

**GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATION: A CHALLENGE  
AND AN OPPORTUNITY**

**Prof. Pratibha J Mishra**

Professor & Head,  
Department of Social Work,  
Guru Ghasidas University,  
Bilaspur (C.G)

**ABSTRACT**

Author will focus her writing on the main theme of topic, that is, Globalization and Its Impact on Education. The author will center around the following sub-themes:

1. The Concept and Ramifications of Globalizations
2. Globalization and Education
3. Impact of Globalization:
  - a) Reforms Within the Educational System,
  - b) The Fall out of Globalization

India embarked upon the process of deregulation and liberalization of its economy from 1980s. The process received a big boost from early nineties, when significant changes were introduced by abolishing licensing for domestic manufacturing for all but a few industries and private sector was allowed to enter areas hitherto reserved for the public sector. Further, import tariffs were drastically reduced (Parikh et. al., 2002). Considered in international terms, globalization as the on-going process of economic, technological, social and political integration of the World is reported to have started after the Second World War. Globalization is impacting the institutional framework in both developing and industrial countries. It is changing the way in which governments perceive their role in the society. It has also far reaching implications for socio economic development and educational systems of countries all over the World.

**INTRODUCTION**

India embarked upon the process of deregulation and liberalization of its economy from 1980s. The process received a big boost from early nineties, when significant changes were introduced by abolishing licensing for domestic manufacturing for all but a few industries and private sector was allowed to enter areas hitherto reserved for the public sector. Further, import tariffs were drastically reduced (Parikh et. al., 2002). Considered in international terms, globalization as the on-going process of economic, technological, social and political integration of the World is reported to have started after the Second World War. Globalization is impacting the institutional framework in both developing and industrial countries. It is changing the way in which governments perceive their role in the society. It has also far reaching implications for socio economic development and educational systems of countries all over the World.

### **The Concept and Ramifications of Globalization**

Globalization is a newly emerging phenomenon. It has been defined as “a set of processes by which the world is rapidly being integrated into one economic space via increased international trade, the internationalization of production and financial markets; the internationalization of a commodity culture promoted by an increasingly networked global telecommunication system” (Graham, 1996).

Globalization transcends socio-economic and political barriers that the countries of the world are prone to build around themselves. It is not only a process “integrating just economy, but culture, technology and governance. It is giving rise to new markets, foreign exchange and capital markets linked globally, new tools, internet links, cellular phones, media network, new actors; the World Trade Organization with authority over national governments, the multi-national cooperation with more economic power than many states, new rules, multi-national agreements and intellectual property, multi-lateral agreements on trade” (Human Development Report, 1999).

Globalization is expected to have a positive influence on the volume, quality and spread of knowledge through increased interaction among the various states. ‘In a globalized world, as technology becomes its main motor, knowledge assumes a powerful role in production, making its possession essential for nations, if they are successfully to pursue economic growth and competitiveness (Stromquist, 2000). Education, being the most potent instrument of creation, assimilation and transmission of knowledge, assumes a central role in the process.

In a market oriented competitive world, unleashed by the forces of globalization, education has to assume a somewhat different role. It cannot afford to be conventional, rigid and impervious to change. It has to keep abreast of the latest developments in various fields and be capable of creating, absorbing and transacting neo-technology and information systems that are sweeping across the countries of the world. There has also to be a paradigm shift in the contents of education with substantial emphasis on the productivity aspect of the curriculum. It would also call for adequate emphasis on research and development (R & D).

It is, however, necessary to guard against being swept off our feet by the new ‘cult of technology’, and consequently, ‘the diminution of respect for spiritual and cultural values’ (Maughey, cited in Namer, 1999). An unfettered and ruthless pursuit of economic goals, without regard to considerations of moral and social values is bound to be disastrous for the people, particularly in developing countries.

### **Not An Unmixed Blessing**

In spite of the cataclysmic changes brought about in most countries, it would be wrong to consider globalization as a panacea for all economic and social ills. As stated by the Planning Commission: “the accelerated process of liberalization and globalization in the world has increased the opportunities for growth and development, but it has also added new complexities and risks in the management of global interdependence” (Tenth Five Year Plan, Vol. I, p. 97). Some of the complexities identified at the international level are:

- i. Globalization is forging greater interdependence, yet the World seems more fragmented – between the rich and the poor, between the powerful and the powerless.
- ii. Economically, politically and technologically, the world has never seemed more free – or more unjust.

- iii. If the present global progress continues at such a snails' pace, it will take more than 130 years to rid the World of hunger (The Human Development Report, UNDP, 2002).
- iv. Globalization is a "tricky term for some, it connotes free flow of ideas, capital, people and goods around the world. For others, it implies the hegemony of the capitalist system, the domination of rich nations and corporations and the loss of national identity" (Madeline Green et. al. 2002).

### **The Humane Face of Globalization**

It would thus appear that globalization is not an unmixed blessing. It may promote "growth through increased technology and knowledge transfers in developing countries but it could also be sometime a source of instability...." (The Human Development Report in South Asia, UNDP, 1999). It should, therefore, not be construed purely as a faceless economic mechanism but be based on:

- a) Ethics: ensuring less violation of human rights;
- b) Equity: resulting in reducing disparities within and between nations;
- c) Inclusion: less marginalization of people and countries;
- d) Human security: less instability of societies and less vulnerability of people;
- e) Sustainability: less destruction of environment; and
- f) Development: less poverty and deprivation.

### **Globalization and Education**

Education, as a service industry, is part of globalization process under the umbrella of General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). There is, however, distinct possibility that this might "force countries with quite different academic needs and resources to conform to structures inevitably designed to service the interest of the most powerful academic systems and corporate educational providers... breeding inequality and dependence" (Altbach, 2002). Further, "Globalization... can lead to unregulated and poor quality higher education, with the world wide marketing of fraudulent degrees or other so-called higher education credentials..." (World Bank's Task Force, 2000). India, is likely to turn into "an increasingly attractive market for foreign universities and hence other nations are going to use GATS' provisions to their advantage" (Arun Nigvekar, 2002). While these are obvious problems, globalization can also have advantages, particularly for India, which has a large educational system and infrastructure and diverse human capabilities.

Given the array of theoretical and epistemological perspective presented in the general social science literature on 'globalization', it is difficult to assess not only the nature and dimensions of globalization, but also what it might mean to the field of education. Very few educational researchers or theorists have attempted to make connections between the economic, political and cultural dimensions of globalization and the policies and practices of education.

It appears as though the phenomenon of globalization will mean many different things for education. Most certainly, in the near future, "it will mean a more competitive and deregulated educational system modelled after free market but with more pressure on it to assure that the next generation of workers are prepared for some amorphous 'job market of 21st century'. It will also mean... "that educational system will increasingly provide the sites of struggle over the meaning

and power of national identity and a national culture. And finally, schools will no doubt also be the sites of various counter-hegemonic movements and pedagogies". (Wells, et. al., 1998)

### **Globalization as a Reality**

We have discussed the main features of globalization and its likely impact on socio-economic development. At this stage, it must be emphasized that globalization, though a recent phenomenon, is a reality, which cannot be wished away. It is, however, difficult to measure its long-term effect on the course of socio-economic development in various countries. In fact, because of the large disparities in the economic position of the countries inhabiting the globe, it would be imprudent to arrive at any standardized formula of assessing the effects. Each country is an entity in itself and requires to be studied differently. It is however necessary to stress that a thoughtless and unimaginative entry into the globalised market would not be in the best interests of the countries, particularly those, which are striving to grapple with the problems of slow economic and social development.

### **Impact of Globalization**

Globalization has a wide ranging potential to influence all sectors of development. Besides its impact on the pace and pattern of economic development, it also casts its shadow on the system of education. It would, therefore, be pertinent to analyze its impact on the process and progress of education. The impact of globalization on education and the manner in which the system should respond to the needs of globalization would require to be studied basically under two broad heads:

1. The needed reforms within the educational system like content, equity and excellence etc. and
2. The fall out of globalization, which will entail determining strategies relating to the impending internationalization of education; finance related issues and privatization of secondary and higher education.

### **Needed Reforms Within the Educational System**

- a) Content of Education
- b) Curriculum Upgradation

The modern advances in information technology have revolutionised, among others, the content of knowledge and the processes of educational transaction. The ever-growing use of electronic media has brought education to the doorsteps of the common man. Information processing technologies provide an efficient framework for the storage, management, analysis and application of information. In the process, popular culture and education alike have adopted what may be called 'computational paradigm', the use of computer metaphors, to understand how human beings cognize themselves and the World.

The operative part of the introduction of the information technology is the need for a continuous up-gradation of the curriculum in order to introduce the latest developments relating

to various disciplines in the curriculum. Alongside, pruning of the existing curriculum would be a necessary condition in order to remove the obsolete and irrelevant details.

It also needs to be stressed that education should help to engender a new “humanism that contains an essential ethical component and sets considerable store by knowledge of, and respect for, the culture and spiritual values of different civilizations, as a much needed counter weight to a globalization that would otherwise be seen only in economical or technological terms. The sense of shared values as a common destiny is in fact the basis on which any scheme of international cooperation must be founded” (Delors Commission, 1996).

The fast developing stock of knowledge and the need for its continuous updating has also initiated an era of life long learning. No longer is education confined to a particular period of life. It is a continuum with no artificial time barriers restricting the process.

### **(b) Productivity Orientation**

The basic objective of globalization is to enhance productivity and to make the educational system an instrument of preparing students, who can compete in the World markets as productive members of the society. This would necessitate making skill training as an integral part of the curriculum besides making attitudinal changes so that the students do not consider it infra-dig to work with hands.

Unfortunately our experience of introducing an element of skill training has not been adequately successful. The schemes of vocationalisation, both at the school and college stages, have been languishing for want of enthusiasm on the part of students (and teachers). It has also not received the required social recognition. It may be recalled that the scheme of vocational education at the secondary stage was launched in 1988 as a centrally sponsored programme. Against a target of diverting 10 per cent of students to vocational stream by 1995 and 25 per cent by 2000, only 11 per cent of students have been covered at the plus two stage. At the college stage also, scheme of vocationalisation has been in operation since 1994. Till date, it has hardly covered twenty thousand students out of a total university enrolment of more than eight million.

The reasons for the slow progress of these programmes are many, but the most significant is lack of acceptance – by the parents, teachers and students -- of introducing an element of skill training as a part of the general curriculum. Education is still considered as an academic discipline in which the intrusion of vocational training is considered unacceptable. Further, the craze for degrees is also an important retarding factor. There is also lack of parity of status between students and teachers of vocational and general streams leading to the former hesitating to join vocational courses.

### **(c) Value Education**

In order to ward off the evils of untrammelled competitiveness and use of unethical practices to go up in the socio economic ladder, it is necessary that education should lay stress on value education, which emphasizes cooperation rather than competition; sharing of experience rather than personal aggrandizement and learning to live together rather than living in mutually hostile camps.

**(d) Research**

Indian professionals, particularly in Information Technology, have successfully competed in the world markets especially in software development and data analysis. This, however, cannot continue for a long time to come especially because competition from the developing countries is likely to be very intense in times to come. This underscores the need for emphasizing Research and Development (R & D) particularly in the newly emerging areas in our university institutions. As suggested by Iyengar (2000): "Our human resource development in the future should be planned such that there are identified areas in which India could compete effectively, and be innovators rather than just followers. These could include areas such as biotechnology, new power sources, education etc. The Government should focus on these areas, and offer incentives to researchers for innovative research in these fields".

**Equity, Excellence Syndrome**

At this stage, I would like to draw your attention to the seemingly contradictory situation, inherent<sup>6</sup> in our race towards globalization. For want of better phrase, I have termed it as 'Equity-Excellence Syndrome'. It is explained thus:

An important component of globalization in relation of education is the need for producing higher quality manpower that can successfully face competition in the world markets. This would imply selecting the best possible human material and giving them education of the highest quality. This would naturally be relevant to secondary and higher education, because education at the primary level has been considered as the fundamental right of every child in the relevant age group. It would also be necessary to grant financial and other incentives to the meritorious students so that want of resources is not an impediment in their ascent towards the highest forms of education.

It can be argued that nurturing of excellence will be inequitable in that it may deny opportunities to a very large segment of student population, who are not so intellectually endowed, to get into institutions of higher education. It is also feared that the present day techniques of students' assessment are not very reliable tools for measuring the potentiality of students, particularly from rural areas and those belonging to the deprived sections of the society.

It is difficult to deny the force of these arguments. The remedy, however, lies not in denigrating the need for nurturing excellence but in creating opportunities for expanding the field of excellence, so as to enable more and more promising students to join institutions of higher learning. This would necessitate qualitative up gradation of the academic and physical infrastructure, reforming teacher education and improving the system of student assessment so that no student with potentiality for benefiting from education is denied that opportunity. It may also require special coaching facilities for the students belonging to the traditionally deprived sections of the society.

**2. The Fallout of Globalization**

**a) Internationalization of Education**

Implicit in the system of Globalization is the inevitability of internationalization of the educational system, particularly at the higher education stage. This is not peculiar to India but has become a worldwide phenomenon. The entry of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and

the inclusion of educational services under the general Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) has given a boost to the internationalization of higher education.

### **Merits of Internationalization**

The merits of internationalization of education are:

- i. Education will improve if it is internationalized and healthy competition takes place;
- ii. It will provide global opportunities and promote international good will; and It will encourage exchange of scholars. This can be done by involvement of reputed scholars in the respective countries in curriculum designing and transaction of knowledge.

Notwithstanding the merits of internationalization of education, it will be harmful for our country to allow an unregulated entry of foreign institutions in India. Quite a few of these institutions are of dubious quality – some of them not even been recognized in their own countries. In a Study “Partnership of Private Sector in Financing and Management of Higher Education” (2002).\* in consultation with academics, educational planners and representatives of the industry, the following guidelines were suggested about the entry of foreign institutions in India:

- While the foreign institutions may be allowed to set up their campuses in India, they should function under the control of the government or specialized bodies like the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) set up by the Government for the purpose;
- The universities which want to function in India should have been accredited in their own countries;
- The foreign institutions should be subjected to pre-entry academic audit and accreditation norms devised by the designated government agencies;
- They should sign Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the government or a body designated by it. The Memorandum should give details of the courses of studies, infrastructural facilities, both academic and non-academic and the amount of expected cost recoveries from Indian students and;
- The entry of foreign institutions should be allowed on the basis of reciprocity. The countries exporting education to India should also permit the opening of Indian university campuses in their countries. There should be provision for exchange of faculty among the various countries participating in the programme; and In the entire process of the entry of foreign institutions the paramourcy of national interests should be the crucial guiding factor.

### **b) Finance Related Issues**

In order to be a part of the global configuration, the requirements of funds for social services including education will increase manifold. For this purpose, it will be necessary to augment government funding for these sectors. Unfortunately, the reverse process has been set in motion. According to Panchamukhi (2002), the impact of reforms has not been quite favourable for Social Services including Education. Before Reforms period, social services constituted 39.4 per

---

\* The Study was conducted at the instance of the Planning Commission at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) under the direction of the present author.

cent of total government expenditure. The percentage declined to 36 during 1991-92 to 1996-97. In the case of education, the decline was from 21 per cent to less than 20 per cent during the same period.

### **Down Sizing Secondary and Higher Education**

Indian higher education has attracted special attention by the 'Reformists', particularly by the international organizations. Based on the 'Rate of Return' studies, the World Bank came to the conclusion that its lending strategy should emphasize primary education relegating higher education to a relatively minor place in its development agenda. The plea has been repeated by Carnoy (1999). According to him: "Higher education is a high cost level of schooling and basic education is relatively low cost. In addition, in many countries, public university education costs are heavily weighted toward non-teaching and non-research expenditures such as student subsidies and administrative costs". The shift of emphasis, it is argued, would enhance opportunities for larger number of primary students at the expense of subsidizing a relatively elite group of families that could bear the cost of university education".

That the Government of India succumbed to these specious arguments would be evident from the fact that in 1997, the Ministry of Finance circulated a note on 'Subsidies', in which, among other things, higher education was described as a 'non-merit' good, unworthy of government subventions.

A deeper consideration of this suggestion will bring out its utter shortsightedness. In the first instance, it is wrong to presume that at the higher education stage, costs are heavily weighted towards non-teaching and non-research expenditure. Moreover it is academically preposterous to segmentalise education, whose different stages are complementary rather than competitive. For example, if university education is starved of funds, it will be impossible to provide good and competent teachers for the school stage. As emphasized by Panoramukhi (2002); "At any point of time, weakening of higher education sector would weaken the forces of competitiveness and efficiency in the functioning of different sectors of economy..."

The implementation of this too simplistic suggestion will also impede the progress of basic research, which is the essential responsibility of the universities. Further, any scaling down of the financial inputs for higher education would result in the qualitative deterioration of the highly trained scientific and technical manpower, which is the mainstay of our economic and social development.

It is heartening to note that a recent Task Force of the World Bank (2000), while fully supporting the continuation of larger investment in primary and secondary education rebutted the traditional economic argument, which is based on "limited understanding of what higher education institutions contribute". The Task Force challenged the notion that public investment in higher education is socially inequitable. It said: 'Rate-of-Return Studies treat educated people as valuable only through their higher earnings and the greater tax revenues extracted by society. But educated people clearly have many other effects on society: educated people are well – positioned to be economic and social entrepreneurs, having far reaching impact on the economic

**An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal**

and social well being of their communities. Rates of return analysis entirely misses the impact of university based research on the economy – a far reaching social benefit that is at the heart of the argument for developing strong higher education system". (emphasis added)

It may be stressed that education is a continuum in which the various stages are complementary rather than competitive. Any attempt at compartmentalizing education in order to deny the requisite funding to a particular sector would be retrogressive and retard the progress of education.

**c) Privatization of Secondary and Higher Education**

As a corollary to the suggestions about reducing public investment in secondary and higher education, a plea has been made to hand over these sectors to private bodies. It has also been suggested that institutions beyond primary basic education should increasingly depend upon tuition fees, the philanthropy of the general public and the industrial and commercial organizations, which should be allowed to set up, manage and finance institutions of post elementary education.

In the preceding section, it has been argued that it would be counter-productive for the government to withdraw from secondary and higher education in view of their close relationship with the production of highly trained technical and professional manpower. Furthermore some of the disciplines, which have no apparent market value, will go by default resulting into a skewed development of the educational system. There is also strong apprehension that privatization would lead to commercialization of education. As pointed out by Altbach (2000), "The motivation for establishing (Private) institutions is always to make money. British and Australian institutions have been active internationally as a way of making up for budget cuts at home". The emergence of capitation fee charging and self-financing institutions in India, with predominately commercial motives, is an eloquent testimony to the abject surrender of education to commercial forces.

In view of the above considerations; while the participation of private bodies in investment and management of education should be encouraged, complete privatization of these sectors of education should be ruled out. Further, market needs should be kept in view while developing the curriculum. The element of productivity orientation should guide the formulation of curriculum framework. It is also necessary that while deciding about the fee structure and other student levies, the tendency towards commercialization of education should be guarded against.

**To Conclude**

I have attempted to traverse the entire spectrum of globalization with a focus on studying its impact on and implications for the educational system. Even at the cost of repetition, it may be stated that globalization is a recent phenomenon in the world's socio-economic system. Although it is too early to assess the impact of globalization on India's economy, it has so far not yielded any spectacular outcomes. It has accelerated the pace of development in some areas but has led to certain incongruities in others. It is, therefore, necessary that steps should be taken to reduce, if not remove, its baneful fall out.

Globalization, as an effective instrument of international exchange of goods and services, has to have a humane face, based on ethical considerations rather than on cut throat competition. It should play a positive role in reducing economic and social disparities within, and among, the nations. It should also be an effective tool for promoting sustainable development.

Globalization has a multi-dimensional impact on the system of education. It has underlined the need for reforms in the educational system with particular reference to the wider utilization of information technology; giving productivity dimension to the educational system and emphasis on research and development. It has also given rise to controversies relating to introducing changes in the inter-sectoral priorities in the allocation of resources leading to the misconceived policy of downsizing of secondary and higher education. It has also advocated privatization of higher education without realizing the dangerous possibility of making the system a commercial enterprise. Further, internationalization of education particularly higher education has been advocated without due regard to the needs and susceptibilities of the developing countries.

It is, therefore, necessary that each country should decide about the nature and extent of globalization that can be constructively introduced in their socio-economic and educational systems. While it is difficult to resist the temptation of falling in line with the international community, it is necessary that while doing so, the paramountcy of national interests should be kept in view. This is more so in the field of education which is intimately concerned with the development of human capital. Any thoughtless entry into the global educational market can end up in harming the vital interests of students for generations to come.

We shall conclude by quoting the prophetic statement of Mahatma Gandhi made long before globalization was ever thought of: "I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any".

#### SELECTED REFERENCES

- Albrecht Douglas and Adrian Ziderman (2000). Financing Universities in Developing Countries, The World Bank
- Amy Stuart Wells, et.al. (1998). Globalization and Educational Changes in Andy Hergreaves (ed.) International Hand Book of Educational Change, Vol.5, Kluwer Academic Publishers, London.
- Arora, Guljit, (2002). Globalization, Federalism and Decentralization, Implications for India: Bookwell.
- Arun Nigvekar (2001). GATS and Higher Education, University Grants Commission, (Mimeo)
- Azad, J.L. (1971). Report of the Study of the Patterns, Procedures and Policies of Financing of Higher Education in India, Planning Commission. (mimeo).
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1975). Financing of Higher Education in India, Sterling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1986). Government Support for Higher Education and Research, Concept.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1989). State Grants: Patterns, Procedures and Policies in Higher Education, The Institutional Context, published in Amrik Singh et.al. (ed.) Konark.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1993). Higher Education in India: The Deepening Financial Crisis, Radiant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2003). Financing of Secondary School Education, Aravalli Publications.

- Bikas C. Sanyal (1995). *Innovations in University Management*; UNESCO, IIEP, Paris.
- Carnoy, Martin, (2000). *Globalization and Educational Reforms in Globalization and Education*, ed. By Nelly P. Stromquist, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Five Year Plans: New Delhi, Planning Commission, Government of India. Mid-Term Reviews, Planning Commission.
- Hallak, Jacques: (1999). *Globalization, Human Rights and Education*, UNESCO, IIEP. Paris,
- Higher Education in Developing Countries (2000)*. Peril and Promise, Report of the Task Force; The World Bank.
- Human Development in South Asia (2000)*. Oxford.
- Human Development Reports, (1999, 2000, 2002 & 2003)* UNDP, Oxford.
- International Association of Universities (2001)*. *Issues in Higher Education*, the OECD, *Globalization and Educational Policy*, Pergamon.
- JN Kaul (1975). (ed): *Higher Education: Social, Change National Development*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.
- Learning: The Treasure Within (1996)*. International Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century, UNESCO.
- National Policy on Education; Govt. of India, Ministry of MHRD, 1986, 1992*
- Panchamukhi, P.R. (2002). *Social Sector Development and Economic Reforms. A Focus on Education Sector in Reform and Employment*, IAMR,
- Parikh Kirit S. (Ed.) 2002. *India Development Report; Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, (Oxford)*.
- Report of the Education Commission 1964-66, Ministry of Education, 1966.*
- Ryle John, ed. (2002). *Globalization, Universities and Issues of Sustainable Development; Edgar and Edgar Publishers Ltd.*
- Sharma, G.D. (2001). *Internationalization of Higher Education; Status and Policy Suggestions, NIEPA (mimeo)*.
- Sharma, G.D. (2001) *Trade in Education Service: An Indian Response, NIEPA, New Delhi, (mimeo)*.
- Stromquist, Nelly P. et.al. (ed.) (2000). *Globalization and Educational Reforms, op.cit.*
- UNESCO (2000). *Statistical Year Book, various years.*
- World Bank (2002). *Higher Education in Developing Countries, Peril and Promise, the Report of the Task Force on Education and Society, Washington.*
- World Bank Country Study (1999). *India, Reducing Poverty, Accelerating Development, Oxford.*
- paper-globalization and education feb-2004/