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GLOBALISATION AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIAN SOCIETY

Y. Gurappa Naidu

Indian Society is drastically changing after globalisation and urbanisation has brought a lot of changes in the Indian culture. Economic policies have a direct impact in shaping the structural framework of economy. Economic policies formulated and executed by the government, have also played an important role in determination of levels of income, savings, investments and employment in the society. It will be a mistake to assume that India can evaluate an effective mechanism for economic reforms and it will be difficult for India to adopt with global changes without dealing with domestic problems like control of terrorism, providing employment to rural educated people, and work for the rural poor, empowering women and marginalised people and providing reasonable price and market facilities for the farmers. Global changes are operating on many new areas of conflict and cooperation for India and we can achieve a new level of integration of Indian economy with world markets on the basis of protection of our own national interest.

Globalisation is the new buzzword that has come to dominate the world since the nineties of the last century¹. The study of globalisation inevitably poses a preliminary challenge to all those who are interested in locating and addressing various facts-economic, political and social - that have a bearing on our conceptions of domestic and international order². Globalisation is a process of structural adjustment increasingly emerging as a kind of irreversible process that challenges the importance of the authority and welfare functions of the state, the complex implications of which are far-reaching to the developing countries. (A.K.Ojha, 2002, P.13) Dr. C. Rangarajan, on "globalisation. : Concept and Concerns" explains that globalisation, has become an expression of common usage. Unfortunately, it connotes different things to different people. To some, it represents a brave new world with no barriers. To some others, it spells doom and distraction. Broadly speaking, the term "globalisation" means integration of economies and societies through cross country flow of information, ideas, technologies, goods, services capital, finance and the people. The essence of globalisation in a broad sense is connectivity in all aspects of human life. Cross border integration can have several dimensions-cultural, social, political and economic. (C. Rangarajan, the Hindu, 6-1-2003)

Though globalisation is defined by different people in different ways, a precise definition is yet to be framed. It is a complex phenomenon and a process by which the world becomes a "Global Village". Globalisation affects different aspects such as economic, political, social and religious ones³ of any country. However, a few definitions are worth viewing. Stephen Gill defines Globalisation as the reduction in the transaction costs of transborder movements of capital and goods, thus of factors of production and goods⁴. Guy Brainbant says that the process of globalisation not only includes opening up of World Trade, development of advanced means of communication, internationalisation of financial markets, growing importance of multinational corporations, population migrations and more generally increased mobility of persons, goods, capital, data and ideas but also of infectious diseases, and pollution⁵. David Held observes: Transnational Networks and relations

have developed virtually across all areas of human activity, goods, capital, people, knowledge, communication and weapons as well as crime, pollutants, fashions and beliefs rapidly move across territorial boundaries. Far from the world of discrete civilisations, or in a simple phrase an international society of states, it has become a fundamentally interconnected global order, marked by intense pattern of exchange as well as by clear patterns of power, hierarchy and unevenness⁶ Sakhi Athyal clearly explained the definition given by C T. Kurian in his paper on Globalisation, youth and Religion in India. C. T. Kurian has written many books in India about globalisation. In his article on "Globalisation-what is it about?" he spells a definition for globalisation. According to it, globalisation is a concept used as a short form to convey a wide variety of process, possibilities and positions. It has a capability of different interpretations of different kinds. To say anything meaningful about globalisation including the mode of response to it, there is a need to know as early as possible what it is all about". He talks about the marvelous technological innovations such as e-mail and flights that convert this earth and its people into a "global village". But this globe has been integrated by capitalist practices and ideologies and has largely removed ideological polarisation. So he concludes that it is a concept of meaning, the implications of which, cannot be taken for granted and that one cannot define one's response to it until the concept is adequately specified. In the capacity of an economist he says that economic and political triumph of private capital and its presence throughout the world is the main component of what has come to be celebrated as "globalisation". (Kurian, 1977, PP.135-36)⁷

Considering this background, into account an attempt is made to analyse the impact of globalisation in India, particularly in rural society. To measure the impact on Indian Society the important areas selected for this paper are, the impact on Indian economy and economic reforms after globalisation, Agriculture, impact on women in Indian Society in general and rural dalit women, the impact on the poor in rural areas and how globalisation becomes a cause for poverty. I have an opinion that the above areas constitute the major part of the Indian society for assessing the impact of globalisation. Efforts were also made to give appropriate suggestions to improve the position. The information was gathered mainly from research papers, and articles from Journals and books. Internet facility also served an important source for collecting the required information for this paper.

GLOBALISATION AND THE PEOPLE OF INDIA

Though, globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation are the three cardinal elements of New Economic Policy (NEP) in India, taking into consideration globalisation alone, it is the process of increasing integration of Indian economy with the world economy through the reduction in import duties and export restrictions, promotion of the foreign investment and permission for the flow of foreign technology and skills. Liberalisation on the other hand, aims at dismantling bureaucratic regulations and control on private corporate enterprises. Privatisation is a process of involving the

private sector in the ownership and operation of state owned undertaking, which ultimately lead to denationalisation of important state owned sectors of Indian economy. All these processes of economic reforms aim at higher rate of national per capital income, full employment, self-reliance and reduction of inequalities and poverty⁸. Globalisation is not a remote experience or removed from the lives of the ordinary people of India. If foreign capital brings in new technology, it may either increase employment or rather reduce more employment.

Highlighting the multi-disciplinary character of globalisation studies, Mohan argues that its impact is felt upon every aspect of life critically altering individuals, institutions, societies and nations. Another fact which Mohan draws the attention is the "local mediation" of global forces. The accent on new social movements that inaugurate a new discourse on "globalisation of responsibility" also forms an integral aspect of Mohan's narration. The accent on the local and the global, is found in the expression in the term "globalisation" in Ramesh Babu's account of globalisation. He argues that while the welfare state is on the back foot, the nation-state is resilient. India is seen as "too small" to challenge the hegemony of the west, while internally it gives the impression of being 'too big' given the tendency to over-centralisation⁹.

New capital that comes in is likely to go into the production of goods that cater the needs of those who have high purchasing power because the profits are likely to be higher in such spheres. This may create an impression of growth and prosperity. But the needs of the bulk of the population may tend to be neglected. There will be no sense of accountability to Indian people in this process. The local manufacturers and workers may be replaced. Handloom weavers of different parts of India are examples of this fact. (Sakhi Athyal, P.1). Kurian also mentions that globalisation usually benefits people who can play the game, but the chances are very less for those who are resourceless, uneducated and those who make livelihood through traditional production activities, will come under various kinds of pressures. So he suggests that we need to educate people about the nature and implications of globalisation and its different kinds of impact on different sections of Indian populations and we also need to formulate popular strategies to influence state policies. He emphasizes the need to wipe out illiteracy, to develop educational facilities and to subject the skills of young people to training, according to the new trends.

Tom Mc Callie talks about the different faces of the future. These seem to summarise very well the trends in globalisation in general in Asia, especially in India. He mention the work of John Naisbitt, *Mega Trends Asia*, and lists these few changes which are taking place, such as nation states to networks, traditions to options, export-led to consumer-driven, farms to super cities, labor intensive to high tech, male dominance to emerging women, West to East. These are the world trends, and they are affecting Asia very much, and especially the people of India. These cause certain challenges in future in areas like education for the people, urbanisation, anarchy and crime, increased wealth for

some and poverty for many. This will result in decentralised and diminished government power, diseases, migration of the people, environmental pressures, travel and tourism, information explosion and increased use of English.

In "New Horizons", Manohar Samuel, in his article, "contemporary India and popular culture", speaks of great changes that occurred in India's socio and cultural aspects. Modern India has its stark contrasts and its own share of contradictions. Though it was heirarched by powerful monarchs for centuries, it is now reformed as a fully alive democratic country. It is emerging with its liberalisation and market reforms, as one of the dynamic major Asian economics. It is a world leader in several areas - its indigenous - built communications satellites have been successfully launched, it has the best computer software in the world, its telecommunication technology has successfully reached the most remote rural areas and it has a strong army too. Yet it is treated as one of the poorest countries in the world, with a population expected to touch more than a billion after 2000 and it is country with a high illiteracy rate. This has led to the over-exploitation of natural resources of this country damages to the environment, pollution and other evils¹⁰.

INDIAN ECONOMY AFTER GLOBALISATION :

Economic reforms have direct impact in shaping the structural framework of our economy. Through economic reforms, the governments have also played an important role in determining levels of income, savings, investment and employment. In this connection, a very important pillar of the new economic policies of the government, is the globalisation of the Indian economy. The government has given a firm commitment to the IMF to implement economic reforms and also to invite foreign capital for investment and to open many areas of the Indian market for foreign multinational corporations. The adoption of a new economic policy is the beginning of the second stage and the new Industrial policy has affixed the seal of approval on it, to quote the policy statement, it involves a struggle for social and economic Justices, to end poverty and unemployment and to build a modern democratic, socialist and forward looking India. It also implies building a society wherein "India grows as part of the world economy and not in isolation". Thus, globalisation, i.e. integration of Indian economy with the world economy is the sheet-anchor of new economic policy (K.S. Takur, 1997, P.51).

In the beginning, it is always comforting to be told that what you do will be protected and sheltered from the onslaught of foreign products, foreign technology and foreign capital. We can claim that we will live within our means. We will produce what we can produce with whatever the mother nature has given us in this country. It is very spartan philosophy and we can live like that. Perhaps, the society could be quite happy with that kind of life¹¹.

GLOBALISATION AND ECONOMIC REFORMS IN INDIA :

The present phase of economic reforms in India came into existence in 1991 and it is based on the following four important measures: fiscal policy reforms, monetary policy reforms, exchange rate adjustments and realistic wages and income policies. The economic reforms of the second phase include the following: financial, social and public sector reforms, capital market, trade policy and investment reforms. These reform measures have brought about further globalisation of Indian economy with more free flow of foreign capital. Though the dependence of India on foreign countries for foreign capital and investment, foreign technology and business consultancy are increasing, it is still being encouraged. This has put the self-reliance of the country in danger. It also endangers the sovereignty of our country. It is therefore essential that while globalising Indian economy, national interests and national self-reliance are to be duly protected. Jag Mohan Singh Verma (2001, P.23)

Verma also observes that, India is trying to attract foreign investment essentially from three sources. These are Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Portfolio Investment and NRI Bonds. It is important to note that no capital investment is made without possible returns. No individual, Multinational Company (MNC) or any investing body will invest in this country for the good of the Indian People. They would do so only for their own financial benefits. This immediately keeps aloof certain important sectors of our national life, namely, the fields of education, health and infrastructure development. The foreign investors have confined their investment to the fields of power generation, communication, oil and gas exploration and all those fields where the returns are high and fast. It can even be remarked that all those investors have ignored the general standard of living of this country.

It is noteworthy that the terms and conditions attached to the flow of foreign capital in India and the spheres in which it is being invested are not according to our national priorities, needs and goals, namely, the eradication of poverty, employment generation, improvement in social infrastructure relating to education, health, potable water and equitable distribution of the fruits of the development. On the contrary the sole aim of foreign capital is to capture our national economy. During the process of globalisation, India should not lose its vital national interests, priorities and also the manipulations of foreign investors. Economic reforms without human face under the pressure of the process of globalisation will ruin us. Along with the economic impact, the reform programmes under the process of globalisation have also affected the social and cultural life of the people in several countries including India. Meticulous caution and care should be taken in integrating Indian economy with global economy. Globalisation should be addressed to the advantage of the country. In response to the challenges of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation in the 21st century, the social scientists, political leaders, business tycoons, natural scientists, bureaucrats and investors of capital on world wide level should come together and examine the substantive implications for the benefit of the entire human kind¹².

IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON INDIAN AGRARIAN CLASS STRUCTURE :

Globalisation in the context of Indian agriculture is supposed to bring about vital changes especially during the recent agreements with GATT and WTO in the traditional agricultural economy. There are three elements of this change, namely, abandonment of channelising the trade to determine the value or the nature of the importance and exports (except onion, pulses and edible oils), dismantling of most of the quantitative restrictions on agriculture and reduction in tariffs. Thus, the Indian agricultural economy is by and large freely exposed to the world market forces which are mainly dominated by the economics of the developing countries¹³.

Agrarian Structure and Indian Villages: Seventy Four percent of the India's population lives in villages and their livelihood mainly depends on agriculture and the related activities. The village economy has been independent throughout the ages and even the industrial development has not reduced its importance. It played a crucial role in the economic development of India by providing food and raw materials, employment to 2/3 of work force, capital for development and surplus for national development. The Indian agrarian structure is dominated by 90 percent of small and marginal farmers (Buggi et al: 2001). The extent of landholdings is associated with caste and social status. The small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers constitute the vast majority of the rural society¹⁴.

Impact and Implications : Globalisation resulted in the neglect of agriculture that adversely affected the vulnerable classes of rural society in their employment conditions, income and consumption pattern, their education and health status. The small and marginal farmers are affected by a reduction in the fertilizer and chemical subsidies and in the budget of poverty alleviation programmes as well as by the shift of area under food production to export oriented commercial crops. The disintegration of rural economy brought about by globalisation lead to the disintegration of village communities, their society, culture and religions aspects (A.Maria Alphorsal, et al: 2003).

Further, in the process of globalisation, the rural poor would experience the dislocation of their economy in its totality for the first time in the history of their existence. This transformation is going to bring all the differences in future to come. The growing modifications in the size and the institution of economy, would not allow the small and marginal farmers to make gradual adoption but will enable to continue to retain their traditions. It is not possible to visualize the kind of intervention the government could make to keep the interest of the poorer sections. (Chandra Sekhar Buggi, et al; 2001) Further he said that in the absence of any clear cut vision about the adverse consequences of globalisation on the rural society, it is apprehended that this process in India would ultimately result in the disintegration of the rich culture and traditions which were hitherto sustained by the poor and the middle classes of Indian society through ages.

IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON INDIAN WOMEN :

Women represent 48.2 percent of India's population with an absolute figures of 406.5 million as per 1991 Census. It is noteworthy to mention that women involve themselves in productive activities apart from discharging household work and child rearing. It is in Indian paradox that though women by tradition were described as "Sakti" or even defined as "Devi" they have never been accorded equal status with men¹⁵. Even after globalisation, the existing social and economic institutions unfortunately have never been considerate to the crying needs of women. They are considered more as a burden than a potential force of human resource which can be developed for the betterment of community after globalisation.

Many critics fear that globalisation, in the sense of integration of country into world society, will exacerbate the issue of gender inequality. It may harm women especially in India in several ways: (1) Economically, through discrimination, in favour of male workers, marginalisation of women in unpaid or informal labour. (2) Exploitation of women in low-wage sweatshop settings and or impoverishment though loss of traditional sources of income (3) Politically, through exclusion from the domestic political process and loss of control to global pressures and (4) culturally, through loss of identity and autonomy to a hegemonic global culture¹⁶.

Globalisation has been attributed to displacement, commodification and modern-day slavery of women in Asia particularly in India. Those that are greatly affected, are industries of predominantly women workers who are in jobs dealing with textiles and clothing, electronics, food and other assembly type industries. Technological advances in computers and robotics has pushed even more women out of the production processes, adding greatly to unemployment. This disperses even more of the already low workers' wages. Women workers must contribute to the family's income and have no choice but to accept low wages. Poverty and unemployment led thousands of women to go to other countries to find better opportunities. Migration policies have encouraged the trafficking in women. Modern-day slavery of women brought about by globalisation is clearly seen in commodification of women's bodies through prostitution in the big cities of India and tourism has helped in increasing this trade. This resulted in an increase in AIDS in India and women are the main victims in this situation. Hence, women and men need to be educated on prevention and care of AIDS.

Further Sakhi Athyal observes that abusing of women was prevalent in India before globalisation. But globalisation has caused the increase of it because of the stress and strain of the community and changes in the traditional life style. In the joint family system, there were social control systems which helped women in these issues. But in the individualistic life styles which prevail now, women suffer more abuse. Globalisation has also increased the greed in people for production of more goods and more profit as a result and thus more dowry is demanded from young

women now-a-days than previously. Modern studies and research have shown that educated women, healthy and enjoying elementary human rights are at the foundation level of progress and prosperity of society. Women's education has, for example, a beneficial multiplier effect on social development. The State of Kerala in India is an example of this. Infant mortality population growth and average expectation of life in Kerala are equal to that of many advanced countries. Social scientist should make a study of this phenomena. (Usha Narayana, 1994, p.7)¹⁷.

Impact of Globalisation on Rural Dalit Women : Dalits constitute the vast majority of the low income tier in India and have been placed at the bottom of the socio economic and political strata. In rural villages of Andhra Pradesh, after implementation of the NEP, a sharp rise in prices, decreased job opportunities and a drastic decline in income opportunities which hit rural dalit women severely. Inflation made them unable to purchase basic items, even from the Fair-price-shops that is supposed to provide commodities at subsidised prices. This increase in price has also triggered reduced nutritional levels and chronic hunger became rampant among the landless rural poor, especially women. While industrialisation has generated more jobs (Dewan, 1999), it has also increased the migration of the poor to Urban areas by in search of jobs (Upadhyaya, 2000) and the number of female-headed households has grown as a result. Rural Dalit Women are the least competitive in the existing labor market, primarily due to multiple discrimination against them based on gender, caste, class and other biases. They accept the most marginal work, notably as daily wage labourers in the agricultural sector in rural area. This results in a feminised agricultural sector. Several studies indicate that women in South India do most of the agricultural work, though their contribution is invisible (Bennett, 1992, John with Lalita, 1991)¹⁸ and this trend is further intensified under the macro-economic policy changes, such as the disadvantaged are becoming poorer and more vulnerable as their wage levels remain extremely low, inflation remains high and the disparity in wage differences between men and women continues to increase. In the same villages, women receive an average of Rs.50 and men Rs.80/- i.e. it accounts only 62 percent of men's wages.

Furthermore, globalisation has triggered serious imbalances in the distribution of natural resources. Southern States, particularly Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are facing water shortage problem. Since getting water from a well or public tank is considered women's and girl's work, obtaining water is of primary concern. Women also supply water to other family members, further deteriorating their own hygienic conditions and health. While these women suffer from a lack of water, globalisation rapidly expanding the industrial estates uses a large quantity of water for their operation. Thus water is sold and or allocated to these factories at the expense of surrounding agricultural households. Despite this fact, infrastructure investment in drinking water was cut dramatically under the NEP in Tamil Nadu (Harris-White, 1999) and also in Andhra Pradesh. Gender discrimination is rooted in Indian society and culture, but the globalising economy in India has further worsened gender relations

among dalits. The changing economy has resulted in the wide spread dowry system in poor and dalit households. As a result, dowry harassments and crime cases have risen in number. Deteriorating gender relations are closely linked to an on-going economic changes. In this way globalisation cannot be separated from dalit women and their every day lives. Gender blind policies do not secure the quality of life of women, but instead increase gender imbalances and discrimination in states like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, where a women's status is considered relatively better than in other states (Yuka Kawana, 2003).

GLOBALISATION AND THE POOR IN RURAL AREAS :

In rural areas of India, 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 loans from banks and multi national companies particularly in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. They supply hybrid seedlings, fertilizers and highly advanced equipments. This equipment utility reduced the human labor force. Hence, the rural people are shifting from place to place for want of labor for their livelihoods. As there is a shift from food crops to export crops, the prices of food items went on high and the poor people could not buy from their meager income. Similar trend continued for clothing, housing, transportation, health, etc. So people were forced to consume less of even minimum basic necessities¹⁹. Rathakrishna (2003) discusses that industrial and agricultural transformations occurred during the 19th century has helped the rich than the poor people. The industrial development not only widens the gap between the rich and poor but also it promotes urbanisation and flow of rural poor to urban areas and diversion of potential fertile cultivable land to urban mechanised activities. 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. (A. Maxia Alphonsal, 2003)

DOES GLOBALISATION CAUSE POVERTY ?:

Many people who are concerned about the fate of India's poor now attribute their plight to globalisation. They argue that globalisation has weakened the position of poor countries and exposed poor people to harmful competition. Their concern is understandable, especially since the gap between rich and poor has indeed become more glaring in recent decades. Providing a direct link between economic globalisation and poverty is a complex task for several reasons. Specifically, how globalisation affects the economic status of individuals or the society in a big democratic country like India, is not easy. The effects of globalisation may be due to competition among workers or trade or government borrowing or foreign investment.

Poverty can be measured in different ways, for instance, relative to a country's average, by communication capacity or in terms of overall well being. Historically, within the same country,

many people in many places have been poor for many reasons. Attributing poverty to globalisation therefore requires proving that globalisation has become a dominant factor in producing a new kind of poverty. Poverty in this era of globalisation has assumed new dimensions. Globalisation and marginalisation go hand in hand. The Vikas Adhyana Kendra report in 1997 brings out many realities in India. For example, the reduction of subsidies on fertilizers, pesticides and seeds most severely affected the marginal peasants who can't afford the higher prices. The quota of PDS food grains was seriously cut down. Rice was reduced from 20 to 13 kg per cardholder. The victims most seriously affected by these changes were STs and SCs²⁰. Therefore, it is tempting to conclude that globalisation causes poverty.

AN OVERVIEW :

Indian Society is drastically changing after globalisation and urbanisation has brought a lot of changes in the Indian culture. Economic policies have a direct impact in shaping the structural framework of economy. Economic policies formulated and executed by the government, have also played an important role in determination of levels of income, savings, investments and employment in the society. It will be a mistake to assume that India can evaluate an effective mechanism for economic reforms and it will be difficult for India to adopt with global changes without dealing with domestic problems like control of terrorism, providing employment to rural educated people, and work for the rural poor, empowering women and marginalised people and providing reasonable price and market facilities for the farmers. Global changes are operating on many new areas of conflict and cooperation for India and we can achieve a new level of integration of Indian economy with world markets on the basis of protection of our own national interest.

During the process of globalisation, India should not lose sight of its vital national interest and priorities. Economic reforms without human face under the pressure of the process of globalisation will ruin us. Along with the economic impact, the reform programmes under the process of globalisation, have also affected the social and cultural life of the people in several fields of the Indian society. Hence, the economic reforms in India in the process of globalisation should be addressed to the advantage of the country. Globalisation resulted in the neglect of agriculture that adversely affected the vulnerable classes of rural society in their employment conditions, income and consumption pattern, and their education and health status. The small and marginal farmers are affected as there is a reduction in the fertilizer and chemical subsidies and shift of area under food production to export oriented commercial crops. The disintegration of rural economy brought about by globalisation lead to the disintegration of village communities, their society, culture and religious aspect.

Globalisation has attributed to displacement, commodification and modern-day slavery of women in Asia particularly in India. Those that are greatly affected, are industries of predominantly

women who work in jobs dealing with textiles and clothing, electronics, food and other assembly type industries, adding greatly to unemployment. Modern studies and research have shown that educated women enjoying elementary human rights, are at the foundation of progress and prosperity of a society. The state of Kerala in India is an example for this. Social scientists should make a study of this phenomenon. Globalisation has generated more jobs to the Indians and also increased the migration to urban areas by the poor women in search of jobs. Rural dalit women are the least competitive in the existing labour market.

The globalisation also brought drastic changes in the field of agriculture in the Indian society. The result was that the farmers are using latest equipment which reduced the human labor force. Hence, the rural people are shifting from place to place for want of labor for their livelihood. Effects of globalisation in the Indian society particularly on rural areas may be due to competition among workers or trade or government borrowing or foreign investments. Hence, poverty can be measured in terms of overall well being. Increasing in poverty to globalisation therefore, requires proving that globalisation has become a dominant factor introducing a new kind of poverty. Therefore, it is tempting to conclude that globalisation causes poverty.

Hence to overcome the bad effects of the globalisation the rural poor must be encouraged to stay back in their rural areas and to start their own enterprises to get the same degree of satisfaction that an urbanite gets while leading his day-to-day life. The dichotomy between urban and rural society must diminish to the extent of vanishing. Modern industries could be split into various components which require simple industrial skills to be manufactured in rural areas by all those concerned through training, in addition to their own traditional skills. Planning for rural and urban growth should always ensure the vanishing of the dichotomy once for all.

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