WHAT IS GLOBALIZATION?

So what is globalization? Each one of us has heard the word before a number of times. The term usage is always limited to just the economic aspect. However, when we use the term Globalization in Sociology, the usage goes beyond the economic factor to understand the phenomenon of globalization in order to understand it from various aspects. Sociologists worldwide believe that limiting globalisation to just the economic aspect would make it very narrow as a concept. They are of the view that there are many aspects of globalization like political, social, cultural and ideological aspects along with the economic aspect.

Globalization as a term could be understood as the tendency of different new technologies, philosophies and business enterprises to spread wide throughout the world or the process of making this happen. As a process, Globalization is supported by information technology and driven by trade and investments. It can also be regarded as a process of interaction and also integration among different people, numerous different companies, and governments of different countries. Globalization leaves no stone unturned when it comes to affecting our society. It affects each and every aspect of the society be it environment, culture or religion.

Let us see some definitions of Globalization. In 1992, Roland Robertson defined globalisation as ‘the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole’. Sociologists Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King define globalisation as ‘all those processes by which the people of the world are incorporated into a single world society’. According to Anthony Giddens, ‘it is the intensification of worldwide social relations which link the distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa’.

RELIGION AND GLOBALIZATION

As we all already have the idea that Globalization affects the society as a whole, religion is no exception. Globalization has been a carrier of religious views across the world. So whenever the discussion in on religion and globalization, there are two things that come to our thought immediately. The first one is that, Globalization has brought about many new religious beliefs, customs, values and traits to various places through interaction and exchange. It results in the sharing of religious values and culture worldwide reducing cultural differences. On the flip side, it also plays an important role in eroding local customs and beliefs and vaporising traditional values as it brings along new trends, new techniques, new cultures and also new religions.

We could view religion and globalization together as partners in the historical change. Religion also has taken the role of the carrier of globalization tendencies. If we are to look at the history of Christianity, we would not be mistaken if we understood it as a part of an effort that was made at a very early time to create and weave a global network of believers of the faith. The popularity of Christianity as a world religion resulted due to the relation between its ambitions that have been global and the ever expanding economy and politics. We can consider it as a globalizing force even before ‘globalization’ as a phenomenon came into existence. These elements of historical pattern are not just an exception to Christianity. It can also be found even in Buddhism, Islam, and other religions.
If we are to understand religious presence across the globe and the relation between religion and Globalization the sad demise of Pope John Paul II and his funeral makes a very good example of the same. He died in April 2nd, 2005 at the Apostolic Palace, Vatican City.

Along with his sorrowful demise came an end to a long period of papacy. Though physically weak at the time of his death due to a long period of illness, Pope’s mental and spiritual strength had not diminished at all. The demise had been much anticipated, so much so that the channels broadcasting the occasion were ready with obituaries and statements much before the broadcast. The Pope was a very famous man known to all. He was also known for his resistance to communism in East Europe. He was even regarded as a catalyst to the events that led to the collapse of communism as a political system. He was a global figure where everyone knew him. We could consider him as the best known individual in the modern world. So it is more than obvious that an event like his demise would be the centre of focus. It was very much expected that the whole world had their eyes on Rome. Most of the countries, in order to pay a tribute to the Pope put a hold to their normal activities for a day to show their respect. Rome had all the attention from media, religious leaders and other individuals. There were many who even went to the city in the week before the funeral. We can imagine the extent of religious presence in the world. The influence of the Pope crossed all political and religious boundaries. The impact Pope had on everyone cannot be denied my many. It was remarkable. The impact was so strong that in Britain, the royal marriage was postponed because Prince Charles, the then Prime Minister and the Archbishop of Canterbury should attend the funeral of the Pope in Rome. This gesture of cancelling a huge event and rescheduling it was first of its kind that was shown in the 21st century where the funeral of the Pope was given greater priority than the royal wedding.
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

What is the position of religion in the process of Globalization? Well, how and where religion is placed in the process totally depends on our understanding of the Globalization process. Globalisation as a term has innumerable meanings. Its meaning varies from a person to another. It means different things to different people. So if we understand it from an economic point of view, religion will have a vague place. It takes place at a macroeconomic level of change and so religious communities and individuals can either react or retreat. We are basically victims of the process. It is to be mentioned here that this process cannot be controlled by us. Liberal theological Christians enunciate this approach as they carefully analyse the western economic forces and their effects on the people which is most likely negative especially for people living in the developing world. Here, the only significance of religion lies is in the provisions of haven fundamentalist forms of religion for those who retreat from the globalization process. If we see globalization from many other perspectives; the place religion has is far more significant. As a matter of fact activities related to religion and people involved with the same make use of much better technologies and transnational network in order to establish and develop their relationships. They could be considered as global actors. The numerous type of activities carried out under the name of 'mission' is one of the examples along with the mutation of the catholic church in the global ecumenical movement in an ever increasing global network of religious organisations, beliefs, and groups. This offers a very good example of globalisation in the past 100 years. In Christian forms mission generally means the movement of people from North to south. At first it was the Europeans who were later followed by Americans moved across the world for building an empire. In the mid-post war decades, language underwent modifications and alterations. Churches present in the developing countries began maintaining their presence as equal partners of their American or European equivalents. These churches now began to become the centres of Christianity in their own right, much bigger than what they were back in their own homes. This was followed by many organisational changes as a result of it. What then followed was partnership between dioceses and parishes with one in the North and the other in the developing countries. In many western societies, their main aims were complementing volunteering services and society.

We can see that a third stage in this evolution, a complex one though; is becoming even more evident. On one hand there is an increasing tendency to reverse the North South flow due the rising number of missionaries heading to Europe from the developing world who is motivated by purely religious factors and few economic factors. On the other hand, the north south axis is collapsing as mission becomes a series of movement from everywhere to everywhere else. Here Brazil could be a perfect example, the number of Brazilian missionaries working abroad are many and also in the Portuguese speaking churches of the Brazilian diaspora in the United States, Japan, Paraguay and Europe. We however cannot forget the South Koreans who are present all over the world.

There is another important point to be addressed. Are these missionaries very important to the enterprise of mission or is the movement of the people more important? When we talk about Globalisation, mobility cannot be ignored. It is central to globalisation. When people start moving, along with it so do their ideas. We could take the example of Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries where rapid Christianisation took place (Hastings, 1994; Sundkler and Steed, 2000).
THEORIES AND THEORISTS

Robertson (2001) and Beckford (2003) underlined that until recent times not much attention was paid to the field of religion in globalisation by sociologists, firmly along with its consequences for mainstream sociology. Here we will deal with three exceptions with this generalisation. These exceptions have been put forth by Roland Robertson (himself), Peter Beyer and David Lehmann. The situation is however starting to change as various scholars are now examining Globalisation and its meaning from their own perspectives for the forms of their own religion or religion they are familiar to.

Robertson was interested in globalisation from a very early time. His interests date back to 1960s. He also pays a lot of attention to religion. He assumes that when one works within a global perspective, transformation of the study of religion takes place. What it does is, it relinks religion to the mainstream of economic and social life. This helps in overcoming the isolationist assumptions carved in the western experiences of modernity. When we think in a global context, we are rather thinking differently. We are thinking differently about religion, about classics, about the relation between sociology and its cognates, about the capability of religion to start as well as respond to change and also about the linking of culture, ideas, politics and economy. Religion now becomes an infinite varied subject that interacts in a myriad different ways with the culture, ideas, politics and economy. Religion now is not considered as a factor that hinders the rising of a complete modern society. Robertson has also been critical of the world systems theory. Globalisation is not uni-dimensional as Wallerstein (1979) maintains it. It is multi-dimensional with religion as a central place. The main task of sociology of religion is to study this phenomenon seriously, document the occurring and derive necessary theoretical frameworks for a better understanding.
Peter Beyer has responded to this challenge. Beyer’s ‘Religion and Globalization’ (1993) starts not with a theory but with an incident: the fatwa pronounced by the Ayatollah on Salman Rushdie in 1989. He makes use of this incident to show the global nature of the world we live in and the place religion has in it. Beyer interprets the fatwa in two different ways. On one hand the reaction of the Muslim to Rushdie’s novel shows the relation between particularist identity and religious belief. On the other hand it reveals a notion that Muslims are being asked to surrender the core of their fate ‘as the price for full inclusion in a global system currently dominated by non-Muslims’ (1993: 3). With such a challenge, Beyer’s aim is to know about the ‘institutionally specialized and systemic’ forms of religion present in the modern world and the different ways in which these find expressions (1993: 12). According to Beyer, what needs attention here is the place attributed to religion in the public sphere. He believes that religion can operate in two different ways; on one hand by revealing a tendency towards particularism and cultural distinctiveness and on the other a form of ecumenism. Ecumenism is the forms of religion that makes links with issues that emerge from a global, functionally differentiated society.

David Lehmann has a somewhat different view. He does not see religion as a part of the globalisation process. He is of the view that religion is itself the original globaliser. He expresses this in two ways. Lehman (2002) explains that there are two types of religious globalization owing to the difference in religion, cultural, economy and political characteristics of the individuals. Lehmann uses the term fundamentalist for the first one. This type of religious globalization aims to extend cultural homogeneity. We may refer to the personality of a religious leader or the belief in their holy text which may be a reason why they would not bring changes to their beliefs and practices despite a new culture. One important point to be understood here is that it does establish itself to a new culture but does not acknowledge it. Cosmopolitan is the other type of religious globalization that he mentions aims at less emphasized differences in power between their new culture of the place to where they have migrated and post migration culture. It allocates various degrees of recognition to the new culture of the region they have migrated to. Lehman says that the most important feature of this type is that it generates discourses on the relations between original culture and the new one.

GLOBAL RELIGION

Pentecostalism

The Pentecostal forms of Protestantism began to grow in the southern hemisphere towards the late 20th century. This took place first in Latin America, Africa and all over the Pacific Rim. The growth rate of Pentecostalism is fastest among people who find in this form of Christianity a vision for themselves and support for their family. This community looks up and out. If we speak in terms of theology, they provide a vision and is blessed by the spirit and gifted with new opportunities. These communities transcend national, political and ethical
boundaries as they are linked to a huge expanding network of churches and organisations. We should remember here that communications within these networks are in the English language. Another important factor is the capability of Pentecostalism to provide refuge. This is true in terms of practice and teaching. Hence a set of communities are freely joined but firmly directed, leadership is often authoritarian. This has proved to be a great combination in weak economies of the developing world. We can also see significant changes in the lifestyle of the people as a result. For people living in the global south Pentecostalism has brought about some real improvement and not just survival. It is a more modest enterprise than a direct application of the thesis of Max Weber or capital accumulation. Honesty, discipline and organisational talent stand out, and also become the most needed skills to survive in the industry. As people move from villages to towns and cities for employment opportunities and better education, Pentecostal communities become in a very practical sense ‘havens and way stations in the journey up the socio economic ladder’ (Maldonado, 1993:235). This could be applied to countries and continents as well. This is why Pentecostalism is a ‘global option’ for Martin (Martin, 2002a). These communities are freed from the ascribed categories that bind people to places socially or geographically and at same time can put down roots.

**Global Ecumenism**

**Meeting of the World Church Council Delegations**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) was officially founded in 1948, is a global institution. It is a proper example of Peter Beyer’s second type that is a form of religion that makes links with the questions that arise from a global functionally differentiated society (Beyer, 1993:
The members of this institution are diverse in origin, very qualified and efficient. The WCC became the channel through which the different streams of ecumenical life that already existed were brought together. The main goal was to bring together both Christians and churches ‘to visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards unity in order that the world may believe’ (WCC Constitution). Much progress has been made, however ‘visible unity’ is still an aspiration. When the WCC was first created it was focused on bringing world peace, it was affected a lot by the Cold war and its effect on the church life. It started finding methods to eradicate difference between the east and the west. It supported the togetherness of insight of Marxism and Christianity. After 1989, this changed radically and reactionary and conservative religion grew especially in the late 20th century. One obvious example is Pentecostalism. We can also take modern Europe as an example of ecumenism. Well, the European Union has been widening and the ecumenical contacts have been developing. These two things are the two sides of the same coin. The main question that the Europeans have to answer is what is uniting them together and not the factors dving them. Let us now discuss another example. Brother Roger founded the Taize community in Burgundy in the aftermath of the Second World War as a symbol of reconciliation in a village close to the border between Occupied and Vichy France. Now, it has become a centre of pilgrimage for youth where they visit in order to share their views and lifestyle. It is a fine example of peace-making and ecumenism in Europe.

ISLAM

Pentecostalism and resurgence from Islam are both parts of the self-conscious awakening of a part of the world that has not been included in the mainstream. Let us discuss the Indonesian case with special mention of the Panca Sila. In the modern world, Indonesia is the largest Muslim nation. It has 240 million people with 88% Muslims. During 1990, when the economy of the nation plummeted due to a financial crisis a major religious change also took place at the same time with 2 million Muslims converting to Christianity and Hinduism due to violence of the mid 1960’s. We can say that this is the largest conversion for Islam in modern times. What we need to see here, is the nature of Islam- it is plural. According to Hefner, for Muslims like Christians, pluralism has always been the case (2000a: 7). However in the late 20th century in Indonesia, the notion has a certain vibe. In the case of revival of Islam and the development of a well-educated middle class, the reformists have an important role. It is these middle class who are finding new ways forward for the Indonesian state. They also had a major role to play in the dethroning of President Suharto in 1988. The presence of the middle class can also be seen around the debate of Panca Sila. Panca Sila is the official doctrine underlying the Indonesian state. The Panca Sila consists of five basic principles. They are the belief in one supreme God, humanitarianism, consultative democracy and social justice. The first one is a bit controversial and important for a political discussion as to what is that ‘one supreme God’? Different religions have different views. Muslims support their own God and others their own too. Well, religion is said to be present for the well-being of the people and the state recognises five religions with Islam in majority and Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Taking this fact that that there in an imbalance in religious divisions, we can say that the Panca Sila is quite a remarkable attempt to take in these religious differences and also affirm the cultural diversity. It has been a better way forward for Indonesia as it neither endorses a Muslim nation nor a completely secular state. However, till when will this be allowed to carry on, is not known.

CONCLUSION
Globalisation has touched all the aspects of our lives, the world and the society. Religion is no exception. As much as it has helped in strengthening our religious roots and bringing us awareness about it, also it has resulted in eradicating our culture and values and replacing it with new ones. New religions are coming up to satisfy people who did not find their queries answered by their faith, conversions are taking place and global religions are rising.