



Egocentrism and Critical Awareness

Muhammad Sharif Uddin

Uttam Gaulee

Morgan State University, USA

In a recent interview Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky, stated that the current conflict between his country and Russia is not between two armies or two countries, but rather between two ideologies. One ideology was a free world, free thought, and respect for others. The other ideology, on the other hand, was all about dominating others by using muscle to instill dread and horror in them. His remark was thought-provoking, and it made us reflect on the global culture of superiority complex. Some people believe they are entitled to more advantages than those who are not like them for one or more reasons. Their socioeconomic level, color, gender, culture, religion, and other factors could all be influencing factors.

One of the most important factors in determining superiority or inferiority is socioeconomic position. People in positions of financial and political power expect special treatment in society. Even someone of the same race with a lower socioeconomic standing does not have access to the same advantages and superiority. Furthermore, privileged individuals are still oblivious that they have an unfair advantage in society and can exert power over others. They assume they are acting appropriately. Social instability and chaos result from this narcissistic superiority mindset. Around 150 years ago, Nobel Laureate Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore wrote "Dui Bigha Jomi," a poem reflecting the face of social authority and control. The poet addressed how society's dominant people took advantage

of the weak and destitute. Tagore believed that the affluent appeared to have the right to steal anything from the poor and weak, making them more vulnerable and inadequate.

For years, leaders like President Zelensky and thinkers like poet Tagore have been pointing out inequality on the global arena, in society, and in our daily lives, and calling for change activism. Do we, however, notice the fundamental differences? Do all persons enjoy the same benefits? Are we secure on the streets, in the malls, or at the grocery stores? Are our kids safe in schools? How can we make the world a more humane place? Everyone should be aware of what academics and leaders tell us about humanity on a regular basis. We must understand the core causes of harmful and life-threatening actions on a regular basis around the world. Hate crimes and social dominance are on the rise, as are infectious diseases. Many people are mentally paralyzed for the basic psychological needs of security, food, and shelter. Even the powerful are scared and insistent to gain greater privileges and create social turmoil.

Critical awareness is essential to mitigate the dangerous contagious diseases of hegemonic injustice. Critical awareness is the knowledge, dispositions, and skills that can help an individual analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the common practices in our society and determine what the ideal practices should be. When individuals can recognize the differences between every day and ideal behaviors, they can become the transformative intellectuals that our society sorely needs. This critical knowledge can help disadvantaged groups comprehend their rights and privileges, as many do not recognize they are controlled by others rather believe they are not entitled to the same rights as others because of their social rank, race, or other reasons. In addition, the privileged groups will be able to acknowledge their dominance and accept everyone's equal rights. Their understanding will help them to be respectful to others. As a result, critical awareness will turn every individual into a transformative intellectual, resulting in societal cultural order.

When I (Uddin) was a doctoral student, one of my professors used to say in every class that we need good education as this education is the only medication for all social diseases like domination, injustice, anarchy, and bad politics. He also proposed that our education systems be rebuilt to help young people become advocates for social and global equality, safety, and security. An excellent education, according to that professor, can foster

empathy, sympathy, and academic achievement. It is the only way to address everyday issues such as social anarchy, health issues, and political and social imbalances. As a result, successful education is the learning process that fosters people's cognitive growth as well as their social, emotional, and ethical growth. We connect good education to John Dewey's whole-child development process through experiential learning. Experiential learning is a type of learning in which students learn by doing, allowing them to obtain the knowledge, attitudes, and abilities needed to address everyday situations. This knowledge can aid us in comprehending President Zelensky's two ideologies as well as Tagore's societal dominance.

The Journal of Underrepresented and Minority Progress is a free online publication that promotes and publishes practical scholarships that help underrepresented individuals advance academically, socially, and economically. It is an open access, peer-reviewed journal for both writers and readers. Our goal is to empower everyone, both powerful and powerless, to create a better society in which we may all live freely, happily, and safely.

MUHAMMAD SHARIF UDDIN, EdD, is the Journal of Underrepresented & Minority Progress's editor, and a faculty member in the Department of Teacher Education and Professional Development at Morgan State University, USA.

UTTAM GAULEE, PhD, is the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Underrepresented & Minority Progress, President of the STAR Scholars Network, and a professor in the Department of Advanced Studies, leadership, and Policy at Morgan State University, USA.