

Inclusivity within and among civilizations

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What is inclusivity or inclusiveness and why is it an important aspect of civilization?

Inclusivity is:

- 1) A recognition of everyone's worth. When a person's worth is recognized, it can contribute to his or her overall mental and emotional well-being.
- 2) Key to harmonious coexistence of diverse groups: It is the only way to bring a peaceful and stable order to society, both of which are a necessary condition for the survival and development of mankind; meaning inclusivity is the only way to combat the increasing social injustice and inequality.

It is argued that

When you include people, you make them feel welcomed, respected (their worth is recognized), connected, secure.

A diverse community can come up with new and innovative ideas that would not be possible if everyone was the same. This is because different perspectives often result in better things.

Impact of diversity without inclusion

Diversity and inclusiveness are inextricably linked and must coexist to create a harmonious society.

Exclusivity negatively affects individuals, families and societies.

Without inclusion, there will always be,

- 1) Deprivation of opportunities. We all know that globalization offers extensive opportunities yet there are many individuals and groups deprived of these opportunities because of their race, gender, religion or ethnicity.
- 2) An increase in the number of individuals and groups having no feeling of a sense of belonging.
- 3) Weak social cohesion resulting in disorder, and social disintegration.

What is an inclusive civilization?

A civilization based on peace, justice, equity, and love for one another regardless of race, religion, or national origin.

A civilization in which the oneness of humankind is a visible fact as envisioned in this ayah: “And verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore fear Me (and no other) ” [Qur’an, 23:52].

A civilization that is composed of cultures of all ethnic groups.

A unified multi-ethnic community – i.e., a community with different opinions, backgrounds, religious beliefs, heritage, and life experience.

Characteristics of an inclusive civilization-What defines an inclusive civilization?

- 1) Love for one another regardless of race, religion, or national origin.
- 2) Oneness of mankind.
- 3) Equal opportunities and benefits for all.
- 4) Cooperation.

The Aim of an Inclusive Civilization

An inclusive civilization aims to foster and implement the development of human society through harmonious coexistence of all races and ethnicities.

An inclusive civilization as depicted in the Qur'an and Hadith

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted [Sahih International, Qur'an, 49:13].

The above ayah refers to the following traits that make human beings unique:

- 1) To know others;
- 2) To be known; and,
- 3) Mutual learning.

Being known

To be known is one of the most fundamental desires of every individual. We feel good when someone knows and understands us.

We all want to be loved by someone who knows us.

Being known gives us a sense of responsibility and accountability that we would not otherwise have.

Knowing others

To know others and to be known is part of human nature: There is in each of us the desire to know ourselves and others, and be known – who we are and why we are who we are – and to be valued.

Sociology and psychology have produced many studies, theories and tools to help us know ourselves and others.

Mutual Learning

It has been argued that the only way for the development of civilizations is to learn from each other and accommodate diversity. No country can close its door and manage alone the challenges of the times, and openness and inclusiveness are a prerequisite for world peace and development.

When individuals, communities or nations understand each other, and learn from each other, they are able to develop better relationships and higher-level thinking respectively. Consequently,, they are able to grow together.

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى □ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah ; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty” (Qur’an, 5:2).

This ayah is a command to collaborate or cooperate which implies an obligation to build an inclusive world where no one is left behind because of their, ethnicity, race, gender identity, or disability and religion.

It emphasizes the necessity of cooperation and mutual support.

It urges a cooperation of two types – in performing good (al-Birr), and refraining from evil (al-Taqwa).

Cooperation with others means drawing on the skills and talents that each person has to offer. Everyone has been granted unique talents by Allah. When these talents are pooled together we can have better results

Cooperation is an essential part of human existence and a key enabler of growth and success

Unlocking the mind: The requirement for realizing the vision – Inclusivity within and Among Civilizations

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. (Qur'an, 13:11).

Our life is a reflection of our views, attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions, among others. All these come together to shape our mindset.

According to the above ayah, Allah does not change the condition of a people, from good (such as, from unity, harmony, inclusivity, strength, righteousness, affluence, obedience, ease, etc.) to bad (disunity, disharmony, exclusivity, weakness, wretchedness, poverty, disobedience, hardship, etc.) or from bad to good, as long as they do not change what is within themselves – their mental state.