

## *The Query of Identity in the Postmodern World*

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### **Abstract**

Postmodern has unbolted doors to numerous new thoughts. Certain thoughts which are contradictory towards the ongoing 'truth' are now accepted by the postmodernist to be one form of truth. As postmodernism does not hold on to any 'absolute truth' postmodernism is considered to be a lamentable development in human civilization. But postmodernism has its own constructive impact in the upliftment of the society. The concept of postmodernism is understood hypothetically but it is yet to be carried out virtually in the society. It is like my philosophy is very postmodern but I act modern. There is a gap to be viaduct which is yet to be discovered. Should we embrace the disparity in the identity or should we bring them all together beneath the same roof? When we focus towards the Northeast part of India the postmodern concept is tacit hypothetically then putting into practice. Language plays its own game in the understanding of truth. The difference in language and difference in faith has left an unbalance in the society. As postmodernism has designated multitudes of trends in art, philosophy, religion, technology so it affects the society in the fragmentation of contemporary existence. I would like to focus how the northeast part of India has accepted the ongoing identity crises from modern to postmodern is creating instability in the understanding of the true identity of an individual.

Keywords: Identity, Postmodernism, Community

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## Introduction

Identity is implausible which makes us divergent from one another. From the time we attained the consciousness of how imperative is 'identity' we human being has worked to construct one for ourselves as we always brawl to make a distinct point of our existence. This distinction can be marked when we have an identity of our own which will very distinct from the rest. Identity is not just related to an individual making a mark through its professionalism which is now considered as the postmodern identity but it is related to an individual since the instance of its confinement. The identity that is related to the parents we are born to and also the community we belong to and the land we are born to and it has a history that is related to one's identity and it goes on till the day of our demise. We always add a new identity in each step of our life which we abscond behind when we are gone from this corporeal world.

As in the title of my paper indicates, I would like to highlight on the query of identity in the postmodern era, which as an individual I have also experience. The idea of identity in the postmodernism is very much broadened and according to numerous scholars postmodernism is not a discipline of thought but mostly taken as a segment. While encompassing a disparate variety of approaches, postmodernism is typically defined by an attribute of skepticism, irony or rejection toward the meta-narrative and ideologies of modernism, and often calls into question various assumptions of Enlightenment rationally. Here 'identity' is not just constrained to the superficial identity of an individual but it is also about the self-knowing identity of acceptance of the individual one who can act independently of all other individuals. The conflict that developed within the self and it tries to amalgamate between the self-identity and the borrowed identity that brings a conflict among an individual in the course of vindicating its true identity. Naming an infant after its birth is still considered to be an immense responsibility as the child carries the burden of the name even after its demise. The society that we belong to and the religion we follow and the culture we belong to have its own part to play in bringing up the identity. Now it is not a new-fangled fixation to say what these identity crises are that I am trying to bring in my paper. When a cluster of people transmitted itself for its development and revolutionize its religious identity and stop practices of its authentic customs does one loses its identity? Is the acceptance of the modern or the postmodern identity can be considered as the loss of its original identity of an individual? If it is so then are we in a venture to find the true identity of the self-individual?

The transduction of the religious identity has changed drastically in my country. The north-eastern part of India which is a good dervish part which is consists of seven states and there are more than 200 tribes and communities with derives language of its own. Each individual tribe has its own authenticity of its own as each of them is rich in their own way. The seven states have mix religion following and most all the major religions can be found practicing in this part of the country though Christianity is considered to be one of the major religion that is followed by the majority of the states. The identity of religion has undergone certain changes and the idea of religious prospects has also changed with the change of time. The postmodernism has transmitted the understanding of religion in a more flexible way with the change of time. Religion plays an important role in binding up a community or the group of

people where we have the feeling of belonging to a particular group as a social animal. From the beginning of mankind we have been clustering ourselves to be a part of a particular assemblage and without that, we are lost of who we are. Starting with the name it goes on to numerous factors that are added up in each step of building up an individual. Now when it comes to so-called “postmodern identity” are we cutting us off from the main root? Is the root necessary to keep us intact to the originality of our ancestral? Identity itself is complex and when it is together with the concept of postmodernism then it becomes an exclusive theory to study for. The self-awareness which is required to know thy self is what we will venture here.

### **Change of identity with time**

Human beings are conscious being but it is not necessary we will be conscious all the time as we generally store all the information in the ‘store consciousnesses’ according to the Buddhist philosophy. In the beginning, our mind is as ‘tabula rasa’, which refers to the epistemological idea that individuals are born without built-in mental content and therefore all the knowledge comes from experience or perception. So what we perceive and experience gets imprinted and stays in the ‘manas’ and which later developed into the person’s identity. With the growth of the self, an individual realize the sense of belonging and we always bind and find the comfort of belonging to a certain community. Here we are also influenced by the ‘other’ also in the change of identity. The Ahom community from Assam is originally belongs to the Tai-Ahoms community of Thailand but as they migrated thousands of years ago to India and has ruled over this northeastern part of the country has undergone huge change in the due course of time. The history binds but the Ahom community has adopted the culture of its native and its present land. The identity of the Ahom community is related to Assam and not to any other states. The Ahoms kings have extended their association between various communities and tribes of the Northeast. The revolution of these identities has taken place as the belongingness has obliged to acknowledge it. The environment has its own impact which we will take as the major factor. The environment has its own impact how will impact on the food habit and customs and also the performance of our rituals as that is what we are going to pass to our next generation and make them aware for belonging to that community. All these engage in recreation its task of philanthropic the individual the sense of who they are, the self-awareness of its origins. A rich land like India where there each community and tribe has its own dialect, ethnic food, customs and rituals which are unique but also somehow related to one another. And even with the coming of modernism or the postmodernism the authenticity of can be still found in the identity of an individual.

The query of how identities change has been a subject of theoretical curiosity for numerous scholars. According to the study, a human mind tends to accept the external knowledge and broadcast oneself to it when the exacting individual finds a keen connection towards the other. We also look for the protected zone so that we will be not left alone. The change of identity also takes place when we struggle to change what we are not content with the present self of our identity. This might lead us to the crises of having identity crises as we constrain ourselves from what we are not. The concept of identity crises is a conflict that people face during their development. According to Erikson, an identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration

of different ways of looking at oneself. One discovers the personal identity with the exploration of the self.

### **Religion identity and regional identity**

Religion is considered to be a specific type of identity formation. Religion is a concept which is hard to define but the belongings are present. In the different community the look out of religion is different, but in Northeast India which was once upon a time mostly dominated by the naturalistic pantheism has changed with the coming of missionaries. The concept of religion has changed in the identity perspective and outlook of the society as a whole. When Christianity came into the main focus there came a time where the old practices are performed. Religion not only brings a community together but it also creates a gap between the same families. Meghalaya is the state where the three major tribes prevail. The Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos. They have their similarities as they have the essence of belonging to the same state and is recognized as 'motherland country'. We can observe a mixed group of practicing a different faith. We can see a majority of the people following the Christian faith. Among the Khasis, there is Seng-Khasi, group where they still practice the traditional religion. According to the Seng-Khasis, the Khasis who has chosen to follow Christianity are not considered to be true Khasis as they no longer perform certain rituals and take part in the religious functions. In a way, a Christian is forbidden to perform any rituals in the Seng-Khasi community. Though the practices of Christianity prevail as they are still bided by its tribal practices which they performed after the church ceremony during a wedding. We cannot let go of the clan practices as it makes us who we are. There the crisis comes from an individual where a conflict takes place. We are rooted in our clan and physically it also reflects in us. Religion has also undergone certain changes with modern times and there is flexibility that is reflected in the convenience of the mass. With time things change and also the practice of religion. Christianity has turned its course towards the modern and postmodern world. So the religious identity is also flexible in bringing up an individual identity. Religious identity is not necessarily the same as religiousness or religiosity. Where despite the implications that religion has identity formation literature has mainly focused on ethnicity and gender and has largely discounted the role of religion.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Postmodern Identity**

According to the idea of postmodernism, we aren't really a self at all. We all have a unique identity that is identifiable from birth to death, there's no real "you" which remains constant throughout all life's changes.<sup>2</sup> During the modern times to find what is really real- what is true and stable has given way. In postmodern times, change is fundamental, flux is normal. Postmodernism has been very flexible.

In the recent years, we could witness social sciences seems to be a revival of interest in religion and spirituality. Writer Walter Truett Anderson gives us four terms in addressing the issues of change and multiple identities. The first among the four

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which is Multiprenia, where from the postmodern perspective we play a role that the very concept of 'authentic self' with knowable characteristics recedes from view. The second term is Protean, where we are the self-protean capable of accepting changes that happen constantly around us. The mind here takes to a level of understanding in more complex ways where the reasoning consciousness takes over the store consciousness. It might include an idea of changing oneself to changing the society where the process is to find one's true self. But in the eye of 'the other', it is a manifestation of the idea that there is no true, stable self. The self is constantly undergoing changes. As it has been well said in Philosophy that "The subject is not the speaker of the language but its creation". Thus there is no enduring "I". So we are a reflection of what we want to be. And this is the third term known as the de-centered self. The fourth term that is put out by Anderson is self-in-relation. So social human being we do not constrain our alone. We are related to people and to certain cultural contexts. We understand ourselves we must understand this contexts of our lives.

Postmodernism idea of identity is like a person who has no absolute truth of its own as we are in a constant growing process. As postmodernism has put out that by nature we are one cohesive self. In the postmodern world, there is no confidence in-ability to know the truth. We hold on to the metanarrative which serves to define and do not always form a coherent pattern. The multiple identities that are constructed through the identification of individuals with coordinates that configure human personality must also be approached from the perspective of technical innovation, of the forms of democratic cohabitation, of the standards of living. The postmodern has its deconstruction in its process of building a constructive identity that has different values which stand out, having the dynamic of lateritic and has the contrast of the present day world. Postmodern identity depends on the way in which an individual construct, perceive, and interpret them and how they present themselves to the outer world. The whole outlook of the postmodern society is confined to the theory now the notion of identity explains the way which has constructed postmodern culture forms.

## **Conclusion**

The problem of postmodern identity has glided from accumulating knowledge to the way in which knowledge is structured and used to configure identity.<sup>3</sup> The search of the self is an ongoing process which has no end. As a human, we work for the recognition of our identity. Knowledge contributes to the growth which we transmitted it to wisdom in the 'manas' and even experience work in that context. In the postmodern world identity is no longer a given, where Nietzsche said "There is no Truth, only interpretations of the truth. The ethical self must be shown through "genealogy" to be historical construction. The self is a Dionysian "will to power". The Masters of Suspicion 'decentered' identity and provides a critical foundation for postmodern thinkers building and refined. The Christian understanding of identity is uniquely equipped to offer a challenging response to those caught in postmodernism and addicted to the flux. The world has never been so open and information has never flowed so freely: it is natural that identity would be fluid in times such as these, where the possibilities are open for anyone to form any narrative they wish, in an

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environment where narrative can find a place, physical or virtual.<sup>4</sup> When identity comes to the prospect of Indian culture it is a question of sticking to the roots. The identity belonging to the North Eastern part of the country is very inclined to the roots of its race and community, where it is also a combination of its religious identity. Postmodernism is a concept that started in the west and still has not penetrated in the socio identity of an individual in Northeast India. Postmodern and postcolonial concepts of identity undermine traditional hermeneutical models of the history of Christianity. The canon's tension between plurality and unity thus offers a grammar for the ongoing reinterpretation of Christian tradition: it has always been innovative and imaginative quest for heterogeneous unity and will to be so in a country like India.

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<sup>1</sup> Barry, C. M, & Nelson, L.J. (2005). The role of religion in the transition to adulthood of young emerging adults. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*.

<sup>2</sup> Rick Wade, 'Where Did "I" Go? : The Loss of the Self in Postmodern Times'

<sup>3</sup> Abrudan, Elena, "Postmodern Identity. Image, Fashion ad New Technologies", *Academic Journal Article, Journal of Media Research*

<sup>4</sup> *Sociology Essays-Postmodernism Identity Formation*

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