

**James Swetnam**

**Johnson J. Puthenpurackal, ed., *Pluralism of Pluralism: A Pluralistic Probe into Philosophizing*, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2006, pages: xxi + 393, ISBN: 81-7086-392-9.**

While the west 'academically' celebrates pluralism, in India it is really celebrated in life. In the west it is a concept to be reflected upon, to be investigated into and to be discussed and clarified. In India, we live 'pluralism' in all its existentiality; India is perhaps the only nation where plurality of every kind harmoniously coexists. Hence, pluralism in India is not merely an academic theme to be scientifically worked out, but an existential issue to be lived with.

In the philosophical sense, the term pluralism has two distractive features, or two uses: pluralism of reality and pluralism of approach to reality. In general, pluralism can be defined as the existence of a condition in which numerous distinct ethnic, religious, or cultural groups are present and tolerated within a society. In other words, it amounts to the condition of being multiple or plural and the belief that such a condition is desirable or socially beneficial. Today, everyone knows that there are people who think and act differently. In the real sense, pluralism is a middle way between realism and relativism.

*Pluralism of Pluralism* examines various aspects or forms of "pluralism." Cultural pluralism denotes that man is in constant journey. Imagination, exile, political refugees, rapid population growth, economic growth, brain drain, globalization, political upheaval, and natural disasters have given birth to different cultures, resulting in what is called 'cultural pluralism'. Ecological pluralism promotes and fosters eco-centricity. The need of the hour is a deeper commitment to protect and preserve nature. It is a commitment to the sanctity of life, a commitment to unity irrespective of caste, creed, and nationality.

Pluralism within feminist thought emerged from reflection that sex differences between women and men should make opportunities, power, self-concept and material conditions. Emergence of feminism in India can be attributed to pluralism. Movements like 'CHIPKO' became the springboard for the birth of eco-feminism in India.

Religious pluralism refers to the fact that there is a variety of beliefs and practices that go under the name of religion. Two main features of religious pluralism are exclusivism and inclusivism. Exclusivism is the view that there is only one religion which is true or which can be an effective means of salvation. Inclusivism is the view that only one religion possesses the final truth and other religions are more or less true to the extent they approximate to their one religion.

This book presents education as enabling people to open up to the reality of plurality. Openness to plurality elicits an attitude of tolerance with highly developed sense of care and concern for other individuals. Under the title “Mass Media and Plurality of Values” it is affirmed that one of the important areas in which education has to assert itself is that of mass media. The new media culture has affected and altered our value properties drastically. The media are powerful tools for communication: to promote good as well as evil, to build as much as to destroy.

Pluralism is definitely part of our modern democratic experience. The scholarly way of dealing with the varied issues in view of containing diversity within a religion, within a culture, within a language that we come across with in this edited volume is commendable. Indeed, they are all expressions of our experience of pluralism; but what makes this collection attractive is the philosophical acumen with which the authors analyse the issues involved and the ‘philosophical distance’ that ultimately leads to viable solutions.

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