
Globalisation and Violation of Human Rights

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ABSTRACT

Broadly speaking the term 'Globalisation' means integration of economies and societies through cross country flow of information, ideas, technologies, goods, services, capital, finance and people but it leads to a more iniquitous distribution of income among countries and within countries. Globalisation may benefit even within a country those who have the skill and the technology. The higher growth rate achieved by an economy can be at the expense of declining income of people who may be rendered redundant. The present article focusses on the negative impact of globalization on the poor people. During the past years it is observed that globalization increases the gap between the rich and poor. There is lack of opportunities for the poor to be able to have access to markets due to globalization. It causes the exploitation of workers and growers, damage to the environment, economic degradation and monopoly power. Therefore Globalisation is liable for violation of human rights.

Globalisation, while essential to the success of the global market place, has a darker less visible side. It benefits some third world countries, as well as large well known MNC's. It however causes the economies of many countries and smaller companies to collapse. It has also blocked investments and growth of some poorer countries.

Keywords: *Globalisation, Liberalisation, Privatisation, Human Rights, Violation, Deregulation,*

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation refers to the global distribution of the production of goods and services. Through reduction of barriers to international trade such as tariffs, export fees and import quota Stephen Gill defines Globalisation as "The reduction of cost of transborder movement of capital and goods and thus of factors production and goods".

Therefore it means the global reach of new technology and capital movements, and outsourcing by domestic companies of rich countries.

Guy Brainbant defines Globalisation as: "The process of globalisation not only includes opening of world trade, development of advanced means of communication, internationalization of financial markets, growing importance of MNCs, population migration and more generally increased mobility of persons, goods, capital, data, ideas but also infections, disease and pollution".

On the basis of different interpretations it can be said that Globalisation creates tensions between those who have the skill and resources to compete in the global market and those who do not. For example when the internet was first introduced to the public, The richer countries in the world were able to incorporate it into their economies before the poor countries. The richer countries had already established a stronghold on the internet by the time the poorer were able to buy computers and pay for internet access.

Objectives:

The present article focuses on the issue of globalization

regarding the following:-

- (a) Effect of globalization on extreme poverty in India which may be viewed as a violation of human rights
- (b) Impact of globalization on labour rights.

FINDINGS

People will agree that extreme poverty is a degradation of human dignity and that there is a basic human right to minimum subsistence which is the part of the "right to life". UNESCO and several human rights activists have claimed that poverty is a violation of human rights.

A common argument in the media as well as in street protests is that globalisation is making the rich richer and the poor poorer. That means globalization causes uneven development. It is true that there is a large decline in poverty in India in the recent decades of international economic integration. But no one has yet convincingly demonstrated that this decline is mainly due to globalization. It could instead be, to a large extent, due to internal factors like expansion of infrastructure or the massive land reforms or the spread of green revolution in agriculture, large anti-poverty programs or social movements in India.

In general it is empirically difficult to disentangle the effects of trade or foreign investment liberalisation from those of ongoing technological changes or reforms in macro-economic stabilization policies, deregulation, privatization, removal of capital controls, and so on.

GLOBALISATION AND POVERTY

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If one goes beyond simple correlations, the causal process through which international economic integration can effect poverty primarily involve the poor in their capacity as workers, as consumers, and as recipients of public services, or users of common property resources.

The Poor As Self-Employed : The poor workers are mainly either self-employed or wage earners. The self-employed work on their own tiny farms or as artisans and petty entrepreneurs small shops and firms. The major constraints they usually face are in credit, storage, marketing and insurance, access to new technology, extension services, and to infrastructure (like roads, power, ports, telecommunication, and irrigation), and government regulations. Relieving these constraints often requires substantive domestic policy changes. Foreign traders and investors are not directly to be blamed. In fact they may sometimes help in relieving some of the bottlenecks in infrastructure and services and in essential parts, components, technology, and equipment. If these changes are not made and the self-employed poor remain constrained, then, of course, it is difficult for them to withstand competition from large agri-business or firms.

Another increasingly important barrier to trade which many small farmers of developing countries face in the world markets is that rich countries now shut out many of these imports under a whole host of safety and sanitary regulations. There are also the barriers to entry raised by the cartels of global retail chains. For example, Nestle and Wal-Mart have come to dominate supply chains for food and agricultural goods. Similarly, it may be very difficult, costly, and time-consuming for small producers of manufactures or services in developing countries to establish brand name and reputation in quality and timely delivery, which are absolutely crucial in marketing, particularly in international markets.

It is also important to keep in mind that trade liberalization, even when increasing the mean income of the poor producers, many heighten their vulnerability, particularly by increasing the variance of prices or income sources. The evidence on this is mixed, but it is clear that the capacity of the poor to cope with negative shocks is usually much weaker than the rest of population

Turning to poor wage earners, the traditional international trade theory suggests that the workers in a poor country having a comparative advantage in products intensive in unskilled labour should benefit from trade liberalization. But it is clear that poor unskilled workers get lower wages (or fewer jobs) in the presence of MNCs compared to what they will get in their absence. Sometimes the large companies, instead of hiring labour themselves, outsource their activities to smaller firms and household enterprises, where the wages

and overhead costs are lower, to the detriment of the formal sector employees, but the net effect on the workers of the country should take into account the resultant improvement in wages and employment among the usually much poorer informal sector workers.

However, two important reasons why opening up of the economy may worsen the conditions of workers: one relates to the nature of technical change, and the other to that of collective bargaining. As much of technical change in rich countries is biased against the services of unskilled labour, and if multinational companies transplant those new techniques in poor countries, employment and wage of unskilled labour will go down.

Globalisation often leads to the weakening of unions. As foreign competition lowers profit margins, the old rent-sharing arrangements between employers and unionized workers come under pressure. Rents decline both for capital and labour, but labour may have to take a larger cut as internationally less mobile labour faces more mobile capital, or as companies can more credibly threaten substitution of foreign factors of production, including intermediate inputs, for domestic factors. This may lead to lower wages, and, sometimes more important, increased risk of unemployment. Until issues of general economic security for poor workers in developing countries like India are satisfactorily resolved, globalization is bound to raise anxiety and hostility among workers worried about their job security.

The general issue of the weakening of the nation state is rather complex. There is a possible loss of national policy options brought about by a poor country's participation in international trade and investment and in the framework of global institutions and rules that govern them. It is observed that many of the international organizations that define the rules and regulations are accountable more to the corporate and financial community of rich countries than to the poor and that the decision making process in these organisations need to be much more transparent and responsive to the lives of the people their decisions crucially effect.

THE POOR AS THE RECIPIENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

This relates to the issue of the poor as recipients of public services. If cuts in public budgets on health, education and public works programs are necessitated by the decline in customs revenue as a result of trade reform, the poor may suffer. The low quality and quantity of public services like education and health in poor countries is, of course, not just due to their relatively low share in the public budget. To a large extent even the limited money allocated in the budget does not reach the poor because of all kinds of top-heavy administrative obstacles and bureaucratic and

political corruption.

Environmentalists argue that trade liberalization damages the poor by encouraging overexploitation of the fragile environmental resources (forestry, fishers, surface and groundwater irrigation, grazing lands, etc.) on which the daily livelihoods of particularly the rural poor crucially depend.

A common charge against multinational companies is that they flock to developing country 'pollution havens' to take advantage of lax environmental standards.

The Poor As Consumers:

Impact on prices of some technology-intensive products (like life-saving drugs) which the poor buy that follows the patent regime of the TRIPS under WTO global rules. Exorbitant prices for life-saving drugs under the monopoly power for global drug companies granted with TRIPS can be a crushing burden on poor people and public health programs in poor countries.

GLOBALISATION AND WORKER RIGHTS

Many advocates of human rights worry about the implications of globalization on worker rights.

- (a) Forced Labour :- Force labour, it is a clear violation of basic human rights and should not be permitted under any circumstances. The same applies to unsafe or hazardous work conditions. The wages paid for work in the global companies are often 'paltry' particularly compared to those paid in rich countries. But more often than not these wages are higher than what domestic companies pay for comparable work. The workers willing to sell themselves as serfs are not permitted, unsafe work conditions that can cause bodily injury are to be strictly regulated.
- (b) Child Labour:-Globalisation has led to exploitation of labour. Prisoners and child workers are used to work

in inhumane conditions. Safety standards are ignored to produce cheap goods. The issue of child labour has attracted a great deal of international attention in connection with the globalization debate.

- (c) Unemployment :- Earlier people had stable, permanent jobs. Now people live in constant dread of losing their jobs to competition. Increased job competition has led to reduction in wages and consequently, lower standard of living. The churning caused by globalization causes job anxiety, and some people may actually lose their jobs. What does it imply for the right to work?

CONCLUSION

The article has pointed out the complexities and ambiguities in the impact of economic globalization on human rights, both in the matter of extreme poverty as a violation of human rights and of some basic rights of workers. In general globalization can cause many hardships for the poor but it also opens up opportunities which some countries can utilize and others do not. Largely depending on their domestic political and economic institutions, and the net outcome is often quite complex and almost always context-dependent, belying the glib pronouncements for or against globalization made in the opposing camps.

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