

Global Citizen in the Twenty First Century: Challenges and Opportunities in the Post 9/11 Era

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Abstract

This paper deals with the increased activity of a global citizen in the twenty first century. It explains that how it has become difficult for a global citizen to remain loyal to the government as a unit of the state on the one hand and show allegiance towards its sociopolitical and economic pattern for a successful life on the other. It obliges an individual to face different challenges as well as have opportunities to live as an active citizen. The challenges he face are Class Conflict, ideological chauvinism, increased insecurity/terrorism, visa restrictions, Environment degradation, and globalization. A global citizen has opportunities while living in a state those are: Trade, rapid Communications, identity, representation in the legislatures, right to work, right to get education, right to health and freedom of expression, speech and assemble. The citizen has to adjust himself according to the rules and regulations where he lives even for few days. Modern age is an age of communication. World has become a global village and a citizen of one country travel from one place to another for business, education, entertainment and other works. He has to be loyal to the local laws of the place where he is visiting. Although it is a big challenge for the global citizen but he also get the opportunity of interacting with other cultures. This cultural exchange is a real asset of a global citizen. This paper is based on comparative as well as qualitative method.

Key Words: Global citizen, challenges, opportunities, global village

1- Objectives of the Paper

There are two main objectives of this paper:

- 1.1- Understanding the increased obligations of the global citizen-
- 1.2- It may lead to minimize terrorism in the world in post 9/11 era.

2- Definition of the Global Citizen (GC)

For this paper we may define the GC, is a citizen who is influenced by the local as well as global incidents.

3- Introduction

The twenty first century is full of conflicts. Humanity remains insecure although we have become more scientifically sophisticated and technologically advanced. In the state of nature human beings used to live in 'might is right.' In the modern state drums of democracy and human rights are beaten for the welfare of humanity. The lacuna between practice and precept creates dissatisfaction on the part of the individual. Different levels in the development of a state (developed, developing, under developing etc.) has made the individual confused. This confusion leads towards segregation of humans because of ethnic groups and classes. The communism and capitalism emerged in the twentieth century. The former ended with the end of the same century and latter facing uncertainty at the advent of twenty first century. This uncertainty is giving way to non-state actors to play a role for filling the vacuum created by the state actors in world politics.

The arms race, nuclear technology, and scientific advancements could not make us advanced in our thinking but made the advanced environment. For example, in ancient times we use fire for cooking and keeping us warm. That fire usually comes of burning woods. Today, fire comes of sui-gas, oil or electricity. It has speed up our efficiency regarding consumption of time. We get our water hot in no time, cook foods and get warm without any delay. Thus, this development made us more intolerant and impatient. This, intolerance and impatience forced nations to put implications that could keep us away from meeting each other. We started restricting ourselves with drawing boundaries. These boundaries confined people within a state. That state started giving identity to human beings known as citizens of such and such states. It breeds hatred among nations because of racial differences and class variations.

After the First World War in 1918, League of Nations came into existence to stop war among nations but failed owing to the start of Second World War in 1939. The United Nations came into existence in 1945 but could not resolve conflicts emerge among nations.

The development of cyberspace, internet, email, fax and multimedia reduce the physical boundaries to an extent and increase the interconnectedness among individuals of the world. It created a borderless world. This borderless world is making a serious effort for creating a global citizen. The main source of becoming global citizen is social media.

4- Social Media and Global Citizens

Social media means any medium that comes through internet. For example, email, different search engines, YouTube, twitter, Face book, Skype, websites, blogs etc all are the major sources for interacting or increased interconnectedness among individuals of the world. It started spreading information more rapidly. In the contemporary world, people can play games with each other even sitting in the far-flung areas of the world. They can make business; have friendships and share opinions on different regional and global issues. They can share gifts and shop at through this social media. Social media has increased the interconnection among peoples of the world and dissolved the physical borders. This increased interconnectedness or collectivism encourages the concept of global citizenry.

5- Different Types of Global Citizens

There are different types of global citizens. One, who shares, buys, sells, reads and writes through social media. Second type of global citizen is that individual who not only shares, buys, sells, reads and writes through social media but also travels across the boundaries. The third type of global citizen marries, lives and trades between more than two countries and adopts the citizenship of more than one country. Fourth type of global citizen is he who gets permanent resident status of multiple states but does not get citizenship of more than one state. Fifth type of citizenship is a supranational citizenship that gives way to be a global citizen. For example, a citizen of any European country individual is a citizen of European Union and can move, live, marry trade and work freely in all member countries without any visa restrictions.¹⁴

Although dream of global citizen is pragmatic yet difficult because of certain challenges that an individual may face while embracing the status of global citizen.

6- Challenges

6.1- Visa restrictions is the first challenge that global citizen faces in the global village. There is selective behaviour on the part of the international community as few people of the world who belong to the developed world can go in any part of the world. While on the other hand people of developing world have to face certain visa restrictions. It confines the majority of the people to become a global citizen.

6.2- Ideology is the second challenge in the modern world for the global citizen. The post 9/11 era started a so-called clash of civilizations¹⁵ in the modern world George Bush intentionally or unintentionally called the post 9/11 era as a start of crusade war and went back from his words immediately. The collapse of communism in 1991 and collapse of capitalism in 2008 may be considered significant incidents in the perspective of ideological challenges for the people of the world. Global citizen is looking for an identity through the ideological thinking. The West did its best to defame Islam since September 2001 to date. Islam has been flourishing more strongly in the same period.

6.3- Language is another challenge for the global citizen as the developed countries are not ready to forgo their languages and stick with it for centuries. Interestingly, the developing world is ready to learn about other languages and want to learn about others. Therefore, it seems that it is easier for the individual living in the developing world to become a global citizen as compare to the individual of the developed world.

6.4- Class Conflict is increasing in the world day by day. Joseph E. Stiglitz wrote in his new book that (Stiglitz, The Price of Inequality, 2012) it is the U.S. where inequality is increasing day by day between rich and poor. It is raising a class conflict. The occupy Chicago and occupy Wall Street movements are pertinent examples of class conflict. Therefore, global citizen is facing that lacuna between rich and poor classes. It is also a big hurdle in this perspective.

6.5- Polluted environment is another challenge for a global citizen. In the wake of industrialization, the U.S. emitting 24% of the world carbon dioxide and China is emitting 14 % of the world carbon dioxide in the environment. This emission is depleting ozone layer, causing acid rain, and global warming. The increased interconnectedness has given way to the fast food restaurants in the world over. Hardees, KFC, McDonalds and Pizza Hutt are popular food chains in the world. These restaurants are emitting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) that also damage the environment.

6.6- Globalization: It is again a blessing. Individuals from developing world can take advantages of globalization. The international actors to engage them in any productive activity welcome skilled and capable people. For example, TV channels have provided many individuals from developing countries to get more opportunities in other parts of the world. Mr. Khalid Hameed had been a news anchor in Pakistan; presently he is working with Voice of America. Adnan Siddiqui a known drama actor in Pakistan worked for a Holly wood

¹⁴ (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dual_nationality, 2012).

¹⁵ A thesis introduced by Samuel P. Huntington in the early 1990s.

movie. It was not possible if the phenomenon of globalization was not there. Indian and Pakistani actors are working across the boundaries. Pakistani actors and singers like Veena Malik, Ali Zafar, Meera, and Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, Atif Aslam respectively are working for Bollywood films. It is just because of global village. Amn Ki Asha is an attempt to reconcile among people of the subcontinent. It is possible only when there is globalization. Therefore, the process of globalization has minimized the boundaries and made the world a small place. Australian, West Indian, cricket players are working for Indian advertisements. Pakistani sports commentators are working for foreign TV channels. All these examples showed the opportunities that a global citizen can enjoy in lieu of pursuing the movement of global citizenship.

Beside these challenges, there are also certain opportunities that a global citizen can avail in the jungle like world.

7- Opportunities

Communication revolution and the phenomenon of globalization has compressed the space and time. This compression has made this world a global village. In this global village, everyone has opportunities to flourish. It depends upon the capabilities and skills of the individuals to adjust itself according to the international environment and earn the fruits of globalization.

7.1- Trade is an opportunity for an individual in this age of globalization. Free trade through world trade organization is valuable asset for trading companies living in the far-flung areas of the world. World Trade Organization is a big forum for sustaining meager economies of the world. The GC can take this opportunity successfully and enjoy the freedom of work and trade.

7.2- Identity: Identity is the most important thing that a state gives to an individual. Therefore, he may go across the world with that identity. This identity may give him respect and disrespect according to the individual acts of the concerned person. Today Muslims are called terrorist but we know that terrorism has nothing to do with any ideology. Anybody can commit the act of violence.

7.3- Rapid transportation and communication sources are instrumental for today's global citizen. Airplanes, Rail cars, Luxury Buses, Trams, and Ships have made an easy life for global citizens. It is a blessing that without spending a single penny global citizen can communicate from one part of the world to another in no time. The email, cyberspace, multimedia, all work through internet for the modern day citizens. Mobile phones are a quick source of information and connection with other parts of the world in no time.

7.4- Representation in the Legislature

The individual GC enjoys the right to get representation in the legislature in his country or any other country whom it enjoys the citizenship. For example, a Pakistani individual like Lord Nazir is a member of British Parliament and also enjoying the dual citizenship. In the same way there are many other like examples in the world.

7.5- Right to work

Today a GC has the right to work anywhere in the world. As mentioned above the countries that allow their citizens for dual citizenship, they can work anywhere inside or outside the country. Veena Malik, Ali Zafar, Meera, and Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, Atif Aslam are pertinent examples in this perspective.

7.6- Right to get education

A GC is allowed to go and get education wherever they wish for. Scholarships, financial assistance are available in the world over for getting worldwide education. It assists GC for getting professional education from the best institutions of the world.

7.7- Right to health

The GC is very much concerned with his health therefore, the developed world always keep the health at the top priority in its annual budgets. The developing world does not take care of its health domain as efficiently as the developed world. But anyone can go in the world for his treatment.

7.8- Freedom of expression, speech and assemble

All GCs enjoy freedom of expression, speech and assemble as their fundamental rights. Globalization and multimedia has made it very easier for the GCs to enjoy their fundamental rights. Social media has almost eliminated all barriers of freedom of expression, speech and assemble.

8- Conclusion

There are more challenges for the global citizen since 9/11 and fewer opportunities, thus a pragmatic approach needed for making the quality life of the GC. It needs tolerance on the part of individual. He needs to know how vigilant about the rules and regulations of other countries, enhance our recreation but if we remain ignorant to the local laws, it may happen otherwise. Respect each other the key to success. It will end selective morality. Global citizen can be a pragmatic approach if we start tolerating each other's values. We have to be very careful in visiting other parts of the world and be vigilant about the rules and regulations of that place. It may enhance

our recreation but if we remain ignorant to the local laws, it may happen otherwise. The developed world has to play an important role in encouraging the concept of global citizen. Although, it is already working on that yet the issue of selective morality is damaging the very nature of global citizen. For example, more developed countries enjoy visa free environment for their citizens as compare to developing countries. This selective behaviour or morality is the real hurdle in the way of a global citizen.

There should be a global Citizens' Union/Council that could bring people together through pragmatic dialogue. The UN must support the GC for more security in the world.

The citizens of Denmark, Sweden, Australia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom can go to most parts of the world without visa. The citizens of Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan, etc are not allowed to visit more countries without visa. There are many disparities lying with these countries but global village has to review their attitude towards these countries for a better peaceful environment in the world. Thus, the developed world has to be pragmatic with prudential reforms in visa policy that may provide equal opportunities to the developed world people as well as developing world individuals to travel across the world freely.

9- Findings

GCs from Developed world has more opportunities and less challenges while the GCs from developing world have less opportunities and more challenges in the post 9/11 era. The study needs more empirical data regarding the nature of GCs from different countries and ideologies like Muslim, Jew, Christian-Hindu etc that who is having more opportunities and who has less challenges. The countries like Denmark, Sweden, Australia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom have more opportunities and countries like Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan, etc face more challenges.

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