Reconciling Multiple Identities

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Drivers of Multiple Identities

- Different cultures, beliefs, values
- Different geographical locations
- Different socio-economic status
- Different ethnic background
- Gender-based differences; sexuality
- Colour, other physical attributes
- Language
- Disability
- Etc.
Identities are based on differences.

Identities nurture ‘us’ and ‘they’

Identities are always in opposition to something.

And often to oppression and/or discrimination, historical or contemporary.
Identities are dynamic over time and space

Identities can harden, compete, radicalize

Or soften, adapt, amalgamate

Assume new characteristics
But, multiple identities will be there for a long time....through different Futures

Even in a ‘global’ man/woman

Even vis-à-vis robots....aliens

Because multiple identities are based on differences, not on universality
Some cultures are historically richer with diverse identities

Eg. Moroccon Constitution recognises ‘plurality of Moroccon identity’

Eg. Indian Constitution guarantees diversity & reflects diversity in its National Anthem
Celebrate Diversity...Cultural Pluralism

Yesterday we heard diversity gives rise to different kinds of creativities

Reflects a more tolerant, adaptive, mature society

Diversity is ‘natural’ given the different races, cultures, even attributes....we can, and have in many instances, learnt to live with it.
The problem is with identity politics.
The demand is not for inclusion within the fold of “universal humankind” on the basis of shared human attributes;

Nor is it for respect “in spite of” one's differences.

Rather, what is demanded is respect for oneself as different

(Retrieving Experiences by Sonia Kruks, 2001, 85)
Diversity....but Universal Human Rights

The underlying notion for ‘respect for oneself as different’ is driven by the notion of universal human rights —

UN Declaration on Human Rights: All human beings deserve equal (economic, social, political, cultural & civic) rights and justice (a life free from want and fear).
The case of India

Rights and Duties
Largest and perhaps most plural society: 4635 communities, 12 distinct language families, 325 languages and dialects, 24 language scripts (Anthropological Survey of India).

‘Sacred’ and ‘Profane’: Indian philosophy sees diversity in nature and human body, including trees, flowers, human bodies, minds, languages and cultures as ‘sacred’ Celebrates the ‘oneness’ of nature and human beings.

The concept of *dharma* or ‘Duties’ towards nature & people.....taking the ‘right’ action is most important
Reconciling Multiple Identities in Multiple Futures
Philosophical Underpining

From ‘Who am I?’ to “the ability to find a way of being that is somehow true to oneself;” (Taylor, 1989).....and

“Without the ‘others’ there is no ‘self’ or self-recognition.”(Hall, 1996)

Key issues

- Citizenship may or may not reconcile multiple identities but this is one step that governments can take now....the role of the State and Law

- The notion of ‘individualism’ will become stronger in the short to medium term but will community and society again outpace this in the longer run? What kind of ‘groupings?’

- Using culture for solutions. Being ‘comfortable’ with each other

- A ‘melting pot’ strategy where everyone submerges their identity does not work unless the philosophical perception of ‘self’ is recognised

- Being prepared for changing identities and nature of conflict – using the traditional ‘risk management’ as a planning tool, as a strategy, scoping study? By governments & private sector

Thank you!
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