

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON CREATING A FAIRER SOCIETY



GLOBALIZATION AND THE TRANSITIONAL CULTURES

An Eastern Perspective

DEBANJANA NAG

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DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON CREATING A FAIRER SOCIETY

A fair society is one that is just, inclusive, and embracing of all without any barriers to participation based on sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, ethnicity, age, class, ability, or any other social difference. One where there is access to healthcare and education, technology, justice, strong institutions, peace and security, social protection, decent work, and housing. But how can research truly contribute to creating global equity and diversity without showcasing diverse voices that are underrepresented in academia or paying specific attention to the Global South?

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GLOBALIZATION AND THE TRANSITIONAL CULTURES: AN EASTERN PERSPECTIVE

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*The book is dedicated to my mentor Prof Virendra Pal Singh (Retd),
Chairman, Global Research Education Foundation India, Ex-HoD, Center for
Globalization and Development Studies, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj,
India, a teacher who has been a profound source of inspiration for me and
taught me to fight and conquer all the obstacles that came across my path.*

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PREFACE

The book *Globalization and Transitional Cultures: An Eastern Perspective* is a thesis work that has been converted into a book. The concept of globalization is always in question. It is a concept that has prevailed for ages, but with the arrival of communication technologies and the advancement of digitalization, the impact of it has become much evitable. Most of the time, the concept has been understood in the Western views like how McDonaldization has changed the world or how technological advancements have spread Western ideologies in all parts of the globe. However, very few studies question whether globalization can popularize Eastern ideologies. The book is an attempt to resolve this question and to examine the glocalization process where the local thoughts of each ideology can be globalized and escalated in a wider platform.

To establish the ideas, the author has taken the help of both primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources include various reviews of the literature consisting of various examples, sloka or verse, the theories given by the pioneers of globalization and cultural studies to identify the gap in those studies and to understand how their views are relevant in today's world. Similarly, the help of a primary survey has been conducted to assess contemporary sociocultural values, norms, and ethics, especially in the countries of the Global South like India. All these processes took acute studies related to the field. As the book was basically a thesis, considerable revisions, modifications, and additions have been done accordingly for better representation of the book. The book has attempted to illustrate major theories and terms related to globalization and cultural aspects. Further, it also takes up the cases like tribal societies as in most of the cases being a marginalized society, their relevance is often omitted in the perspective of globalization and cultural change though they constitute a huge population in the countries of the Global South. Hence, the book is purely an attempt to understand globalization from an Eastern perspective, which is different from Western ideologies and includes marginal sections of society like tribes, women, and the middle class at large.

There is a famous saying of Albert Einstein "Education is not learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think." The book is the outcome of rigorous thinking, support, and hard work of many people. I owe to my mentor

Prof Virendra Pal Singh (Retd) earnestly for his immense help and guidance in the process of completion of this work. I thank Prof T. V. Kattimani, Vice-Chancellor, Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh who always encouraged me in my academic journey and stood behind me as a backbone all the time. Love to my parents Mr Sambhu Lal Nag and Mrs Anita Nag, my dearest sister Alankita Nag, and my husband Mr Vageesh Kumar Mishra for helping me to keep my morale up in my hardest times. They are the ones who lived this journey with me every single day both in good and adverse times. I also thank Emerald Publication for allowing me to present my work in front of the world in the form of this book. I hope the book will guide scholars who are working in the field of globalization, culture, and development studies.

GLOBALIZATION: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The dawn of the 20th century evidenced the emergence of three new catchwords namely globalization, privatization, and liberalization. Among these three concepts, the concept of globalization is the most complex and challenging one. Globalization is viewed through various perspectives from epistemological, analytical, and critical to grassroots levels of civil society and public actions. Globalization was more centered on quantitative approaches like trade, tariffs, free flow of the global market system, etc. But by the beginning of the 21st century, it changed its course toward more qualitative approaches: political, demographic, environmental, or cultural.

The 20th century has been an era of many radical and theoretical changes. During the 1950s–1960’s, the Marxian and Weberian debates of class and social mobility were the major topics of discussion among scholars. The decade of 1960–1970 focused on gender-based issues like feminism and inequalities. The decade of 1970–1980 was “post-modernism”. Along with postmodernism, the idea of globalization got prominence in the late 80’s to early 90’s. With the development of interactive technologies, it soon became a buzzing phenomenon. The world gradually converted into a small village. It transformed the concept of time and space over the world. With the evolution of WEB 2.0, even the technologies that were based on one-way communication systems converted to a two-way communication system.

The major changes in the economies were witnessed, especially in developing countries like India, which became an IT hub for the developed countries for outsourcing knowledge workers. Though extractions of technical minds were ongoing, these technological developments also benefitted developing countries by producing more skilled generations. With the emerging

communication system, the common people also started taking an interest in socio-political conditions and they had an opportunity to express their views. Eventually, people became more global accelerating the process of globalization. From case of economic perspective, communication technologies and cultural interactions showed immense success, whereas in terms of sociopolitical factors like lessening the decision-making rights of the national governments, developing Westernization over other civilizations, etc., were not so preferred. As a result, though globalization has become an integral part of the recent world, it remains a debatable issue.

The term “Globalization” comes from the word “globalize” referring to an increasingly borderless and interconnected world. Through the integration of capital, conservation, and acts of human rights, development, and transportation of cultural commodities, globalization is reconstructing global economic orders, consumer conscience, and cultural landscapes that have direct implications on human development.

According to Held et al. (1999, p. 2), “Globalization may be thought initially as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual”. Held further opines that global governance is diminishing national governance and thus making nation-states irrelevant. He further argues that neither Westphalia’s system of sovereign nations nor today’s globe-centric system can solve the political challenges. Hence, he suggests a multilayered economy that can create an economic and sociopolitical linkage between governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

Jan Aart Scholte (2000) states that the world is going through “relative deterritorialization” and will gradually face “supra territorial relations”, i.e., the process of globalization is displacing the sovereign power and control of governments over the territories, cultural practices of land, denying the international relationships between individual states and thus generating homogenous practices and relations over the supra territories.

One important concept to understand globalization is the “Minimal Phase Model of Globalization” proposed by Roland Robertson. Robertson proposed this theory in the year 1992, which describes the process of globalization through five different phases, where globalization goes through various stages from creating a change to a declining stage. In all these stages, Roland Robertson argues globalization is a very long and complicated process (Dimitrova, 2002) where changes occur at a very slow pace. Robertson is among the pioneers of globalization theory. He describes globalization as a cognitive process where an individual or a society perceives any changes through their

understanding and accordingly, they accept or reject any phenomenon. This is how Robertson's theory differs from other notions of globalization based mainly on the imposed traditions of westernization and hence, he give more focus on the word glocalization rather than globalization.

Scholars like Friedman (1999) associate cultural globalization with Americanization or homogenization of culture, whereas other scholars found it as a heterogeneous process where if two cultures come into confluence both will grasp some entity from the other. As a result, the concept of multiculturalism will develop. With changing dimensions of sociopolitical interactions, the level of cultural interactions also changes. It further creates the debate of cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity in the society. So, it can be visible that globalization as a cultural aspect is purely a multidimensional process.

On the other hand, John Tomlinson (1999) in his book defines globalization from the point of view of culture and describes it as the characterization of global social life that has a complex network of growing cultural interconnectedness and interdependence. He further states, "Globalization lies at the heart of modern culture, cultural practices lie at the heart of globalization." Tomlinson sees global culture as a different element from globalized cultures. He sees global culture as a result of influenced culture or a single-world culture, whereas he defines the term globalized culture as a culture that constructs identities of different cultures at a global level. Thus, he defines globalization helps in the construction of a globalized culture rather than a global culture.

Goran Therborn (1995) sees globalization as a wave of evolving civilizations and he argues that as civilizations are developed, along with evolves the process of globalization. For example, with industrialization, concepts like division of labor, world trade, world market, interdependence, world production rights, world influence, universal law/rights, capital/income, world impact, world finance, world market, determination of risks/opportunity, etc. evolved. With the evolution of "world culture" systems, identities, cross-continental interchange, world diffusion values, world influences, world religions or ideologies, universal homogenization/hybridization, etc. came into context. Thus, Therborn sees globalization as a hand-in-hand phenomenon of culture and establishes cultural globalization as one of the major discourses of globalization.

Turner and Khondker (2010) in the book "Globalization East or West" talks about the changing notion of globalization with context of East and West. It tries to understand the eastern matters that are seeing constant transformations due to coming in contact with the western world. The book analyzes the affect more in an economic and political scenario and brings about the perspectives of other scholars like Amartya Sen who believes, "Globalization is neither Western nor Eastern (Turner & Khondker, 2010, p. 45)." For this, it explains the concepts of

universal knowledge systems like the science of mathematics, geography, etc. to establish its theory. However, if seen in a more acute way, it is seen that when dived down more deeply into the cultural affairs, the elements of globalization create different impacts on different cultures. This makes it more important to understand the effects of cultural globalization separately for the Eastern and Western world.

B. Axford's edited book, "Why Globalization Matters?" (2021) takes up various questions of globalization in different chapters. It talks about various disciplines of globalization including political science, sociology, geography, anthropology, and communication studies, etc. and how theoretical approaches to globalization like space, culture, history, governance, and capitalism work as an umbrella term to create complex interconnectedness among these approaches (Theiner, 2014).

Manuell Castells in his "The Rise of Network Societies" (1996) articulates a weaker section of power, i.e., "influence." He states, "the nation-state is losing power but not influence." He further discusses that due to it societies, today are reshaping and reforming new linkages. He termed it as "Network Societies," which means the power in the globalized world has been diffused in many intersecting networks rather than in a single state. Hence, it can be said that globalization in politics has restructured world institutions, and some critics argue that it has turned the political agencies toward a cosmopolitan democracy.

The new type of society is in the phase of postmodernism and is hugely *globalized* and the rise of concepts like Manuell Castells's (1991) "The Rise of Information Society", and Marshall McLuhan's "The Global Village" (1964), etc. has helped in the formation of a new type of social systems. Thus, the new social system concentrates more on global problems rather than on individuals. The availability of free and quick information is a major factor behind this that eventually progresses the process of globalization. Singh (2004) argues, "The effects of Globalization started with the 'cultural invasion from the sky' is now centered on 'the emergence of information society'. Hence, it can be said that the era of globalization centrally depends upon the flow of information."

Anthony Giddens (1996) describes that the process of globalization is going through four layers: extensification, or the process of stretching social relations; intensification, or the intensifying rate of world trade system and exchanges; velocity, or the speeding up of global flows; and the impact that can be visualized due to global interconnectedness. Since the beginning of modernization, trends of change have been flourishing in the society. Globalization as a process brought likeliness to the lifestyle of people through their food, fashion, art, and music, even in the process of thinking. It created a

background for diminishing plurality and forming a homogenized and liberalized world. Further, globalization turned into a “*process of change*” that is spread over various aspects of society economic, political, demographic, cultural, technological, and environmental.

Globalization in all of its forms therefore can be said to be a transition from the traditional period of history to the modern age of discontinuity. It is the extension of society and interconnection between the societies that covers the whole globe. Interactive technologies are fueling its growth process, and its institutional dimension can interlink the cross-border flow of social and cultural artifacts. With the cross-border flow of sociocultural elements, the globe thus experiences a journey toward a more rational and modern world. To study and discuss this process of change through globalization, three different schools based on three different perspectives have been established. These schools of globalization are discussed elaborately in the following section.

SCHOOLS OF GLOBALIZATION

Based on the nature of globalization, it has been mainly divided into three major schools: Hyperglobalizers, Skeptics, and Transformationalists.

Hyperglobalizers

Hyperglobalization was a term that came into existence in the early 1990s. It was used to describe the “rapid rise of trade integration”. Eventually, it became a dynamic school that believed globalization is a process that can create integration among all global-level procedures, i.e. trade, culture, communication, etc. According to the hyperglobalizers, globalization has ended the concept of nation-states and made it irrelevant. Rather it has created a *global village* amplifying the concepts of internationalism and cosmopolitanism. The hyperglobalizers can be again subdivided into positive hyperglobalizers and negative hyperglobalizers.

Kenichi Ohmae’s book “*Borderless World*” (1990) supported positive hyperglobalizers. He stated that “a fundamental paradigm shift” is going on in the international market. He discusses this shift with the fact that as the flow of goods and services has become much easier after the emergence of GATT, it is not possible to attach the countries with a “single economic unit” only. According to him, this easier flow of goods and services is also creating a “dispersion of economies” as they can trade globally with much flexibility. To ensure that these

flows of goods and services can run smoothly, he also suggests a global governing body that can regulate the “global flow of economy ending the nation-states boundaries”. His argument can be further explained by Daniel Bell’s “The End of Nation-States.” He also supports the school arguing that diminishing geographical boundaries has also diminished the usefulness of international laws.

The “negative hyperglobalizers” on the other hand were mainly the Neo-Marxist scholars like James. C. Scott. They are the critiques of globalization. They find globalization as “expansionist capitalism” or a kind of “imperialism.” James C. Scott in his article “Vernaculars Cross-Dressed as Universals: Globalization as North Atlantic Hegemony” (2009) believes “globalization may eliminate, diminish, or replace: vernacular practices such as the cultures, religions, and languages of less numerous peoples, local forms of agriculture and land tenure, and other ways of life and institutions that appear to stand in the way of standardization.”

The opinions of negative hyperglobalizers have further helped in the rise of the “*Standardization thesis of Globalization*” as pioneered by James. C. Scott (1998) in his thesis. It comprehends globalization as a process by which the capitalists control the world by hegemonizing nation-states, creating monoculture, and conglomerating Multinational Companies. It standardizes the complex societal norms, tacit vernacular practices, and precious indigenous cultures. Hence, the hyperglobalizers view globalization as a totally “homo-centric” notion.

Skeptics

With the emergence of Globalization, the concept of *detrterritorialization* emerged and the school of hyperglobalizers pivoted in this concept. However, the concept was rejected by the skeptics school of globalization as they opined that globalization is not based on the concept of one nation, one government rather it segments the world into major regional blocs. The skeptics’ school of globalization states that neither globalization is a new concept, nor it has created an epochal transformation in international affairs. Rather it has segmented the world economies into smaller regional blocs. The skeptics believe globalization is an advanced mode of *Western imperialism*. They found it a concern of powerful states and without their hegemony, the contemporary world system would decree. On account of this, the skeptics’ beliefs are divided into two methodological models:

The first model opines that globalization has articulated the world into three major blocks, i.e. the European Union, North America, and Asia, especially Japan. The whole current world economy is surrounded by these three blocks. Waltz (1999) states that globalization is not global at all but is mainly divided into northern latitudes. The results can be seen in the case of the expansion of McDonalds' in far-ranging places with the popularization of Facebook, and Twitter among all sections of society; from considering hamburgers, pizzas, cokes, and sandwiches as favorite past time meal to accepting Sushi as a quality cuisine across the world; the influence of the regional blocks is crystal clear.

The second methodological concept argues that globalization is not ending the nation-states, but they are as strong as ever before. The openness in world trade before World War I was much higher, likewise global flows in economies and global migration flows were also higher in the 19th century as compared to today. Henceforth, the skeptics like Hirst and Thompson (1996) prefer the term *Internationalization* over globalization.

Transformationalists

The transformationalists, who are the third school of globalization, are considered to be the most prominent school of globalization. Transformationalists believe that globalization is not a teleological process. It is an absolute phenomenon. The effects of globalization are not only limited to economic or political activities but also reflexive in the arenas of technology, environmental aspects cultural artifacts, etc. They believe that the concept of nation-states is still effective and cannot be diminished. David Held (1999) argues that only the shape of nation-states has been restructured by global governance, international laws, and social movements. The territorial boundary still exists but now global monetary flows and other economic activities are more accessible to foreigners and investors. Thus, the sovereignty of the nation-states is under threat as they are shared.

Transformationalists believe that nation-states are an integral part of the sociopolitical system and thus the world can never be homogenized or segmented. Transformationalists also state that the flow of culture is not a one-way process. Westernization has not swallowed up the local cultures. It has also been influenced by them. Local cultures may lose some of their heterogeneity but will always have their own presence in the ongoing society resulting in the process of glocalization where there is an immense scope to expand the local thoughts and artifacts to go global. The establishment of

ISKCON temples in the hearts of North America by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and the spread of Hare Krishna movement that still attracts the Western Community toward the pages of Shrimad Bhagwat – Gita, in the land of Mathura-Vrindavan or in the Ghats of Varanasi is the finest example of how a local tradition can be recognized throughout the globe heartily.

Hence, globalization is a two-way exchange and the only change that has taken place is the concept of culture that is now less stable as hybridized global identity has been overwhelming the recent world. Thus, all three schools have their own ideological concepts and based on this each one of them has their own notion to look upon the approaches of globalization.

APPROACHES OF GLOBALIZATION

In the theory of “Discontinuities of Modernity,” Anthony Giddens argues that whenever the development of any process occurs, along with comes the different phrases through which the development process comes to its original shape. These are the transitional phrases in which society comes under stress and as a result, different kinds of discontinuities are generated. These various forms of discontinuities further create various kinds of approaches to that process and thus the process of development takes place. Based on this theory of Anthony Giddens, the processes of globalization are substantially influenced by four major sets of approaches specifically.

Globalization as a Time–Space Approach

The link between time–space and globalization can be found in David Harvey’s “The Condition of post-modernity” (1989). He coined the term “Time-Space Compression” to describe that if there is an acceleration in economic activities in the world, there follows the destruction of spatial cross-borders and distances automatically. With increasing communication and technology, the capital moves to the transnational boundaries at a much wider and faster level. He believes that compression of time and space is a key factor behind globalization.

The concept of time–space in building blocks of globalization has also grabbed attention in Anthony Giddens’ “Time-space distanciation.” His major thinking was that social relations get stretched over space and time. The expansion of global media, information technology, and transportation has changed the historical trajectories of different societies. For instance: tribal