

Globalization in the Understanding of Gandhi



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Abstract

There are two parallel trends of ever widening process of globalization. First relates to those who are in favour of globalization and secondly are those who vehemently criticize this process. Supporters and critics of globalization both can be said to have certain vested interest. There is, however, a need to understand and analyze these two mutually opposing processes and trends from a more genuine and humane perspective of the Gandhian philosophy. The panorama of contemporary globalization in Gandhian perspective is not very difficult to see. Gandhi's experiments have led him to evolve a predominantly non-violent state as his second best ideal and a non-violent society as his ultimate ideal for establishing a vibrantly creative global and just political ethos where cooperation, equality and non-violence replace exploitation, inequality and bloody warfare and mutual hatred. Interestingly, these are also aiming of the emerging global civil society as a concomitant aspect of globalization.

Keywords: Nationalism, De-terrotiarialization, Borderlessness, Civil Society, Swadeshi, Trusteeship, Non-violence, Sarvodaya, Liberalization, Privatization,

Introduction

In the second half of the 20th century, a considerable amount of literature has emerged on the phenomenon of globalization where it has been found that there is a no consensus on what globalization is all about? The phenomenon of globalization is not a single process but a complex of processes, sometimes overlapping and interlocking but also at times, contradictory and mutually opposite. Therefore, it is difficult to reduce globalization to a single premise. To explore this complexity, the best attempt has been made by Anthony Giddens in his book, *The Consequences of Modernity (1990)* where he argues, "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"¹. Giddens perception of globalization clearly highlights the feature of de-terrotiarialization or borderlessness. Thereafter, Tom J. Palmer also defines globalization as, "the diminution or elimination of state-enforced restrictions on exchanges across borders and the increasingly integrated and complex global system of production and exchange that has emerged as a result"². Similarly, Dicken see globalization as a more advanced form of internationalization, and a more recent form of economic activity implying, "a degree of functional integration between internationally dispersed economic activities"³. These apparent aspects in different perspectives of globalization make it clear that it is a process of increasing interconnections, interdependence, a rise of transnational flows and an intensification of processes such that the world is in some respects becoming a single place i.e., a global village in true sense.

Thus, globalization stands for abolition of geographical barriers.

It means that a quicker movement of ideas of economies, technologies, cultures, politics and environment among the nation and individual. Globalization advocating freedom of all and internationalism and stands for realizing the advantages of free economic relations for all the people as well as for enhancing efficiency, productivity, good governance, and standardization. It involves the drive for developing rules and procedures for creating and implementing the decision that can secure a socioeconomic integration of all the individuals of the globe. Globalization is that the process thereby social relations; acquire comparatively distant and borderless qualities. Consequently, the idea of globalization implies the stretching of social, political and economic activities beyond national territories in such a way that events, decisions and activities in one region of the globe will come to have significant for

the individual and also the communities in the distant regions of the world. on the far side this globalization implies that connections across frontiers don't seem to be just occasional or random, however rather are regularised such that there's a detectable intensification, or the growing magnitude of connectedness, in nearly each sphere of social existence from the economic to the ecological, from the activities of Microsoft to the spread of harmful microbes, from the intensification of world trade to the unenrputedprolifecation of weapons of mass destruction. This connectedness also implies a speeding up of international interaction and international diffusion of idea, goods, information, capital and people. in this sense, globalization is that the growth and intensification of connections and movements- of individuals, goods, capital, ideas and cultures- between countries. To some individuals, this process implies the requirement to replace national institutions with international ones. A additional integrated international system has also enhanced consciousness of such shared issues as pollution, disease, crime and terror, that several have come back to believe, will solely be dealt at the worldwide level. Most broadly, globalization is that the growth and intensification of linkage and flows across borders.

Aim of the Study

In this study attempt has been made to examine the possibility of the emergence of a new and non-exploitative globalization process in the present world. Attempt has also been made to analyze the measures taken by the representatives and head of the state to coup up with the problem of globalization. Focus will also be there to understand the various problem faced by the developing countries as a result of diverse process of globalization. Above all, it will also be attempted to ascertain the relevance of Gandhian alternative approach for the balance and justifiable impact of globalization.

Arguments in Favour of Globalizaiton

Globalization is a process of growing integration of the world in economic, social, technological, cultural and political terms. It is not simply a tendency any more but also a reality. It as an activity by which individuals around the globe are gathering into one society and interact globally. That improves the world in numerous ways i.e., integration of the economies, reduction of poverty, reduction in inequality , generation of employment oppercunities, improvement in life styles , quick information exchange, growth of worldwide civil society and unified approach for environment protection. This manner globalization has become very helpful to all countries. It appears, globalization is a uniting force the world over. The positive aspects of globalization are as under:

Globalization offers a way of conceptualizing a new standardized economic structure and dynamic in the form of world economy. It refers in this sense not just to conjectural change towards greater trade and investment integration between relatively distinct national and regional economies, but to a qualitatively different kind of World Order. Such a process involves the increasing integration of more and more nations and economic actors into world market relationships.

This integration to a greater extends promote economic equality, reduced poverty and solve a number of the traditional bottlenecks of developing countries. Global production is rebalancing in ways that not seen for 150 years. Growth in the cross-border movement of goods, services, people and ideas has been exceptional. By 2011, trade accounted for nearly sixty percent of global output. Developing countries have contended an enormous part in this between 1980 and 2010, they magnified their share of world trade from twenty five percent to forty seven percent and their share of world output from thirty three percent to forty five percent⁴. The globalization is also transform the politics and make it top of the state through political integration schemes like the European Union (EU) and through intergovernmental organizations like the International Monetary Funds, the World Bank and also the World Trade Organization. Political activities can even transcend national borders through global movements and NGOs. Civil society organizations act globally by forming alliances with organizations in other countries, using the global communications system, and lobbying international organizations and other actors directly, rather than working through their national governments.

Globalization has a profound impact on social and cultural life. Globalization via Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) i.e., the internet and mass media have expedited the spread of liberal democratic values and human rights and nurtured the expansion of "global civil society". "Improvements in communications and the spread of information were critical to the collapse of the iron curtain. People learned what was happening in different countries and understood that they did not have to be compelled to leave the means they were living, and also the ideological barrier fell"⁵.

Globalization as discussed is equate with shrinking of space and disappearing borders. It has swung open the door to opportunities. It is now possible to produce a product anywhere, using resources from anywhere, by a company located anywhere, to be sold anywhere. Such a world offers a tremendous economic opportunity, the possibilities for economic advance are far greater that at any time in human history.

Globalization promotes the universal approach to the sustainable use of natural resources having economic value (forests, fisheries, rivers, ocean and etc.), ecological worth (natural sinks for the absorption of carbon and other pollutants) or aesthetic, historical or scientific value. This can give rise to countless policies on the development of eco-tourism, research on new medicines, the use of empirical knowledge concerning natural resources management and the economic properties of local biological diversity, the use of the regional ecological supply (such as biomass and natural resources), the productive utilization of unique ecologicalniches and international negotiations on regional ecological services of global interest. Some of the most important steps in this direction are the Stockholm Conference (1972) World commission on Environment and Development (1987), Kyoto Protocol (1997), Earth Summits and etc.

Thus, the globalization diminishes national borders and the fusing of individual national markets. The fall of protectionist barriers, to a large extent, has stimulated free movement of capital and has paved the way for companies to set up several bases around the world. Globalization also promotes information exchange which to a greater extent leads to the understanding of the other cultures and allowed democracy to triumph over autocracy. It appears globalization is a uniting force over the world.

Critics of Globalization

Nevertheless, most of these potential advantages have not materialized up to now. Whereas some countries and a few segments of the world population have enjoyed well increased in their standard of living, a majority of the countries has not knowledgeable about a big rise of their level of human development. Several thinkers, significantly the neo-classical believe that globalization is not to blame for this. Lindert and Williamson, as an example conclude, "the nations that gained the most from globalization are those who changed their policies to exploit it, while the ones that gained the least did not"⁶. The critics do not agree with this and argue that the dearth of policy reforms is not the basis, however the corporate-driven nature has been responsible for uneven nature of present globalization. For them, globalization has caused unsustainable damage to the environment (global warming, ozone depletion, pollution of all forms and etc.), the human costs (like poorness, inequality, injustice, unemployment and etc.), the erosion of culture and ethical values, trust deficit among the developed and developing nations, the erosion of state sovereignty, dependency of developing nations to developed nations for technology and etc. All these inherent tendencies of the globalization lead to an increasing extent of diversification exploitation of the emerging and underdeveloped countries at the hands of the developed world. As such there are quite a few pejorative perspectives of present day globalization: Globalization means global possibilities of economic development, but it does not distribute the benefits in an equal way for each country, many of them, including the Afro-Asian and Latin American countries under transition, do not feel the positive effects. Globalization leads to the growth of Multinational Corporations (MNCs). These corporations have proven harmful to the goal of economic equality, in more than one way, (i) regional inequality has further aggravated because of them. MNCs are interested in setting up industries in particular regions and hence those regions developing very rapidly and other regions remain underdeveloped. (ii) MNCs pay more salaries and perks to their employees than other employees. This widens the gap between the incomes of the labourers, giving rise to economic inequality. (iii) These corporations give more importance to the production of *consumer items of urban use*, than the production of mass consumption goods. Reason being that it is more profitable to produce the former than the latter. Thus the scarce resources of the country are not put to optimum use. (iv) These corporations further accentuate rural and urban disparity. By setting up their industries in urban areas they encourage villagers to leave their village

and settle down in urban areas. In short globalization leads to inequality and exploitation.

Globalization undermining the sovereignty and autonomy of nation-states. Under the pressure from the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the new dispensation of the WTO, liberalization, privatization and structural adjustment policies have been imposed or adopted by many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, thereby diminishing the economic role of the state in farming its policies or setting its development goals. State sovereignty is no more absolute and non-state actors are playing significant role in the national politics of state as well as in international politics. Economic policies of developing countries are being dictated by IFIs of developed countries. These developments have resulted in dependency and the international marketisation of domestic economies wherein the movement of capital, goods and services are made dependent on the exterior factors as national barriers to investment and trade have been removed.

The *market-dominated culture* has excluded or marginalized certain groups and, in this manner, cultural globalization has had a negative impact. Proponents of this view argue that globalization has been related to the destruction of cultural identities and "subverting several native norms and rituals governing such necessary social spheres as wedding practices, parent-child relations and therefore the submission of women"⁷. Responses to this range from anger and discontent to those that realize the ways that to resist globalization by promoting and protecting cultural traditions⁸. Burbules and Torres use the term "counter globalization" to explain these movements. They are saying that "while globalization is clearly happening, its kind and shape are being determined by patterns of resistance, some with a lot of progressive intentions than others." In this issue, skeptics see the globe fragmenting into cultural or ethnic enclaves instead of integrating into a worldwide culture. They affirm nationalism and national identity because the basic cultural kind that anchor states and their culture and is a bulwark against the onslaught of worldwide culture⁹.

The globalization also has an adverse impacts on the environment in many ways. *First*, Liberalization policies and global market integration have facilitated the institutions and activities that have led to greater exploitation and depletion of biological diversity and resources such as forests and fishery resources, and have promoted and expanded environmentally harmful activities, that lead to continued reduction in the status of biodiversity. *Second* is the pressure on ecosystem due to population explosion which is responsible for extensive deforestation, pollution of all forms, global warming. *Third*, There is no real will to change harmful production methods. Harmful technologies continue to be exported to the developing countries that to a greater extent facilitate air, water and noise pollution.

Gandhian Perspective

From above discussion it is clear that the present day globalization, therefore widely followed has not come to grip with unevenness in growth, the growing difference in term of income distribution,

problems of coordination of various sections of society, dependency of third world toward the developed world for economic aid and technological transfer, cultural degradation and depletion of natural resources¹⁰. This can be as a result of the *corporate and neo-liberal nature* of the contemporary globalization. This nature and structures did not offer a long run answer to the problems of human beings. It is in this background that Gandhian philosophy may be shown to possess its relevance in the solution of the essential issues which are associated with globalization. To this end, it might be necessary to recall the board corpus of his ideas on Truth, nonviolence, Trusteeship, Swadeshi, Sarvodaya, Nationalism, Internationalism, and Interdependence.

These ideals of Gandhian philosophy provides a holistic approach for the foundation of globalization that promote an egalitarian world in all terms. What is basic to it is that the regeneration of the individual through a code of self-discipline and training or education and a through reconstruction or restructuring of the political and socioeconomic structure of the nations internally. Gandhi, as practical idealist, invents five moral principles, which can be observed as vows on individual plan. These vows are *Satya* (truth), *Ahimsa* (non-violence), *Asteya* (non-stealing), *Aparigrah* (non-possession) and *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy). Gandhi thinks that these fundamentals are absolutely necessary for *self-knowledge* and *self-reliance*. They are a source of strength and unflinching determination to observe moral laws. In the absence of these principles one is also tempted towards weaknesses. These according to Gandhi should be taken as universally recognized principles. Gandhi quoted;

"I do not believe that an individual may gain spiritually and those that surround him suffer. I believe in *adivaita*. I believe in an essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives. Therefore I believe that if one man gains spiritually, that whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent"¹¹.

Thus, to Gandhi behind the death dealing atomic bombs and nuclear weapons is the human hand that releases it. And, if human beings through correct education, training and discipline were weaned off from violence, even the deadliest nuclear weapons would cease to be the horror that they are these days. Hence, Gandhi stressed on the discipline of the individual. However, Gandhi's was not a one-track mind. He was, as he himself said a 'practical idealist' or 'Karmayogin'. Therefore, side by side with the individual's discipline, Gandhi suggests a pervasive reconstruction of the political and socioeconomic structure of the nations of the world internally without necessarily seeking to abolish national frontiers. This is obviously a holistic approach, and Gandhi called it "internationalism though non-violent nationalism"¹².

"It is impossible for one to be an internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e., when peoples belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man. It is not nationalism that is evil; it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness

which is the bane of modern nations which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rises on the ruin of, the other"¹³.

When nations as well as individual will have purged themselves from all forms of evils, the world will have globalization in the Gandhian perspective in which the various nations will cooperate as freely and equally. According to Gandhi, this is the price of mankind's survival and it is the only condition on which the world can live, and rules out the fraud, dependency, exploitation, violence and etc., as domination feature of present day globalization. But, the contemporary globalization is completely different from the Gandhian perspective as materialistic outlook is predominant in almost all walks of the life both among individual and nations. Competition and confrontation take place all over instead of cooperation and peaceful co-existence. To Gandhi the reason of this confrontation and unhealthy competition is that, not a single nation is self-sufficient and dependent upon another for their economic prosperity. To him, such a system is vulnerable to unfair competition and economic exploitation¹⁴.

To exterminate confrontation and unhealthy competition among nations Gandhi developed the concept of *Swadeshi* i.e., self-sufficiency in all forms in individual, national and international level. The essence of this doctrine is that importance is given to the indigenous methods for production of commodities, rather than going in for goods from foreign countries. If it is accepted as an alternative approach in this age of international trade dominated by unfair competition and economic exploitation, it would pave the way for a healthier economic relationship. In this sense, Gandhian philosophy of *Swadeshi* would encapsulate the strategy, knowledge and also the short as well as long term interest of the world. *Swadeshi* stands not just for self-reliance but also ensures mass employment through labour intensive industries. Its purpose is that every country should have a self-sufficient economic system that it ought to be able to survive for a long period without international trade. On the premise of such a capability it will help them to selectively accept only those transactions that are non-exploitative in character. In this context Gandhi said, "I am not against all international trade, though imports should be limited to things that are necessary for our growth but which India—and for that matter any poorer country—cannot herself produce and export of things of real benefit to foreigners"¹⁵.

Gandhi permits international trade and exchange of those commodities that cannot be produced in the country, and also the terms of trade are non-violent and non-exploitative. Gandhian ideals of international trade are to be supported freedom, equality, non-violence, cooperation and common understanding of the actual needs of the individuals in different countries. With these objectives Gandhi wants to extend the law of non-violence into the international trade. These aspects of international trade in Gandhian perspective is helpful to evolve globalization in which each nation of the world is free to participate externally and internally this might build nation self-sufficient.

After Swadeshi another important philosophical aspect of Gandhi is the Trusteeship, its relevance is well noticed in the present day globalized world if it is used as a weapon for the establishment of an egalitarian world order. Within which social justice and equity would prevail. The underlying principle of trusteeship is that enjoying one's wealth by renouncing it, i.e., non-possession to the extent possible. As Gandhi wrote

"Just as one must not deceive, so one must not possess anything which one does not really need"¹⁶

Hence, the doctrine of trusteeship implies that the owners of the property should act as trustees of their property and that they are free to use their property to satisfying their genuine needs and therefore the rest part of their property should be used for the common good of the society. This is often an important principle for the creation of an ideal society. In the same manner, if all the countries of the world may come some way on these lines, an equitable World Order would become substantive and facilitate the globalization in Gandhian perspective. Firstly, trusteeship provides the way for transforming the present day globalization by inculcating the principle of equality in it, within which nobody either individual or nations in a position to dominate the other, everybody appears to be enough self-sufficient to satisfy their genuine desires. Secondly, Gandhi constructs of trusteeship determine the production for the social needs not for the personal whim or greed. This nature of production to a greater extent removes the exploitative aspects i.e., individual to individual, one group to another, one nation to another nation and individual to environment. Therefore production in this manner would lead a sustainable development that will create globalization a lot of conducive to world. And thirdly, if globalization would accept the ideals of trusteeship than it might become anti-thesis to acquisitive aspect of present day globalization. So globalization will not be equated with accumulation of material goods for the satisfaction of ever-increasing desires of a few people at the national and a couple of developed nations at the international level. In this manner globalization would make sure the right to honourable livelihood of all the people of the globe.

Apparently these features of Gandhian philosophy should be consider as the guiding principles for contemporary globalization and useful to achieve the objective of happiness to all. Everyone should get equal opportunity for development, dignity, non-exploitative trade practices (based on the principle of Swadeshi), all countries sharing the excess wealth for the welfare of the world at large, development of human personality and contented life. Such globalization in Gandhian perspective will be achieved solely through the principles of *nonviolence, Truth, Swadeshi, Sarvodaya, Trusteeship, Non-exploitation* and etc. A global village formed on these principles alone can be a lasting unit in which the relationship between man and man, nation and nation should be based on love, cooperation and truth and a real relationship cannot be established with the help of money and material products alone. Money and goods can never establish a near perfect state of globalization, he said. Gandhian plan of globalization

is based on the principles of equality, justice and fair play. By globalization he meant the utilization of all resources of society in such a way that the good of each individual, for the society and world as an entire unit was acquired.

Conclusion

Globalization on Gandhian lines would be based upon the philosophy of how to live better with less. If the contemporary globalization stands for material growth, Gandhi's framework would imply sufficient for all with psycho-spiritual growth. It would not envisage man as dominating over nature but of man among nature, as a neighbourhood of it. As against competitive self-interest it advocates enlightened self interest. The modern globalization myth of self conscious individualism would get replaced by cooperation and relational individualism. Being self-reliant it would be a development from below, an autonomous process keeping man at the center. Such a development would ensure the advancement of man through his own endeavour, the goal being the development of the whole human being. Therefore formed, development turns into an everlasting development in Gandhian perspective, which will increase at one and so the same time the technological, economic, social, political and cultural dimensions. At every step of globalization according to Gandhi, creative energies of individuals and nations alike would be mobilized with people's participation. It is the individual who matters more than the goods and products. Gandhi is able to place development around people and groups rather than people around development. It might be through people's direct involvement that new values, simpler lifestyle with dignity and self-respect, cultural diversity of various communities, giving due recognition to each group's cultural identity will emerge. Self-reliant development, as such, would resist the penetration of the dominated international system. This will help to preserve identity and autonomy leading to, satisfy human needs and work towards an egalitarian resource distribution. Then, according to Gandhi, a real character of globalization stands for proper utilization of all resources of the society in such a way that the good of each individual, society and world as an entire unit can be realized.

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