modern world. But unfortunately, many non-western members were able to be free themselves from the colonial jurisdiction of western power or westernization. (Nurullah, 2008), (Pakeeza & Chishti, 2012: 728) (UNAFEI, 2006).

Methodology

This study is followed the research based on qualitative approach. Since a qualitative research is an unstructured, this article is designed based on desk and library-oriented research. To find out the challenges of globalization that met by Muslims and Islamic culture in the world, the research focused on available published literatures, journals, newspapers, magazines, works and speeches of Muslim scholars and thinkers that are related to Islamic culture and globalization. The texts of the Qur'an and Hadiths are used as primary sources of data for analysis the study and its concept.

Globalization and Islamic Culture

The spread of Islam has an impact on the culture of this globalised world. Islam has spread not only as a religion but has also helped also to give birth to languages which are spoken today by many more non-Muslims than Muslims. Today Kiswahili in Africa is the most important indigenous language to have emerged out of Africa but its origins lie in the interaction between Islam and African culture. Islam and the Arabic language have bestowed the Arabic alphabet for languages like Farsi, Urdu, Old Hausa and others. The Arabs have given the world the so-called Arabic numerals through which the twentieth century has computerised the human experience. Today the Quran is the most widely read book in its original language in human history. Muslims are expected to read the Quran in its original Arabic and not a translation that may change the intended meaning. The Christian Bible is the most widely read book in translation.

As the 21" century began, almost one out of every five human beings is a Muslim. In the course of the 21st century a quarter of the human race will probably be Muslim. The new demographic presence of Islam within the Western world is indicative that Islamisation is now a major globalising force.

In the second half of the twentieth century both Muslim migration to the West and conversions to Islam within the West are consolidating a new human Islamic presence. In

Europe as a whole, there are now 20 million Muslims, eight million of whom are in Western Europe. These figures exclude the Muslims of the Republic of Turkey, who number some 50 million. There are new Grand mosques from Munich to Marseilles.

Also as a manifestation of the demographic Islamisation of the Western world, there are now over a thousand mosques and Islamic centres in the U.S alone. The country has professional associations for Muslim engineers, Muslim social scientists and Muslim educators. There are some six million American Muslims - and the number is rising impressively.

Currently Islam is the fastest growing religion in Central Asia. After the collapse of the U.S.S.R., all five states of Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan - made an official place for Islam as the dominant religion. In France, Islam is becoming the second most important religion numerically after Catholicism. India is also the country with the third largest number of Muslims in the world. The majority of India's Muslims are Sunni. In Britain some Muslims have been experimenting with an Islamic parliament of their own, and others are demanding state subsidies for Muslim denominational schools. In Germany it has been belatedly realised that the importation of Turkish workers in the 1970s was also an invitation to the muezzin and the minaret to establish themselves in German cities. Australia has discovered that it is a neighbour to the largest Muslim country in the world in terms of population (Indonesia). There are new mosques, Islamic schools and Quranic centres from Brisbane to Perth.

Westernisation, on the hand, is also a major globalising force. In the first half of this century, the West had colonised more than two-thirds of the Muslim world, from Africa to Asia. The first half of the twentieth century also witnessed the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the complete de-Islamisation of the European state-system. The aftermath included the abolition of the caliphate as the symbolic centre of Islamic authority. The ummah (Islamic community) became more fragmented than ever and became even more receptive to Western cultural penetration. Other forces which facilitated the cultural Westernisation of the Muslim world included the replacement of Islamic and Quranic schools with Western style schools; the increasing use of European languages in major Muslim countries; and the impact of the Western media upon the distribution of news, information and entertainment. In other words, the West has in turn spread not only its technology and market ideology, but also its languages (especially English, French and Spanish), its educational systems, consumer culture, including the dress code for men world-wide, and its

mass media. The net result has indeed been a form of globalisation of aspects of Western culture. But at what cost?

In almost every liberal country in the West, crime is escalating, violence sometimes quadrupling, street mugging is on the rise, and the culture of the fortress city is developing. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death among American adolescents, the causes including the decay of family values and a more general national malaise. By comparison, suicide is a rare form of violence in the Muslim world.

One of the remarkable things about the twentieth century is that it has combined the cultural Westernisation of the Muslim world, on the one hand, and the more recent demographic Islamisation of the Western world, on the other. The foundations for the cultural Westernisation of the Muslim world were laid mainly in the first half of the twentieth century. The foundations for the demographic Islamisation of the Western world are being laid in the second half of the twentieth century. There are ample of Muslim scholars with the belief that because of globalization, the western culture has invaded the Muslim culture and society, due to which Muslims beliefs are being manipulated and so their real identity is getting confiscated. The cultural Westernisation of Muslims contributed to the brain drain of Muslim professionals and experts from their homes in Muslim countries to jobs and educational institutions in North America and Europe. It is in this sense that the cultural Westernisation of the Muslim world in the first half of the century was part of the preparation for the demographic Islamisation of the West in the last fifty years.

There are scholars and policy makers in the West who are concerned with recent Islamic revivalism and face tensions about how Islam is to be treated in Western textbooks and media, especially as Islam becomes a more integral part of Western society. In the Muslim world, education has become substantially westernised. Is it now the turn of education in the West to become partly Islamised? Can the Western world enter the positive sphere of globalisation, and draw on the traditional wisdom of cultures such as Islam which point towards a more integrated society with drastically decreased levels of crime and violence?

The rise of Islamic movements in different parts of the world, aimed at resisting Western domination and control over Muslim territories and resources, Muslim cultures and communities, has provoked a new wave of aggressive emotions against the religion and its practitioners. That it is resistance to Western domination and control - and not some threat to the West as such - which is taking place within the Muslim world, is a reality that is concealed from the general public. What Islamic movements opposed to is the annexation

and occupation of their lands as in the case of Palestine and Lebanon, the usurpation of their rights over their own natural resources as in the case of the Gulf Sheikhdoms, and the denigration of their religion as often happens in the Western media, sometimes abetted by local elites and writers. Islamic groups and some individuals see their struggle as part of the still unfulfilled quest for self-determination and for genuine sovereignty. Such Muslim resistance is portrayed as an 'Islamic threat' by some Western academics, including Samuel P. Huntington. The Conflict between Western and Islamic civilisations, Huntington in this article "The Clash of Civilisations"' points out, 'has been going on for 1300 years. The Gulf War is only the most recent important example.' His argument has been the centre of controversy for the last six years.

At the turn of the Western millennium, it is crucial to consider whether Islam is a monolithic force; whether the clash between Islam and the West is inevitable; and whether the so-called Islamic civilisation poses a credible threat to the West.

Huntington depicts the Islamic countries as part of a wider pan-Islamic movement, united in their hostility to the West and the United States. So convinced is Huntington of the 'kin-country' syndrome that even the Gulf War of 1990 becomes clear evidence of the brewing clash between Islam and the West.

The depiction of Islam and the Islamic countries as a monolithic entity may reflect the errors of the orientalist mind-set, which refuses to understand the diversity within Islam for the convenience of a simple explanation. The assumed identity, through segregation and confinement of the Islamic civilisation, is a product of the Western imagination and sustains a deep phobia because the simple explanation, ironically, renders Islam both 'unknown' and mysterious.

It is orientalist scholarship that has invested Islam both with internal unity and an external political ambition. Orientalists have reconstructed Islam as a political religion despite the fact that there is little in original Islamic sources on how to form states or run governments. It also produced a particular reading of the 'orient' that was at odds with reality. Edward Said, in his article "Orientalism Reconsidered"' argued that 'designations like Islam and the Arabs . . . represented interests, claims, projects, ambitions, and rhetoric's that were not only in violent disagreement, but were in a situation of open warfare.' These divisions, however, were quickly glossed over and the myth that the Islamic countries possessed a fundamental unity of purposes that transcended national boundaries became the accepted consensus. The myth has, so far, refused to adapt itself to reason.

If the notion of a political and monolithic Islam should be taken with some scepticism, it is still true that a fundamentalist movement has emerged with the specific political task of reforming Muslim societies. This, however, is essentially a reaction to westernisation, though not modernisation, and constitutes an attempt to check a perceived social drift and weakening of morals. In the West, modernisation is synonymous with westernisation, but Muslim 'fundamentalists' clearly dissociate the two. This discordant understanding of modernisation has given Western analysts the impression that a rejection of westernisation is the equivalent of a battle-cry against the West.

It should also be mentioned that the fundamentalist movement, most active in the Shi'ite countries of Iran, Iraq and Lebanon, is also diverse and a minority movement in most Islamic countries. Even assuming Islamic fundamentalism would spread significantly, it is not inevitable that it will inexorably lead to a clash with the West. After all, the West, and particularly the United States, has maintained a very special relationship with Saudi Arabia, one of the most fundamentalist of Arab States.

Therefore, even if we grant that Islam forms a united movement in comparison to western culture, it is not certain whether the Islamic civilisations will constitute a true adversary to the West. However, it would be helpful if commentators in the West recognized that the pursuit of modernisation need not be accompanied by westernisation, and that a rejection of westernisation is not an inevitable call to do battle with the West.

It is helpful here to recognise that Islamic revivalism is in many ways the successor to failed nationalist programs and offers an Islamic alternative or solution, a third way distinct from capitalism and communism. Islamists argue that Islam is not just a collection of beliefs and ritual actions, but rather a comprehensive ideology embracing public as well as personal life. It is important to understand that Islamic activism in some countries is a cause of concern but not for alarm. It is not a challenge to any civilisation. Like radicals throughout history, Islamic radicals become moderate once accommodated and incorporated into the socio-political mainstream. If they do not, they perish or become sociologically irrelevant cults. Therefore, extremism can best be reduced through gradual democratisation, a process and a system of governance which the West is not encouraging in the Muslim world, and particularly not in the Middle East.

One also needs to be clear about the teachings of Islam. Some analysts in the West take the view that the rapidly growing Muslim population in Europe and the United States, and Islamic revivalism generally, are potential threats to Western culture. The study of Islam demonstrates that it is not a violent doctrine. Islam, like other world religions, is a faith of

peace and social justice. In fact, Islam is as universal as Christianity, and offers a generous consolation when it comes to finding purpose and guiding the soul in a confusing world. It does not turn to fundamentalist militancy, because it has always been a tolerant religion and dislikes extremism and killing. Islam does not encourage terrorism and threatening behaviour. These violent concepts do not originate in Islam as a faith. Those groups who practice terror under the flag of Islam are a small minority, rejected by the great majority of Muslims. In relation to aggressive attitudes, the key message to Western scholars is to oppose extremist Muslims but not blame all Islam.

Conclusion

From any perspective, it is true that in the rapid march of technology in the 21st century, the Muslim *ummah* is standing in the middle of multiple challenges, but none is more formidable than the issue of how to make a balance between cultural integrity and religious identity of Islam. On the contrary, the *ummah* must have the approach of enduring the changes associated with a globalising world. So, in the age of cultural exchange, Muslim *ummah* must have a future plan. Otherwise, they will decline without a clear vision of their future (Inayatullah, 2005). But the weakness of the *ummah*, in the perspective of global civilisation, is associated with the rise of various cultures in the west. Islamic culture is incumbent to meet the challenge and resolve this clash between Islam and westernisation. In the circumstances, the future of Islam and its culture depends on the *ummah's* ability to remain constant with an uncompromised trend in the time of fusing modernity into western culture. At any cost, they are required to comply with the principles of Islam in exchanging Islamic culture with all other cultures in view of westernisation and relatively branding Islamic culture in the arena of cultural globalisation.

It must be a matter of great recognition that those who submit themselves to Islam theoretically and practically will at least never commit or involve in any subversive acts like terrorism, extremism or fanaticism. Actually, cultural values and ethos of Islam are accustomed with the safeguard of humanities for both temporal and perpetual life. The recent scenario in the world is reflecting a huge number of western people's conversion into Islam. This is the successive result of cultural globalisation of Islam, even if the influential western propagandists are firmly standing against Islam. Still, the western media plays the role to politicise the Islamophobia in the state affairs throughout the world from west to east. Somehow this media intentionally propagates Islam as a threat to life and society (Inayatullah, 2005). In fact, if a follower of any religion is misguided and does not follow the

instructions and jurisdiction of his/her religion, the very religion should not be charged for their followers those showing laxity in religion.

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