Chapter - II
THE PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE
THE PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE

The problem of existence is the never ending problem of human civilisation. By the problem of existence what Krishnamurti means is the total human problem not partial problem of an individual. And it is not the physical problem but the psychological problem of the human being. And the problem of existence can be analysed through the understanding of the psychological problem of an individual. Because, for him, it is the individual who can change the outer structure of society which is made by the relationship of man and man.

Krishnamurti is one of the philosopher who has devoted his life for the transformation of human consciousness in terms of solving the problem of existence. By the transformation of human consciousness he does not mean the outer changes of the society or world. It is the individual who can change the outer structure of the society through the inner purification of the individuals. The individual is the molecule of the society, and the society is the projection of the inner or psychological state of the individual.

Krishnamurti stated that the problem of existence are created by the individual themselves through the self-centred action. The very structure of human consciousness is based on acquisitiveness, possesiveness, accumulation

(17)
search for security and comfort, all of which are the expressions of limited self consciousness, that is responsible for breeding human problems and for making our existence as battle ground of envy and competition. This problem of individual consciousness are reflected in society and the problem of society at large are focussed in the individuated consciousness. There is an interchange of the problem between the individual consciousness and the society made by the individual. So he wanted to concern deeply with the problem breeding from the very constitution of human consciousness. For this there is no need for the change in the social order or in the constitutions of the governments or in the economic systems. What is necessary is to change only in the individual psyche. Krishnamurti does not perceive individual and collective human problems separately. He sees the social phenomenon as a projection of the psychological structure of the individual.

Krishnamurti tackled the same age-old problem in his own way. Regarding this R.K. Shringy in his “Philosophy of J. Krishnamurti: A systematic study” writes: “He may not in his life time succeed in changing the heart of every human being, but he is sowing seeds, seeds that will in due course of time bear fruits to yield more and more of the psychological revolution to germinate in every human heart. Even if he is able to carry humanity one step further, it would be a significant task in the history of civilisation”1 In fact, Krishnamurti wanted to bring a total revolution in the human society so that there cannot be any problem in human existence. He is of the opinion that the problem of human
existence is rooted in the very constitution of consciousness. It is the fragmentation of consciousness which arise the problem of existence. Human consciousness is fragmented due to the divisions and conflicts. There is division in the human mind. And there is conflict in the society. To be is to be related. Life is the human relationship; relationship with things, people and ideas. When there is any contradiction between these relationship there arise the problem. If we cannot establish the right relationship with things, people and ideas, there is always conflict and problem.

Conflict as a problem for existence:

Modern society is a fragmented society, devoid of true sense of unity and love. In the present world humanity is fragmented into innumerable divisions based on different distinctions viz, racial, cultural, ethical, religious, class and ideological differences. Large nations dominate small ones nations and try again and again with new strategies to colonize, suppress and keep them backward. So, the conflict arises due to the dominations. Every individual, every society and every nation tries to dominate others on different grounds. Conflict is there in every form among individuals, societies and also among nations. In other words, the urge for domination whether it is by individual, society or nation is the root cause of all the conflict. As Krishnamurti points out: "Every individual is fighting with somebody. One man feels less than another and struggles to get to the top. There is no love, there is no consideration, there is no deep thought. Our society is a constant battle of man against man."
Existence is by itself a problem, a paradox in the vision of Krishnamurti. And it is also holds that ordinary human being or individual is hardly aware of the problem. He opines that from the very moment we are born, a type of battle starts with our life and it lasts till death. It is a never ending process created by fear, loneliness and despair, a wearisome routine of boredom and repetition and a total lack of love. Our life has become an uncreative, repetative and mechanical. Life is a series of constant struggle and battle. Our constant struggle is between 'what is' and 'what one should be'; between 'thesis' and 'antithesis'. We are breeding contradiction and confusion in our thought, feeling and action. In the vision of Krishnamurti, the characteristics of human life is "Conflict in every form: between husband and wife, between two groups of people with conflicting ideas, between what is and tradition; between what is and the ideal"3

We are involved in strife and struggle in life and we live under the shadow of fear which breeds confusion and contradictions. And above there we have convinced ourselves that struggle for existence and all the evil attendant upon it are inevitably necessary for our survival.

Thus, Krishnamurti perceives the problem of existence primarily as a conflict. By the term 'problem' he means to say a state in which there is conflict. And as the conflict prevail in us, we regard it as a problem, which is to be dissolved, to be understood, or from which we wish to escape. Hence to be aware of the problem means to be aware of the conflict. Conflict is both a social and a psychological process. This problem cannot be ever solved by any specialists nor
economists nor psychologists nor follow of any system. Nor can it be able to eradicate the conflict from the society by any method or formula. Krishnamurti perceives the conflict as a total process of human consciousness. Because he does not perceive the individual and collective human problems separately, but his view so integrated that he rather sees the social phenomenon as a projection of the psychological structure of the individual. Any compartmental approach would touch the problem on the surface level and it will breed the illusion of the solution eternally in the offering, i.e. have only a tinkering effect. Here we can quote the words from his talks:

"We generally approach a problem of this kind either objectively or subjectively, do we not? We try to understand it either on the objective or the subjective level, and the difficulty is that the problem is neither purely subjective nor purely objective; but is a combination of the two. It is both a social and a psychological process, and that is why no specialist, no economist, no psychologist, no followers of a system, whether of the right or of the left can ever solve this problem. The specialists and experts can attack the problem only in their own particular fields, they never treat it as a total process; and to understand it, one must approach it in its totality."

For understanding the very nature and structure of conflict, one has to go into psychologically and inwardly into one's mind, and not outwardly to the systems and institutions.
Rohit Mehta also explored the nature of conflict as the main problem of human existence found in the philosophy of Krishnamurti. In his words, “The conflict in which modern man is caught is a conflict between the subjective and objective factors of life. This conflict has assumed grim proportions in this age of science and technology are too overpowering. Moreover, changes in the objective conditions are far too rapid in their movement and much too catastrophic in their content. The subjective factor appears too weak and inadequate compared to the overpowering nature of the objective conditions. In fact, it is the inadequacy of the subjective factor which has made the conflict of man utterly frustrating. The psychological factors governing man seem today powerless to deal with the situations created by the technological forces of modern society. The technological revolution is moving fast - but the psychological revolution has hardly begun - it is the enormous distance between the two which is the root of all the problems facing humanity today. It is this which has made the structure for significance very bitter and almost devastating.”

Fear as a problem for existence.

Fear is a dreadful thing which dulls our everyday life. For Krishnamurti, 'fear is one of the greatest problem for human existence'. In a sense, all human beings are burdened with fears of some kind. There is fear of unemployment, fear of pain and disease, fear of not having enough money, fear of losing power/position in society, fear of losing family, fear of what are neighbour or the public.
think about us, fear of not living up to the image others have built about us and so on. So we are all afraid of something, the conscious fear as well as the unconscious and subconscious fears.

Fear forces us to accept conditioning which is an obstacle to one who wants to live free. Here we can quote the words of Krishnamurti:

"Surely, this question of how to be free from fear is one of our major problems, is it not? Perhaps it is the only problem, because it is fear lurking in the innermost recesses of our minds and hearts, which cripples our thinking, our being, our living. So it seems to me that what we need now is not more philosophy, better systems or greater knowledge and information, but true individuals who are utterly free from fear, because it is only when there is no fear that there is love."6

Krishnamurti talks about two kinds of fear i.e. physical fear and psychological fear. He is more concerned with the second one. For he maintained that understanding the deep rooted psychological fear, we can be able to meet the physical fear which inherited from the animals. But to be concerned with the animals fears first, it will not help us to understand the psychological fears.

Krishnamurti holds one of the major causes of fear is that we individual beings do not want to face ourselves as we are. If the mind tries to overcome fear, there is friction, confusion where we try to control it, overcome it. The first thing to ask ourselves is what is fear? And how does it arise in the human mind?

Krishnamurti stated,
“Fear is one of the greatest problems in life. A mind that is caught in fear lives in confusion, in conflict, and therefore must be violent, distorted and aggressive. It dare not move away from its own patterns of thinking, and this breeds (hypooring). Untill we are free from fear, climb the highest mountain, invent every kind of God, we will always remain in darkness”. 

Here we find that fear is the source of our confusion, conflict and which creates the violent in nature and it makes the human mind- distorted and aggressive.

Individual Problem and World Problem:

In the vision of Krishnamurti, there is a close relation between the individual and the world. He does not distinguish between the individual problem and the world problem. It is the individual that made the society and the world. So the individual problem is the root cause of the world problem. We have to understand the individual problem first how it originates then we can also understand the world problem. In other words, all the human problems are the creation of the individual themselves. In the words of Krishnamurti:-

“All our problems are really individual problems because the individual is society. There is no society without the individual, and as long as the individual does not totally understand himself his conscious as well as his unconscious self; whatever reforms he may devices, whatever gods he may invent, whatever truths
he may seek will have very little significance. So the individual problem is the world problem, which is fairly obvious, and the world problem can come to an end only when the individual understands himself, the activities of his mind, the workings of his consciousness”.

The problems of war, starvation, exploitation and all the other innumerable problems that confronts each one of us are the creation of the individuals. As long as we cannot understand ourselves at every level, there will be the rottenness of the present society. So he wanted to bring about a revolution not only in his outward relationship but in the whole field of his thinking, feeling, acting and reacting. It is found from his teaching that every collective problem when examined closely, reveals itself as being both the sum total and the resultant of the many individual desires, fears, illusions and conflicts. Unless they are tackled on their own, personal level, the social problems cannot be dealt with adequately. As Krishnamurti puts it - the individual problem is the world problem. There is no radical solution to social chaos, unless the personal chaos in every man and woman is brought to end.

This cannot happen through any political or social revolution, through formal re-arrangements in the hierarchy of separation, oppression and exploitation. The individual will always shape society in his own image and all the revolts and revolutions cannot change the image. This image man alone can change when he sees the need for change.
Man must become fully conscious. He must be aware of himself as both the cause and the effect of the chaos. Unless he sees himself as essentially the result of inner and outer confusion of psychological and social disorder, of lack of clarity and purpose in his relationship to himself and others, he will remain both the creator and the creature of the world in which he lives. Krishnamurti perceives the world problem is essentially the individual problem. Not only these, Krishnamurti narrates the chaotic conditions of Individuals which leads to the world problem. In his words:

"No organisation, no religious bodies, no external coercion, no seeking of help from without can make the individual straight, serene and truly creative, because the individual is absolutely free.... It is of the utmost importance, if you would bring about order, serenity, clear thought and the happiness, not only of the individual from the very beginning. Because if the individual is within himself chaotic, he creates chaos, if he is within himself crooked, he makes all things around him crooked; if he is within himself disturbed, he creates around him disturbance."

Again Krishnamurti stated, "We are responsible for this appalling misery and confusion, not another, but you and I. Because you are thoughtless, unaware, wrapped up in your those values that are immediately gratifying, you have created this immense, engulfing disaster. War is a spectacular and bloody expression of our daily life, our life of competition, ill will, social and national division and
so on. You are responsible for this chaos, not any particular group, not any individuals, but you; you are the mass, you are the world. Your problem is the world’s problem.

**Individual and Consciousness :-**

In the writings of Krishnamurti, we find that consciousness is the totality of life in which thought functions and relationship exist. All motives, intentions, desires, pleasures, fears, inspirations, longings, hopes, sorrows, joys are in that field. He perceives the individual and consciousness is same. There is no difference between an individual and his consciousness. In his language, “your consciousness is what you are”. He also apprehends that the contents of consciousness can be transformed and can be totally changed. In this world there is only one consciousness. My consciousness is not mine. There is no consciousness which can be only for one individual. He says, “Your consciousness is the consciousness of all humanity, because what you think, your belief, your sensations, your reactions, your pain, your sorrow, your insecurity, your gods and so on, are shared by all humanity. Consciousness is same to all humanity all over the world whether he may be American or Russian or Indian or whether he may be rich or poor, the consciousness is the same. When these divisions bring in the mind then arises the problem of existence”. So we find that divisions in human beings as Hindu or Muslim, Indian or Russian create the problem of existence.
Krishnamurti’s position in the causes of suffering in the world:

Krishnamurti perceives the problem of existence at three levels. These are:

(i) To become aware of the problem,

(ii) To be deeply aware of its cause and effect and of its dual process.

(iii) To transcend it the thinker and his thought must be experienced as one.

This may remind the four noble truths of Buddhism in which Gautam Buddha speaks of four problems of human sufferings viz -

(i) The existence of suffering

(ii) The cause of suffering,

(iii) The cessation of suffering and

(iv) The eight fold path.

In these truths, he recognises the path to reality. We can achieve the truth by following the path mentioned by him. But Krishnamurti does not recognise the fourth one i.e. the path to reality. For him, there is no path to reality. Truth cannot be achieved through organised system or path. Rather, he maintained that a path implies effort or practice. His famous saying is “Truth is a pathless land.” One cannot approach truth by any path what so ever, by any sect.

It may be mentioned here that the three states of the problem of existence stated by Krishnamurti are not fixed within a frame work. Even he does not consider these three stages as leading one to the other or as lower and higher levels of awareness. Because, for him, awareness has no degrees or levels and

(28)
also because he considers them to be closely inter-related, acting upon each other simultaneously.

Krishnamurti clearly observes -

"These three states or steps I suggested only for the convenience of verbal communication, they flow from one to the other; they are not fixed within a framework of different levels. It is really important to understand that they are not different stages, one superior to the other, they hang on the same thread of understanding. There is an inter-relationship between cause and effect and the dualistic conflict and the discovery that the thinker and this thought are one".12

We may recollect here what Krishnamurti expressed in a conversation with C.L. Nahal when asked if he agreed with those who affinities in his teachings with some form of Buddhism, "It is not for me to agree or disagree. But most of these schools whether it is Buddhism or Vedanta, or any other, suggest a path, the middle path the negative path and the like. I suggest no path at all. For a path implies effort or practice and the immeasurable can only be faced by a person by keeping himself free of effort, in a state of alert readiness for the new, in a state without fear or hope."13

This may be compared with Baudelairean "ENNUI"

It is pertinent to mention here that the present world crisis is felt by every thinking person and it is realised that a fundamental change in our social order is
necessary. The average man is disappointed with political, religious and intellectual leadership so far as the present situation of the social order is concerned. There is the possibility of happening of the third world war which may be occur the complete annihilation of human civilisation.

Carlo Saures in his “Krishnamurti and the unity of man” observes the present world crisis as: “Man as an individual, is more in bondage that he ever has been. The anonymous and irresponsible technique of world administrative and security services envelops us in a network of restrictions in which we choke and which literally is killing man as a creative human being and soon will destroy him altogether. This fact is quite obvious. To perceive what freedom is, and of what it is made up is no longer a question of personal preference but a matter of life and death. Whatever it survives or wipes itself out our first effort must logically be directed towards the immediate necessity for insight, towards clear understanding. It is the question of breaking down now the process of conditioning which is destroying our world and makes our so-called civilised values turn against themselves.”

The problem and the solution:

As we find that Krishnamurti raises the problem of human existence but at the same time he also concieves the solution of the problems created by the individuated consciousness. For him, understanding the problem is the solution
of the problem. In other words, in the problem is the solution. Fragmentation of consciousness is the root cause of all the problem for human existence. Krishnamurti comprehends life as “a process of consciousness focussed in the individual and manifest universe in which the individual finds himself involved, as a projection of his own consciousness”. He discussed the problem of existence and at the same time he narrates that how we can solve the problem. This is one of the peculiar quality of his writing. He did not left the question as it is. He tried to awakened the ignorant individual beings. Krishnamurti spoke in the mass but his attempt is to awakened the individual.

It is important to understand the root cause of any problem. In understanding the problem with all its complexities, its causes and so on, the answer is very much within the problem. It means, investigating the whole source of the problem, observing the complexities and investigating the problem deeply is much important than seeking an answer, a solution, a resolution. He suggests in various ways and in different terms for the solution of the problems.

The only solution is the understanding reality, of what actually is, at the individual level. It is the ignorance of human being that create the problem of existence. Ignorance is not merely the lack of information, it has the positive content of ignoring or discounting ‘what is’ in preference to ‘what should be’. Ignorance implies the denial of reality or truth.
Krishnamurti believe that only a change of will or transformation of consciousness can solve our problems of human existence. The only solution of our problems is the discovery of truth. Thus, it is self-knowledge, the only effective approach to the problem of existence.
REFERENCES:


6. Krishnamurti, Jiddu., (1953) Talks, Ojai - P-4


13. Nahal, C.L., A Conversation with J. Krishnamurti, P-10