

SOCIAL SCIENCE GAZETTEER

16 & 17 (1&2) January – December 2021 & 2022

October 2023; pp: 185 – 193

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Article History

Received: 08 – 08 – 2023

Revised: xxxxxxxx

Accepted: 24 – 10 – 2023

Globalisation and Issues of Core and Periphery with special reference to Marginalized Groups in India

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***Abstract:** The process of globalisation alongwith liberalisation and privatisation has transformed social, economic, political, cultural and psycho-emotional life of all social groups. The impact of these processes is so powerful and multi-dimensional that scholars like Peter. L. Berger and Samuel P. Huntington use the notion of 'Many Globalisations' in place of globalisation. One of the Consequences of these processes is the decline of 'Secular Society', because of sharp rise of 'homogenisation of culture'. This consequence has led to structural and processual contradictions in the life of marginalised groups in all nation-states including India. In each marginalised group there is sociological need to understand what is 'Core' and what is 'periphery' i.e., which organ is 'strong' and which one is 'weak'. It will be helpful in identifying marginalisation and exclusions as consequences of globalisation. This article, in this direction, is an exercise so that 'institutionalized oppression' could be viewed in context of marginalised groups of India (The Scheduled Castes particularly)*

Keywords: Globalisation, Core, Periphery, Marginalised groups, Dependency theory, World System theory, Consumerism

India has initiated wide ranging economic reforms covering all sectors of the economy agriculture, trade, industry, finance and even social sectors such as education, health and housing-since July 1991. The globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation (LPG) is the main slogan of this reform. The globalisation is primarily understood today as the free movement of goods, services, people and information across national boundaries. Now we have to agree with the view that globalisation is now a fact, not an option. We have to live with it though globalisation has not been a democratic choice of people anywhere. The imperatives of globalisation have been business driven, by business strategies and for business ends. Governments have helped them by policy actions that were often taken in secret, without national debate and discussion. The manner in which globalisation was introduced in India, as in several other countries, in the garb of economic reforms, without any discussion in the parliament or with people. The anti-democratic content of globalisation thus surfaces right from its birth. The basic framework of globalisation can be seen as comprising three tenets: (1) Social Darwinist conception of competition, (2) panacea of free market and (3) extreme individualism. It believes that only the winners in competition have right to survive. Globalisation prescribes free market as panacea. The market serves as a playground for individuals to compete- to fight to finish. Market is represented as optimal and self-regulating social structure. Market centric management is known to produce pro-rich regime controlling world's knowledge; property rights and patent rules, thereby pushing poor people and poor countries to the margin of the knowledge driven global economy, spread of inequality – making rich richer and poor poorer, marginalization of those who fail to compete in marketplace resulting into growing unemployment, underemployment, exclusion and poverty. Globalisation, with its ideological orientation is inherently elitist and hence naturally produces inequality; Globalisation thrives

on uncertainties and therefore demolishes all established correlations transforming the world into a risk society. Globalisation, an agenda of capitalism in crisis, driven by imperialist institutions like IMF, World Bank, and WTO, has essentially a pro rich bias. It has been a social disaster, environmental disaster and a threat to stability of the world. It has both its winners and losers. The gainers include people with assets, profits, and people with high skills, educated, professional, technical people, large firms, global markets, global elites and firms with market access and branding. The losers include people without assets, uneducated workers, labourers, those dependent on public services, small firms, the poor, local communities etc. Now in case of Marginalized Groups we can say that without any doubt that as it stands today, they are the losers of globalisation. Now the people are talking about second generation reforms. Still the government and professional economists are optimistic about the positive results of the process of globalisation. It is they who believe that globalisation is the agenda for humanity which can work for the poor. It is not merely economic phenomena rather it covers all spaces of modern life. It refers to culture, polity, economy and the state. It is being said that 'you may not be interested in globalisation but globalisation is very much interested in you. No political governance but corporate governance. Globalisation has existed in many forms; there have been trade services, flow of goods and capital and labour across nations. However, in the last thirty years globalisation has become a major force controlling economic, political, social and cultural spheres of the world. The new significant aspect of globalisation is the attempt to create new rules and regulations for free trade of goods, capital and services and to enforce and monitor this new agenda through international instruments such as the WTO, IMF and the World Bank. On the international front, India has provided market access and liberalized flow in the case of around 760 commodities. Similar access is allowed in capital investment and flow. International companies are allowed in insurance and many other service areas.

Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) has been introduced into the domestic economy. It includes (a) Privatization of the public sector and services, (b) Removal of restrictions on private sector participation in the economy, (c) Withdrawal of the government from many development and basic welfare sectors, (d) Wage freeze and cuts in subsidies. Further services such as banking, insurance health and education are now open for private sector investment. A main focus of globalisation has been to reduce the role of the state. In the social and economic governance of the country and move towards the privatization. Right from its inception the process of globalisation has generated a good amount of debate both in favour of and against it. A large section of industrialists, and capitalist's class whole-heartedly welcome this process. No doubt that many changes have happened in our society since inception of NEP. Among other things India has become one of the fastest economies in the world and a leading country in Information Technology. But on the human development index (HDI), India is ranked as one of the lowest in the world. This means there is a contradiction in our development paradigm. As the government itself has admitted in different ways, the fruit of our development has not reached the majority of the people especially the Marginalized Groups like Dalits and Tribal. As it is said that there are three facts of social development viz; social security, social justice and social harmony. Now it amply clear that globalisation has adversely affected all the three in India. It has led to worsening of social security, widening of disparities improvisation of the poor, Dalits, Tribal and sharpening of social tensions and conflicts.

The Tribals are the most backward section of the population in our society, who are facing a lot of problems all over the country. The empirical evidence shows that their employment opportunities are decreasing, their means of livelihood are affected and their education, health and food security are being threatened.

Evidences show how globalisation has affected the Tribals in Kerala. In the light of globalisation, the state government made a major shift

in educational policy when privatized professional education. These measures have adversely affected Tribals as well as Dalits, as they do not get reservation and financial subsidy from these institutions. The government seems to be decreasing its investments in government hospitals and public health centres also, which are mostly used by Marginalized Groups like Dalits and Tribals. The PDS in Kerala, which was the best in India, is badly affected by this shift.

Globalisation has led to exasperation of socio-economic disparities in the third world. According to a report of the Mahbub UI Haq during the globalisation phase about half-a-billion people in South Asia have experienced a decline in their incomes. While globalisation has benefited a small minority of educated urban population. Overall income inequality has increased. Elaborating this point, the report adds, “the balance sheet of gainers and losers in the globalisation process shows the uneven burden borne by the poor within and among nations.” What is more, on the front of social development, particularly education and health, the report notes decline in expenditure in South Asian countries, falling to levels lower than those in the pre-globalisation period. The poor, especially the Marginalized Groups, have been expressing their dissatisfaction and anguish against new economic reforms.

Issues of Core and Periphery

Core-Periphery models are based on the observation that within many spatial systems sharp territorial contrasts exist in wealth, economic development between economic heartlands and outlying subordinate zones. Core-periphery models have been used in many different situations. The industrialized countries are identified as the core and the developing countries are the periphery. It is argued that the core has continued to develop and industrialize by drawing resources from the periphery leaving the developing countries without the means or the resources to develop. The development gap between developed and least developed countries widened instead of narrowing, this cycle is known as dependency theory which believes that the

resources flow from the less developed periphery to the industrialized core. Further core-periphery theory is based on the notion that as one region or state expands in economic prosperity; it must engulf regions nearby to ensure ongoing economic and political success. The area of high growth becomes known as the core, and the neighboring area is the periphery, Cores and peripheries may be towns, cities, states, or nations. It so happens that resources drain away towards the core. Core and peripheries are everywhere and on every level. The core regions benefited the most and the periphery zones relied on coercive labour practices.

Dependency theory and World System theory (Paul Baran, Andre Gunder Frank, Wallerstein and Cardoso) provide vital grounding for the issue under reference. Dependency theory rested on the notion that resources flow from a ‘Periphery’ of poor and underdeveloped states to a ‘core’ of wealthy states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former, It is a central contention of dependency theory that poor states are integrated into the ‘World System’. Dependency and World system theory hold that poverty and backwardness in poor countries are caused by the peripheral position. There is distinction between the nations of the centre and the nations of the periphery.

It is against this background we have to examine the case of Marginalized Groups in India. The most Marginalized Group in India is the Scheduled Castes or Dalits who constitutes over 160 million or about 16:33 percent of the population. They are rooted in Caste system and are subjected to multiple deprivations. Approximately 2/3 of the Dalits are agricultural labourers in rural areas and are totally dependent upon wage employment. In the urban areas large number of them works in informal and unorganized sector as casual labourers. The LPG policy sets out to frame policies and programmes that imply a drastic reduction in the government’s role in economic and social governance. Certain policies of 1980s that were devised keeping in view the interests of Dalits and other poor and Marginalized Sections have been revised. As a result, there is a departure from the past

policies of the government towards facilitating a free market economy.

Apart from exclusion that Dalits face in the market due to lack of purchasing power, they also suffer particularly from lack of access to the market, which arises out of caste-based discrimination. In the context of privatization and the withdrawal of the government from economic governance, deregulation of various markets and changes to education, health, industry and financial sectors, Dalits are going to suffer more in the labour market and other markets such as capital, land, information etc.

Using the core-periphery argument, the rich and privileged class who constitutes the core, the most benefited even after the arrival of LPG in India. And the Dalits, Tribals and other groups are poverty stricken due to their peripheral position in Indian society. The resources drain away towards core and the periphery relied on coercive labour practices. As a result, a gap widened between the rich and the poor. The impact of globalisation on poverty is noted by many scholars. The evidence shows the globalisation has been accompanied by a significant rise in poverty, since the entire argument of globalisation with respect of poor is based on the 'trickle down' effect; it is admittedly not oriented to benefit the poor. The premise behind this argument is that globalisation entails growth of economy which will slowly trickle down to the lowest layers of the society. This premise however is not held out by the empirical evidence. Contrary to its claims about boosting economic growth, during its operation over the last two decades there has been economic decline in about 100 countries, consequently reducing incomes of about 2 million people.

One can see similar negative impact on the Indian economy during the globalisation decade. A comparison of the pre and post globalisation economic parameters over a decade revealed that on all parameters except GDP growth there was a drastic fall during the globalisation period.

Indeed, globalisation has led to impoverishment of millions of Dalits and poor in rural areas, the alarming phenomenon of farmers suicides during the last five years may be taken as an illustration of the devastation caused by globalisation. Dalits who are engaged in lower jobs in urban areas are the worst hit people. Globalisation has unleashed policies like downsizing, outsourcing, to bring down labour cost. The trends towards casualization, informalization, feminization, subcontracting has further aggravated the situation of the Marginalized Groups. The increasing incidence of part-time workers, shikshansevek, seasonal workers, home workers and subcontracted workers are working by leaps and bounds in the country. The exposure of the small sector not being able to face global competition has led to closures throwing scores of workers on roads. Increasing incidence of industrial sickness and closures in both traditional and modern industries has resulted in a massive loss of employment. The much-flouted job creation in the sectors like IT, telecom, Biotech etc. are intrinsically elitist and have meant little to these groups. The pro-rich bias of globalisation has aggravated existing inequality world over and has reached vulgar limits. Globalisation is producing billionaires at the rate unprecedented, in history, which is being cited as the enrichment of people by its protagonists; (core) but it is purely at the cost of those at the bottom of the pyramid (periphery),

The oppressive economic policies under globalisation are sustained by the systematic spread of neoliberal culture among masses, the culture, characterized by consumerism.

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Rural Culture in Hindi Cinema

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Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2020, page 317, Rs.1295, ISBN: 978-81-316-1034-3

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"Visual sociology" offers new ways of studying and understanding the social world through visual, sensory and other experimental approaches. Researchers can study sociological questions in a new way and analyse or study the reality of the social world. With the help of pictures or movies, we learn to read pictures, shapes and symbols. This became possible after the emergence of "Visual Sociology" or "Cinematic Sociology" as a new branch of sociology. Since the culture industry is driven by capitalist or market forces, the construction of social reality in society takes place through the media and especially films. That is why rural themes have almost disappeared from Indian cinema in the 21st century.

Sociology of Cinema in general and Rural Cinema in particular can be described as a scientific and analytical branch of knowledge through which various aspects of "real" social life are presented as "reel" or "virtual" social life through "audio-visual" techniques. The film is mainly about entertainment. If "real life" is close to "rolling life", then "Parallel Cinema" or "Real Cinema" is born as one type. Which goes beyond entertainment and promotes processes of social reforms, changes in thought processes, traditions and beliefs. All these aspects found an important place in Rural Culture in Hindi Cinema written by Shivam Singh. The book is an important