



Intolerance in our society

And our responsibility

There are quite a few “ailments” in our society which are either not treated amicably or mishandled including depression, blood pressure, diabetes, hepatitis and cardiac related issues. We are all well aware of the “vigilance and efficiency” of the Ministry of Health as we see new scandals showing the mishandling by this department, popping up every other day as well. But the “disease” I am going to write on today is extremely fatal for our society as a whole. And the dilemma is that we are not even aware of the dire consequences that this social evil is bringing in our society and country as a whole. We top the countries that are suffering from this ailment and this has shaken the whole structure of our society and not many are ready to pay any serious attention to it. The irony is that even if we know about this we are not ready to do something about it as a society. To some extent I think we may not have a remedy, looking at the current picture of our society. You may be thinking what evil am I talking about that has shattered the very existence of this society so quickly. Well, it is intolerance. That’s true, this disease is eating us all up like anything and shaken the very basis of our society. Simply, it is a state of restlessness which is on the high with every passing day, in our society. Every society in the World does have this social disorder but has it at manageable or negligible levels. But it is increasing in our society day by day. Let’s have a look at his causes and its types.

Individual or collective intolerance:

We witness this attitude every day on our roads where no one is ready to give anyone their right of the way or in particular when one is involved in an accident we see people fighting like mad. We see in the news where a mother is forced to kill her own children or people beating up their servant for extremely small mistakes. Likewise the lawyers are seen throwing shoes on the judiciary for not having got the “desired” decision. This clearly depicts the demoralizing society well on the way to further decent. Take the case of the people who are called saviour of humanity, the doctors. They go on strikes for weeks leaving behind the suffering people in the hospitals just because they were transferred to some remote areas, against their will. We can well imagine the state of the misery the patients in the ICUs go through and end up losing their lives. Teachers beating up the pupils badly for having cheated in the exams or not having done well in the routine test. We see teachers literally breaking the bones of the pupils for not having

memorised the lessons by heart. People putting vehicles and buildings on fire protesting against the load shedding of electricity.

Social & Economic Intolerance:

It is the unequal distribution of the resources/wealth and materialistic approaches by the majority of people that make up the face of this society are other reasons of the intolerance in the society as a whole. Everyone is in the race to accumulate wealth using few fair and mostly unfair means. We knew that people are mixing wood powder in the tea but now they have gone one step further and are colouring the used tea with the animal blood to sell it as new. Social intolerance sometimes result in taking lives on a small squabble taking place amongst children and ending up with the fatalities. Children fighting over a game of cricket sometimes get elders involved also and ending up taking lives. What is this and why are we succumbing to this insane behaviour? It was only a few days ago when we saw one person killed involved in a row to park the car in Samanabad-Lahore.

Religious & Moral Intolerance:

We are the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who forgave the old lady who was used to throw litter on him every time the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by her house. He taught us the lesson of ONE UMMA and today we are separated/divided into various cliques including Shia, Sunni, dao-bandies etc. We build our mosques based upon our sects and beliefs. We are not ready to offer Salah in each other's mosques but are always ready to pass on fatwas of Kufar every now and then. And we call ourselves Muslims who believe in one Allah and our Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). How ironic! We have stooped to such a level as a society that we prefer to rush away from an accident scene instead of helping the injured. Not long ago people lending a helping hand to others on the occasions of marriages or financial transactions were admired immensely but such a person in today's day and age is considered as "insane and redundant". Our values have changed dramatically with the time due to this social evil to some extent.

Our religion teaches us to inculcate tolerance in ourselves especially show this attitude during Ramadan and look at us what we do during this holy month? We become more intolerant to each other. And yet, we call ourselves Muslims and the very best of the human beings. We see that not only individuals but the pillars of the state are affected by this social evil and we see them confronting each other frequently now. The state is confronting against judiciary and also lawyers and police humiliating the sacred institute like judiciary as well. Similarly the treasury benches are not ready to tolerate anything from the opposition benches and confronting with each other furiously. Same is the case with all the political parties of this country who are not ready to tolerate each other views and manifestoes. This attitude is quite evident in the television talk shows every day where instead of having a debate, the participants humiliate and belittle the leaders by mud-slinging. We will have to cast a glance (a bird's eye view) on the state of affairs of this country to know the reasons for this behaviour. I didn't want to include the

politics of this country in today's column but it looks improbable as you never know what happens the next day as far as news in this country go. The electricity rates strikes you like lightning when you hear significant increase in the tariff and so on and so forth. In my view issues like load-shedding, inflation, joblessness, law and order, delayed justice, illiteracy, decrease in the resources as compared to increase in the population, increasing sense of deprivation and "rewarding" the elite only in our society, are the core reasons for this social evil which has put this country on the descent.

My only aim to highlight this social evil is to look into the ways as how we can eradicate it sooner than later. To me we all collectively are responsible to bring about the change. Parents, writers, intellectuals, teachers, religious leadership and all the state pillars which are responsible to interact with the masses need to play their roles honestly and to the fullest. People actually showing tolerance in our society are pretty unique and rare to find but there are these people out there and we should all take a lead from them to bring about this change in ourselves first and in the society as a whole. We will have to honour these people and make them the torch bearer. And people who believe in criticism only, they will need to come out of their shells and be an example for the others to follow. We will have to take drastic steps to bring about this change and turn it around for us and our future generations. This evil has been in our society for ages and just as we overcame "dengue" we will need to overcome this social evil too. We will have to find a solution from the existing system bringing about necessary changes in this very system if required. The nations which are not ready to change themselves end up been changed by the "3rd force" from inside or outside the country. Or they meet their logical end if left to the "Divine Intervention" and that is often extremely horrific. We will have to defeat this menace that is driving us more intolerant day by day. People like teachers, ulaamas and rulers are the role models for the masses in the developed world. But unfortunately we see totally opposite of this. Today we see ulaamas openly display their disgust and anguish against the rulers and vice versa. The ruling and opposition political parties are doing the same as well. We see the disgusting language used and derogatory comments passed on to each other by the so-called honourable members of parliament on both sides of the floor are extremely sad. They are not setting a good example for the fellow countrymen who elected them and sent them in the parliament to work hard for the betterment of the poor and ordinary people of this country. We don't see any faction of the society presenting an exemplary behaviour and attitude that we can take lead from. We are facing huge challenges from across the border which is unprecedented. Pakistan today is threatened and targeted by its enemies inside and outside the border at the same time. "Pakistan – China Corridor" Project is going to be the game changer in the region and both leaders and all the opposition parties need to rise above the petty political gains for the sake of this country and the future of our children attached to it. Therefore, our leaders need to show maturity and sanity towards dealing with these issues threatening our solidarity and very existence for that matter. And as I said, it is Allah's promise that if we, ourselves are not ready to change us for the better, we will surely end up taken over by the 3rd force from inside or outside of the country. I fear that

“someone” will teach us the “lesson” again if we have not yet learnt it from history already. We adopted this same attitude of intolerance towards the people in East Pakistan and it resulted in half of the country separated from us. We see the same unrest in KPK, Balochistan and Karachi today. If we can'tchange this attitude of intolerance towards each other and as a nation, we must consider – can we afford another Dhakka fall?

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