

# Liberal-Idealist Tradition in Non-Western World: Study of Vasudaiva Kutumbakum and Ubuntu

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## Abstract

*Prevailing humanitarian intervention in global affairs suffers from gross ineptness, ascribing to Western predominance on institutionalised discourse of Liberal Idealism. Recognition of limits to Euro-centric ideas and experiences in humanising global endeavours creates an urgency to explore non-Western roots of humanitarian actions. Of use, in this inquisitive quest, are ancient societal ideas of mutual existence and collective progress that drive humanist endeavours in India and Africa, notably Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and Ubuntu, calling for focussed consideration.*

**Keywords:** Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Ubuntu, Indic-African Worldview, Liberal Idealism, Globalisation of Humanitarian Response.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to South Africa in July 2016 proclaimed, “.....Through the spirit of Vasudaiva Kutumbakum and Ubuntu.....Our relationship has been a story of resolve, determination, justice and the excellence of human endeavour” (PIB, 2016), It is not for the first time that idea of Vasudaiva Kutumbakum has been enunciated in an overseas forum. Indeed, New Delhi’s eloquent articulation of this ancient Indian worldview in the United Nations gathering has been a regular occurrence right from the country’s independence.

Search for cultural connectivity through expression of a co-equivalent philosophical narrative of the distant neighbourhood

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reflects the proclivity of India, for that matter of other non-Western civilisational entities, for their active engagement in ideas shaping exercises of global affairs on humane terms. Proclamation of ancient cultural ethos in global platforms has drawn renewed interest with increasing realisation of ideational inadequacy and, in extension, operational inefficacy of the West dominated contemporary word order.

Recognition of limits to Euro-centric ideas and experiences in humanising global endeavours creates an urgency to look for non-Western roots of humanitarian actions. Modi's pronouncement of positive interrelationship through the spirit of Vasudaiva Kutumbakum and Ubuntu resonates in exploring intrinsic value of Indic-African templates of mutual existence and collective progress for globalising humanitarian response in a substantive sense.

Keeping the above concern in perspective, this paper has examined Liberal-Idealism as an analytical construct emanating from the Western world. It has subsequently contextualised Liberal-Idealist tradition in the regions beyond the West. Then, also the paper has conceptualised Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and, has later on made a reflection on *Ubuntu*, for seeking ideational expanse of the existing structure of global affairs.

### **Liberal-Idealism in Western World**

Liberal Idealism is a dominant idea in the global affairs discourse, owing its origin to the celebrated concept of perpetual peace expounded by Immanuel Kant (Kant, 1795). Running through Woodrow Wilson's reiteration justifying American entry into World War I in 1917 and then enunciation of fourteen principles as part of his vision of inter-war world order, it culminated in the

Democratic Peace Theory and Liberal Peace Thesis in the post-Cold War context (Reiter, 2017). It essentially posits the inevitability of democratic governance for ensuring global peace. For bringing peace through introduction of structural democracy in select parts of the Non-Western world, orchestration of regime change becomes the principal strategy of the extra-regional powers, especially the US led actors of the West. Hence, an inescapable question arises: are gradually evolved democratic institutions, or the arbitrarily crafted ones, essential for global peace? To put a more fundamental question, how liberal and ideal are methods of applying Liberal Idealisms in the practice of global affairs?

Interventionist endeavour towards establishing democratic institutions in Libya is a revealing case. The unilateral military intervention of the West in this North African country, ignoring mediatory role of the African Union, has caused enormous domestic and regional destabilisation. The then US President Barack Obama, under whose leadership the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation forces carried out the military operation, admitted that failing to prepare for the aftermath of the ousting of Libyan leader Col Muammar Gaddafi was the worst mistake of his presidency (BBC, 2016). However, American Institutional Liberalist like Robert Keohane in the beginning interpreted regime change through military means in Libya as one of the major indicators of the 'revival of moralism' in the post-Cold War world politics (Keohane, 2012). The *moralpolitik* supposition of this exercise is demystified, with timely revelation on the American scheme of capturing oil resource (The Hindu, 2012) and the French government's covert operation for killing Gaddafi in Libya (Indian Express, 2012). Evidently, exogenous imposition of the apparent

political morality has recreated many such conflict theatres and insecurity zones in the Non-Western world.

Proactive persuasion for selective non-intervention in distant conflict regions is another facet of West-centred Liberal Idealist discourse. Cold war time humanitarian intervention by the Afro-Asian actors in their respective neighbourhoods, notably Tanzania's intervention in Uganda, India's in East Pakistan and Vietnam's in Cambodia, with a positive outcome of stopping large-scale atrocities and displacement, became an issue of so called international security concern in 1970s (Seybolt, 2007).

The idea and practice of establishing democracy and peace through top-ward compelling methods have so far received enough critical reflection and enormous discredit. Roberts views liberal state building and peace building as a "post-Cold War neo-imperial agenda of intervention" in which states in post-conflict environments are being built in the image of the West. For Roberts, such an approach which is invasive and imperial has failed and will continue to fail as long as there is a failure to recognise and understand that "transitional impositions of democratic practice cannot be substitute for or replace, in the short-term, political behaviours derived from needs, experiences, histories and evolutions quite different from those from which Western democracy is derived" (Roberts, 2008, p. 64).

Similarly, Darby using a post-colonial critique of liberal peace building notes that it is a colonial enterprise that marginalises the experiences, approaches and understandings of non-Western societies and does not connect with their everyday lives (Darby, 2009). Darby notes that, as long as peace building initiatives are

determined from “above and outside”, they are “cast in the mould of colonialism” (Darby, 2009, p. 701). Richmond observes that “The whole apparatus of peace is sometimes colonial and racist in that it implies the transference of enlightened knowledge to those who lack the capacity or morality to attain such knowledge themselves” (Richmond, 2005, p. 204).

Patrick Tom argues that the practice of international peace building is grounded in the idea of the superiority of the liberal peace over other forms of peace, especially, local ones. He illustrates the case of Africa, where communities are rarely consulted about what kind of politics or state they want and as such, are being presented with no choice, but the liberal peace. For him, this assumes a priori that this is what they want, thus ends up looking like a colonial project. He adds that the liberal peace project has failed to achieve its aims including a democratic setting in which people’s welfare and human rights are promoted. As such, it doesn’t look like a very humanitarian practice, but as something that has been designed to recreate colonialism (Tom, 2011). Patrick suggests that if liberal peace building is to be “saved”, it ought to be saved from its “cheer leaders” who offer prescriptive strategies without a critical reflection on their viability and acceptability in post-conflict environments, and have witnessed local resistance to them. While the liberal peace model has worked well in the West, it is crucial to question whether transplanting it wholesale to non-Western societies with different cultural and historical backgrounds from it will work. In fact, war-torn societies need to be “saved” from problem-solving approaches that are biased towards these societies and ignore local agency, capacities for peacemaking, order and recovery. It is

important for the locals' voices to be heard (Tom, 2011), since as insiders they "possess the historical, cultural, and linguistic resources that outsiders lack, and that are essential not only to understanding the root causes of conflict but also to the search for sustainable solutions" (Donais, 2009, p. 11).

Democratic/Liberal Peace Thesis marginalises experiences, approaches and understandings of non-Western societies. This exclusivist variant of liberal idealism systemically permeates the ideational structure of the global affairs, which bears centuries together ascendancy of the West, especially prolonged dominance of the Anglo-Saxon powers like Britain and the United States. R. J. Rummel gave a compelling story of the horrors that occur in modern societies. He depicts how 'democide' has been very much a part of human history. Among other examples, his depiction includes the massacre of Europeans during the Thirty Years' War, the relatively unknown genocide of the French Revolution, and the slaughtering of American Indians by colonists in the New World (Rummel, 1997). Liberal Idealist discourse emanating from the West, in effect, serves the purpose of raising a human facade for the brutality that has been unleashed under the existing global order that is constantly unleashed under the existing hierarchical global order, which is based on the presumption of supra-state anarchy (Bull, 1977).

The anthro-economic foundation of this Anglo-Saxon eclecticism is essentially based on individualistic economic freedom and Euro-centric cultural determinism. An apparently globalist project is rooted in Weberian thesis of 'Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism', which has overwhelmingly shaped the Western capitalist worldview. Max Weber, in his seminal treatise *The*

*Religion of India — The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism* published in 1958 argued, “Capitalism would remain weak in India because the ancient religions of India have no element of the Protestant ethic, a necessary element for the growth and development of capitalistic thoughts.” Weber put forward further, “The irrational approach of Indian religious traditions, consisting of such dogmas as the *samsara* (illusionary world) and *karma* (doctrine of divine compensation), created a system that was highly traditional and progress-inhibiting” (Weber, as cited in Mishra & Kamal, 2014, p. 228).

Weber's stereotype vindication is thoroughly negated, when Paul Bairoch, a Belgian economist, has found India's share of global GDP at 24.5 percent in 1750, then taking a steady slide to 20 in 1800, 17 in 1830, 8 in 1880, and finally 1.7 in 1900 (Bairoch, 1982), under colonial grab. Predating Weber more than a century, another such powerful thinker like Hegel, who has immensely contributed, in addition to Immanuel Kant, to idealist philosophy in the West, in his 1830-1831 *Philosophy of History* lectures at the University of Jena stated:

The Negro.....represents the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality-all that we call feeling-if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character. The copious and circumstantial accounts of Missionaries completely confirm this.....(Hegel, 1956, p. 93).

Hegel's typecast description of Africans lacks credibility, since there is evidence of humanity protection institutions in pre-colonial Africa, as put forward in the later part of this paper. The

notional premise of such awful sense of Euro-cultural superiority is monotheistic theological traditions that have gained traction in many parts of the world, including the West. Though carrying global pretention, the Western version of Liberal Idealism consequently remains completely dismissive of the ideational and behavioural specificity of the Non-Western World.

### **Contextualising Liberal-Idealist Tradition beyond the West**

Liberal Idealist narrative of the established International Relations (IR) has barely taken note of historical experiences and ideational traits of the regions distant to the West. It is a continuation of the larger problem that has systemically gripped the theory building exercises of the discipline, since non-Western specificity has received scant recognition in the literature on IR. However, any reflection on skewed empirical-normative basis of the so called universal theories of IR does not ignore the truth that the non-Western world, like the West itself, is not a homogenous construct. This spatial category has the diversity of units and inhabitants (Acharya, 2014).

Illustrating the analytical gaps in IR theories in general and Liberal Idealism in particular, Amitav Acharya fairly pleaded, “Liberalism also needs to acknowledge the significant variations in cooperative behaviour that do exist in different local contexts, and that no single model of integration or interactions can account for all or most of them” (Acharya, 2018). His basic contention is that the literature on pre-Westphalian international systems has ignored interactions anchored on trade, ideas (including political ideas) and culture, where empire, hegemony or explicit and continuous power balancing is absent. For him, international systems of that



time could develop out of ideational interactions as much as material ones such as war and conquest (Acharya, 2011).

There is scope for incorporating pre-existing practices and values in Asia and its adjoining regions into the Liberal-Idealist analysis of global affairs. For instance, South-East Asia and the Indian Ocean, with a long history of commerce and flow of ideas, but without unity by conquest, are seldom studied as international systems (Acharya, 2011). Contemplation on the roots of democratic dialogue in India, as reiterated by Amartya Sen in his masterpiece *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* published in the year 2005, is again very instructive. Sen first identifies that democracy as practised in India is not just about elections, but also about civic discourse, including a 'willingness to listen to different points of view'. This maintains the 'long and written-up argumentative tradition' of India (Sen, as cited in Acharya, 2011, p. 637).

Equally, analytical attentions are also not drawn on the sphere of security prevailing in most pre-colonial African states through their indigenous customary and formal institutions. The maintenance of peace within many African communities was based on four legal principles: deliberation and discussion based dispute settlement, rather than force driven justice system; compensatory rectification of misconduct (except in severe crimes such as killing); assessment and adjudication by elders with standing of impartiality; and fairness. In this context, the thirteenth century's Mande Charter of West Africa deserves a proper notice. Its ruling ensured in Mali: - a) the prevalence of two inviolable principles guiding people's interrelationship: *sanankunya* (joking relation) and *tanamannyonya* (blood pact); b) consequently establishing respect of the other and peaceful

settlement of disputes as the rule; c) significantly the absence of harm to foreigners and inviolability of foreign envoy's security (Martin, 2012). Reflecting on the security setting in Mali Empire, Ibn Battuta pertinently observed, "Among these qualities [of the Blacks] there is also the prevalence of peace in their country, the traveller is not afraid in it, nor is he who lives there in fear of the chief or of the robber by violence" (Hamdun & King, 1975, p.58).

Obviously, the centuries together people's linkages between Asia and Africa have yet to capture their due space in the analytical construct of the Liberal Idealist strand of IR discourse. The pre-colonial interactions between India and the eastern seaboard of Africa were mainly economic and cultural. Trade was carried out between the two regions from very early times, some of it through intermediaries from the Persian or Arabian Gulf. India's cultural connectivity with East Africa extended to food and music. There is also evidence of Africa's long standing connection with China and Indonesia (Mazrui, 1977).

Analytical inclusion of these varied cooperative behaviours and outlooks lying across the non-Western regions could have enhanced the cognitive expanse of Liberal Idealist narrative of the Anglo-Saxon dominated IR. Such process has, however, failed to happen due to inherent limitation of the European Liberalism, which derives its genealogical motivation from monotheistic and semitic theology that is an anathema to the tradition of acceptance (Ketkar, 2017). It is, therefore, necessary to explore non-European/Western roots of Liberalism. Of use, in this inquisitive quest, are ancient societal ideas of mutual existence and collective progress that drive humanist endeavours in India

and Africa, notably Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and Ubuntu, calling for focussed consideration.

### **Conceptualising Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**

The expression *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (world is a family), written in bold letters on the first gate of India's Parliament, comes from a famous Sanskrit verse of the ancient Hindu text *Mahopanishad* (Prabhu & Mohapatra, 2014), saying *Ayam nijah paroveti ganana Laghuchetasam, Udaara Purushaanam tu vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. Karan Sing attributed a near meaning to it through his properly translated words, "Division between 'mine' and 'yours' is a small and narrow way of looking at reality, indulged in by people with immature minds. For those of the greater consciousness, the entire world is a family" (Singh, 2001, pp. 148-149). He further interprets the consequent comprehension of human race as an extended family, due to realisation of divine inhabitation in all human beings. Such spiritual humanist outlook has made India's ancient philosophers perceiving unity in all mankind. The highest good is to be found, not in the domination of one race or nationality by another, but in a cooperative commonwealth in which the 'welfare of the entire world' or the 'good of all beings' (*Sarvavutahita*) is assured (Jha, 1989, p.50). In essence, Indian tradition has always nurtured the idea of an interlinked neighbourhood with a sense of enlightened national interest (Prabhu & Mohapatra, 2014).

Guidance of *Dharma* (duty) is the essence of the ancient Indian polity. Duties, instead of rights, are indeed the hall mark of state craft and citizenship in Indic tradition. The corollary concept of 'state without statism' was enunciated by Madhav Sadashiv

Golwalkar, popularly known as Guruji, and Deendayal Upadhyaya. It was further extended to the international plane by Dattopant Thengadi, a great thinker activist of contemporary world, in his seminal work *Third Way*. He unveiled the conception of 'One World State' *Prithvi Samudraparyangtaya Ek Rashtra* (Aitareya Brahmana 8/15) from sea to sea over all the land one state. Drawing upon the ideas of sages in Bharat, he gave his reflection on *The Hindu Concept of World Order* and wrote, "The goal of life.....has been human happiness and world welfare based upon the elevation and emancipation of individual souls: *Atmano Mokshartham Jagat Hitaya Cha*. Hinduness stands for development of human consciousness from individual to universal" (Thengadi, 1998, p. 184).

Globalism emanating from the land of ancient India is ideationally rooted in its civilisational ethos that truth is one but has a diversity of expression, *Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti* (Truth is one, but the learned refer to it with different names) (Patwardhan, 1992). Liberal tradition of India and its contemplation on plurality have indeed a deeper cultural essence – manifested diversity of intrinsic unity. Illustratively, Hindu text *Ishavasya Upanishad* says, "*Ishavasyam idam sarvam, yat kinchit Jagtyam jagat, tena tyaktena bhunjithah maa grudhah kasya svidh dhanam*" (The divine principle pervades every atom in this universe. So, enjoy the bliss of being a part of this universe and share the joy of living on this bountiful, beautiful earth with all your fellow beings and other objects without excessive greed and avarice) (PIB, 2018). Manifestation of such positive integral thinking in Indian national behaviour was eloquently communicated to the global community through Vivekananda's

Chicago address towards the end of 19th century. When cultural onslaught of the British imperialism on Indian society was on its peak, Vivekananda at World Parliament of Religions on 11 September 1893 fearlessly conveyed acceptance of all religions as true, transcending the mere belief in universal toleration, as religious message of India to the world. He asserted national pride in his country sheltering the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth, notably Israelites and Zoroastrians (Vivekananda, 1893).

The behavioural dimension of India's integral humanist worldview was reiterated by C. Rajagopalachari in mid twentieth century, when he spoke of oneness and indivisibility of truth in his profound work *Hinduism: Doctrine and Way of Life*. Perceiving human mind, impinged by all external impulses, as the seat of harmony or unity of thought, he foreclosed the scope for selective use of truth. Rajagopalachari, therefore, offered a strong critique of wasteful consumption of human energy in "disharmonies involved in the prevailing contradictions in science, religion, national politics and the conduct of international affairs." Instead, he went on making a case for harmonization of evolving knowledge on laws of nature, philosophical principles and in practice statecraft in the quest for a successful confrontation of problems presently posed by the most complicated world to the humanity (Rajagopalachari, 1959).

Accepting the premise of the 'world as a family' brings a fundamental shift in one's attitude towards nurturing the planet. The human race is looked upon as part of nature, in the Hindu thought process, foreclosing the space for enjoying dominion or the right to exploit and destroy the natural environment. It is

pertinent to revisit the extraordinary articulation of ecological values and clear portrayal of the Earth with reverence in the 63 verses of the Hymn to the Earth in the *Atharva Veda* of several thousand years ago (Singh, 2010). Few of these verses (Singh, 2010, pp. 29-30) are as follows:

Earth, in which lie the sea, the river and other waters, in which food and cornfields have come to be, in which live all that breathes and that moves, may she confer on us the finest of her yield.

Earth, in which the waters, common to all, moving on all sides, flow unending, day and night, may she pour on us milk in many streams, and endow us with lustre.

Pleasant be Thy hills, O Earth, Thy snow-clad mountains and Thy woods!

On Earth - brown, black, ruddy and multi-coloured. The firm Earth protected by Indra, on this Earth I stand, unvanquished, unslain and unhurt.

May Earth with people who speak various tongues, and those who have various religious rites according to their places of abode, pour for me treasure in a thousand streams like a constant cow that never fails.

Whatever I dig from the Earth, may that have quick growth again. O purifier, May we not injure Thy vitals or Thy heart.

Planet Earth, identified as 'Bhavani Vasundhara' in the Hindu worldview and 'Gaia' in the Greek tradition, has nurtured consciousness up 'from the slime of the primeval ocean to where we are today' (Singh, 2010, p. 30). Ensuing sense of reverence towards shared space resonates in the sensitivity attached to the family as an institution, which is recognised as a basic socio-economic cultural unit of Indian system. It is a strong base of the

economy and a unit for discharging social responsibilities and the preservation of socio-cultural-religious values and traditions. The restrained ethical consumption pattern is a significant message that the family based system provides to the larger global community (Gupta, 2010). The age old idea of world as a family, which is appropriate in the case of global society, “has come within the realm of possibility,” said Karan Singh, “with the astounding breakthroughs in science and technology.” He added, “Instant communication has literally knit the world into a global community, and the internet has opened the gateways to human interaction transcending all barriers of space and time” (Singh, 2010, p. 28). He consequently pleaded for preferring Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam as the most befitting motto of the global society in the making due to present progress in technology (Singh, 2013).

Mechanical compression of world into a closely interconnected place is effected by a steady advancement in scientific discovery and technological invention. India remains one of the principal birthplaces of science through its contribution of geometry, zero, Yoga psychology, steel-making, Sanskrit grammar, binary numbers, music theory, combinatorics, algebra, astronomy, and physics (Kak, 2018). All of these go deep into the currently unfolding fourth stage of industrial revolution and in result the emerging scope for a global society. The contemporary world has, however, yet to become a shared space in humane terms, necessitating an endeavour towards informing ideational structure of global affairs with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam again conceptualised in ancient India.

### Reflecting on Ubuntu

The philosophy of Ubuntu remains deeply rooted in indigenous cultures of Africa, being interpreted by its many people, more specifically of Southern Africa, as a phenomenon of human interconnectedness (Gade, 2013). Denoting a cultural worldview of trying to capture the essence of humanity, it is found in diverse forms in many societies throughout Africa, in particular among the Bantu languages of East, Central and Southern Africa. Clearly articulated in Southern Africa's Nguni group of languages, it reflects the collectivist African philosophy of "I am human because I belong" in a significant contrast to the individualistic Western philosophy of *Cogito, ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) (Brock-Utne, 2004, p. 114). Broadly defined as an African variant of humanism, the concept of Ubuntu accordingly places communitarian interests above those of the individual, with the premise that human existence is dependent upon interaction with others. Having a long tradition in Africa, its general meaning and spirit are mostly understood in common practice and parlance throughout much of the continent (McDonald, 2010). As a behavioural gift, Ubuntu is considered less an economy or even a philosophy, and more a lifestyle, a way of being, a way of seeing and acting. The gift is life itself, and at the root of each society (Muthien, 2008).

Ramose sees the word Ubuntu as 'two words in one', consisting of the prefix ubu- and the stem ntu-, evoking a dialectical relationship of being and becoming. In this sense, ubu- and ntu- are 'two aspects of being as a oneness and wholeness' (Ramose, 2002, p. 230). Desmond Tutu has described Ubuntu as "embracing hospitality, caring about others, being willing to go the extra mile for the sake of others. ...The solitary human is a contradiction in terms and therefore you seek the common good because your



humanity comes into its own community in belonging” (Tutu, 2009). He has given one of the best definitions of the term in his book *No Future Without Forgiveness*, explaining the term thus (Tutu, 1999, pp. 34-35):

Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks to the very essence of being human. When you want to give high praise to someone we say, 'Yu, u nobuntu'; he or she has ubuntu. This means that they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means that my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs. We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'a person is a person through other people' (in Xhosa Ubuntu ungamntu ngabanye abantu and in Zulu Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye). I am human because I belong, I participate, I share. A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes with knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.

Desmond Tutu’s reiteration of the indigenous concept of Ubuntu, conveying the profound truth of interconnectivity in human experiences (happiness or distress), resonates in the post-apartheid campaign of South Africa for promoting an African Renaissance. Nelson Mandela gave the similar reflection in his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom* (Mandela, 1995), explaining mutuality in human liberation. The ancient principles of ‘respect and gifting; of social egalitarianism and normative nonviolence’ are critical for constructing alternatives to the pursuit of hegemony and domination. Ubuntu stands out to be at the core of such new forms of political practices, putting forwarding an

enlightening message of inextricably connected humanities and freedoms (Muthien, 2008, pp. 60-61). In its 1997 White Paper on Social Welfare, South African government defines Ubuntu as “the principle of caring for each other’s well-being...and a spirit of mutual support....Each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual’s humanity.” The White Paper adds, “Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being” (RSA, 1997).

An interdependent consciousness in the social, economic and political behaviours reasonably emerges from the conception that existential mutuality underpins human interrelationships. Pertinently, the ancient ethic of Ubuntu offers a perceptual base for striving towards comprehensive peace and security in Africa. For instance, Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) in post-apartheid South Africa, a Committee chaired by Desmond Tutu, is a remarkable experiment to reverse the systemically inflicted dehumanisation. Timothy Murithi appropriately notes, “Even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the brutalizing system from which they benefited economically and politically: it distorted their view of their relationship with other human beings, which then impacted upon their own sense of security and freedom from fear.” Observing correlation between Ubuntu and TRC, Murithi writes, “The notion of Ubuntu sheds light on the importance of peacemaking through principles of reciprocity and a sense of shared destiny between peoples.” He adds, “It provides a value system for giving and receiving forgiveness. It provides a rationale for sacrificing or letting go of the desire to take revenge for past wrongs” (Murithi, 2006, p.29). Manifestly, TRC experiment has

gained its traction as an innovative conflict resolution approach in many countries of Africa and beyond, signifying relevance of Ubuntu, an African vision of humanism, for global endeavours of peace and security.

In conclusion, ideas of Vasudaiva Kutumbakum and Ubuntu are located in Indic-African worldviews, guided by non-Western societal pursuit of humanism with considerable significance for global efforts towards achieving peace, security and harmony in a comprehensive sense. Prevailing humanitarian intervention in global affairs suffers from gross ineptness, ascribing to Western predominance on institutionalised discourse of Liberal Idealism, an extension of Anglo-Saxon version of eclecticism premised on the notions of individualistic economic freedom and Euro-centric cultural determinism. Ensuing absence of standardisation of global response to humanitarian crisis, hence, remains a fundamental concern.

Increasing recognition of West-centred ideas and experiences as inadequate for unleashing globalisation of humanitarian response, creates an urgency to look for non-Western roots of humanising global endeavours, underlining exploratory worth of Indic-African templates of mutual existence and collective progress, exemplified in value systems of Vasudaiva Kutumbakum and Ubuntu. Indian message of Vasudaiva Kutumbakum has an enormous transformative potential in shaping mechanically interconnected world into a humanely shared space. Equally, African notion of Ubuntu has an immense action able relevance for nurturing a mutually secure and peaceful global setting. Consequent integration of ancient collectivist ethos underpinning Vasudaiva Kutumbakum and Ubuntu philosophy into its analytical construct increases the likelihood of Liberal Idealist tradition becoming global in scope and humane in substance.

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