CHAPTER III

RUSSELL'S CONTEMPORARY WORLD

The term 'Russell's contemporary world' has been used here to stand for the world that belonged to the period from 1872 to 1970 in keeping with the years of Russell's birth and death respectively. The said period evidently represents the scanty later part of the nineteenth century and the mega early part of the twentieth century with their respective socio-political, economic, cultural, religious, and ethical features of human habitations. Besides being well-acquainted with all the major socio-political upheavals of the past history of mankind by virtue of extensive and meticulous study of a heap of historical records related to man's evolutionary process, Russell could also strenuously accumulate substantial knowledge of the socio-political, religio-ethical, economic, cultural, scientific and intellectual trends and tendencies of both the centuries to which he belonged, and thereupon got well-conversant with the views and visions, creeds and convictions, intellectual insights and social relations, ethical bearings and behaviours, taboos, superstitions etc. of his contemporary people with different ethnic identities. All his writings on sundry subjects related to human life and society which were regularly coming to light after the World War I of 1914-18 with the exception of German Social Democracy that had been published in 1896 manifest his acute knowledge of the contemporary world mostly in relation to human thinking and behaviour.

The outbreak of World War I, as a matter of fact, may significantly be taken for the very turning point of his intellectual and socio-political career as his inclination to the study of socio-political and moral problems with respect to the peaceful and honest living of Homo-sapiens and also the further continuity of human civilization on this
planet started growing more impregnable and consistent with utmost sincerity. The War of 1914-1918 changed everything for him. In 'The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell, Volume II' Russell has mentioned that he ceased to be an academic, and took to writing books of new kinds after the World War I. It also changed his whole conception of human nature. He became for the first time deeply convinced that puritanism does not make for human happiness. Subsequently, he developed a new kind of love for the living ones after having seen the spectacles of death caused by the World War I. In the essay My Mental Development, Russell writes:

"The First World War gave me a new direction to my interest. The war and the problem of preventing future wars, absorbed me, and the books that I wrote on this and cognate subjects caused me to become known to a wider public."

In a word, both his intellect and conscience were dedicated to the prolific writings on socio-political, ethical, and pacifist matters in order that people might be made aware of the prevalent social evils which were to be condemned as the root causes of mutilating the human civilization. As he was a man of scientific and rationalistic temperament, all his endeavours to identify the so-called social evils and abuses were indispensably scientific, and all the process in this line could easily generate a kind of sensation in the minds of the people impelling them to shake off their traditional chain of dogmatic views and superstitious beliefs.

Notwithstanding the fact that Russell was the leading thinker of the twentieth century, here much stress has deliberately been laid on the relevance of the nineteenth century with a view to unfolding the dominant trends of this period that had affected Russell positively or negatively during the early part of his life. The formative period of Russell's life, beyond question, was nourished by the nineteenth century sentiments and sensibilities with support and opposition alike. The elderly members of his family and the other respectable people such as kith and kin, teachers, guides in various fields and so forth with whom he was closely associated were the men and women who were living under the direct impact of the views and visions of this particular age. His close association

1. 'The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell', op.cit., p. 17.
with such a group of people made him fully aware of the thinking and behaving of the period concerned, and they did a lot to shape his own thinking and behaving in the later years. That is why it is contemplated to be quite imperative for anyone who wants to throw light on Russell's works and activities to make a precise survey at least of the main perspectives of the social advancement through a series of upheavals which were almost inevitable in its course. On the other hand, Russell himself enjoyed the nice occasion to witness the oncoming of the twentieth century from its very beginning; he was already an intellectually mature being with a high level of rational outlook. With such background, 'Russell's contemporary world' may easily be used to represent both the later nineteenth century and the early twentieth century world. Russell, a social thinker and humanitarian in the truest sense, never faltered to raise the voice of protest against what he had found to be unjust and morally harmful to thoughts and actions of surrounding people. He wrote about his own time in the way as follows:

"The world in which we find ourselves is one where great hopes and appalling fears are equally justified by the possibilities. The fears are very generally felt, and are tending to produce a world of listless gloom. The hopes, since they involve imagination and courage, are less vivid in most men's minds. It is only because they are not vivid that they seem utopian. Only a kind of mental laziness stands in the way. If this can be overcome, mankind has a new happiness within its grasp." 2

Another important point to take note of, here, is that Russell was mostly concerned with the Western civilization rather than the Eastern; that is, precisely speaking, he was more concerned with the traits and trends of the European civilization. His opinion and comments on assorted subjects are based on his own experiences that he gathered through continuous efforts to know this civilization at best. He was, of course, not totally ignorant of the Eastern civilization as he himself was an omnivorous reader of history and other subjects related to human society. Whatever may be the case, Russell's diagnosis of the evil forces that might harm the true essence of mankind, as a whole, is

2. Bertrand Russell:  'Human Society in Ethics and Politics',
almost accurate, and his condemnation of such forces now appears to be ever fruitful to
human civilization, no matter Western or Oriental. Again the limitation that he was mostly
concerned with the Western civilization may be ignored on the grounds that the nineteenth
century was an age in which the entire world was gradually getting affected by the
impact of the scientific knowledge of the socio-cultural expansion of the European
civilization. In this context, we may aptly refer to the observation of W. H. McNeill, the
distinguished historian that:

"The preponderance of the West as against other civilizations of the world,
which had existed already under the Old Regime, became so great in the
course of the nineteenth century that after about 1850 all traditional barriers
against Western penetration collapsed. Westerners took advantage of their
new found power to surge into every part of the habitable globe. The world
thus for the first time in human history entered upon an adventure in global
cosmopolitanism"

Now, we may be confirmed that Russell was equally interested in all parts of the
world although the trends and tenets of the European civilization shaped him to be an
outstanding lover of mankind and a great social thinker for its progress at large. He left
no stone unturned to detect the enemies of man either in the form of sentient or in that
of evil-notion. Having witnessed in his own days the nefarious trends of war-mongering,
racial hostilities, religious persecutions, intolerances, socio-political malpractices,
moral degradation using of destructive scientific weapons and all other anti-human ills
and abuses, he boldly carried on a mission to discover the real causes of such evil deeds
at all costs. Here, in this chapter, attempts have been made to identify the major social
features of Russell's contemporary world so much so that his diverse assertions as revealed
in his different works may properly be substantiated. The features that need to be
specifically emphasised are: - i) Man and Universal society. ii) Political Scenario, iii)
Economic Picture, iv) Religion, and v) Moral Degradation. Analyses of these points
related to Russell's contemporary human society are supposed to give us an adequate

London p, 412.
impression as to how he was affected by his contemporary world and what factors impelled him to form his own moral philosophy to discriminate the evil and harmful forces that strangle humanity with brutish spirit. Let us investigate the evils that Russell condemned to be anti-human in regard to the social events as have been categorised above.

1. Man and Universal Society:

As stated above, the undeterred expansion of European imperialism to different countries outside England resulted in uniting together the people of different parts of the world under a single umbrella through the magic power of its art, culture, education, philosophy, behaviours, commerce and other human dealings. Such a process of international relation became more expedient and competent with the beginning of the nineteenth century. As a means of communication, the role of the English language was very effective, and the inhabitants of the colonial countries came to realize that they would have to remain alien to the modern intellectual world of the West until and unless the English language was learnt by them to the great effect. Thus, English as a link language among different nations rendered enormous service to the peoples of the world for exchanging their views among themselves, and thereupon a kind of universal fellow-feeling, however apparently it might be, developed to know and understand one another. This very step of international relation of humanity and brotherhood, even in the teeth of wars and battles, was absolutely an important phase of social intercourse in the nineteenth century. Migration, no doubt, was still there in ancient days; but the migration with an organized and accomplished purpose became very emergent in the nineteenth century. The noble and far-sighted thinkers of different parts of the world cherished the view that human society was very much susceptible to be burnt up in the fire of violence and war-mongering unless and until people irrespective of creeds and nationalities maintained a deep sense of mutual love and admiration, untainted fraternity and cordiality among themselves in the supreme interest of the survival of mankind. The growing human relation took the global form in the wake of the growth of the international business and political affairs. This type of human relation from nation to nation, in the long run, resulted in bringing forth a new flow of education, culture, philosophy, economics, science and technology,
trade and commerce and almost everything that a modern nation located in any part of the world needs to keep pace with the growing civilization. Thus, the nineteenth century epitomised the unbreakable association of the East with the West, a relation which still stands as a challenge to the saying of Rudyard Kipling, an authoritative writer of English literature that "the East is East, the West is West, and the twain shall never meet". Human civilization started taking on a new colour and look by the grace of scientific inventions, press-media, reputed academic centres, new philosophical thinking and many other forms of social inter-relation that were found to contribute as much possible as to the process of globalization. W. H. McNeill's observation may aptly be referred to in this connection-

"The secret of Western pre-ponderance over the rest of the world was not solely a matter of material superiority and political organization—important though these were. In addition, during the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries the intellectual achievement of Western science together with the artistic expression of Westerners' aspiration after truth and beauty attained a depth, power and sophistication unmatched elsewhere."

Such was the role of the West in leading the other parts of the world through the path of modern civilization. As a consequence of academic and intellectual expansion, a large section of people were attracted to the modern scientific knowledge and learning in defiance of traditional views and prejudices. The colonial countries were, beyond question, amassing benefits of the western intellectual trends by coming into close contact with the new and dynamic thoughts of the imperialists, and thereby could tread the path of progress in all perspectives even if they were economically eroded to an enormous temporal loss. So, the significance of the nineteenth century in turning the human society all over the world into a dynamic social force can, in no way, be slighted away.

Now, the negative features of the scenario are to be noticed as impartially as possible. It will be foolish on our part to suppose that this sort of globalization of human

relations was totally free from demerits and anti-human spirits. Had it been so, the world would have absolutely turned into a holy shrine of Eternal Peace for all. But, on the contrary, a good number of demerits of the present society that extends all over the world are undeniably found to be liable to throw the human existence into the pit of fear and dismay. The moral degradation of a section of people irrespective of castes, creeds and communities has given rise to some anti-human tendencies in them such as hunger for materialistically cosy life, political domination over the weaker section, subjugation of the down-trodden and the fair sex, religious animosity, hatred for the other races and so forth which are indeed at the root of all kinds of sorrows, suffering and agonies. The world today, in fact, is no longer an ideal place to live in where the good and honest men can realize the true essence of life. Outward progress with pelf and power is, no doubt, on the rise, but the inner peace of heart is nowhere to find. Such was also the picture of Russell’s contemporary world, and this caused him to ponder over how the mankind might be rescued from the clutch of depravity. The outstanding evils of Russell’s time may be enumerated as racial rift, group hostilities, war-mongering, loss of credibility among men, religious dogmas and prejudices, economic disparities, political domination, and others. That Russell’s world was not a sound world may easily be evidenced by his new words written in the ‘Preface’ to the book Why I am not a Christian’. He writes, "For my part, I think it better to do a little good than to do much harm. The world that I should wish to see would be one freed from the virulence of group hostilities and capable of realizing that happiness for all is to be derived rather from co-operation than from strife". 

Racial rifts.

Though the universal human society was on the march of outward progress in the nineteenth century and still it is on, the rift between the black and the white was yet to be bridged up with humanitarian zeal as the hatred of the white for the black also figured conspicuously during Russell’s days. In addition to that, peoples of diverse beliefs and faiths with different ethnic backgrounds were never prepared to shake off their own sentiments about their respective ethnic identities even though they came into closer

contact with one another outwardly. As a result, racial rifts all over the world prevailed odiously to the disgrace of so-called human civilization. Russell's world, too, witnessed the situation many of the non-white and non-Christian people were not given any preferred position of civilization. Russell states:

"The Negro minority in the United States, having been emancipated from slavery in 1865 constituted a trying social and political problem. In the South, where the majority of Negroes lived until very recent decades, discrimination along social, educational, and political lines has been a part of general practice and has been connived at and even sanctioned by the law."  

Similarly, in the later years of the nineteenth century, the oriental races like China, proud of their own tradition and capacity to compete effectively against Western white people, did not want to be assimilated easily, and a sense of alienation still remained active towards each other. Prejudices towards individuals of other colours and creeds are also seen in the reflection of the Westerners' feeling of white and Christian superiority. In this regard, L. Gottschalk and D. Lach have passed their opinions as follows: "Recently the supremacy of the white men has been threatened throughout the world, and the values of his Christian society have been openly called into question by European and non-European Marxists as well as other disbelievers."  

Such threats to Western supremacy contributed in no small part to the anxieties that prevailed during Russell's time, and it is still found in our present century. It is obvious that he could easily notice rifts between Christian and non-Christian, white and coloured capitalist and communist and also a fresh dichotomy between pro-Russian and anti-Russian. Thus, several sets of antagonism were running rampant in human societies causing tremendous harm to the sense of universal brotherhood. Russell was much concerned at such behaviours of different people of his contemporary world which were not wholesome at all.

6. Louis Gottschalk; and Donald Lach. 'The Transformation of Modern Europe'
Allied Pacific Private Limited, Bombay, Indian edition 1962, P 1003

Now it is evident that contemporary world of Russell was imbued with antagonistic feelings among different ethnic groups, different nationalities, different faiths and beliefs and so forth, and these feelings of differences might adequately be attributed to the worrying instability of the universal human scenario. Both scientifically and technically, it is true, the universe is tied to a single thread, but the sense of global brotherhood is yet at stake because of such disagreeable sentiments of diverse ethnic groups.

**Social Status of Women:**

Against the trend of male domination over woman down the ages, the nineteenth century witnessed the fact that the status of woman, with the onward march of civilization, was boosted to a certain height particularly among the enlightened sections. Though the development was not markedly noticeable, it was only in this century for the first time that demand for the equal status of women with that of men was on the rise, and consequently a kind of somewhat upper status than in the former days was granted to the woman in a number of countries also. Even right to suffrage was also granted to women in America in this century. Truly speaking, the trend was vigorous in the Western countries; the Eastern countries were far lagging behind in this respect almost till the end of this century. John Stuart Mill (1806-73) was the chief advocate of women's suffrage in England who wrote the famous book *The Subjection of Women* in 1869. Campaign of women's suffrage became a very sensational trend in England in the later half of the nineteenth century, and the societies like "National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies", Women's Social and Political Union and few others came into existence. Besides, periodicals namely 'Women's Suffrage Journal', 'The Common Cause', 'Votes for Women' and 'Women's Dreadnought' were regularly published in support of women's causes.\(^8\) So, the impact of Mill's works on the subject of improving the status of women was very influential among the free thinkers. His mother who was also a lady of radical views, as his father was, 'used to address meetings in favour of votes for women'.\(^9\)

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In spite of the fact that liberty, suffrage and other rights were granted to women in the twentieth century at large, they seem to be reluctant enough to keep pace with the male folk even today excepting a bare minority. Majority of the women could not come forward with confidence to adopt themselves to the right granted to them by breaking the traditional chain of dogmas and superstitions. Ridiculously, this is a very discouraging aspect of the process for women empowerment.

The condition of women in England was very much shocking to Russell. He voiced for the equal status of the women all over the world and expressed his sorrow at the plight of women that it was "a disgrace to both men and women that the world should have had to wait so long for champions of women's equality" ¹⁰. Even in England, women were not granted the power of suffrage up to World War 1. In Christianity Russell observed: "Monks have always regarded Women primarily as the temptress; they have thought of her mainly as the inspirer of impure lusts." ¹¹

So far as suffering of women is concerned, we still find that working class women are not in an advantageous position to feed, educate and nurse their children because of their poor economic condition. In the lower income group of society, the plight of women is very pitiable, and many are being deprived of proper food, health and self honour in their way of struggle for survival. Again, people generally, while speaking of liberty, speak of political liberty, freedom of states, self government of the citizens, economic liberty of the nation and so on. But they hardly speak of Women Liberty from the male domination—which is still an ugly social feature of the present day world as it was a bid more in the days of Russell. In this context, we may refer to Russell's feelings as reflected in the following words:

"At present men and women seldom have any real companionship, or any real understanding of each other's best: brought together by a temporary attraction, they remain strangers, and as a rule, hamper each other's development. In all

¹⁰. Bertrand Russell, 'Portraits from Memory' George Allen and Unwin Ltd
¹¹. Why I am not a Christian, op.cit., p. 29
this, there is no necessity; it is due mainly to the fact that subordination rather than liberty is expected, and that women's follies and men's vices are pleasing to the sense of superiority of husbands or wives as the cases may be. To teach men and women to love equality and liberty is the true beginning of all reform in personal relations; and until this is done people will continue to degrade and depress those with whom their lives are passed."  

Russell in his article "Liberalism and Woman Suffrage" published in the 'Contemporary Review', July 1908, made his strong argument of women's voting right as citizens. Here he writes:

"The rise of women to equality with men, which has been rapidly advancing during the past half century, is one of those great social improvements of which only a few occur in a thousand years. To let prejudice or an uncertain party advantage stand in the way of our contributing to this improvement is unworthy of men who have liberty at heart, and I most earnestly hope that few liberals will any longer be guilty of such treachery to all their professions"  

Suppression of women is an act of male behaviours which may be judged either right or wrong as the case may be in the light of morality. Russell pointed out that his contemporary world was not free from male prejudices against women. Here, he felt the need of a new approach to morality as to how women may be emancipated from the bondage of age-old views and behaviours. He tried to analyse everything related to man-woman relation scientifically and thus passed his comments why and how woman deserve equal status in society. He writes:

"The argument in favour of equality between men and women is merely an application of the general argument in favour of liberty. I shall try to show that this general argument applies with peculiar force to women, on account of the intimacy of their relations with men. I shall then consider the special...


13 Ibid, p. 284
arguments adduced against liberty in this case, admitting that some of them have much force, but contending that they are sufficient to outweigh the gains which may be hoped from the equality of men and women.  

**Education:**

The nineteenth century was mostly an age in which the growing trend of scientific education expanded to the different parts of the world having a good hold in the minds of the concerning people by its impact of practical uses in day to day life. What is more, it is science which, by one step after another, invigorated the process of bringing about changes in the thinking of man with regard to morality, religion, philosophy, art and culture, social outlooks etc. through the marvels of its new inventions and discoveries which indeed gave severe jolt to their thoughts and behaviours. From that point of view, the role of science in the domain of general education was felt to be very important for refinement of hearts and enlightenment of knowledge. People came to realize that life without being blessed by the gift of science was almost incapable of keeping pace with the onward movement of human civilization. In this context, the role of Western education with the traits of scientific temperament needs to be specially highlighted. How science influenced the nineteenth century people even in studying art, psychology, sociology and other branches of human knowledge can easily be understood from the following observation of Louis Gottschalk and Donald Lach. They write;

"The rapid and dramatic advances of invention and technology in the nineteenth century stimulated a firm confidence in the ability of man to understand and control his environment. Theoretical scientists forged ahead in the natural sciences with equal hopefulness; and in studying historical, psychological, literary, linguistic, and social problems, the nineteenth century scholar, borrowing with almost unquestioning faith the scientists' method and drawing analogies to their findings, came to similar conclusions".  


15. 'The Transformation of Modern Europe', op.cit., p.1008
In the realm of literature, too, the earlier idealistic, didactic and imaginative tones were replaced by realistic trends for better understanding of man in relation to society. To speak the truth, it is science that makes man look into the society where he lives in a new light. Simultaneously, the same kind of transition also occurred to art, culture, philosophy, ethics and so on. Of course, it is also true that even under such a sweeping trend of science, peoples speaking different languages and pursuing different cultures, appeared not much willing to throw away their respective traditions and beliefs at the wink of eye. McNeill Says:

"literature being tied to tongue was less international than painting and less radical in rejecting traditional forms. In Russia, however, the tension between the old Russian, orthodox cultural traditions and new fangled western styles of thought and sensibility drove sensitive writers like Feodor Dostoevsky (d. 1881), Leo Tolstoy (d. 1910) and Anton Chekov (d. 1904) to create a new moral universe each for himself." \(^{16}\)

The impact of Russian literature was largely felt by the Westerners and they also introduced new realistic trend into their literature by putting aside, more or less, the conservative, characteristics of their earlier literature. This is how a global uniformity in education was coming up in the nineteenth century which was more scientific, more rationalistic and more knowledge based than the previous education. Yet the question arises, as Russell, too, worried about, - "Has this education helped adequately the people of the world achieve the universal 'good' to live peacefully among themselves?" To Russell, the answer is definitely 'no'. The reasons why he cherished such a negative answer, have been detailed in his works like 'On Education' and 'Education and Social Order.'

People, not the fundamentalists, preferred liberal and scientific education of universal character. With the passage of time, as the consequence of conventional education, the number of so-called educated men began to grow bigger and bigger. The point to take note of here is that education appeared to be barely successful to make people enriched

\(^{16}\) W. H. McNeill, op.cit, P. 430.
in human virtues and moral qualities even if its growth was quite noticeable to all scholars were produced; but men of noble human virtues were very rare to find. Still today, though attempts are vigorously made to free education from the chain of dogmas, superstitions and other anti-scientific influences, many people are found to be much prone to such tendencies causing smears and blemishes to the enlightenment of head and heart. Bertrand Russell was shrewd enough to discriminate such negative aspects of conventional education which hindered many learners from being educated in the truest sense of the term. So far as education is considered to be the forceful factor of guiding the society through the path of moral enlightenment, education of Russell's time, as he observed, was not steadily advancing on the main track to achieve full success. He also happened to notice that human society was yet to recover from the depravity and degeneration despite the so-called expansion of conventional education. Russell motivatedly tried to point out the harmful drawbacks of the education system of his time through his various efforts. His outstanding work 'Education and Social Order' very clearly and categorically points out the loopholes that he could detect in his contemporary education system. He is of the impersonal opinion that the negative theory of education must be eliminated in its entirety, or education will obstruct the creative intellect of the learners.

In Russell's view, education of his time was not free from certain serious drawbacks as he found it tinged in the colour of fervent national patriotism, religious sentiments, class feeling, propaganda and so forth. He states: "The bad effect of religious education depends partly upon the articular doctrines taught and partly upon the mere insistence that various doubtful propositions are known to be true." 17. Again education advocating much of national patriotism and class feeling which Russell happened to witness in his own time is totally harmful to the human society at large. He further states:

"Thus in any society in which class distinctions exist, children are respected not solely on account of their own merits, but also on account of the wealth of their fathers. The children acquire a belief that they are superior to the..."
children of the poor, and an attempt is made to cause the children of the poor to think themselves inferior to the children of the rich".  

Moreover, having seen the various defects of education which failed to produce morally enriched citizen baring a few ones, Russell also viewed that it should be one of the purposes of education to the young "to reach correct conclusion wherever possible. Failure to do this promotes the bitterness of party spirit and the danger of destructive conflict, while on the intellectual side it gravely impedes scientific progress. All these things statesmen would do well to remember when they are tempted to view education as a mere branch of political propaganda".  

He was also sure that political propaganda and overwhelming national patriotism in education might bring forth a sense of alienation among different nations with their respective economic systems and ideological views. Being confronted with such drawbacks of education of his own time, Russell had to deeply think over how the world, charged with hatred and unbalanced judgements, could be saved by introducing a new moral code that might be applicable to the universal education.

Beliefs and Behaviours:

Although, as mentioned above, the social intercourse among the diverse ethnic groups inhabiting different parts of the world started to grow vigorously world wide with the object of forming a universal human society, many of the people of such ethnic groups, irrespective of nationalities, were not mentally prepared to throw away their traditional adherence to social codes and customs, behaviours, rites and rituals, etc. through which they wanted to uphold and preserve their own ethnic identities. Still today, people look upon their customs, creeds and cultures as their identical criteria for preserving their social position, though they are not very much sincere in analysing scientifically what benefit the society may derive from such age-old beliefs and behaviours. Various customs related to sex and marriage, religion, ownership of property, agriculture, household etc were found running rampant in the days of Russell, and he viewed that all such customs were not conducive at all to the real progress of social enlightenment. The so-called

18. Ibid. P. 94
19. Ibid P. 143
educated people were also inclined to follow such customs without raising any doubt about their efficacy, if any, in practical life. Russell thinks that customs are not to be followed for customs' sake; they must have some bases to be useful in practical life. After scientific and rational analysis, if they are found to be of no use for enriching the human virtues and qualities, close adherence to them is of no avail. But Russell is very much sure that customs like child marriage, male domination over female, traditional treatment for curing diseases, and many others of the sort are no longer useful at all. On the contrary, they may rather appear as great obstacles on the path of social progress.

Russell has rightly pointed out some of the mental and behavioural evils of his contemporary world in his famous essay *An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish*. He categorically states that all these evils were nurturing the sense of animosity and separatism among different sections of world people. He says, universal welfare can never be achieved if the air of love and unity ceases to blow all around. Moreover, a profound and pure sense of respect and responsibility in the mind of each mature member of society is to be nourished for such universal welfare. Russell has made sincerest effort to focus on such human qualities in order to get the world free from the bondage of human evils, and comes forward to contemplate a new passage through which mankind, by and large, may be led to a happy phase.

In the nineteenth century as in the earlier centuries as a whole the orthodox social system did not grant anybody freedom for radical views and thoughts. For any original creation and progressive action freedom is utmost necessary. But Russell found during his time that anybody who needed freedom for any radical thinking and behaving have to face public anger and disapproval, and, in the long run, he had to forsake his spirit of doing something novel. Freedom for man, if properly utilised, is a possibility that may salvage him from the humdrum business of day to day life into a world where he adds a new dimension to his existence. This does not mean that freedom should be unbridled; it must be limited by law which may be assessed to be purely conducive to human growth. Russell's contemporary world did not witness any effective law to control liberty for any person who wanted to shape his intellect and creativity to fruitfulness. This drawback of the social system deprived many people of the common rank of their due share that
could have been gained by enjoying freedom. Russell always voiced for such freedom. He knew that political liberty is not sufficient; the liberty for doing something desired in the positive line is also necessary. Russell says:

"The immense majority of modern educated men have no such freedom; they have to earn their living within the existing framework of society, and they cannot make important changes in their own way of life unless they can first secure important changes in political and economic organization."  

In spite of the fact that human civilization was marching ahead at the mercy of science, most of the people of Russell's time could not set themselves free from fear rooted in committing sin, violating religious rites, protesting war and social alienation, checking dogmatic beliefs and so forth. People hardly raised any question of doubt against any evil of the socio-religious set up of the society for fear of being condemned, though they knew that their submission to such authority was not helpful to their social and rational status. The fear of socio-religious indictment and political instability and insecurity that might be caused by war were like the irremovable hurdles on the path of free thinking. Even, the scientific temperament of the age was not potent enough to dispel people's outmoded views and visions to which majority of the people were clinging silently. Such people were lacking the required courage to critically analyse and examine the set morality in the light of rationality and scientific outlook. Russell is also of the view that almost everybody believed in superstitions, however cruel and anti-human they might be, under the clutching influence of fear. It is true that this type of adherence to such baseless views and superstitions cannot create a congenial situation for the peaceful and enlightened living. In this connection Russell writes in his essay *What I Believe*:

"It must, therefore, be one of the chief concerns of the scientific moralist to combat fear. This can be done in two ways: by increasing security, and by cultivating courage. I am speaking of fear as an irrational passion, not of the rational prevision of possible misfortune."  

20. *Unpopular Essays*, op.cit., p. 41

He further says that fear generates impulses of cruelty, and therefore promotes such superstitious beliefs as seem to justify cruelty. Neither a man nor a crowd, nor a nation can be trusted to act humanly or to think sanely under the influence of a great fear. To Russell, "to conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom, in the pursuit of truth as in the endeavour after a worthy manner of life".\textsuperscript{22}

Russell also experienced that it was not only fear, but also envy of one man for the other that tremendously affected the peaceful living of mankind. He found that the universal human society of his time was also torn and tormented with envy which were mostly political, economic, religious, cultural and so forth. All these types of envy, no doubt, gave rise to wars, racial rifts, religious intolerances and other forms of animosity among the people that created a fearful situation of insecurity of life and property. He was very much upset having seen such heinous effects of envy on general trend of society. Envy makes people vindictive, and it is fully manifest in the devastating wars in which National warriors like Napoleon, Hitler and many others were actively involved in introducing a number of tragic chapters to the history of mankind. He further says: "one of the most unfortunate results of our proneness to envy is that it has caused a complete misconception of economic self interest both individual and national"\textsuperscript{23}.

False beliefs and prejudices were no less responsible for group violence, political conflicts, cultural rifts, apartheid problems, economic exploitation etc. which Russell had to witness in his contemporary world. Passion for pride in nationality and prejudices against race, sex, class and creed were also the causes behind sorrows and suffering of the weak, and this ultimately ignited the spirit of Russell to do something for the social uplift in all spheres of life. He was sure that a strong sense of nationalism combined with a sense of hatred for other nations is "the psychological root of economic nationalism, and war, and man-made starvation, and all the other evils which will bring our civilization to a disastrous and disgraceful end unless men can be induced to take a wider and less hysterical view of their mutual relations"\textsuperscript{24}.

\textsuperscript{22} Unpopular Essays, op cit, p 118.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid p. 168
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, p. 169.
This type of pride in nationality gave rise to traditional enmity among countries. Russell came to realize that pride in race was even more harmful than national pride when he found that many gross and ignorant Whitemen despised the best of the Chinese solely because their yellow skins. Thus, a victorious nation or race tended to cherish contempt for the vanquished even though they might be surprisingly enriched in certain human qualities. So, Russell remarks: "So long as the Japanese were victorious, they entertained a contempt for the Whiteman, which was counterpart of contempt that the white men had felt for them while they were weak." 25 In the same line, the traditional trend of the superiority of the male sex over the female sex pained Russell very much as he considered it to be immensely unfortunate for the human society. He also observed that the sense of superiority of the capitalist class over the working class was at the root of all miseries that the latter had to suffer in a classified society. In England, where snobbery was deeply ingrained, the equalisation of incomes which had been brought about by the war had had a profound effect, and among the young the snobbery of the elders had begun to seem somewhat ridiculous. He witnessed in his own time a very large amount of regrettable snobbery in England which was "connected more with education and manner of speech than with income or with social status in the old sense." 26

During his own days Bertrand Russell happened to witness a great amount of harm done to humanity by people's inflexible beliefs in superstitions and dogmas especially in relation to social morality. His reactions to such beliefs are to be positively taken into account if someone attaches any importance to his comment that dogmas and superstitions, in no way, contribute to the intellectual and ethical progress of mankind. He was also fully confirmed of the fact that the superstition of nationalism which was a common political feature of his contemporary world proved to be more harmful than that of theology. In the essay *What I Believe*, he writes:

"Current morality is a curious blend of utilitarianism and superstition; but the superstitious part has the stronger hold, as is natural, since superstition is the origin of moral rules." 27

25. Ibid P. 171.
26. Ibid, 175.
Russell also found that his age was not, in the least, free from criminal behaviours related to sex, marriage etc. Customs about sex varied from one ethnic group to another, and violation of such customs gave rise to divergent offences that affected adversely the normal way of living. Moreover, he had to witness some unscientific practices, as he deemed, such as ban on widow marriage, tradition of phallic worship, prostitution, divorce, child marriage, celibacy and many others that were prevalent unabated in different parts of the world during the period concerned. He had a number of opportunities to learn that sexual love was, in many cases, at the root of social disturbances that caused untold miseries to the life of a number of people. In his book "Marriage and Morals" Russell has quite elaborately explained the merits and demerits of marriage institutions of his time with reference to those of the past. From all his elaboration, one thing is very clear that he was always opposed to the unscientific taboos related to sex and marriage. He says: "In seeking a new ethic of sexual behaviour, therefore, we must not ourselves be dominated by the ancient irrational passion" 28 He further stressed that men and women should remember in sexual relations, in marriage, and in divorce to practice the ordinary virtues of tolerance, kindness, truthfulness and justice.

Russell was always in favour of scientific knowledge for removing the darkness from the mind surrounded and influenced by superstitions and dogmas. He says

"Science can teach us, and I think our own hearts can teach us, no longer to look round for imaginary support, no longer to invent allies in the sky, but rather to look to our own efforts here below to make this world a fit place to live in, instead of the sort of place that the churches in all these centuries have made it." 29

In the tune of Russell, we may also say that the world needs a fearless outlook, and a free intelligence, looking back all the time towards the past, that is, dead is of no use today.

28. Ibid. p. 120
As far as human beliefs and behaviours are concerned, Russell was confronted during his long span of life with the above mentioned sentiments, false beliefs and prejudices about religion, race, sex, sin, self-importance, superiority and other anti-social sentiments which were hampering the flow of moral and ethical progress of mankind as a whole, and thereby debarring the world from being a peaceful and protected habitat of Homo-sapiens. As Russell was a great humanitarian thinker, he tried his best to formulate some new interpretation of moral codes which he expected to be much effective and conducive to the dignified habitation of mankind on this planet.

Political Picture:

Russell's contemporary world also witnessed an evidently long series of socio-political upheavals that brought about drastic changes in many of the social systems and political views that people were used to cling to. The numerous ups and downs in the political arena were the most conspicuous examples of people's non-integrity in thoughts and behaviours especially in relation to man's instinct for power and domination and also the instinct for protest and protection. The nineteenth century was much influenced by the patriotic fervour of Equality, Fraternity and Liberty, the three great ideals of the French Revolution that pitifully cut down the unbridled power of the feudal Lords and Barons enshrining in a free political situation chiefly in the West where all members of the society were expected to play creative role irrespective of their social positions. Apparently, democratic trends began to blow over the political firmament and capitalism became a very forceful economic system in the western world with the advent of the nineteenth century. The period between 1815 and 1914, as W. H. McNeill says, is called a "bourgeois era" with different ideals and practices in European and Western societies. According to him, the American and French revolution and the liberal constitution making of the nineteenth century showed clearly enough that "political systems were neither natural nor God-given, but man-made, and could be changed if enough men agreed upon the change to be desired" while the emergence and development of capitalism in some countries of the West witnessed the healthy and desirable transformation of their social,

economic and political life, its impact on the pre-industrial societies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America took the form of imperialism which was far from desirable. These victims of imperialism were not allowed to raise their standard of living by industrialization. They were to supply raw materials to the industrially advanced countries and function as their market. Moreover, "the most backward elements in the social and political fields in these countries were supported by the imperialists and given a new lease of life by them". The exploitation of the colonial countries by the imperialists ones became a very vivid feature of the political network of both the centuries to which Russell belonged. It was, of course, a happy trend for him that he got the chance to witness the collapse of imperialism that began after the World War II.

Capitalism was also accompanied by the ideas of liberalism emphasized by different champions of this doctrine even if it was not at all free from a number of drawbacks. The nineteenth century, for England as for Western Europe in general was "the epoch of liberal triumph; from Waterloo until the outbreak of the Great War no other doctrine spoke with the same authority or exercised the same widespread influence". Despite the differences among different schools of liberalism, the underlying agreement among all of them was loyalty to the concept of civil and political liberty on which Western Democracy was chiefly based. Though capitalism professes democracy and liberty, Russell wants to say that capitalism is no longer a good political system where economic rift between the rich and the poor persists actively to affect the general human atmosphere during his time. He finds that the capitalists do everything for their class-interest and the working class is to suffer a lot. The evils of economic inequalities, class-rift, poverty, oppression etc. came to the knowledge of Bertrand Russell, and he strongly denounced the system. In his view, "Capitalist and Wage system must be abolished. they are twin monsters which are eating up the life of the world". In place of them, Russell favours such a system which will may hold in check man's predatory impulses, and will diminish

32. Ibid p. 26
the economic injustice that allows some to be rich in idleness while others remain poor in spite of unremitting labour. He, thus, being weary of capitalism unequivocally condemned this system and also the system of wage-earning in order to emancipate human society from the fear of inhuman evils that the common people were to suffer intensely.

Socialism, as a sharp reaction to capitalism, came into being in the twentieth century after the teaching of Karl Marx, the great political philosopher of the world and a German by birth. Russell was keenly aware of the socialist movement which had already started in the later nineteenth century. It is a system in which the state is the sole owner of land and capital of a nation. The new political regime in Russia under the doctrine of Marxian Socialism was first introduced in 1917, and, thus, the world did witness a great historic political event. But Russell observed that people in a socialistic pattern of society, as in Russia, were not given any chance to enjoy full freedom of thought and impulses even if they were economically in a much advantageous position in comparison to that in capitalism. He also happened to mark changes that came over the spirit of socialism. A process of reform in different perspectives of this system became almost inevitable to appease the resenting people. This was the case not only of Soviet Russia but also of the other European countries where communistic doctrine controlled the political system. Consequently the doctrine of Fabian Socialism emerged as a new political ideology which was largely advocated by George Bernard Shaw, the renowned dramatist of the twentieth century English literature. But this Fabian Socialism was never accepted by any community as a political system in practical reality. Other political ideologies like Anarchism and Syndicalism fostered by the spirit of socialist doctrine were also floating in the theoretical wave in the early part of the twentieth century, but they were not brought into practice by any nation. All these ideological gestures make it very clear that socialism, in whatever form it exists, is not free from pitfalls. Nevertheless, Russell himself was a staunch supporter of what was known as Guild Socialism. No doubt, Russell preferred Socialism to Capitalism, and in this regard his comments are as follows:

"On the other hand, both Marxian Socialism and Syndicalism, in spite of many drawbacks, seem to me calculated to give rise to a happier and better
world than that in which we live. I do not, however, regard either of them as the best practicable system. Marxian socialism, I fear, would give far too much power to the State, while Syndicalism which aims at abolishing the State, would, I believe, find itself forced to reconstruct a central authority in order to put an end to the rivalries of different groups of producers. The best practicable system, to my mind, is that of Guild Socialism, which concedes what is valid both in the claims of the States Socialists and in the Syndicalist fear of this State, by adopting a system of federalism among trades for reasons similar to those which are recommending federalism among nations. 34

Russell himself witnessed what was taking place in Russia, a Socialist Republic, when he visited the country in 1920. What impression he received about the socio-economic condition of the Russian people may be found in his own words as he writes:

"Everything is to be systematic: there is to be organization and distributive justice. The same education for all, the same clothes for all, the same kind of houses for all, the same books for all and the same creed for all—it is very just, and leaves no room for envy, except of the fortunate victims of injustice in other countries." 35

Russell, by going through Dostoevski's Crime and Punishment, Gorki's In the World and Tolstoy's Resurrection, could easily reflect upon the destruction and cruelty upon which the ancient splendour was built: the poverty, drunkenness, prostitution in which life and health were uselessly wasted. He came to know how all the lovers of freedom suffered in petrifying bondage. He also remembered the knoutings and pogroms and massacres. He, of course, did not approve the ugly and brutal beginning of the new political system, but was all praise for the constructive spirit of the people for a new social machinery. Anyway, by hatred of the old he became tolerant of the new though he could not like the new on its own account. He saw that under the new social system of Russia people were, to a greater extent, materialistically satisfied, but the state remained

34. Roads to Freedom, op.cit, p. 17.
indifferent to love and beauty and the life of impulse. He writes:

"I cannot give that importance to man's merely animal needs that is given here by those in power. No doubt, that is because I have not spent half my life in hunger and want, as many of them have. But do hunger and want necessarily bring wisdom? Do they make them more, or less, capable of conceiving the ideal society that should be the inspiration of every reformer? I cannot avoid the belief that they narrow the horizon more than they enlarge it. But an uneasy doubt remains, and I am torn in two...." 36.

During his own days Russell also witnessed political system under Kingship though it was not in a very impregnable form. Moreover, the amount of feudal vestige that was found in the world of his time was totally neglected by Russell as it was going to be almost swept away by the newly emerging trends of political systems. He thought of a new system of society with new moral and humanitarian values where politics might contribute largely to making human lives as good as possible. According to Russell "the problem of politics is to adjust the relation of human beings in such a way that each severally may have as much of good in his existence as possible. And this problem requires that we should first consider what it is that we think good in the individual life." 37 Russell, to his utter dismay, did not get any occasion to find such a wholesome political system in practicality in the entire world during his own life time. He even disagreed with Karl Marx, whose influence was on the galloping march at that time, so far as the abandonment of some democratic rights were concerned even if he learnt a lot from his writings about the inevitable socio-economic transformations under various regimes.

Another very dreary feature of his time, today also of course, was the war-mongering attitude of the powerful nations. The World War I was the most heinous happening in the history of the twentieth century human civilization which pushed back the whole world into a gorge of inhuman sentiments giving rise to an awful uncertainty of survival of mankind. Russell was greatly shocked having seen the impulses of ferocity and vindictiveness rooted deep in those nations which were directly involved in the War causing untold suffering to the simple and honest people of both the sides. To speak the truth, the warring nations, in the long run, got almost crippled losing tremendously wealth, property, peace and mutual integrity. Russell comments that it was the outcome of men's strong but unreasoned sense of nationalism. This war-mongering attitude of men filled

36. Ibid, p. 107  
Russell's mind with horror that men would one day put an end to human existence on this planet.

Unluckily for mankind itself, no sooner had the agonies of the World War I been appeased to the minimum level than the World War II broke out in 1939 to add fuel to the fire. Hitler of Germany was the surging force behind the scene to wage such a War with a view to taking revenge of the mal-treatment and injustice committed to Germany after the World War I. Here, it is also a nationalist cause to bring down the overall progress of human civilization to the level of beastliness. The use of Atomic Bomb in this war is the darkest feature of war-mongering attitude of the so-called civilized people. In addition to that, twentieth century witnessed very frequently the confrontation between the colonial countries and the imperialist ones as the former were always striving hard for freedom from the clutch of the political domination of the latter. The colonial countries, no doubt, had to suffer extensive loss in the process of attaining liberty from the imperialist domination.

Russell was so afflicted having seen the aftermath of both the World Wars that his philosophy of life took a new turn, and he started pondering over the ways by which the war-mongering attitude of any nation might be rooted out for permanent peace. He voiced for a World Government as the solutions to national hostilities and differences. He was very lucky in the sense that he did not happen to witness during his own life the World War III as he feared much. Yet he did not dispel the possibility of the third World War in the coming days unless a clear choice between Reason and Death is made by the people of the world. Here, by 'Reason' Russell means willingness to submit to law as declared by an international authority. But he fears that "mankind may choose Death" though he may be mistaken in such fear. Regarding war, his views will be discussed in a broader light in the concerning chapter of this thesis.

**Economic Features:**

It is true that human society based on different classes can never be stable and peaceful so long as economic disparities and discontent among different sections are allowed to prevail unabated. Russell was very much concerned at the economic inequalities prevalent in his contemporary societies except in Russia. He was not a propounder of any economic theory; he simply took pains to sort out the economic inequalities of the human

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38. *The Impact of Science on Society*, op. cit., p. 89.
societies that had existed so far, Russell was always against starvation, exploitation and oppression that were found to be diabolic socio-political evils of his own world.

Russell was born and brought up in the heyday of capitalistic system with all its merits and demerits. A member of highly aristocratic family, Russell had all the chances to enjoy the privileges of this system, and he did so to some extent. Nevertheless, being inspired by his humanitarian zeal, he did easily cast his glance at the miseries and suffering of the poor working class and also at other anti-human evils that resulted from this capitalistic economy. In capitalistic system society is divided into two main classes—the privileged class and the poor working class. Russell could easily comprehend how the poor majority in the capitalistic system had to wade in the mire of the worst miseries being deprived of their due. On the other hand, the poverty-stricken peasantry was also seen by him striving hard for the minimum needs of life. This type of economic rift between the privileged and the poor gave rise to variegated agitations like strike, revolution etc. creating social unrest and politically unstable situation. Capitalism, Russell observed, was at the root of these types of socio-political unrest chiefly caused by economic inequalities and injustices. So far as class war is concerned Russell says the following notes from his own experience:

"The class-war, like wars between nations, produces two opposing views, each equally true and equally untrue. The citizen of a nation at war, when he thinks of his own countrymen, thinks of them primarily as he has experienced them, in dealing with their friends, in their family relations, and so on. But a nation with which his country is at war views his compatriots through the medium of a quite different set of experiences." 39

Thus, an antagonistic rift between the privileged and the working class was a very sharp feature of any capitalist society of Russell's time in which the poor peasantry, the working class and also the poor common people had to live in hardship, and it made the socio-economic pictures of the countries concerned very ugly and pathetic. In order to get rid of such economic oppression, the exploited people, very frequently, sought for changes in economic systems as advocated by Socialism, Syndicalism, Anarchism etc. Russell himself advocated Guild Socialism though he did not see it in practice during his lifetime. In the Introduction to the book Roads To Freedom he comments:

"But the modern world, by the increase of education and the rise in the standard

39. Roads to Freedom; op.cit., P.20
of comfort among wage-earners, has produced new conditions, more favour able than ever before to the demand for radical reconstruction. It is above all the Socialists, and in a lesser degree the Anarchists (chiefly as the inspirers of Syndicalism), who have become the exponents of this demand."  

In this way, Russell was always opposed to capitalistic economy though it was undeniably a dominating economic trend in many countries including England, his mother land. According to Russell, the low-living of the working people and also of the peasantry is an indelible stain on human civilization. His reaction to this capitalist economy may be found in his following words:

"In the conditions of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family-relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests."

The evil show of capitalism made Russell fully realize the fact that the economic inequalities and disparities with corresponding social positions can never be altered unless and until the bourgeois economic system is replaced by some other more humanistic system like Socialism as professed by Karl Marx. Russell voiced for changes in economy, for better living of all people, for abolition of capitalism by being enlightened under the impact of the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels though he himself was not a communist in the popular sense of the term. His earnest call for overthrowing capitalism was much backed by the following lines of the Communist Manifesto:

"The Communist disdain to conceal their views and aims, they openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries unite!"

40. Ibid, p. 17.
41. Ibid, p. 32
42. Ibid p. 34
Russell noticed that his world was really an unstable world both economically and politically, the economic disparities caused many suffering people to follow the path of depravity and indulge in anti-social activities like theft, robbery and so forth just to find out any way of earning livelihood though they know it to be a vile means. Similarly, other crimes like murder, arson etc. were also found as the result of vengeance for economic hardship. Russell was confirmed that these anti-social and criminal trends were nourished mostly by the hardship of living. Thus, so far as morality is concerned, Russell regretted the unstable social position in any country of his world. He Says:

"Real stability, such as the world imagined itself to be enjoying before 1914, is not to be achieved quickly. But if the way to achieve it is realized, and if it is clear that the world is moving in the right direction, confidence in the future will revive and the danger of paralysis of hope will disappear." 43

He also cherished the view that political stability of a country was possible only through economic equality and moral justice. Without the moral approach to any aspect of society, Russell viewed, no stability, no peace, no equality as required for the progress of mankind cannot be possible. In connection with equality, Russell says that equality must be approached not by lowering the standard of the fortunate but by raising the standards of the others. In the nineteenth century the arguments for raising the standard of life in backward countries would have been merely humanitarian. Now they involve the question of self preservation. So long as some nations are very much poorer than others, the poorer nations will inevitably feel envy and will be source of unrest. It is no longer possible, as it was in the past days, to live in the present world as people do not have any assurance against any social disaster.

From the above discussion with regard to the economic trends of Russell's own world, we may come to a conclusion that Russell was bitterly opposed to capitalist economy as he supposed that Capitalism was creating lots of impediments to the progress of the major section of people. As a humanitarian thinker he laid much stress on abolishing that economic system which can never be expected to open a new avenue for the all round progress of mankind as a whole. He thought it to be his moral obligation to save mankind from the jaws of ravaging economy so that the proud privileged may no longer cast their eyes at the poor with hatred and disdain.

Religion and Its Consequences:

So far as Russell's Moral Philosophy is concerned, it is indispensably imperative for anyone who wants to know the impact of religion on morality to throw light on how different faiths were influencing the people of the world during his life period and what was his reaction to the religious teachings that his contemporary people were used to receive. Here, we would also like to focus on how the impact of religion on human society affected Russell's views during the period that he belonged to. The undeniable fact is that, as in the past, the role of religion during nineteenth and the twentieth century was also, to some extent, decisive in controlling and conducting human behaviours mostly in relation to socio-ethical dealings of man as required in a civilized way of living. As Russell was born and brought up in a Christian society, though his parents were of radical views, he got the chances to know all the tenets of Christianity and their effects. In addition to that, he, too, tried his best to know the other extant religions of his time as accurately as possible by virtue of his reading the relevant books that were available to him. Here, our attempts are basically concerned with how the Western World was affected by Christian religion and how Russell reacted to it as revealed in his various writings. Anyway, he, after knowing the inner tenets of all religions, came to a conclusion that the impact of all religions was almost the same, the variation if any, was not in nature but only in degree.

There is a common notion that all religions teach love, peace, purity, honesty, truth, spirituality and other human values for the true essence of the term 'Man'. But the factual picture of the world shows that religions have failed to achieve their goals as the world appears no longer a peaceful place for human living in general. The sense of universal brotherhood is very vague; group hostilities are going on here and there; racial rifts all over the world are very frequent; religious enmity among the followers of different faiths is in force; human values are marred to a greater extent even if advocates of religions are found doing their best to emphasize the religious teachings for the enrichment of souls and sensibilities. Why is it so? It is, most probably, because of the fact that the followers of one faith want to establish that their religion is superior to any other, and thereupon they cherish a sense of neglect and hatred towards the other and vice versa. Such sentiments
ultimately create a situation in society to arouse enmity and intolerance among the followers of different faiths that are found in different parts of the world.

Russell writes in the preface of the book *Why I am not a Christian* : "The truth of a religion is one thing, but the question of its usefulness is another. I am as firmly convinced that religions do harm as I am that they are untrue" 44

During his life time, Russell also marked that Religion had an adverse impact on the political affairs of any country of the world. The terms 'Islamic countries' 'Christian countries' etc. were popularly used to imply that a particular religion was considered to be of supreme importance in ruling the country concerned. On the other hand, the basic problems of life which were almost identical all over the world irrespective of creeds and communities, were given not so much of attention to as required for a healthy solution to the socio-political problems. Hence, the patrons of politics were found manoeuvring religious sentiment among the common people to perpetuate their political power over the masses keeping aside the interest of ameliorating the lot of the suffering in the practical sense. But religion, however much influential it might be, could not keep the society stable for long as the basic needs of the people had to remain unfulfilled quite pitiably. So, religion, Russell noticed, utterly failed in boosting the economic lot of the common herd, and the suffering in the life of the down-trodden caused all kinds of discontentment and disturbances to make the political atmosphere almost uncertain and unwholesome. Russell writes in the essay 'Can Religion Cure Our Troubles' that no faith is framed to remove the troubles of the common people as commented in the following words :

"That the world is in a bad way is undeniable, but there is not the faintest reason in history to suppose that Christianity offers a way out. Our troubles have sprung, with the inexorability of Greek tragedy, from the First World War, of which the Communists and the Nazis were products. The First World War was wholly Christian in origin." 45

45. *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, op.cit., p. 604,
On the other hand, a host of nineteenth century thinkers and socio-analysts such as Darwin, Karl Marx, Engels and others introduced a new trend of thinking that tried to deny logically the idea of 'God', and thus repudiated the idealistic and spiritualist characteristics of religion. These thinkers laid much stress on the scientific analysis both of the social events and the natural phenomena to find out the real causes behind them. Science as a powerful element of human intelligence was effectively instrumental to bring about wonderful upheavals in human thought in exploring the truth about any happenings. In his essay *Science and Tradition* Russell writes: "In the scientific world, all this is different. It is not only prayer and humanity that you cause things to go as you wish, but by acquiring a knowledge of natural laws." 46

He solely agrees to Darwin's views on evolution that have many effects upon man's outlook on life and the world. All the same, some people of learning with scientific temperament were also found by Russell to be somewhat reluctant to interpret the social events scientifically, because they did not want to face any kind of fanatical apprehension. The instances of past persecution made them fearful inasmuch as they thought that this type of scientific interpretation might give rise to social discontentment and political instability resulting from such sentimental and subjective matter. Nevertheless, the process of scientific analysis and interpretation was being carried out to establish the truth for the enlightenment of human minds.

In his contemporary world, Russell found religious intolerance, religious hatred, religious domination and so forth that caused utmost havoc to the peaceful habitation of universal men. It is indubitably true that different religions like Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and others were responsible for the division of the human society into different groups on the basis of faith and creed, and thus the inner strength of mankind, as a whole, turned feeble more and more with the passage of time. The sense of separate identity on the basis of religion under the same umbrella of humanity was a very pernicious trend that Russell had to witness with a great shock. He noticed that human society was very much prone to be crushed and crumbled by the fanatical trends even if scientific...

progress had already been achieved to a greater extent. He also condemned the Nazis and the Communists who were equally harmful to mankind on the whole. Against any kind of dogma he utters:

"What the world needs is not dogma, but an attitude of scientific enquiry, combined with a belief that torture of millions is not desirable, whether inflicted by Stalin or by a Deity imagined in the likeness of the believer." 47

After making an extensive survey of the role of religion in society, he finally points out in his essay Religion and Science that religion was, in his own days even, very gradually losing grounds being questioned in every step by scientific enquirers. He, of course, admits that there has been a prolonged conflict between the religion and the science in which, until the last few years, science has invariably proved victorious. He further confirms his view that the damage caused to mankind by scientific weapons is a question of human behaviour; but the damage caused to mankind by religion is a question of blind pursuit of what is not true. About the supremacy of science over religion, Russell says:

"The effects of science are of various very different kinds. There are direct intellectual effects: the dispelling of many traditional beliefs, and the adoption of others suggested by the success of scientific method. Then there are effects on technique in industry and war. Then, chiefly as a consequence of new techniques, there are profound changes in social organization which are gradually bringing about corresponding political changes." 48.

Russell was also very much worried about the role of Church in society as he perceived during his own days particularly in his homeland. The majority of the people, there, were found to follow the Christian ethical codes which were mostly conducted by Church either blindly or traditionally without raising any question as to how much beneficial these moral codes proved to be for them. They were, Russell observed, quite

48. Impact of Science on Society, op.cit., p.II
unwilling to make any critical estimation of such moral codes in the light of rational and scientific judgement. Getting off the beaten track, he raised question about such Christian moral codes and the role of Church with a view to exploring the truth behind them. His reaction to the role of churches may be conceived from the following words:

"These are a great ways in which at the present moment the church, by its insistence upon what it chooses to call morality, inflicts upon all sorts of people undeserved and unnecessary suffering. And of course, as we know, it is in its major part an opponent still of progress and of improvement in all the ways that diminish suffering in the world, because it has chosen to label as morality a certain narrow set of rules of conduct which have nothing to do with human happiness; and when you say that this or that ought to be done because it would make for human happiness, they think that has nothing to do with the matter at all". 49

So far as the picture of his contemporary world is concerned, Russell observed that every single bit of progress in human feeling, every improvement in the criminal law, every step towards the diminution of war, every step towards better treatment of the coloured races, or every mitigation of slavery, every moral progress that there has been in the world, has been consistently opposed by the organized Churches of the world. Russell quite deliberately says that "the Christian religion, as organized in its Churches, has been and still is the principal enemy of moral progress in the world" 50 He also became fully aware of the growing trend of communalism, fanaticism, fundamentalism etc. during his own life time. Judaism vs Christianity, Israelitism vs Philistinism, religious domination over the minorities, rift between the Hindus and the Mohammedans in the East and many other conflicts based on the narrow sentiment of religion were the worst religious evils that Russell had to witness with his own eyes. The trend of distrust and disintegration, in the long run, added fuel to the fire of socio-political instability in the global human society. This type of instability dealt a severe blow to the true essence

49. Why I am not a Christian, op.cit., p. 25.
50. Ibid., p. 15.
of universal brotherhood to the effect of an immeasurable void of natural goodwill and fellow feeling among the nations. This is, regrettably, a negative aspect of human history. Russell is of the opinion that injustice, misery, cruelty and many other social evils might have been done away with, had the people not been prevented by the political influences of Churches or any organized religions. He was almost sure that universal happiness might be attained by rational knowledge, but its utilisation for the purpose was obstructed by the teaching of religion. In this regard his views are as follows:

"Religion prevents our children from having a rational education; religion prevents us from removing the fundamental causes of war; religion prevents us from teaching the ethic of scientific co-operation in place the old fierce doctrines of sin and punishment."

From the above discussion on the role of religion in society, it may be concluded that religion in the days of Russell, of course, even today, was used as a kind of weapon by a particular section of the society, mostly the ruling section, to serve its own purpose, not to restore general and universal good of mankind. Had religion been capable of producing any inherent quality to work as a panacea for all human and natural troubles, the common people who apparently more devoutly worship their God would not have suffered misfortunes and miseries to their utter agony throughout the ages. His reaction to the role of religion may aptly be evidenced in the following words written in the essay Can Religion Cure Our Troubles?

"Mankind is in mortal peril, and fear now, as in the past, inclining men to seek refuge in God. Throughout the West there is a very general revival of religion. Nazis and Communists dismissed Christianity and did things which we deplore. It is easy to conclude that the repudiation of Christianity by Hitler and the Soviet Government is at least in part the cause of our troubles and that if the world returned to Christianity, our international problems would be solved. I believe this to be a complete delusion born of terror. And I think it is a dangerous delusion because it misleads men whose thinking might otherwise be fruitful and thus stands in the way of a valid solution."

51. Ibid. p.42.
52. The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell, op.cit, p.598.
Moral Degradation:

The foregoing discussion shows an outline of how the different perspectives of Russell's contemporary human society such as political, economic, cultural, racial, educational, religious and so forth were affecting the views and visions of the people at large, and how he reacted having seen this particular picture of his own time. All his works written on human issues clearly suggest his vehement protests against any anti-human trend and irrational outlook that may pose obstructions to the smooth growth of a peaceful and honest society required for the true progress of mankind as a whole. He condemned the uncongenial forces of his world that gave rise to a great number of anti-human misdeeds such as group violence, terrorism, war, pogrom, plunder, sexual crime, corruption, socio-political injustice, greed for power, materialistic hunger and so forth. In the essay An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish, he says that he found his world plunging continually further into "madness, cruelty, persecution and superstition increasing by leaps and bounds", 53 and this situation shocked him immensely. Having witnessed such a nightmarish picture of the world he came to a conclusion that the morality which prevailed in society was pitiable crippled and impotent to drive out such brutish behaviours of concerning men as it was basically based on superstition, dogma, taboo, fear etc. In contrary to that, Russell voiced that society must have such a morality where "a good life is inspired by love and guided by knowledge" 54

Russell was, thus, shocked at the moral degradation of the age, and cherished the view that the world would remain a place of turmoil and turbulence until men acquire a kind of discipline and freedom to enrich human values and virtues in order to apply them for universal welfare and peace by deliberately pulling down the anti-human passions if any. Russell also noticed that people, barring a few, turned out to be mostly ego-centric, materialistic, power hungry and self-seeking leaving aside the true zeal for doing something for the common good, common progress, and universal social happiness. Erosion of such moral values on the part of the most of the socio-politically important people irrespective of creeds and communities caused Russell to suffer mentally to a

53. Unpopular Essays: op.cit, p. 82.
great extent, and this, at length, led him to think in a new way as to how human virtues like generosity, prudence, brotherhood, sense of social obligation, attitude towards humanitarian behaviours etc. could be restored once again with the sole of purpose of turning the world into a happy peaceful dwelling of all men. During his time, Russell marked that the politically privileged and the patrons of Churches instilled in the minds of the common people the idea of 'sin' for violating some so-called moral codes based on irrational and unscientific views, and thus the common people were almost kept in ignorance so that they might not want to make any scientific analysis of the prevalent social and moral codes. The religious influences on education and politics made the entire situation pernicious in the real sense of the term. But Russell was hopeful that unscientific and irrational views would be away very soon and a new way of thinking and behaving would lead the human society. He says: "New hopes, new beliefs, and new thoughts are at all times necessary to mankind, and it is not out of dead uniformity that they can be expected to arise".

Anyway, it is human actions and behaviours that are responsible for troubles and suffering both mental and physical. Russell felt that the degree of troubles and suffering may be reduced to the minimum level provided all men be guided by a humanitarian zeal. Here lies the significance of promoting a sense of new morality among the people which he professed through all his concerning works. The following words quoted from his essay Ideas That Have Helped Mankind explicitly shows his earnest hopes for a better world:

"The present moment is the most important and most crucial that has ever confronted mankind. Upon our collective wisdom during the next twenty years depends the question whether mankind shall be plunged into unparalleled disaster, or shall achieve a new level of happiness, security, well-being and intelligence. I do not know which mankind will choose. There is grave reason for fear, but there is enough possibility of a good solution to make hope not irrational. And it is on this hope that we must act".

55. Ibid. p. 132.
56. Unpopular Essays. op.cit., p. 159.