

Globalization and its Impact on Tribal Society in India

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Abstract

Globalization in literal sense is a process of transformation of regional or local phenomena into global ones. Globalization is making a considerable impact on all aspect of human life directly or indirectly in everywhere in the world and it is multidimensional. All the economic, technological, economic, socio-cultural, and political forces act combine in the process of transformation of lifestyle of any community in everywhere and at every level. Globalization process is also called modernization which include development of science and technology and, communication by which all the places are interconnected and people become more migratory.

Globalization has tremendous impact on culture specially the indigenous culture of tribal society. The tribal, the original settler are mostly live in forest, hills and other naturally isolated regions which are rich in mineral resources. Their lifestyles are conditioned by ecological setting they live. India is a land of diverse ethnic group (having 08.6% tribal population to total population in 2011) with diverse language, economy and socio-cultural system. Globalization also has negative impact as inequality, poverty, deprivation of land and forest area. The present study depicts how the process of globalization fails its impact upon the tribal society.

Introduction

Globalization means different things to different people. In business world, it refers mainly to specific strategies in companies designed to overcome the constraints of national boundaries through the mechanisms of globalized productions and market and networks. In the field of economics it is considered synonymous to economic inter-dependence between countries covering increased trade, technology, labour and international capital flows. In the political debate, globalization refers to the integrative forces drawing national societies into a global community covering the spread of ideas, norms and values. Last but not least, in the social field the tidal wave of global culture is sweeping the indigenous culture all over the world (Padma 2011, 1).

Globalization is an historical process that began with the first movement of people out of Africa into other parts of the world. Traveling short, then longer distances, migrants, merchants, and others have always taken their ideas, knowledge, customs, and products into new lands. The melding, borrowing, and adaptation of outside influences can be found in many areas of human life. In considering the history of globalization, some authors focus on events since 1492, but most scholars and theorists concentrate on the much more recent past. Some authors have argued that stretching the beginning of globalization far back in time renders the concept wholly inoperative and useless for political analysis. Perhaps the most extreme proponent of a deep historical origin for globalization was Andre Gunder Frank, an economist associated with dependency theory. Frank argued that a form of globalization has been in existence since the rise of trade links between Sumer and the Indus Valley Civilization in the third millennium B.C. Critics of this idea contend that it rests upon an over-broad definition of globalization.

Thomas L. Friedman divides the history of globalization into three periods: Globalization One (1492–1800), Globalization Two (1800–2000) and Globalization Three (2000–present). He states that Globalization One involved the globalization of countries, Globalization Two involved the

globalization of companies and Globalization Three involves the globalization of individuals. It can be said that the development of agriculture furthered globalization by converting the vast majority of the world's population into a settled lifestyle. However, globalization failed to accelerate due to lack of long distance interaction and technology in those days. The contemporary process of globalization likely occurred around the middle of the 19th century as increased capital and labor mobility coupled with decreased transport costs led to a smaller world. An early form of globalized economics and culture, known as archaic globalization, existed during the Hellenistic Age, when commercialized urban centers were focused around the axis of Greek culture over a wide range that stretched from India to Spain, with such cities as Alexandria, Athens, and Antioch at its center. Trade was widespread during that period, and it is the first time the idea of a cosmopolitan culture (from Greek "Cosmopolis", meaning "world city") emerged. Others have perceived an early form of globalization in the trade links between the Roman Empire, the Parthian Empire, and the Han Dynasty. The increasing articulation of commercial links between these powers inspired the development of the Silk Road, which started in western China, reached the boundaries of the Parthian empire, and continued onwards towards Rome.

The Islamic Golden Age was also an important early stage of globalization, when Jewish and Muslim traders and explorers established a sustained economy across the Old World resulting in a globalization of crops, trade, knowledge and technology. Globally significant crops such as sugar and cotton became widely cultivated across the Muslim world in this period, while the necessity of learning Arabic and completing the *Hajj* created a cosmopolitan culture. The advent of the Mongol Empire, though destabilizing to the commercial centers of the Middle East and China, greatly facilitated travel along the Silk Road. This permitted travelers and missionaries such as Marco Polo to journey successfully (and profitably) from one end of Eurasia to the other. The Pax Mongolica

of the thirteenth century had several other notable globalizing effects. It witnessed the creation of the first international postal service, as well as the rapid transmission of epidemic diseases such as bubonic plague across the newly unified regions of Central Asia.

The Age of Discovery brought an extraordinary change in globalization, being the first period in which Eurasia and Africa engaged in substantial cultural, material and biologic exchange with the New World. It began in the late 15th century, when the two Kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula – Portugal and Castile – sent the first exploratory voyages around the Cape of Good Hope and to the Americas, “discovered” in 1492 by Christopher Columbus. Shortly before the turn of the 16th century, Portuguese started establishing trading posts (factories) from Africa to Asia and Brazil, to deal with the trade of local products like gold, spices and timber, introducing an international business center under a royal monopoly, the House of India. Global integration continued with the European colonization of the Americas initiating the Columbian Exchange, the enormous widespread exchange of plants, animals, foods, human populations (including slaves), communicable diseases, and culture between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. It was one of the most significant global events concerning ecology, agriculture, and culture in history. New crops that had come from the Americas via the European seafarers in the 16th century significantly contributed to the world’s population growth (Babar 2016, 345).

In India the process of globalization was introduced in July 1991. But the history of certain elements of globalization in this part of Asia is very old. If we restrict only to the features and indices of the ongoing globalization, it stands for breaking down of boundaries and barriers. It stands for universalization and oneness. It believes in the formula of survival of the fittest at the cost of culture of ‘live and let live’. It believes in maximum exploitation of natural resources to meet not the need but the unending greed of population across the world whose number is increasing by the day. It stands for regulation by market forces, IMF, World Bank.

According to S. Dasgupta (2005), contemporary social scientists discuss globalization as a process by which the world is becoming increasingly interconnected and unified, subject to the homogenous and uniform process of cultural, technological and economic unification. Hence, globalization is an economic-plus process. It has two sides. If one side is shining, the other side is full of discord, differences, demarcation, discrimination and dissonance. It is full of threat and exclusion, particularly in the third world. According to Dasgupta, globalization has created a three tier structure across national boundaries. The globalists represent the core of circle, at the second level of those who are in the secured form of employment and cut-throat competition in the global market and the third are the excluded population. M. McLuhan (1964) give the concept of 'global village'. In the realm of globalization, of the total 100 villagers, for example, 70 are illiterate, 50 are suffering from malnutrition and 80 are living in substandard houses. G. Huizer (2003) said that if the world is like a village with population of 100, only six are Americans but they have control over 50 percent of the resources and rest 94 residents have control over remaining 50 per cent resource only. If resource are distributed in this manner, we can easily guess about the term 'global village'. Of course globalization creates opportunities even in the Third World countries, but here also it is controlled and possessed by only a few. Most of the others, who are the victims of marginalization especially the tribal community of all over the world, are forced to remain at the bottom by globalization. And suffering of these dispossessed is further bound to increase manifold due to a number of interconnected factors, including ever-increasing environmental degradation (Chaudhary 2013, 5 – 6).

As I discussed earlier the process of globalization effecting tribal community very much. The tribals become marginalized in a large scale in India as a bad effect of globalization on our human civilization. In the name of development, the life, livelihood, culture and habitat of indigenous people has brought under the hot-iron of globalization. The tribal way of life is dictated by the law of nature. Notwithstanding the fact that the

constitution of India has granted various safeguards to the tribal communities, they continue to remain the most backward and discriminated groups in India. Cases of displacement of tribal people in India have increased manifold. Commercial activities under the garb of economic growth and economic development brought alien forces, cultures and influences into the traditional life and culture of tribal communities.

The English term 'tribe' is derived from the Latin word 'tribus' designating a particular kind of social and political organisation existing in all these societies. In English language the word appeared in the sixteenth century and denoted a community of person claiming descent from a common ancestor. In India the term tribe has legal and administrative connotations. Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India define tribes as: "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under article 342 to be schedule tribes for the purpose of this constitution" (<http://tribal.nic.in/>). The word "tribe" is generally used for a "socially cohesive unit", associated with a territory, the members of which regard them as politically autonomous (Padma 2011, 10). These communities belong to different ethno-lingual groups and profess diverse faiths. Living at disparate levels of socio-economic development, they are spread along the entire spectrum of social evolution in India – ranging from the Paleolithic hunters and gatherers of forest produce to the industrial workers (Raja, Ahmed 1990, 6).

The forest occupies a central position in tribal culture and economy. The tribal way of life is very much dictated by the forest from birth to death. It is ironical that the poorest people of India are living in areas of richest national resources. Historically, tribals have been pushed to corner owing to economic interests of various dominant groups. In contemporary India, the need for land development is still forcing the tribal people. As an aftermath of globalization, land held by tribal communities that could previously not be occupied by others, were now freely being given to non-tribals including large multinational companies like Coca-Cola. It is

estimated that owing to construction of over 1500 major irrigation projects since independence, over 16 million people were displaced from their villages, of which about 40 percent belong to tribal population (Padma 2011, 10).

A common feature shared by the most of the tribal people is their remoteness and marginal quality of territorial resources. In the past, exploitation of such poor regions was found to be both difficult and uneconomic. But, the recent rapid technological advancement and unrivalled economic and political strength of world capitalism, and the rising power of neo-colonialism through G-8 directly and IMF, WB etc. as agencies have created favourable conditions for the evasion and extraction of natural resources from the ecologically fragile territories of tribal people. Thus, forced eviction of tribals to make for mammoth capital-intensive development projects have become a distressing routine and ever increasing phenomenon (Pathy 1992, 279).

There is a heavy concentration of industrial and mining activities in the central belt. (The Central Indian Tribal Belt stretches from Gujarat in the West up to Assam in the East across the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. It is among the poorest region of the country. Over 90% of the Belt's tribal population is rural, with primitive agriculture). All the massive steel plants, BALCO, NALCO, Heavy engineering concerns etc. are based in this central belt. Most river basin development schemes and hydropower projects, and chain of forest based and ancillary industries are located in this region. Despite intense industrial activity in the Central Indian tribal belt, the tribal employment in modern enterprises is negligible. Apart from the provisions of Apprenticeship Act, there is no stipulation for private or joint sector enterprises to recruit certain percentage of dispossessed tribal workforce. The tribals are forced to live in juxtaposition with alien capitalist relations and cultures, with traumatic results. They are forced onto the ever expanding low paid, insecure, transient and destitute labour market. About 40 percent of the tribals of central India supplement their income by participating in this

distorted and over exploitative capitalistic sector. Many more are slowly crushed into oblivion in their homeland or in urban slums. This is nothing short of ethnocide. Their economic and cultural survival is at stake (Padma 2011, 11).

India happens to be the second most dammed country in the world. It has invested over Rs.300 billion on dams and hydropower projects by 2000. Between 1981 and 1990, the WB provided \$7billion for such projects in India, one-fifth of its total funding for 85 countries world over. Nearly 60 per cent of these large dams are located in the central and western India were about 80 percent of the tribal population live (Streeten 2001, 328).

Dams and the displacement of tribal peoples.

Name of Projects	State	Total Population facing displacement	Percentage of tribal people displaced
Karjan	Gujarat	11,600	100%
Sardar Sarovar	Gujarat	200,000	57.6%
Maheswar	Madhya Pradesh	20,000	60%
Bodhghat	Madhya Pradesh	12,700	73.91%
Icha	Bihar	30,800	80%
Chandil	Bihar	37,600	87.92%
Koel Karo	Bihar	66,600	88%
Mahi Bajaj Sagar	Rajasthan	38,400	76.28%
Polavaram	Andhra Pradesh	1,50,00	52.90%
Mithon and Panchet	Bihar	93,874	56.46%
Upper Indravati	Odisha	18,500	89.20%
Pong	Himachal Pradesh	80,000	56.25%
Inchampalli	Andhra Pradesh	38,100	76.28%
Tultuli	Maharashtra	13,600	51.61%

Name of Projects	State	Total Population facing displacement	Percentage of tribal people displaced
Daman Ganga	Gujarat	8,700	48.70%
Bhakra	Himachal Pradesh	36,000	34.76%
Massan Reservoir	Bihar	3,700	31%

Source: Satyajit Singh, *Taming the Waters*, OUP, 1997, and government figures.

There is no reliable and complete information on the number of tribals displaced in the country since independence. The estimate range between 5 and 7 million or approximately one in every ten tribals has been displaced by different development projects. It is not only the magnitude of involuntary tribal displacement that should attract the special concern but also the sacrifice of collective identity, historical and cultural heritage, and of course the survival support. Poverty, malnutrition, mortality, morbidity, illiteracy, unemployment, debt bondage, and serfdom among the tribals are markedly higher (Shah 1998, 280).

Globalization has witnessed a paradoxical situation in India in which a privileged small segment of population has been enjoying the fruits of development and large vulnerable tribes have been deprived of such benefits. The process of economic transition which took place in the wake of globalization has manifested a paradox of glaring and widening equality. With the dividends of growth and development being percolated to a small segment of population, the tribals have been deprived of the benefits of economic growth. In the context of exploring potentiality for eco-tourism development in bio-diversity areas, national policies and laws like National Bio-Diversity Strategy and Action Plan, Bio Diversity Act, 2002 and National Environmental Policy, 2006 and various central and state tourism policies have emerged in recent years. But these developments have raised apprehensions and psychological trauma in the minds of indigenous people as at the national level, there are enhanced

activities of the new players like the state forest departments. Many forest areas like national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and reserved forest were targeted for eco-tourism on the basis of a few eco-friendly practices (Tripathy 2013, 102).

Two critical issues have not been considered – participation and benefits of forest dwellers or tribes in such tourism and the negative impact of tourism on bio-diversity and eco-systems. More over unplanned tourism projects are detrimental to the interests of the tribes, and especially the women, in a fragile eco-system. The tribal women are made to pay double the price for basic necessities as the struggle to access drinking water has been intensified, besides the negative socio-cultural impacts of prostitution, trafficking on women. The tribal dominated areas have been targeted for large-scale development projects, particularly extractive industries like water and power, which bring meagre benefit of these tribes and take away from them their habitats, resources (forest, water and land), cultural tradition, livelihood and their identity (Tripathy 2013, 102). A significant number of tribal people, who are generally dependent on the natural and common resources, are displaced, and as such, their ethos and lifestyle are dismantled and denigrated for the sake of developmental projects as the outcomes of globalization. Apart from the loss of land, living and lifestyle (of generations), displacement causes other traumatic, psychological and socio-cultural consequences. Involuntary displacement makes their life more miserable and impoverished (Mohanty 2005, 1318–1320).

One of the ways of globalization in India is disinvestment or privatization. Many public sector enterprises are being sold off to private sectors with the objective of raising revenues to meet the fiscal deficits and to improve efficiency. Profit making enterprises like BALCO which are in the tribal belt, have been privatized. PSEs in the tribal belt were beneficial to tribal people giving them employment and livelihood. Privatization of these enterprises will adversely affect the tribal people and disturb the regional balance in terms of industrialization.

A number of studies suggest that during the 90s, when policies of Liberalization-Privatization-Globalization (LPG) were implemented in various degrees, income distribution, has worsened, and as a result is having a dampening impact on long term economic growth and on the prospects for poverty reduction, necessary to meet Millennium Declaration Goal of having the number of people living in extreme income poverty. Extreme income poverty has affected some 150 million people in India. Tribals make up about one third of the income poor. An assessment of progress has been less than anticipated. The trade aspects of globalization also alter their context of many issues and areas affecting tribals, in some cases intensifying problems and in other cases affecting the policy actions required to address the problems (Pathy 1992, 279).

The process of globalization has affected both tribal men and women, as I tried to discuss earlier. The sufferings of tribal women were more as she has to perform both productive and reproductive role. The land is the primary means of livelihood for the tribal people as there are very few other means of livelihood. Women were heavily involved in agricultural activities and also they collect minor forest products for their livelihood. The loss of land for women not only means loss of employment but also loss of food security. Tribal women involve themselves in collecting minor forest products, which supplement their food. The problem faced by the tribal women is more because they have to serve food to the family.

Tribals were prevented from going into the forest in the name of prevention of forest degradation. However, tribals have been closely linked to the forests by private contractors for profit maximization – a phenomenon that is actively encouraged by the forces of globalization. Water availability has gone down in these areas since companies like Coca-Cola have been given large scale rights to water. The tribals are forced to go far and now need much more time to be able to meet their water needs. Women, who are responsible for getting water, obviously suffer more because of this (Padma 2011, 13).

The interface between tribes and globalization is a significant phenomenon of our times and worthy of rigorous studies because it has implications of far reaching importance. Globalization is hastening the process of destruction of local production and local markets. Aggravation of poverty and loss of bio-diversity and cultural impoverishment are inter-related due to rapid industrialization and the tribals living in remote areas are getting adversely affected. Due to globalization, there are unsustainable consumption and production patterns which are causing loss of bio-diversity and cultural diversity.

Globalization as a process has far reaching cultural potential in India. Developmental strategies under the new economic policies led to a process of conscious and systematic annihilation of culture and identity of the first people – the *Adivasis* of the country. The process of globalization has invaded India since the introduction of the new liberalization policy. The socio-cultural change among the tribal communities has no doubt empowered the tribals; however, their cultural identity is under severe stress. But, it is not too late to rise above the politics of exclusion and marginalization and unearth and mainstream fast vanishing tribal traditions. Perhaps it's time to amplify long marginalized voices and awaken contemporary notion states to the realization that only through the establishment of such democratic, reconciliatory, gender-friendly, grass root tribal traditions could one create a more equitable, more just society and world order. There is a growing awareness of the need to pay attention to threats which may be posed by globalization to cultural diversity and traditional knowledge, in particular those of indigenous and tribal communities. There is sometimes a perception that cultural intolerance and violations of human rights are a result of promoting cultural diversity. It seems that there is a need for an internationally agreed framework, such as a code of ethics or conduct, a declaration, a plan of action or legal instruments. For promoting vast indigenous culture, tradition and knowledge of the tribal society.

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