

Religion and Conflict Resolution

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Introduction

In the current world there are a lot of conflicts in almost all countries. Sometimes it may be an ethnic conflict, religious conflict, environmental or social. All the living beings love their lives and they do not wish to experience sorrowful, acrimonious experiences. No one can prevent the bad circumstances coming from nature such as droughts, floods, storms, earth slips, plagues etc. but mostly people have to suffer from lots of inconveniences which are arising for human activities such as; wars, revolutions, conflicts, crimes, environmental pollution etc.

In fact, the main reason for all these unethical behaviours is the selfishness of human beings. Actually, selfishness is a common defilement that exists in all beings and sometimes people are not able to control their selfishness. Whenever people become selfish, they are misled by greediness and because of that, they behave unethically and that is harmful to others. According to the seriousness of the bad behaviour they are known as crimes, serious crimes and very serious crimes.

There are lots of social harms in the current world. The war and conflict is remarkable among them. In present world we can see there are many severe wars which make immense damages to the world. Due to the wars poverty, illiteracy, sicknesses and many other social problems have arisen. Most unfortunate thing is some religions are the cause for many wars. Delusion has spread everywhere in the world.

In present people when they cannot solve problems by discussion directly take the weapons and wage war against others. Most perilous thing is today people used developed techniques and science in the war. Therefore damages of the war take higher rank. In day by day developed country do experiment to discover powerful bombs and weapons. According to statistics people can destroy world four times with using collected weapons in their stores. When look at the whole world human beings have waged the wars against human beings based on greed, hatred, delusion, revenge so on. In this time period more than thirteen wars are running.

The Web of www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war shows world-wide conflict and wars which running now as follows. United Nations define military conflict as major war in which 1000 soldiers die in battlefield per year. In 1965 there were 10 major wars and in 2005 there were 8 major wars. Since 1960 there were more than 20 major wars in African countries such as Rwanda, Somalia, Angola, Sudan, Liberia, and Burundi¹. Majority of the world now confront to conflict or war. According these aspects whole world today suffer from wars and conflicts seriously.

Religious have much to say about peace in their teachings, but the practical side of that peace making grows out of, because of recent development. Therefore most religion is being a cause of war. Most of modern main conflicts have owed little religion.

What is a conflict?

Conflict is a state of open, prolonged clash between two opposite parties or individuals. In psychological terms, conflict is a psychic struggle, often unconscious, resulting from incompatible or opposite needs, drives, desires, tendencies wishes or demands. In political terms “conflict” can refer to war, revolution or other struggles. Buddhism has delivered a lot of roots for conflicts and the psychological way to overcome such kinds of conflicts.

From the above explanations, we can simply say that conflict is a clash or contest between opposing two individuals or parties about opposing or incompatible needs and selfish desire.

Conflicts Due to Sensual Pleasures

In current world many wars and conflicts generates due to some common reasons. Those are, Greed, delusion and hatred, Lack of knowledge, Economic and materialism, Poverty, Religious fanatics, Political attitude.

War has caused immense economic and social issues in every country. The people have to spend lot of money for troops, supplies, and artillery such as rockets, guns, bombs, bullets etc. Howsoever in the war spend lot of money and destroy natural resources and human lives. The

¹ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/>

families are breaking up, non-moral behaviors such as stealing, raping increase gradually; lack of food, diseases, and homelessness spread everywhere. Every country which involved with the war gives examples for above facts. The money which use for war people can use to build houses for homeless people, to develop education in the country, to eliminate poverty in the country, and to develop health facilities of the people.

With the sensual pleasure as cause, sensual pleasure as the source, sensual pleasure as the basis, king quarrel with kings, nobles with nobles, Brahmins with Brahmins, householders with householders, mother quarrel with sons, son with mothers, father with son, son with father, brothers with brothers, brother with sisters, sisters with brothers, friends with friends. And here in their quarrels, they brawl and disputes and attack each other with fists, clods, sticks, or knives, whereby they incur death or deadly suffering and pain. Now this too is a danger in the case of sensual pleasures, a mass of suffering here and now ... the cause being simply sensual pleasures².

Mostly sensual pleasure is the reason for a lot of conflicts not only in the human society but in the animal society as well. People make conflicts for forms, sounds, smells, taste etc... that is also a main cause for a lot of conflicts in the society.

Religion, Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building

Religious peace-building can provide a spiritual basis for transformation, compensating for mechanistic conflict resolution models and the religious texts, values and beliefs can be assisted to incite conflict to promote peace building and reconciliation.

Every religious community in the world is devoted to a similar process, that is, to guide individuals to move away from thinking about their individual needs and to address their obligations to the greater good of society, humanity or the environment. To achieve world peace free from conflict it is necessary to develop a sense of universal responsibility, a deep concern for all irrespective of creed, color, sex or nationality.

² Majjhima Nikaya 13

The following altering approaches which reflect the teachings of the religions can be useful in solving political conflict and promoting peace.

- The Use of Religious Texts for Reconciliation

Aspects of sacred texts may be simplified or de-historicized to support violent interpretation, legitimizing war or fostering negative enemy images.

The most of religions originated before many years ago and therefore people think how these teaching can use in present world to solve present world's issues. When we find the causes of the all social conflicts which have arisen today all generated due to the defilements of the human mind. Another misunderstanding about religions is people think the religion does not relevant with the lay society and it is good for only sages. But when we consider about religious teachings those are mostly combined with the society and the life style of the sages give ideal for lay life.

Religious Scripture provides enough sources of authority and crisis/dispute among lay people and sages and how elucidated them. There are some sort of conflicts and arguments in the society in past, present and in future as well. Those stories talk about how similar situations of conflict were dealt by a religious founder, elder or prophet. These parallels can often be adapted to the contemporary context. Conflict over economic resources, territory, political ideologies and religious differences are not new problems. The problems which arise today between individuals and groups are not really different to those that arose in the past. Scripture is the best place for instructive lessons about any kind of conflict. Concept of forgiveness, non-violence, loving-kindness, empowerment, justice and compassion can be found in the Bible, the Qur'an, throughout Buddhist literature and in the texts of all religions. Those religious texts illustrate their frontrunner as peacemaker how used strategy to overcome conflicts.

The religious harmony, compassion to others does not practice its followers. Already around the world after-math of these teachings can identify with terrorism. When we consider about history the Theistic religions due to the god concept and his teachings more than 120 million people have killed in human history. Their concept of *jihad* and Just war put the world worse situations. Some teaching of theistic religions spread the hate and threat. These religious concept lead people in wrong way and make severe damage to the world.

But Buddhism has deferent kinds of teachings from the theistic religions which accept the revenge therefore Buddhism able to change this tendency because The Buddha advices to avoid that kind of troublesome environment without associating. The Buddha introduced the war as unskillful, evil act which give worry in *samsaric* life. Buddha emphasized the important of universal brotherhood. “*Metta* concept” He advised to people to spread loving kindness even to their enemies.

Buddha always emphasized the important of peaceful life. He always led the people toward peace. The Nibbana which is the final goal of the all Buddhist had been defined as “Incomparable peaceful noble path” (*Anuttaram santi wara padam*). When Buddha was a young prince he gave up the path which led to war and conflicts. He realized the path which gave ultimate happiness to the people.

- Religious Ritual and Traditions to promote Peace Building

Religious Rituals and symbols are a powerful means of communication, and allow for multiple interpretations. They can also emphasize commitment to values in times of crisis and are often respected by both sides to a conflict and can be used as a way of building empathy and trust. Religious rituals provide for restoration, healing, reintegration, atonement and forgiveness after disturbance; reconciliation processes can utilize these, but also leads to an underestimation of attempts emerging from various religious traditions to help resolve conflicts and build peace. The point is that, when successful, religion’s role in helping to resolve conflicts and build peace is a vital component in helping to achieve human development more generally.

Virtually all religious traditions incorporate ideals of peace; positive interpretations of values, myths, texts and images can be woven into the fabric of peace narratives as religious actors attempt to mobilize people towards reconciliation. Understanding how religious traditions, identities and religio-cultural elements contribute to a culture of violence is critical.

Identifying **religious institutional sites** which uphold non-violent values, and empowering them financially, technically and through training can contribute to peace-building and outreach, both into the immediate community and to a wider network of initiatives across the social, political and economic range.

- Faith-based actors make to conflict resolution

Faith-based actors are well-placed to mediate, advocate, observe, educate and engage in inter-faith dialogue. Perceived as legitimate and credible, they have a common framework for discourse, and access to financial, institutional and human resources within their faith community

- Different Identity

In practice, some of people may get lot and increase the distrust and wariness of each other. It needs the tolerance, compassion, peace education and heart full communication to learn, to grow the understanding and sympathy to differences of all identities. We should respect to the other identities as well as ourselves. As an example: Muslim culture and identity is women's wearing veil to cover their faces. In case of ignoring and less respect to other identity, the conflict will certainly happen. This may be raised up to religious misunderstanding.

- Exercising Forgiveness, Tolerance and Contentment

Cruelty and injustices are common in every country affected by conflict. In a peace agreement, there should be a mutual process of acknowledgement of cruelty or injustices. Here all kind of tolerance include in religious tolerance. To extinguish the fire of hatred and conflict, followers and leaders should practice tolerance and should honor every teachers and followers of other sects and also their teachings. And cruelty or injustices should commit to forgiveness through dialogue between both parties. When they practice contentment, jealousy and hatred can never overpower them and thereby they feel more comfortable in allowing others to enjoy their lives.

- Roles of Religious Leaders

Religions carry the code of apposite conduct for people to live together peacefully. In case that religious leader can encourage people to translate the good teaching into action, it would be good enough to use religious essences to upkeep conflicts. Since religions are composed of the true, the good and the beautiful.

If it is not enough understanding and realizing about one's teaching, will lead to the wrong or improper practices. For example, *jihad* in the scripture is full of conditional and definite explanation. No one can call for *jihad* as they wish. Therefore religious leaders need to learn their own teachings clearly in order to avoid the unnecessary misunderstanding from followers. Further religious leaders can use their religious teaching as healing method, concerning religious teachings as a preventive factor and a transformed conflict and apply virtuous practices to the violent situations.

Religious leader should realize and advice to followers the necessity of the implied intra and inter-religious dialogue. The heart-full and peaceful communication is encouraged to get rid of prejudice and create the learning and transforming any conflicts. However, it is also urgent that gathering of followers within the same religion to listen to each other about the traditional and new understanding and practices of people in the daily life especially in the violent context.

Conclusion

Religious hatreds and differences are the main courses to many recent and current conflicts in the developing world. This paper claims that religion can both encourage conflict and build peace. Especially religious can play a positive role in helping to resolve conflicts. Religions to prevent war and conflicts introduce so many principles. The righteousness, Mutual respect, sharing gains, compassion, patient, obeying is most exceptional one among them, but the delinquent is those teachings not in applied for current conflicts, they just discuss.

More, religious individuals and faith-based organizations, as carriers of religious ideas, can play important roles. Not only as a source of conflict but also as a tool for conflict resolution and peace-building, providing early warnings of conflict, good offices once conflict has erupted, and contributing to advocacy, mediation and reconciliation. Although religious believers would normally regard their chosen religious expressions as benevolent and inspiring, religious faiths are sometimes linked to violence and conflict both between and within religious groups Commonwealth & Comparative Politics. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each and every religious instructor to give only understanding and right view to the society. To bring peace to the practicing religions are very important.

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