

SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN SOCIETY

Dr. P. Chand Basha., M.A. Ph.D.*

Introduction

Today globalization is a common usage, but invites controversial interpretations. As a term it is poorly defined. There are some commonalities in the interpretation of the term in different disciplines. The commonalities include terms like uniformity, standardization through a technological, commercial and cultural synchronization coming from the west. Globalization has a wide role to play worldwide. It has left back its footprints at every sphere of life. Not only in India, but the interchange of world views and ideas has resulted in a major transformation of the lifestyle and living standard of people globally. Indian culture is no bar to this transformation process. Our deep rooted traditions and customs have loosened up their hold with the emergence of globalization. India has a rich cultural background and pride of its culture is famous throughout the world. Globalization has not only inculcated the westernization in India, but conversely the Indian culture has also spread its impact globally. Culture and traditions of any geographic region hold a special significance with respect to its uniqueness and that is the differentiating factor for a population within a geographic boundary from the other.

Sociological interpretation of the Term Globalisation

In the domain of Sociology, it can be noted that the term “Globalization” has got extensive treatment in the hands of many sociologists. The sociologists perceive that though economic in origin, the term has enormous social implications.

* **Reader in Sociology, K.H. Government Degree College, Dharmavaram, Anantapur (Dist) Andhra Pradesh, India**

According to George Ritzer “Globalization refers to the rapidly increasing worldwide integration and interdependence of societies and cultures”.

According to Scholte “Globalization as de-territorialization or the growth of ‘supra-territorial’ relations between people. Globalization refers to a far-reaching change in the nature of “social space”.

According to Albrow “ Globalization includes all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single society, global society”.

According to Ronald Robertson “Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.”

According to Anthony Giddens, “Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” .

According to Water “Globalization is a social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly”.

According to Held et al, “Globalization can be thought of a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power”.

Colians Dictionadry of Sociology “ Globalization of production refers to the integration of economic activities by units of private capital on awaked scale .”

S.K Misra and V.K Pury “ In simple terms Globalization means integrating economy of a country with the world economy.”

In simple words “globalization is refers to a process of increasing economic integration and growing economic interdependence between countries in the world economy”

The word globalization is now used to sum contemporary world order. But the influence of the globalization of directly visible in the economic field and hence the term is very often taken to me economic globalization of market. The globalization defined as the process whereby there are social, cultural, technological, exchanges across the border.

History of Globalization

During the 19th century, globalization approached its modern form. Industrialization allowed standardized production of household items using economies of scale while rapid population growth created sustained demand for commodities. Globalization in this period was decisively shaped by nineteenth-century imperialism. In the 19th century, steamships reduced the cost of international transport significantly and railroads made inland transport cheaper. The transport revolution occurred sometime between 1820 and 1850. More nations embraced international trade. Globalization in this period was decisively shaped by nineteenth-century imperialism such as in Africa and Asia. The invention of shipping containers in 1956 helped advance the globalization of commerce.

After the Second World War, work by politicians led to the Bretton Woods conference, an agreement by major governments to lay down the framework for international monetary policy, commerce and finance, and the founding of several international institutions intended to facilitate economic growth multiple rounds of trade opening simplified and lowered trade barriers. Initially, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), led to a series of agreements to remove trade restrictions. GATT's successor was the World Trade Organization (WTO), which created an institution to manage the trading system. Exports nearly doubled from 8.5% of total gross world product in 1970 to 16.2% in 2001.

Globalization has been facilitated by several factors. Three of these have been highlighted: rapid improvements in technology, liberalization of trade and investment policies and, pressures from international organizations such as the WTO.

The social impact of Globalization :

India is a culturally diverse country. Sixteen per cent of the world's population lives in the country. There are over 826 languages and thousands of dialects spoken. The difference in regions, topography and climate allow for different types of lifestyles and culture. Although about 70 per cent of the populations live in rural areas, India is rapidly urbanizing with more than 225 cities with over 100,000 population, and at least ten cities alone with over a million people.

Globalization is hardly a new force affecting India. To think so is to ignore a diverse and pluralistic long-standing civilization that was shaped by a long list of "invading" (globalizing) cultures that became what we now know as India. The previous globalizers of India include the Aryans, Greeks, Turks, Afghans, Muslims and most recently, the Europeans, Portuguese, French, Dutch and finally the English. The former globalizers that came with invading armies have increasingly been replaced by less violent but equally powerful globalizers.

Society

The traditional Indian culture is defined by relatively strict social hierarchy. From an early age, children are reminded of their roles and places in society. Several differences such as religion divide culture. However, far more powerful division is the traditional Hindu bifurcation into non-polluting and polluting occupations. Strict social taboos have governed these groups for thousands of years. Among developing countries, India has low levels of occupational and geographic mobility. People choose same occupations as their parents and rarely move geographically in the society.

Family Structure

Let us start with the key attraction of Indian joint family culture. The joint families have become a strange surprise to the Indians especially to those residing in the metropolitan cities in the small flat culture with the nuclear families blooming up like mushrooms in the rain. We have lost the patience to get adjusted into the joint family, imbibing the values of the elders and getting the young ones brought up under the shadow of their grandparents. Children have started treating grandparents like guests or visitors, and such an upbringing is one of the main

reasons of increasing old age homes, as those children consider their own parents as burden in their state of adulthood.

Marriage Values

Similarly, marriages have also lost their values. It is very much evident from the increasing number of divorce cases and the extra-marital affairs reported every now and then. Marriage used to be considered as bonding of the souls which will be linked even after the death; but today marriage is like a professional bond or a so-called commitment to share life without compromising their self-interests. The ego factor into the Indian youth is again a product of globalization.

Religion

India is the birth place of religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. India is one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world, with some of the most deeply religious societies and cultures. Religion still plays a central and definitive role in the life of most of its people. Despite the strong role of religion in Indian life, atheism and agnostics also have visible influence along with a self-ascribed tolerance to other faiths.

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 who converted to Christianity were encouraged to think, behave and live like Englishmen.

Culture

The culture of any country does not only portray the region and language of the region, but it starts with the mindset and mentality of the residing citizens. Indian culture is quite rich with respect to its heritage and resources, and more importantly due to the welcoming approach of its citizens. India is bouquet of flowers varying religion, dialect, edibles, tradition, custom,

music, art and architecture etc, bundled into a single unit of patriotism and unity. The common factor within all these diversities is the Indian mindset of welcoming, greeting, celebrating in a united way with immense affection and togetherness. This is the rich essence of the Indian culture that has attracted many foreigners to stay back in India and mingle into its eternal fragrance.

Food, Clothing and Dialect

Indian food, clothing and languages are varied with respect to different states. The food varies in its taste, but every food has its own nutrient value and every region is specified and rich in its medicinal preparations with the home remedies. Even the clothing varies in different states which is very much particular in maintaining the dignity of woman. The varies cuisines from all over the world though have different flavours to add, still the food ingredients that have inflicted with much popularity are the junk food items which has increased the health disorders in the country. Again the dressing like the suitings for the males is an inappropriate match for the Indian type of climate. The female dresses are again a way of distraction to the perverted minds.

Even the Indians are not very much in favour of promoting their mother tongue or our national language. Instead the youth today consider it to be a shameful condition to speak in their national language Hindi. The way the foreign languages are getting prevalent in India like the French, German and Spanish, right from the school level, is the example of how much we provide importance to Indian languages in comparison to the foreign ones.

Greeting:

Namaste, Namaskar or Namaskaram is a common spoken greeting or salutation in the Indian subcontinent. When spoken to another person, it is commonly accompanied by a slight bow made with hands pressed together, palms touching and fingers pointed upwards, in front of the chest.

Festivals:

India, being a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, celebrates holidays and festivals of various religions. The 3 National holidays in India, are the Independence Day, the Republic

Day and the Gandhi Jayanti, Popular religious festivals include the Hindu festivals of Diwali, Durga puja, Holi, Rakshabandhan, Dussehra, Ramzaan etc. American festivals like Valentine's day, Friendship day etc. are spreading across India.

Social Values

We have the incorporated values of treating the guests as God, warm-hearted welcoming, greeting elders with due respect and a celebrating every small festival with great colour of enjoyment and togetherness. Such a wide gathering with full hue and light can hardly be seen today. People have highly restricted themselves in social interaction. The interaction in present generation is highly diplomatic considering the financial status and wealth. We have lost our social values and cheerful blessing of togetherness. The present generations are more happily celebrating Valentine's Day rather than Holi and Diwali.

Rural Poor

In the villages, farmers are not much aware of global economic system. Most of the food crops are converted into cash crops. Sugar cane farmers are getting advance loan from banks and MNCs. They used to supply hybrid seedlings, fertilizers and highly advanced equipments. This equipment utility reduced the human labour force. Hence the rural people are shifting from place to place for want of labour for their livelihood. Natural manure is replaced by synthetic fertilizers. As there is a shift from food crops to export crops, the prices of food items went on high, and the poor people couldn't buy from their meager income. Similar trend continued for clothing, housing, transportation, health etc. So people were forced to consume less of even basic necessities.

Deaton (2003) opines that more than one fourth of the World's poor live in India. India's economic liberalization in the early 1990s resulted in high rates of growth, whether it reduced the numbers of poor or benefit only increasingly wealthy urban elite is a question. Because of growing inequality, consumption by the poor couldn't rise as fast as average consumption and poverty reduction was only about two-thirds of what it would have been had the distribution and consumption remained unchanged (Deaton, 2003). The gap between rural and urban areas

widened because of the vast differences in the levels of literacy, availability of living facilities such as water, drainage, housing, power, lighting, food and transport etc.

Aged People

Indian society is undergoing rapid transformation under the impact of industrialization, urbanization and globalization. Consequently, the traditional values and institutions are in the process of erosion and adaptation, resulting in the weakening of intergenerational ties that were the hallmark of the traditional family. Industrialization has replaced the simple family production units by the mass production and the factory. Economic transactions are now between individuals. Individual jobs and earnings give rise to income differentials within the family. Push factors such as population pressure and pull factors such as wider economic opportunities and modern communication cause young people to migrate especially from rural to urban areas.

With the rapidly increasing number of aged compounded by disintegration of joint families and ever increasing influence of modernization and new life styles, the care of elderly has emerged as an important issue in India. Providing care for the aged has never been a problem in India where a value based joint family system was dominant. However, with a growing trend towards nuclear family set-up, and increasing education, urbanization and industrialization, the vulnerability of elderly is rapidly increasing. The coping capacities of the younger and elder family members are now being challenged under various circumstances resulting in neglect and abuse of elderly in many ways, both within the family and outside.

Sociologically, ageing marks a form of transition from one set of social roles to another, and such roles are difficult. Among all role transformation in the course of ageing, the shift into the new role of the 'old' is one of the most complex and complicated. In an agriculture based traditional society, where children followed their parent's occupation, it was natural that the expertise and knowledge of each generation were passed on to the next, thus affording older persons a useful role in society. However, this is no longer true in modern society, in which improved education, rapid technical change and new forms of organization have often rendered obsolete the knowledge, experience and wisdom of older persons. Once they retire, elderly

people find that their children are not seeking advice from them anymore, and society has not much use for them.

This realization often results in feeling of loss of status, worthlessness and loneliness. The growth of nuclear families has also meant a need for changes in role relations. Neither having authority in the family, nor being needed, they feel frustrated and depressed. If the older person is economically dependent on the children, the problem is likely to become even worse.

Globalization has increased Nuclearization of Families. Nuclear Families, characterized by individuality, independence, and desire for privacy are gradually replacing the joint family, which emphasizes the family as a unit and demands deference to age and authority. Children who migrate often find it difficult to cope with city life and elect to leave their old parents in the village, causing problems of loneliness and lack of care givers for old parents. Parents in this circumstance cannot always count on financial support from their children and may have to take care of themselves. They continue to work, although at a reduced pace.

Another development impacting negatively on the status of older people is the increasing occurrence of dual career families. Female participation in economic activity either as workers or as entrepreneurs has increased considerably in the recent past in the urban informal sector, and the middle class formal sector, as well as in the rural areas. In the rural informal sectors, increased expenditure on education, health and better food require high incomes. This development has implications for elderly care. On the one hand, working couples find the presence of old parents emotionally bonding and of great help in the caring for their own children. On the other hand, high costs of housing and health care are making it harder for children to have parents live with them. This is true both in rural and urban areas.

Hence the changing factors in the family in its structure and function are undermining the capacity of the family to provide support to elderly and the weakening of the traditional norms underlying such support' leading to neglect and abuse of older people in family.

In the cultural sphere, the global diffusion of Levi's, McDonalds, MTV and Coca Cola-Pepsi-Cola has shown increasing assimilation of local cultures into the American culture or what could have been said as Americanization, or McDonaldization or in Hannerz's interpretation of 'Cocacolonization' and Benjamin Barbers's terminology of 'Mc World'. Americanization is a process that refers to the growing influence of the United States of America on the culture of other countries, as a result substituting a given culture with the American one. McDonaldization refers to the global spread of the fast food restaurant.

So, from this perspective, it is claimed that cultural globalization is spreading cultural imperialism. J. Bhagwati points out: "if the 19th century was British, a time of Pax-Britanica, and the 20th century was American, when Pax-Americana prevailed, the 21st century which many feared would be Japan's, a Pax-Japanica promises to be American again".

Conclusion

Overwhelming impact of globalization can be observed on the Indian culture? 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. "Swami 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!'" Precisely such a terrible thing is taking place in India today on account of the inexorable and immutable process of Globalization. In the end we can say that, every step of movement towards economic, political and cultural modernization, taken by the state in India, is responded to by the people with an enhanced sense of self-consciousness and awareness of identity. Cultural modernization, sponsored by the forces of globalization, is resented if it encroaches upon or does not promote

the core cultural values of society, its language, social practices and styles of life. The vigour of the renewed sense of self-awareness generated among the members of the local cultures and communities is such as to succeed in making adaptive reconciliation with the forces of globalization. The linkages both visible and invisible, defining the cultural interdependence among communities and regions in India which have existed historically, reinforce instead of threatening the national identity. These bonds seem to become stronger as India encounters the forces of modernization and globalization.

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