



Globalization and its influence on Indian culture and society

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Abstract

Globalization is as extremely interesting and attractive in 21st century as modernization development and change have been for the preceding century. To think of the world as a global village was once a day dreamer's pleasure. Not any more instead the end of the 20th century will be remembered for bringing the dream of globalization to reality on the one hand, several outcomes of this transformation are within the access of huge strength of human being availability of internet facility and fax machines are its examples. Who could have thought its wide speed availability in India three decades ago? Globalization as a trend would create it's on each area of Indian culture and society. On the other hand, the process of globalization has generated universal disillusionment. Those express praise for its arrival are fewer. Disillusionment prevails not only in the developing but also in the developed world. It needs to be analyzed as to what lie in the root of such disillusionment.

In this context, the present paper examines historical perspective of globalization. It will examine the implications of looking at the impact of globalization Indian culture and society.

Keywords: Social and cultural influence, globalization, global village, transformation, disillusionment, Indian culture, indian society etc

Introduction

Globalization is as extremely interesting and attractive in 21st century as modernization development and change have been for the preceding century. To think of the world as a global village was once a day dreamer's pleasure. Not any more instead the end of the 20th century will be remembered for bringing the dream of globalization to reality on the one hand, several outcomes of this transformation are within the access of huge strength of human being availability of internet facility and fax machines are its examples. Who could have thought its wide speed availability in India three decades ago? Globalization as a trend would create it's on each area of Indian culture and society. On the other hand, the process of globalization has generated universal disillusionment. Those express praise for its arrival are fewer. Disillusionment prevails not only in the developing but also in the developed world. It needs to be analyzed as to what lie in the root of such disillusionment.

People around the globe are more connected to each other today than ever before in the history of mankind. Information and money flow more quickly than ever. Goods and services produced in one part of the world are increasingly available in all parts of the world. International travel is more frequent. International communication is commonplace. We live in an intensely interdependent world in which all the earth's peoples with their immense differences of culture and historical experience are compressed together in instant communication. We face today a world of almost infinite promise which is also a world of terminal danger. This phenomenon has been titled 'Globalization.'

'The Era of Globalization' is fast becoming the preferred term for describing the current times. Just as the Depression, the Cold War Era, the Space Age, and the Roaring 20's are used to describe particular periods of history; Globalization describes the political, economic, and cultural atmosphere of today. While some people think of Globalization as primarily

a synonym for global business, it is much more than that. The same forces that allow businesses to operate as if national borders did not exist also allow social activists, labour organizers, journalists, academics, international terrorists and many others to work on a global stage.

British Imperialism or Western Colonialism did not die after the end of World War II when the West gave up its colonies in Africa, Asia, Latin America, West Indies and the East Indies. Gradually it changed itself into a subtler form which is proving to be more harmful to all non-Western cultures both in the short run and the long run.

Indian culture which in effect means Hindu culture, Hindu religion, Hindu society, Hindu civilization, Hindu way of life are under the lethal threat of the ruthless forces of Globalization today. What went by the name of Colonialism in classical history textbooks produced in the days of British Raj has been replaced today by the synonym of Globalization. The unbridled expansion of western culture has continued at an accelerated rate along with the denigration and decline of Hindu culture, civilization, religion, art, literature and customs. This new Colonialism has taken on several new faces or rather put on new masks. It cleverly masquerades itself through labels and slogans like democracy, humanitarian rights, gender equality, internationalism, free trade and humanitarianism. In the name of modernization and Globalization it pretends to be uplifting peoples whom it is really exploiting. This is not very different in either kind or intent from old Western Colonialism British Imperialism in the Indian context which vaunted itself as the benign bringer of Civilization and culture to the uncivilized world. It was given the glorious title of '*White Man's Burden*'. In the Colonial Era in India from 1700-1875, British colonial expansion worked through military, economic, and religious methods. Military force was the primary and initial method. This was little more than organized banditry, stealing the gold, jewels and other treasures of India. Economic

exploitation went hand in hand with the military conquest. Later it stooped so low in its methods as to get involved even with the drug and narcotic trades. Later economic exploitation developed into a fine art resulting in the exercise of total control over the natural resources and controlling the economy of India for long term gains. Religion provided the needed rationale for this cruel plunder. All native Hindus were dismissed as heathens or pagans' despicable creatures who don't have to be treated like human beings till they take their fateful decision to embrace Christianity. According to the missionaries who came to India to play second fiddle to the British Imperial rulers, Christianity was the only true religion. Jesus Christ was the only true God. All other religions like Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and many other traditional faiths and religions in India had to be eliminated to save the souls of India and Indians. All facets and all aspects of Hindu religion and Hindu society were dismissed as idolatry and superstition, in order to advance the noble Christian pursuit of salvation for the barbarous heathens of India.

Along with Christian religion came the rest of British or Western culture, thought and customs and the gradual end of traditional ways of life. Thus, our traditional religions and cultures were gradually subverted or eliminated. The new Indian converts to Christianity were encouraged not only to give up their religion but their culture, which often had religious or spiritual implications as well. A good Indian Christian convert would dress like an Englishman and emulate English manners in all things. Thus, in India the Hindus converted by the British to Christianity were encouraged to think, behave and live like Englishmen. This is what I call *Macaulayism*. This term derives from Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800 - 1859) who was a Member of the Governor General's Council in Calcutta in the 1830s. He introduced the English system of education to produce Brown Sahibs who were to be English in taste and temperament. This expectation was more than fulfilled even by 1900 and after our independence thanks to our Anglo-Saxon Prime Minister Nehru this process has been completed with consummate ruthlessness.

After the outward display and establishment of the forces of Colonialism, came an intellectual form that was less overt but more dangerous and explosively insidious. The British rulers attempted to colonize our minds by eliminating all our traditional schools and education systems through a progressive system of Western education. This they did in a country like India where Christianity failed to gain many converts. This gave British Colonialism in India the aura of a civilizing influence. Educated Indians having higher education in the colleges opened by the alien rulers in the latter half of the 19th century was made to believe that it was not colonial exploitation that the Englishmen were bringing to India but progressive Western values training our people in science, art and technology and teaching them better and more equitable forms of government. Native Indian people were helped to learn the skills of veneer of English civilization by becoming modern and rational.

Though all forms of Colonial Empire in the geographical sense came to an end after the II World War, yet the same forms of colonial exploitation continue even today in all parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America under the banner of that all-embracing umbrella called Globalization. Western Civilization in spite of its tall claims to support diversity is only promoting a worldwide monoculture the same basic

values, institutions and points of view for everyone which it calls 'Globalization.' The brutal and stark truth is that western culture, with its declared pursuit of markets and commodities eliminates all true culture, which is based on quality and not quantity. It creates a culture of filthy lucre and lust for money all the way that submerges any true culture of refinement or spirituality a dismal culture in which everything can be bought and sold, possessed or capitalized on. All our capitalists and businessmen in India today are gloating and bloating about the ever-rising tide of consumerism and consumer culture brought about by the ruthless march of Globalization. This in my view constitutes the greatest assault on Hindu culture and Hindu society by the draconian dragon of gargantuan Globalization.

Macaulayism of British India has become in letter and spirit the Globalization of today. Pound Sterling has been replaced by the US Dollar. To the people of India in general and educated Indians in particular, Globalization seems to be rather mild and well meaning, more like an imperceptible breeze, which blows in silently, fills up the psychological atmosphere, creates a mental mood, inspires an intellectual attitude and finally settles down as a cultural climate pervasive, protein and ubiquitous. It is not out to use a specified section of Indian society as a vehicle of its virulence. It is not like Islamism which wants to destroy the body of a culture in one fell sweep. It is not subtle like Christianity which subverts a society surreptitiously. Yet at the same time, it is a creeping toxemia which corrodes the soul of our Hindu culture and corrupts our time-honoured social systems in slow stages. And its target is every section of Indian society.

What has been its impact on culture in India? Every educated Indian seems to believe that nothing in Hindu India, past or present, is to be approved unless recognized and recommended by an appropriate authority in the West. There is an all-pervading presence of a positive, if not worshipful, attitude towards everything in western society and culture, past as well as present in the name of progress, reason and science. Nothing from the West is to be rejected unless it has first been weighed and found wanting by a Western evaluation. Swamy Vivekananda foresaw the dangers of Globalization as early as in 1893 when he spoke at the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago. To quote his soul-stirring words: 'Shall India die? Then, from the world all spirituality will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct, all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force, and competition its ceremonies, and human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be'.

Let us return to other dimensions of globalization. The essential point that emerges is the intensification of the exploitation of the people on a global scale. There are more than 100 countries who are actually poorer today than they were 15 years ago. That is, in absolute terms, there is a decline in their incomes correspondingly, in absolute terms, there is increase in profits generated by the global capital from their countries. This process of Globalization, therefore, represents the classical shift in the balance of forces away from the people towards big capitalists. This is the political impact of this Globalization: shift in favour of multinational capital and their profits at global level and, in the process, economic exploitation of third world countries or the developing world has been intensified. Therefore, the

singular-defining feature of Globalization at the international scale is the growing of inequalities. The growing of inequalities between countries and the growing of inequalities inside countries between the rich and the poor.

As someone remarked, finance capital is the single player in the world casino. The world is a gambling place and this finance capital is on its speculation march making super profit. So, the first direct impact on us are growing pressures to remove all restrictions on inflow and outflow of financial capital. The second, which is being negotiated in the WTO, which is called the multinational agreement on investment MAI, i.e. remove all restrictions on the inflow of industrial capital and remove all restrictions on the repatriations of profits. We, in India, have implemented this to a large extent allowing the free flow of FDI. This Vajpayee government has gone to the extent of opening up every sector. The strangest thing you will find with this government is it has opened up 100 per cent access to FDI in real estate. Even countries, which are advocates of liberalization, Globalization etc, have restrictions on foreigners acquiring property. The third area of globalization is the removal of all restrictions on foreign trade and provide access of your markets for the products produced by the industrialised world. Bending over backwards to appease US imperialism, this Vajpayee government has already, not only removed quantitative restrictions, but also progressively reduced import duties so that virtually we move towards a zero-import duty regime. That are the goods from the advanced countries can come and take over our markets and maximize profits.

As a result, India is moving dangerously towards being enslaved again economically by the industrialized west. Other aspects of Globalization and its impact on India, I think, also merit attention. But on the economic front, let us to sum up what has happened as a result of globalization. If you look at it sector wise or if you look at its macro-picture, one myth that has been exploded is that Globalization has led to a higher growth rate in India. The pundits of Globalization have been saying we have broken out of the so-called Hindu rate of growth. The Hindu rate of growth they define between 2 and 3 percent and they say that Globalization has given us growth rate of more than 6 percent. The highest growth was between 1986 and 1990, when you crossed 8 percent and after that in the next 5-year averages you will actually find a decline.

Now, this is typical again of Globalization. One important feature of liberalization is the States withdrawal from economic activity in the name of free market -- the philosophy, the ideological tenet of Globalization. This, in other words, means the State's capacity to invest in the economy declines leading to a decline in capital formation. Declining domestic capital formation adversely affects the future health of economy. That is actually what is happening. State's withdrawal has two types of impact. One is that the gross domestic capital formation declines, which impacts on the general economic growth. Secondly state's withdrawal means whatever little responsibility that the state has towards the people in terms of education, health, in terms of other social obligations, are progressively abandoned by the government. In other words, the people have a double pronged attack on them. Because of decreased economic activity the employment opportunities and their livelihood get adversely affected. Secondly, because of the State's withdrawal from social sector whatever relief they were

getting that also gets reduced. The livelihood of the vast masses of the people deteriorates sharply.

Impact of Globalization in India has also many other dimensions. It has wide ranging impact on everything else connected with our lives. It impacts our entire culture or the entire value system, on the milieu in which we are living. Capitalism not only produces the object for the subject but it also produces subjects for the object. He made a very penetrating statement. In today's advertising world if you see this what is actually being created. You are creating human beings who are capable of consuming certain products. The emphasis is no longer on creating the products that are required by the human beings rather creating human beings that are required for the products. This is essentially the defining feature of culture under Globalization. Human beings are reduced to the status of products who will consume the other products that capitalism produces. This entire trend of culture -- consumerism, degeneration etc -- creates its own atmosphere which affects every aspect of our life and society. One immediate impact can be seen in the declining political culture. Globalization has thrown up in India absolutely newer avenues for corruption, which were unheard of or unconceivable ten years ago. The entire range of corruption that you find in our country today and the political corruption that you find as a consequence -- flood gates have been opened by this process of Globalization.

Globalization and liberalization mean the opening up of areas for kickbacks and commissions to a large extent. In the process, the entire culture of corruption if we may call it, has undergone a 'revolutionary' change where you find the ways in which money can be made has not only expanded but it is having a tremendous impact on the political life of this country. This is an important aspect because the causality here is actually genuine democracy and the obvious consequence is the very sharp rise in political opportunism. This sharp rise in political opportunism also is creating a degree of political instability which will seek to move the polity towards authoritarianism. The degeneration of polity seeks to divorce politics from all democratic content and reduce it to sordid bargaining and manoeuvring. Very often, we see now a days, the corporate world saying separate economics from politics. This is *their* politics! They are actually saying that reform process should take place independent of what is happening in our political life. They want to separate reforms from politics so that nobody can interfere and the politicians are told that you can confine yourself either to destroying Masjids and building temples or giving reservations! That are your agenda and do not talk of economics. So, the attempt to separate economics from politics in other words separate the political life of the country from the actual economic decisions that are being taken, is a very important consequence of the process of Globalization. How this is impacting on our political life we are able to see in various aspects of the type of governance that we are seeing in the last few years at the center and state.

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