

ISSN : 0976-9463

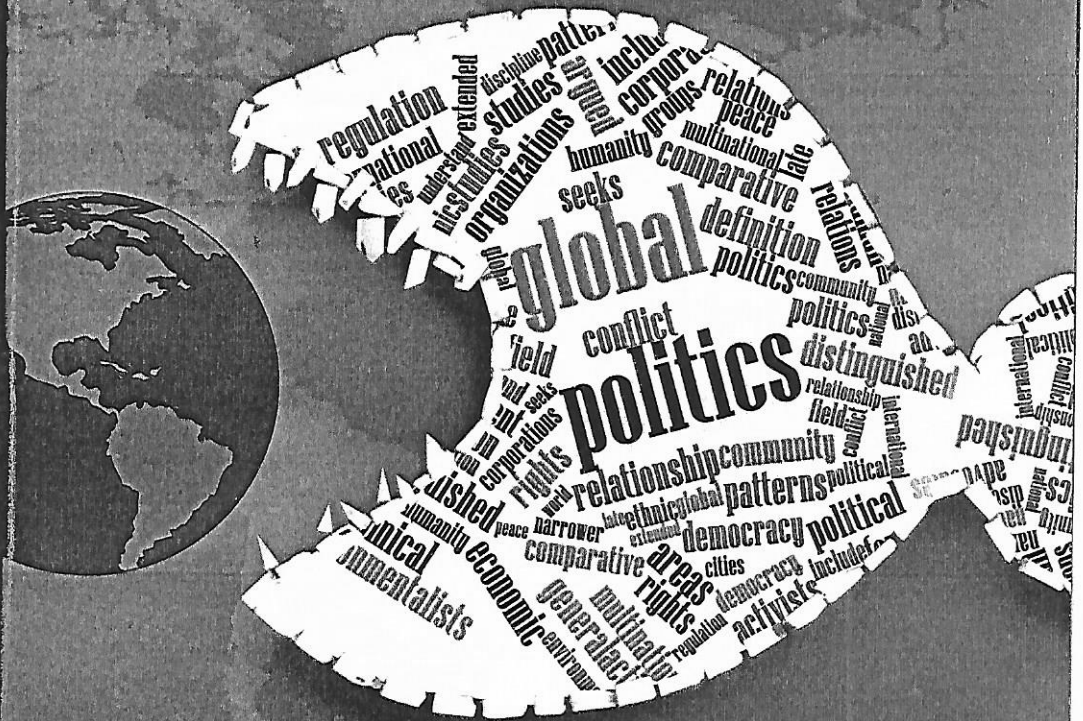
Issue 25, Vol. 39

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UGC Approved Peer-Reviewed Research Journal on Arts and Humanities

Contemporary Issues of International Relations



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দি গৌরী কালচারাল এন্ড এডুকেশনাল অ্যাসোসিয়েশন

TABU EKALAVYA

UGC Approved International Peer-Reviewed (Refereed) Research Journal on Arts & Humanities

ISSUE 25, Vol. 39 • April-June, 2020

ISSN : 0976-9463

TABU EKALAVYA

Under The Gouri Cultural & Educational Association
Research Institution of Language, Culture & Literature
Registration No. S/IL/34421/2005-06

Estd. 1995

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প্রাপ্তিস্থান : দে'জ, দিয়া, দে বুক স্টোর (দীপু), পাতিরাম, ধ্যানবিন্দু, পাতাবাহার

মূল্য : ৬০০ টাকা

CONTEMPORARY INTOLERANCE IN SOUTH ASIA : IN SEARCH OF THE RELEVANCE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

KAUSHIK CHAKRABORTY

Abstract

Religious and ethnic intolerance triggered by different religious and ethnic groups of South Asian Region are rumbling which may reach the crescendo at any moment. This turmoil may result in gross political instability for which the entire region is likely to be confronted with absolute anarchism. We may clarify the issue with reference to cases of some countries falling in this region. For instances, the Buddhist monks of Sri Lanka appear to be the patrons of Singhalese nationalist fanaticism. Having been extending morale booster to the anti-Tamil sentiments for the last three decades, they have now turned their attention to the Muslim minorities as an additional target. Recently the Singhalese are in dreadful communal conflict with Muslim minority. After Sri Lanka, let's turn our eyes on Bangladesh. Bangladesh presents a more shagging picture. The minorities of the country are being treated as second-class citizens. Despite the termination of five decades since independence of Bangladesh, Hindu, Christian and Buddhist minorities have been subjected to humiliation and torture. And in India the term 'Secular' became the most controversial term in present day politics. As a whole, intolerance is a basic factor that shakes the very foundation of the human rights through demolishing the democratic fabric of these countries. Dignity and equality of human beings lie at the heart of the Human Rights framework with its basic idea of elimination of all forms of discrimination. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Now, keeping this in mind we need to turn our attention to Vivekananda with an aim to evaluate the cogency and relevance of his ideas in present day context of South Asia through the prism of Human Rights and democracy. Vivekananda recognized universal acceptance through