

GLOBALISATION: COLONISATION PERPETUATION

A Critique of the Marginalised

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Introduction

At the genesis of Third Millennium, developing nations of Asia, Africa and North America are finding themselves in an inevitable 'critical' situation of two opposing cultural and historical processes: viz. globalisation and subaltern movements. Globalisation can be seen as a cultural, political and economic New-Order supported by the Western neo-liberal capitalistic ideology envisioned in the logistics of market economy. The present commercial exigencies compel the developing countries to go for globalisation. For example, India's New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1991 is an example of the tendency towards globalisation. This policy was the result of the World Bank - IMF dictated Structural Adjustment programme. The process of globalisation is accelerated in India with the completion of the Uruguay Round of GATT and the establishment of the World Trade Organisation.

At the same time any one who is perceptive and has a sense of social responsibility, infers that the hard earned cultural, political and economic freedom of developing countries is radically challenged in the dynamics of globalisation. Naturally there emerge resistance movements against globalisation in the developing countries. These movements are generally called sub-altern movements; they are known differently as peoples' movements, new social movements, counter cultural and grass-root movements. These movements consider the New-Order envisaged in globalisation as a radical onslaught on the cultural identity, political autonomy and economic freedom of the developing countries. Sensing the dangers of globalisation, India, though she has officially opted NEP,

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showed political discretion in recognising the veritable role of the people at the grass-root level in the vision and praxis of her future development. For example, the constitutional amendment regarding Panchayath Raj emphatically affirms the importance of localisation of economy and politics through peoples' participation on the one hand, and on the other hand confirms role of cultural and geographical pluralism of Indian polity in the economic vision.

Even Amartya Sen, the Nobel laureate of Welfare Economics said in a recent TV interview that developing countries have to reconcile with and incorporate globalisation into their political and economic system and cultural psyche. No doubt, the people of the developing countries, especially the vulnerable sections should find out a vision as well as action plan to live with globalised commercial compulsions while not negotiating the hard earned political freedom which ultimately rests of economic independence. The question is whether it is possible to strike a balance between them? The paper looks at the problem primarily for the perspective of the marginalised of the developing countries. There are two parts in the paper. The first part discusses the various neo-colonial aspects of globalisation and the second part will deal with the current approaches of the marginalised towards globalisation economics and politics.

Part I.

Phenomenon of globalisation

1. Ideology and Dynamics of globalisation

Liberal international theory which has once lost ground with Marxist theories owing to its incapacity to explain structural inequities within nations and at the international level, acquired a new appeal as a powerful ideological framework for global changes in the present post-Cold War context. Traditional internationalism is now called neo-liberalism in which there is a shift from conventional liberal internationalism to what it is some times called 'neo-liberal

globalism'. Neo-liberalism or neo-liberal globalism came into prominence with the ascendancy of the process of globalisation. What is being accelerated in neo-liberalism is the incorporation of every sector of the world into the Western capitalist mode and its market logic through the unfettered flow of transnational capital.

The assumptions of neo-liberal globalism undergird the ideological framework of globalisation. Neo-liberal globalism fundamentally entertains a conception of linear evolution of international relations toward greater individual freedom through international co-operation and the process of modernisation. Neo-liberalism has primarily been understood as an economic doctrine with a set of policy prescriptions per se; economy and politics (markets and states) are considered as autonomous entities. Neo-liberalism's central complaint has been that interest groups exploit society by means of political system by siphoning out public funds in the form of subsidies, entitlements and welfare payments. Hence it is argued that political control over economy and resources should, therefore, end in favour private initiatives and enterprises.

Richard Gardner defines Neo-liberalism as "the intellectual and political tradition that believes in the necessity of leadership by liberal democracies in the construction of a peaceful world order through multilateral co-operation and effective international organisations."¹ This meant, according to him, primarily the US leadership. Neo-liberalism holds that Third World political and economic development has to ultimately embrace the liberal-capitalist democratic system of the West, and what is needed from the part of developing countries is to imitate the West and catch-up development.

Succinctly speaking the crux of neo-liberalism is minimum governmental interference in the economic affairs of the populace. It means that relationship between state and corporations should be

¹ Richard Gardner, "The Comeback of Liberal Internationalism," *The Washington Quarterly* 13(1990):23.

kept fluid - the unconstrained movement of the resources from the state to the market. i.e., transference of resources from state exchequer to the bursary of financial and industrial corporations which control and regulate the market forces.

Options of neo-liberalism are associated with deregulation, more flexible labour markets, unlimited privatisation (including traditionally public services), cuts to social spending, uncontrolled openness to international capital transfers, etc. In many developing countries like India, these options are reinforced by the implementation of "structural adjustment" programmes (SAPs). Sensing the shift of power from state to market in the NEP, the former finance minister Mann Mohan Sing stated: "power should move to the boardroom" i.e., from government to the corporation now onwards.² In layman's understanding it means less red tape, less centralisation and less bureaucratic control implying greater efficiency in implementation of developmental projects.

Thus globalisation envisions the countries of the world as absorbed in a single economic entity. That is to say, less government in the matters of business and commerce, promotion of a global economic structure and dynamics in terms of acceleration of capital and technology and economic integration independent of political and social commitment, even cultural sensibilities. Global mono-autonomous-economic-fabric implies trans-nationalisation of capital, internationalisation of the division of labour and standardisation of production. In short market forces and gains per se become the metaphysics of economic advancement in the vision of globalisation.

The agents of globalisation are indeed giant Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) and Transnational Corporations (TNCs). Until recently, large corporations - even the ones known as multinationals - have been in the first place, in terms of ownership, national firms whose activity had extended beyond the frontiers of their country of

² *Hindu*, 1 Oct.1995.

origin with the positive support of their government. Today, they have become powerful enough to develop their own strategies of expansion outside (and sometimes against) the assumptions of government, policies. Therefore, they want to subordinate government policies to their own strategies. Neo-liberal discourse conceals this objective to legitimise the exclusive purpose of defending the private interests represented by these corporations. The "freedom" being demanded is not freedom for all; it is freedom for corporations to pursue their interests at others' expense. From this point of view the neo-liberal discourse is perfectly ideological as well as dishonest!

However neo-liberal discourse did not see the possibility of the economically powerful exploiting the less powerful.³ and fails to understand that meaningful freedom is possible only within a reasonably just and secure social and international order⁴. This failure is more glaring in neo-liberal globalism in which privilege and freedom of transnational capital is understood independent of people at local and international level. Pivotal political questions social justice and concerns of the vulnerable sections of the society are relegated to background.

Needless to say that globalisation is the intricate and tricky assertion of Western capitalism world wide through the market forces in the post-colonial era in which territorial colonialisation is no more politically and culturally viable and acceptable. Besides,

³ See Srthur A Goldsmith, "The State, the Market and Economic Development: A Second Look at AdamSmith in Theory and Practice," *Development and Change* 26(1995):634, and Petras and Vieux, "Shrinking Democracy and Expanding Trade: New Shape of the Imperial State," *Economic and Political Weekly* 31(1996):2594-97

⁴ See Mark W Zacher and Richard A. Mathew, "Liberal International Theory: Common Threads, Divergent Strands," in C.W.Kegley Jr. ed., *Controversies in International Relations Theory* (New York: ST. Martins, 1995), 107-150; Christian Bay, "Conceptions of Security: Individual, National and Global," in Bhikhu Parekh and Thomas Pantham eds., *Political Discourse: Explorations in Indian and Western Political Thought* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1987), 129

the fluid situation created by the fall of Eastern Communist Block and failure of state controlled socialist economies in these socialist countries was opportune time for the greater appeal of a market economy in the developing countries. Dishonesty and deceit in the neo-liberalist policies of globalisation are looked into from the perspective of the poor in the following pages.

2. Globalisation Leads to Disenfranchisement

As already observed, when globalisation sees the countries of the world purely in terms of an independent economic entity, devoid of their political, cultural, social and historical presuppositions it results the erosion of state's power. The shift from state to market in the process of globalisation implies first and foremost less power in the hands of people at the instance of corporations becoming more powerful than governments. Guided by market forces corporations become less accountable to the democratic process— an unconditional affirmation of the market as the sole social regulator.⁵ Some intellectuals in this country even reject the concept of state while advocating for individuals' initiative and resourcefulness.

There is no doubt that the structure of political life will be profoundly modified in the globalisation process in the course of time. Political life and struggles traditionally took place within the framework of political states whose legitimacy was not questioned (a government might be challenged, but not the state itself). Besides, in the state, political parties, trade unions, press, judiciary formed the basic structure of the polity in which political movements, social struggles, ideological currents found expression. One of the major neo-liberal offensives is the rejection of the role of state in deciding the destiny of its people; market is conceived as the sole arbitrator of future of the peoples. Neo-globalism is thoroughly an all-encompassing anti-state ideology.⁶

⁵ See *Seminar*, January, 1996.

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The weakening of the state's authority happens when state and market are presented as antithetical in the ideology of globalisation. Needless to say, there has been a concerted attempt by the WB and IMF to reduce the role and function of the state in the matters of national economy. This role of WB and IMF as the financial institution of globalisation has a profound impact on political institutions altering the nature of the state and the inter-state system. There is a remarkable alteration even in the vocation of the nation especially in third world countries. For example, there is a tremendous pressure on the state from WB and IMF to withdraw from welfare and social projects to serve the market forces. The states comply the directions of these international monetary agencies under the threat of withdrawal of loans. It implies a decline in the authority of the state and a failure to discharge its basic functions. States which were once the masters of markets now appear subservient to them. Then the crucial questions involved in the process of globalisation are i. survival of state; ii. supraterritorial constituents for the state; iii. loss of sovereignty, iv. reduction of social security provision; v. difficulties in the realisation of democracy. All these point to that eventually states lose their former core attribute of sovereignty. The principle mark of sovereignty used to be complete and exclusive control of national economy. The freedom of macro-economic policy making is now denied to states.⁷

Moreover in India as well as in many developing countries, there is the trend of institutionalisation of responsibility for economic policy-making by an autonomous finance ministry. Economic policy making is perceived as a purely technological exercise in terms of market gains. But citizenship is the foundation of the modern liberal democratic state. It provides a framework in which individuals are part of a political community and as such is strongly linked to the concepts of the nation - state sovereignty. The very concept of

⁷ Ravi Arvind Palat, "The Phenomenon of globalisation," *Hindu* (Dec.14, 1998):12.

citizenship has become a beleaguered idea at the advent of globalisation.⁸

But, it should not be forgotten that the poor in countries like India want a greater role for the state in the context of unmet basic needs, namely food, shelter, clothing, education and health. In a minimalist state constricted to mere policing, the wealth will be accumulated in the hands TNCs and MNCs and they, in turn, become more powerful than governments. Today the very agenda of globalisation is set by TNCs and MNCs; the policies of the IMF and World Bank have to be responsive to these corporations in the web of market forces. Today the competition is not for territory but for market.

In the countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, the police force and even the military is more at the service of MNCs, and TNCs' mega projects than the aspirations of marginalised. In developing capitalist countries the conflict between the aspirations of popular majorities and the results produced by current policies, the helplessness of states to deal with the forces unleashed by Globalization and frighteningly effective forms of media manipulation have produced a genuine crisis affecting the idea and practice of democracy.⁹

As India approaches the 21st Century we need to recognise the threat within and to redefine war. The image of an invading army should be recognised as a rare and confinable threat. Infinitely more dangerous is the Trojan Horse battle being waged under the cloak of international and national trade and commerce. Conventional war kills instantly. The war that is referred kills slowly and targets our most vulnerable citizens.¹⁰

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ See Dr. Samir Amin, "For a Progressive and Democratic New World Order."

¹⁰ See Bittu Sahgal, "Colonisation Continuum: The never ending story."

3. Globalisation: an Antithesis of Social Justice

The dishonesty and deceit of globalisation become poignantly transparent in the context of social justice. The development paradigm under globalisation is bound to exclude the poor, especially women, children, tribals, dalits, the vulnerable groups. It seems that globalisation and marginalisation are the two sides of reality. Today we are faced with two frightening developments as the result of globalisation and liberalisation. Our society conveniently forgets the poor and we exclude them from our consciousness - the amnesia of the poor. It is the logic and the imperative of the system. In the feudal system, the slaves were ill-treated, but the system wanted them; in the traditional caste-organisation, the out-castes were discriminated against, but without them and their toil the society could not function. But today, the worst thing happening with globalisation is that the poor are not wanted; they are a burden; they have simply become redundant.¹¹

The second disturbing development is the progressive eclipse of social consciousness and responsibility in the country. The decades between 70s and 90s will be remembered for the vibrant sense of social justice. Since the 90s with the advent of globalisation and new economic policies in the country, for the upper castes and classes - who are also mostly the policy makers - social justice has become the bad dream of yester-years. This anaesthetising of social consciousness and responsibility is the worst thing that has happened. For it strikes at the very root of our capacity to envision a different order of things, a different kind of society.¹²

Statistics convincingly prove that globalisation is antithetical to social justice both in terms of distribution of wealth and in terms of exploitation of labour. Today, TNCs and MNCs control one third of the world's wealth and of global production through world trade

¹¹ Felix Wilfred, "Church's Commitment to the Poor in the Age of Globalization," *Vidyajyoti* 62(1998):80.

¹² *Ibid.*

resulting the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Aijan Ahmed writes that for one hundred and eleven countries in World Bank's reporting system interest payment on foreign debt alone rose from 32.1 billion to 59.5 billion dollars between 1980 and 1989 while payments rose from 43.7 to 70.3 billion dollars during the same years.¹³ Ruddar Datt says that our share in the world trade increased from just 0.56 to 0.58 of total world exports during the last five years!¹⁴ Thus globalisation is a conspiracy of the rich against the poor.

Globalisation is the dominion of a uni-polar economic system, facilitating the free movement of capital and trade. In an unequal situation it works in favour of the rich. Capital itself is used more for profitable speculation than for useful production. It is one-way accumulation of wealth: from the poor to the rich. It relativises and threatens national economies and deprives people of a say in what happens to them.

In the avarious race to secure more luxuriant lifestyles for ourselves, around 50 million Indians have begun to affect the stability, security and livelihoods of over one billion others. This powerful minority is colonising the entire subcontinent and in the process they are shattering the ecological stability of one-fifth of humanity. Neither water nor food is any longer secure for the victims of this colonial misadventure. These have been snatched from rural India by urbanites.¹⁵

Exploitation of labour forces is another aspect of the unjust practice of globalisation. People are no longer respected as persons, but become cheap labour. More than the problem of rising unemployment, the poor are excluded and are not needed even as cheap labour. Moreover international debt and structural adjustment

¹³ Aijan Ahmed, *Seminar*, Jan.1996.

¹⁴ Ruddar Datt *The Hindu*, 8 April 1997

¹⁵ See Bittu Sahgal, *Colonisation Continuum: The never ending story*

programmes trap people into economic, political and social dependence. The transnational integration today weakened the economic links within countries. Improvements in transportation, communications and manufacturing technology, provide companies with a way to reduce costs by dividing production into part processes and relocating the less-skilled and more labour-intensive segments in low wage areas. As a result, well over 40 per cent of the employees of General Motors, Exxon, Honda, IBM and Toyota, to name some examples, are located outside the home countries of these corporations. Despite the rhetoric of free trade, Mr. Robert Reich, former US Secretary of Labour, estimates that as much as 40 per cent of all international trade consists of trade among subsidiaries of major corporations. These changes have four important consequences:

First, there has been a steep decline in industrial employment in all OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries and this has had an adverse impact on trade unions. Falling membership implies the increasing strength of right-wing factions.

Secondly, the ability of firms to easily shift their production facilities overseas underscores a fundamental difference between companies and governments. While governments are firmly rooted in territories, companies are footloose. As more and more companies shift a larger and larger share of their manufacturing overseas, governments are forced to offer greater tax incentives and financial handouts to the strongest players in the global economy at the expense of welfare payments to the poor.

Third, the weakening of government control over the economy undermined the effectiveness of trade unions and social democratic parties forged during the age of industrial capitalism. No agencies exist to preserve society's interests.

Finally, since the wider distribution of industrial production leads to a reduction of profit margins in the manufacturing sector,

companies begin to shift an ever-increasing portion of their capital for financial speculation. From a daily turnover of \$15 billion in 70s, for instance, the foreign exchange transactions were estimated at \$1.3 trillion a day in 1993. Put another way, whereas foreign exchange transactions were 10 times larger than the total world trade in 1983, by 1992 they were 60 times larger.

When financial speculation overshadows industrial production as a source of profits, income inequalities increase. Unlike manufacturing, speculation does not contribute to the creation of a large and prosperous middle class. The world's 358 billionaires today have more assets than the total incomes of 40 per cent of all people on the earth, some 2.1 billion people!¹⁶

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report on "Human Development 1992" says that the wealthiest 20% of humanity controls 81% of world trade, 95% of its loans and 81% of its domestic savings and its investment. In addition, the 20% of humanity living in the wealthy countries consumes 70% of the world's energy, 75% of its metals, 85% of its wood and 60% of its food supply. The statistics self-evidently shows that the current international 'order' promoted by globalisation only functions by maintaining a growing inequality. Globalisation is, indeed, an antithesis to distributive justice and anti poor in both content and style.

4. Globalisation a Challenge to Eco-Justice

The capitalist model on which the ideology of globalisation is founded demands perpetual development. Perpetual development in any finite system is a mathematical impossibility. In the industrial countries like G7 the development is in stagnation. Since it is in stagnation the developed world by itself cannot sustain it over at any

¹⁶ See Ravi Arvind Palat, "The Phenomenon of Globalisation," *Hindu* (Dec.14, 1998),12

length of time. Consequently they are spreading this model to the entire world through market economy.¹⁷

The impact of chasing the mirage of development is not restricted to the mere colonisation of resources. The consumer lifestyle also acts to destroy natural resources without anyone ever having a chance to use them. Such destruction points to the usurpation of the resources of those yet to be born. This is inter-generational colonisation, the ultimate adventure. This act of treason is performed 'in national interest' by political and corporate collaborators from among us who conspire with powerful multinational corporations and governments to generate and despatch millions of kilograms of toxic wastes to India.

Little wonder that India, enjoys the dubious distinction of harbouring the world's largest number of development refugees. These are people who have to leave their homes because the forests, grasslands, rivers, wetlands and coastal habitats were usurped "in the national interest" or became unusable because they were either poisoned or altered beyond description. The development dream has turned into a toxic nightmare.¹⁸

The most convincing proof of this trend is the falling fish catch off the western coast of India. Not so long ago, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat, for instance, were among the most productive fish-producing states in India. No longer. Where fishing boats could catch a boat-load of fish in a few hours, they must now stay at sea for days on end, often to no avail. Directly responsible are the industrial effluents, like chlorinated compounds of heavy metal released from the industrial centres such as Gulf of Kutch, Vapi, the Thane Creek. Sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide-laden grey-yellow clouds have become the new symbols of Third World countries. The toxic smog that envelops us produces a variety of illness ranging

¹⁷ George Cherian, ed., *An Alternative Vision* (Bangalore: Ecumenical Christian Centre, 1995), viii

¹⁸ See Bittu Sahgal, "Colonisation Continuum: The Never Ending Story."

from emphysema to chronic bronchitis. The very young and the elderly suffer the worst. The toxic waste import into India and the amount we generate within country is assuming "chemical warfare" proportions. The victims are the poor, the very young, the infirm and the elderly.

What exactly is being done to coastal and forest communities in the name of globalisation? We have converted their habitats to mines, dams and urban complexes. Our thermal plants, copper smelters, chemical complexes, refineries, prawn farms, five star hotels and national highways have combined to degrade the quality of resources and life of those who were not invited to our urban celebrations. Thus pushed, fisher-folk are fast moving to urban slums where they join millions of rootless souls. Like a cancer, ecological degradation and the resultant injustice done to the poor thus sets India against India.¹⁹

Our land was once blessed by some of the most extravagant gifts by nature: dense forests, water-stocked Himalayan ranges, a productive coastline, fish-rich estuaries, grassy pastures, rich soil, a bountiful river-system, abundant rain and a warm climate. We devalued these resources and converted them to cash on the advice by the World Bank. Today our forests are virtually gone. Our coastline is fast becoming a toxic soup. Our aquifers have been so poisoned with industrial and agricultural effluents beyond remedy for years. The air in our cities is unbreathable and tap water contains fatal matter. Breast milk in parts of Punjab is so contaminated by DDT that it is dangerous to infants! Nuclear plants such as Tarapur, just outside Mumbai, spew radiation in doses which kill thousand slowly and silently. Can we call this development?

Moreover, the proponents of globalisation in the name of 'development' are quite insensitive while forcefully displacing the adivasis from their ancestral lands for mega projects. The direct result of this has been the annihilation of over 95 per cent of the

¹⁹ *Ibid*

adivasi cultures of India and the displacement of tribals and adivasis from their ancestral lands which have been rich with resources for their livelihood. This displaced lot migrated to our cities and end up in city slums of inhuman conditions.

Now it is high time for the present economists of globalisation to contemplate Gandhi's advice, to examine whether what is done will first benefit the citizen on the lowest rung. Unfortunately, the powerful minority has taken advantage of the pressure put by the World Bank and the IMF to commercialise the Indian nation. Community wells, rivers, coastlines, forests, grazing lands and even people's homes have become little more than raw materials for blind personal ambitions. Legitimised by the guidelines laid down by a new economic policy businessmen have taken to profiting from the construction of nuclear reactors, highways, airports, prawn farms, chemical factories and storages, refineries, thermal plants, five star hotels, deep sea ports and other urban infrastructures. These so-called development projects are carved out from the survival infrastructures of ecosystem people - fisher-folk, forest dwellers, marginal farmers, pastoralists and the rural poor.

At this juncture it should be mentioned that the contributory cause of violence and terrorism in our society has been the erosion of the life-support system of poor communities - clean water, fertile soil, forest supplies, such as fuel, fibre, fodder and food available from village ponds, rivers, pastures, forest fruit-trees and marginal fields. Marine pollution and coastal land degradation have combined to cause fish catches to plummet. Millions of self-sufficient communities now migrate to urban India. Often the economist of globalisation do not recognise these destabilising factors of Indian society in their acquisitive quest for 'development' and fail to see the expenditure from the state exchequer to contain the social upheavals and crimes.

The purpose of development is not growth, but stasis. No organism or system can keep growing continually. An ever

continuous growth is called cancer. Globalisation with its agenda of continuous growth by plundering the eco-sources for immediate gains of neo-colonial get-rich quick brigade of market economy is anti-poor and against social justice in the eyes of the people on the lowest rung of the society.²⁰

5. Globalisation as Cultural Homogenisation (cultural aggression)

Globalisation as an a-territorial colonialism is more devastating and harmful than the territorial colonialism of the olden times from a cultural point of view. During the past colonial period cultural interactions between the conqueror and the conquered led to a cultural synthesis; to a great extent cultural pluralism and diversity are respected and colonial intentions were more of commercial gain than cultural aggression. But globalisation aims at homogenisation which is not less than imposition of Western culture in toto on developing countries through the logic of market forces and consumerist values.

The consumerist value of market economy is "to live more, buy more". Consumerism is the desire to get things which you cannot afford to. That is to say it is built on artificially generated needs or on unwanted and multiplied needs through media. Consumerist philosophy leads to increasing greed, selfishness, corruption and indiscipline in life on individual and corporate level. It will eventually cause individualism and an acquisitive mentality. Rising individualism goes hand in hand with lack of social responsibility and solidarity. Where true brotherhood and sisterhood disappear God is no longer the provident parent. A practical atheistic and materialistic attitude sets up mammon as an idol in the place of God. People are subordinated to material forces. Violence and corruption become rampant everywhere and at all levels. In a consumer and technological culture the people become expendable.

²⁰ Bittu Sahgal , "Colonisation Continuum: The Never Ending Story," *Sanctury Magazine* 602

Consumerism and market forces which target more on profit than people, vigorously engage in commodifying every corner of the globe and units of social life. People are pressurised by the market forces to embrace a new commodified and consumerist culture. Commodifying life through consumerist values involves cultural homogenisation. No doubt, globalisation is leading to significant changes in cultural practices, expressions and activities resulting in cultural consumerism adversely affecting life-styles, livelihood patterns including even food habits and thus altering the very content of indigenous culture. In this sense globalisation is a cultural aggression of imposing a mono-culture through market and media. "The powerful new forces are attempting to bind the people of the world tightly together. MNCs are driving the global economy into a single unit and new signals from multinational communication network are creating a recognisable international culture."²¹ Indeed, the worst impact of this imposition of mono-culture is the disruption of cultural diversity; it destroys local culture and local creativity. Now Coco-Cola, Mac Donalds, KFC or Pizza Hut have become the cultural icons in the place of traditional cultural symbols! It means that "globalisation achieves much more than cultural imperialism; it foregrounds culture as an instrument of imperialism. In other words, culture acts both as a sword and a mask."²²

Therefore, the homogenisation process implied in globalisation calls for reduction of cultural diversity not cultural integration. Globalisation is a radical challenge to cultural pluralism, a veritable and precious heritage of India. India has had many political invasions which have always led to cultural and religious synthesis. But the invasion of globalisation is of a different genre; it does not call for integration but imposition of Western culture through commercial compulsions. The displacement of traditional cultures by

²¹ Desmond A D'Abreo, "Prolonging Colonization Re-thinking Development," *Voices for Changes* 1(1997):5

²² K.M.Panikkar, "Globalization and Culture," *Voices from the Third World* 20(Dec. 1997):53

a mono-culture is a murder of the cultural identities and uniqueness of developing countries of Asia and Africa. Moreover, homogenisation of culture will make people, especially the younger generation estranged from their cultural archetypes and pedigree; it will create a cultural and even ethical vacuum in their life values and visions. Therefore, the resultant of homogenisation is displacement of traditional root-paradigms and belief systems of the indigenous people of the developing world. This is nothing but taking away the right of people to live in their culture and is a silent but subtle invasion on or colonisation of human freedom and dignity.

More devastating is that in the process of globalisation even the future is programmed and colonised because it is already an occupied territory in the purview of the logic of market intentions. Today forecasting simply ends up by projecting the preferred past and the privileged present on to a linear future. This is being done through the western technologies and media; the advertisement on television, newspapers, magazines for new consumer goods like cars, computers, mobile phones, digital and satellite gadgets give the message on "how new technologies will transform not just our social and cultural environments but the very idea of what it is to be human. . . . The sub-text is that the future technologies are the resource of the West which will enable the non-West to have a future; the future will have a clone of the western future. If that seems empowering and inclusive, it is only an illusory surface seduction that obfuscates how the future is made."²³ Thus there is an in-built momentum in the process of homogenisation (globalisation) towards a determined, one dimensional, linear western trajectory for the future of the whole of mankind challenging the age-old pluralistic fabric of developing countries in Asia and Africa.²⁴

²³ Ziauddin Sardar, "The Problem [of Futures]," *Seminar* 460(Dec, 1997):12.

²⁴ See Antony Kalliath, "Editotial," *Journal of Dharma* 23(1998):4-5.

Part II

Approaches and Responses to the Threat of Globalisation

At the advent of a globalised economy which is controlled by MNCs, TNCs and regulated by international financial institutions like IMF, WB, GATT individual nations, especially developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are finding themselves being dictated to by international market forces while deliberating on their national agenda and economic priorities of their people. In this era of globalisation developing countries are forced to plan and decide their destiny within the ambit of New World Order which is concerned with only commercial and market gains devoid of the social justice, and cultural sensibilities and economic priorities of the people. What we find here in this epoch of globalisation is the collapse of the three societal models which shaped the life and struggles of the postwar period (1945-1980): i. the welfare state of the developed capitalist West; ii, Sovietism; iii. the projects of national liberation/modernisation of the Third World Countries. All these models are envisioned primarily in terms of social justice and welfare responsibilities towards vulnerable sections of the society. globalisation is proposing or imposing a new model which is unjustly favourable to the Western capitalistic interests.

The analysis in the first part of the paper emphatically drives home the idea that the development we have experienced over the past twenty years of globalised economy is not acceptable because the economy must be made to serve the people not the other way round. The growing social distortions like reappearance of massive and permanent unemployment within global trade, erosion of welfare nations, a new phenomenon of exclusion/marginalisation of people a permanent feature of the landscape world wide cannot be accepted as the price we have to pay for a period of transition on the way to a new dynamic economy for the coming generations. Again, the prophets of globalisation advocate that "there is no alternative" and that people of the world must "adjust" to the so-called rationality and

efficiency requirements of the ("market") economy. But these arguments are understood as mere ploys and without substance in the experience of the marginalised of the developing countries.

The experience of many developing countries of Asia and Africa show that both catching-up and free-market policies increased marginalisation of weaker sections of the society. Now there is considered opinion both within and outside the third world that "catching-up development is impossible" not only because of the limits and inequitable consumption of resource base, but above all, because this growth model is based on a colonial world order in which the gap between the two poles is increasing, especially as far as economic development is concerned."²⁵ No doubt, neo-liberal market policies will only increase this gap and neo-liberal globalism with its disregard to the existing structural unevenness of world polity and economy and with its criminal want of social responsibility to the sections on the lowest rung is only a justificatory ideology of a 'neo-colonial world order'.

Naturally the march of globalisation in developing countries is met with resistance of various kinds. The call of resistance to globalisation in the third world is in terms of the argument that capital ("market") must be forced to adjust to the requirements of the people's social progress and should be responsive to the social justice. The following approaches and action-plans seem to be viable ways of addressing the anti-poor neo-liberal policies implied in globalisation.

1. Subaltern Movements

Traditionally political and social struggles take place within the framework of political states whose legitimacy is never questioned, though a government may be challenged, not the state itself. Political parties, trade unions, media form the basic structure in which

²⁵ Maria Mies, "The Myth of Catching-up Development" in Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1993). 60

political movements, social struggles and ideological currents find expression. But now all of these institutions have lost their credibility and legitimacy to an extent, or people don't believe in them because they are subtly handled by the power centres of globalisation. Today, in their place a variety of "movements" have taken centre stage, focusing on the demands of environmentalists or women or the struggle for democracy or social justice, or asserting community identities (ethnic or religious). These various movements outside the main-stream conventional struggles are collectively known as Subaltern Movements. The status of these movements, their patterns of organisation, their method of expression vary from one country to the next. These movements are a radical critique of the globalised neo-liberal management. These movements are or can be part of a conscious and organised refusal of the societal projects of MNCs and TNCs.

i. *Farmers' Resistance movements:* Under the New Economic Policy, TNCs and MNCs are given freedom to invest, produce and trade agricultural commodities without restriction and regulation. This 'free-market' approach adopted in India envisages a free export-import dynamics so that domestic prices of agricultural products can be brought at par with global prices for the advantage of the Indian farmers. No government regulations and interventions, no price distortions. The prices will be decided by the logic of demand and supply alone. But in reality the prices are determined by the few powerful trans-national trading companies through their exploitative marketing techniques and networks and resources to their advantage. Here Indian farmers have no say in the market, and the international market logic works against their interests. Thus it exposes the baselessness of the globalisation argument for price equilibrium in agriculture.

Besides, the growth of agri-business corporate ventures, the displacement of food crops with cash crops, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss incurred by monoculture agro-industrial crop patterns, the threat posed on food security,

repercussions on land rights and farmers' rights on procuring and reusing seeds etc. are the grave concerns of Indian farmers in the globalisation scenario. As Utsa Patnaik says globalisation creates a "sharp dualism between a minority of export oriented capitalist farmers and companies out of quick profit and a mass cultivators whose returns from the domestically consumable crops falls as a direct result of the relative price shifts inherent in the new policies. ... The livelihood of rural labourers is under threat and irreversible environmental problems are in the making."²⁶

The farmers' resistance movement to neo-liberal global policies are in the direction of ecological sustainability and social justice. This approach involves: i. freeing agriculture from high external inputs like chemical fertilisers and pesticides, ii. freeing farmers from capital-intensive farming methods; iii. removing landlessness of the peasants; iv. ensuring food as human right; v. ensuring equitable water rights; vi. reinigorating local markets etc.²⁷

A major farmers' organisation at the forefront of anti-globalisation struggle is the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS). It began in a big way on 2 October 1992, Gandhi's birth anniversary with 'seed Satyagraha' in Bangalore. The farmers' movement was able to conscientise farmers about the dangers of neo-liberal policies and succeeded in resisting TNC operations in seeds and related fields and in blocking the amendment of the Indian Patent Act of 1970 in terms of GATT/WTO specifications.²⁸ This struggle is a continuous one and others are catching the imagination and courage from the success of KRRS.

ii. **Fisher-folk Movement:** The globalisation policy of the Government of India opened up the marine waters of the Indian

²⁶ Utsa Patnaik, "Export-Oriented Agriculture and Food Security in Developing Countries and India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30(1995):257ff.

²⁷ See Vandan Shiva, "globalisation of Agriculture and the Growth of Food Insecurity," *Bija-the Seed* (Nos.17-18, 1996):25-26

²⁸ See Patnaik, 2449

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to joint ventures of Indian and foreign companies. These joint ventures are totally export oriented for increasing India's foreign exchange earnings. This resulted an increase from \$26.1 million during 1980-1990 to \$147.8 million during the NEP years, 1990-95.²⁹

But the extensive exploitation of marine resources by foreign vessels devastated marine eco-system. The traditional artisan fishing folk who depended on marine resources for their livelihood has been concerned with the ecological consequences of mechanised fishing. Since 1970 they were organising movements under the banner of National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF) to preserve marine ecology for utilising it in a sustainable manner for the common good. Later NEP was able to forge together various traditionally conflicting sectors into an umbrella forum: the National Fisheries Action Committee Against Joint Ventures (NFACAJV). Farmers' uprising was for banning fish trawling during the monsoon months which are the breeding season for marine fish. Various provincial governments responding to the fishworkers' call banned monsoon trawling. The consistent Fishworkers' resistance movement yielded results. The government of India appointed the Murari Committee which recommended cancellation of permits to foreign vessels under joint venture, denial of extension of existing licences and eventually Government accepted the committee's report.³⁰

Fisher-Folk resistance has been in a big way against export-oriented intensive shrimp farming in the coastal belt. Shrimp aquaculture found to be highly environmentally destructive due to high rate of water usage, conversion of fertile agricultural lands into aquaculture farms, the introduction of chemical inputs in soil and water. The various Grama Swaraj movements succeeded in their struggle and the Supreme Court of India directed to close down

²⁹ Ashish Kothari, "Environment and New Economic Policy," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30(1995):926.

³⁰ See for further details Fishfolk's Move to Save Marine Resources," *Passline* v.2, nos.19-20(1997).

commercial shrimp farms throughout the Indian coast.³¹ Later movements against export-oriented aquaculture also have formed a national network called Peoples' Alliance against the Shrimp Industry (PAASI).

Moreover, globalisation has made emphatic inroads in Indian infrastructural sectors like power: Enron project in Maharashtra and the Cogentrix project in Karnataka.³² These mega projects turned out to be centres of resistance and helped to conscientise people on neo-colonial implications of globalisation.

iii. *Resistance through Labour Movements*: In India, the trade union movement and new social movements can be seen as resistance movements against globalisation. The farmers' and fishworkers' struggle though seen as social movements have a substantial trade union content.

Organised workers' movements belonging to different political streams played a crucial role, even though not up to the potential, in offering resistance to neo-liberal industrial policies. The fear of job losses and the de-ideologisation of the working class in the scenario of neo-liberal values have weakened their resistance to an extent. Their struggles are centred around public sector undertakings facing disinvestment and insurance and banking sectors.

The globalisation process has been successful in disrupting labour potential through propagating new tendencies in the labour sphere: "degradation of labour, feminization of labour, housewifization of labour, informalization of labour, casualization of labour and peripheralization of labour."³³ In India it seems that

³¹ See M. Naganathan, K. Jothi Sivagnanam and C. Rajendran, "Blue Revolution in a Green Belt," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30(1995):607-608 and Mukul, "Aquaculture Boom: Who Pays?," *Economic and Political Weekly* 29(1994):3075-78.

³² See Amulya K. N. Reddy and Antonette D'sa, "Enron and Other Similar Deals vs New Energy Paradigm," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30(1995)1441-18

³³ See Dave Broad, "Globalization versus Labor," *Monthly Review* 47(1995): 20-31

unorganised labour, peasants and the agrarian work-force show increased class consciousness. Now labour force has to align with other NSMs to plumb its full potential in its resistance against the powerful neo-liberalisation process.

iv. *Resistance through New Social Movements*: Neo-liberalism has failed significantly in the third world since development projects envisaged in the grandiose vision more or less marginalised communities of people from resources and power. The New Social Movements³⁴ confront this reality basically at micro levels. Initially NSMs gave attention on micro-politics of everyday life where individual needs and the pressures of political innovation mesh together. From such an ambivalent position they have caught the imagination of many as "the major arena of struggle against globalization and thus they have been transformed as a political factor in the lives of people, especially in the third world countries."³⁵

Third world NSMs emerged in the context of 'debacle of development' or 'maldevelopment' - that is to say, development based on neo-liberal policies resulted in the marginalisation of the majority. In the process of globalisation, traditional politics became redundant, and established political organisations are disintegrated and lost their credibility when the activities of the state are relegated to the background in preference to the market. When conventional ideologies and institutions failed to effectively respond to widening inequalities and to gender, ecological and social justice on the onslaught of globalisation NSMs moved from non-party micro-politics to macro-politics of state, markets and capitalism while

³⁴ To name some of NSMs: Narmada Bachao Andolan, Jharkhand Movement in Chotanagpur (anti-land alienation agitation), The National Network of Peoples' Movement, The National Committee for Protection of Natural Resources, Jana Vikas Andolan.

³⁵ See Muto Ichiyo, "Alliance of Hope and Challenges of Global Democracy," *Lokayan Bulletin* 11((1994):41; Alberto Meluci, "Liberation or Meaning? Social Movements, Culture and Democracy," *Development and Change* 23(1992):75; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Imperialism and the US Left," *Frontier* 28(1996):5.

basically rooted in local milieu. By NSMs we do not mean Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) of a local kind but new movements of mass participation like the fishworkers' and farmers' movements. Now these NSMs are increasingly becoming aware of the imperative of local-global linkages and alliances of struggles to confront the powerful globalisational agencies like IMF and WB and TNCs. New visions and paradigms to challenge the neo-liberal globalisation process will evolve in this networking of various social movements of those committed to the transformation and liberation; these visions cannot be a-priori notions theoretising the struggles of social justice and liberation but the very praxis itself is the principle and foundation of the struggles, and new visions and paradigms of a transformed planet evolve in the process and will be crystallised a-posteriori. This is the logic and dynamic of resistance movements and it demands faith in human goodness and collective wisdom, courage and hope in the future of humanity.

2. The Imperative of Reassertion of the State's Role in the Scenario of Neo-liberal Globalism

As already noted neo-liberalism stresses on the minimum role for the state in commerce and economy. For neo-liberals, the state is 'parasite' and 'non-productive' and makes 'little or no positive contribution to society's material well being'.³⁶ In the classical economic theory government is an important instrument in facilitating the operation of the market. But neo-liberalists' 'minimum government' doctrine entails the weakening of the state on the one hand and the ascendancy of TNCs and MNCs on the other hand. In the globalised economics the state seems less and less to represent the interests of the nation to world affairs but the interests of global finance to the nation. At the same time neo-liberalists seek a strong state internally so as to enable smooth capital flows and

³⁶ Arthur A Goldsmith, "The State, the Market and Economic Development: A Second Look at Adam Smith in Theory and Practice," *Development and Change* 26(1995):648.

market operations by regulating, overcoming or suppressing peoples' resistance - the role of state is reduced to mere policing.

However, social activists of third world countries strongly feel that the state is "the only collective institution through which redistributive justice, planned development and a comprehensive politics of broad, basic and inalienable entitlements is possible."³⁷ In the present neo-liberal world of unequal development and distribution of wealth and of exploitation of resources of the weaker by the TNCs and MNCs the state is the only defence and bulwark of the marginalised and the subordinated. In today's world the state is more indispensable than ever if the social and environmental inequities of the market economy are to be countered.³⁸ In their macro-politics of forging a national political alliance of movements, various resistance movements make a concerted attempt to bring back the state as a centre of contestation of power in their fight against globalisation through legislations and amendments. Thus Third World resistance movements like farmers and fishworkers challenge the neo-liberal global vision of governance through non-state actors like MNCs and TNCs.

A.K. Ramakrishnan argues that it is by combining grassroots activism with national and global issues and by attempting to forge global alliances in their opposition to neo-liberal globalism that resistance movements try to go beyond the boundaries of conventional politics and movements. In this attempt what is envisaged is a global order which allows meaningful local-global linkages with the active participation of state in a communitarian direction. Here the ordering of global politics is from bottom-up, not of neo-liberal globalist top-down approach.³⁹

³⁷ Arun Ghosh, "Capitalism, Nation State and Development in a Globalised World," *Economic and Political Weekly* 32(1997):685.

³⁸ Eric Bobshawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1995),577.

³⁹ A.K.Ramadrishnan, "Neo-liberalism, globalisation and Resistance: the Case of India," 13.

Conclusion

The above analysis undoubtedly points to the fact that globalisation in its substance and goals and even in methodology is a colonisation continuum in a more subtle, a-territorial format. To confront the challenge of neo-liberal ideology what is first and foremost needed is an attitudinal change which should help us to recognise that purpose of development is not growth, but stasis, equilibrium, balance of forces. No organism or system can keep on growing continually. This continuous growth phenomenon, in medical terminology, is called cancer! globalisation causes this cancerous growth by imposing a mono-economy in the favour of few capitalists. Secondly development should not be conceived purely in terms of money and profit and commerce as envisioned in neo-liberal globalism; it should embody human life with its social, cultural and spiritual dimensions; no section of society is excluded including the coming generations in the economic vision of development. In short people should be at the centre of development process, not market. Then democracy is the most reliable institutional means to achieve this noble goal.

The need of the hour is democratisation of all areas of life, including economy resulting greater decentralisation in all spheres of life. Economy is not a mere academics or policies of IMF and WB imposed on the poor in terms of market gains transnationally. Rather it is a matter of daily food and labour and it verily belongs to the life process. Democratisation of the economy means participation of the poor in the decision and policy making process. No doubt such democratisation of all areas of life ultimately leads to the empowerment of the poor, which will only help the marginalised of the developing world to confront the challenges of globalisation. Such a democratisation process in the all powerful presence of MNCs and TNCs is possible through local actions of resistance; networking and alliance of such local resistance movements nationally and internationally have to be a strategic methodology to sustain the democratisation process from grass root level to counter

the neo-liberal values unleashed by globalisation. What is needed is to act locally and think globally with a sense of commitment to social justice. For the sustained inspiration for such a dedicated action and commitment, we have to see the 'gains' or 'development' of globalisation primarily through the perspective of the poor and the vulnerable sections of the society and by owning the poor. Let me conclude this article with the citation of the prayer of Tagore in *Gitanjali* (no.36): "This is my prayer to thee, my Lord - strike at the root of penury in my heart ...Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees before insolent might."

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