



Impact of Globalization on Caste System-An Observation

1. **Prof. Kunta Ailaiah**, Department of Sociology & Social Work, Kakatiya University, Warangal
(ailaiah.sociology@gmail.com)
2. **Ms. Kothuru Rajakumari**, Ph. D. Research Scholar in Sociology, Kakatiya University, Warangal
(kothururajakumari@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT:

Globalization has had a significant impact on the caste system in India, leading to a gradual weakening of its rigid structure by promoting increased awareness about human rights, facilitating social mobility and encouraging inter-caste marriages, although challenges remain in fully dismantling the system due to persisting social and economic inequalities. Globalization has been a buzz word in recent times mainly with regard to economic point of view, where as human history is in itself is a process leading to globalization. The contemporary process of internationalization dates back to the emergence of capitalism in Europe in the late middle Ages. When compared to the developed world, the history of Latin America and the Caribbean has been strongly influenced by this phenomenon to a greater extent ever since the late fifteenth century. If it is seen in its true sense, Spread of Buddhism to other parts of the world from India was the first attempt of globalization in Human history. With the consolidation of capitalist forces in America and Europe, their dominance in world economy lead to the emergence of present form of economic globalization. Socio-cultural diversities in under developed nations like Latin America & east Africa and ever consolidating structured caste discrimination in India, paved the way for developed economic forces to make inroads in these nations. Though their objective of globalization is to influence the economic liberalization, it intensely impacted socio-cultural and political structure of these nations. Some nations like China could harness the benefits of the globalization for their advantage. But Nations like India surrendered to developed nations for the benefit of few people, thus affecting the living conditions of bahun who are in majority and belonging to scheduled castes, Tribes, OBCs and Minority classes. This article is an attempt to bring out the pros and cons of Globalization and its deleterious effect on the lives of marginalized people in India.

Key words: Globalisation, bahun, economic conditions, Communities, Social Structure.

Introduction:

Globalization has led to the expansion of economic opportunities, education, and liberal thoughts, resulting in the weakening of the caste system. Acceptance of Inter caste marriage: Inter caste marriages are becoming more common and are being accepted gradually. History of economic Globalization is categorized in to three important stages- Pre Modern, Modern and Post Modern ages. Roots of the present form of globalization can be traced back to the emergence of capitalistic economic forces in 16th century. Historians opined more often than not, that Buddhism was spread across South East Asian countries, China, Japan and Egypt during and after the period of Samrat Ashoka, which could be called as the first Globalization of Ethical, Rational and social values. It was stated that, Even Jesus Christ got influenced with the principles of Buddha's teachings which lead him towards a selfless service to the people. Therefore, caste is linked to hierarchy, domination, discrimination, inequality and oppression. In India, the system of caste has been institutionalized and thus vivified in numerous forms and ways in the Indian society. In recent times, we see the system of caste is also getting globalized.

Review of Literature:

Japan emperor Yomei (CE 585 - CE 587) adopted Buddhism, and the Japanese began to travel to China in order to learn from the Buddhist teachers. Number of indigenous Buddhist schools developed in Japan. Yomei's son, Prince Shotoku (CE 574 - CE 622) propagated Buddhism in and around Japan. Buddhist king Relbachen (815-836) was the one who was the reason for 'dissemination of Buddhism to Tibet.

Today, some scholars believe that Jesus Christ might have been inspired by the Buddhist principles, as the Gospel of Thomas and many Nag Hammadi texts reflect this possible influence. In Jesus Christ's time Buddhism was already five hundred years old and had spread from India, east to southeast Asia, north to central Asia, and west to the Middle East.

Objectives of the Study:

- To know about history of caste structure in India
- To find out socio-cultural globalization
- To study about impact of globalization on caste system
- To explain about impact of globalization on Indian Bahaman

Methodology:

The present paper 'Impact of Globalization on Caste System-A Study' is collected based on secondary source of data. The secondary data is collected through books, articles published in assorted journals and websites.

History of Caste Structure in India:

The origin of the Indian caste system has many theories behind it. Some of them are religious, while others are biological. The Varna hierarchy is determined by the descending order of the different organs from which the Varnas were created. Historically, however, it is believed that the caste system began with the arrival of the Aryans in India around 1500 BC. Aryans laid out social and religious rules which stated that only they were allowed to become priests, warriors, and businessmen of the society. The Aryans possessed a particular principle of social ordering called Varna Vyavastha, which was based on the four hierarchical divisions of function in society. They were placed in order of decreasing importance: religious and educational functions, military and political functions, economic functions, and menial functions. The Aryans organized themselves in three groups. The first group, Rajayana (later changed to Kshatriya) was the warriors, which were followed by the Brahmans, who were the priests. These two groups constantly struggled for political leadership among the Aryans. Eventually, the Brahmans became the leaders of the Aryan society. The final group consisted of the farmers and craftsmen, and was called the Vaishyas. The Aryan conquerors subdued the locals and made them servants. In this process, the Vaishyas became the landlords and businessmen of the society and the locals became the peasants and craftsmen. These three classes constitute very few in number compared to the fourth category called Sudra and Untouchables, which constitutes majority of the population.

Socio-cultural Globalization:

The spread of Ethical and cultural dimensions is also termed as Globalization of values, which has a long history linked to the aspirations of international civil society resulted out of American and French revolutions in the late eighteenth century. French revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and those human values strongly influenced the independence movements in Latin America and the Caribbean, which began when the Haitian revolution broke out in 1791 as a direct consequence of the French revolution. Whereas the civil and political rights protected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted within the United Nations are rooted in the liberal movements of the late eighteenth century. In addition, feminist internationalism had a decisive influence, throughout the twentieth century, on the recognition of women's equal rights, while environmental internationalism has played a major role since the 1960s.

Globalization simultaneously undermines and also fosters cultural diversity. Indeed, whole segments of the world population feel that their unique histories and the values that govern their communities are under threat with the globalization. At the same time, however, globalization influences the cultural identity of different communities when it is attempting to create a common global economic community.

Impact of Globalization on Caste System:

Key aspects of globalization's impact on the caste system may be described as follows:

i) Weakening of Caste System:

Globalization has led to the expansion of economic opportunities, education, and liberal thoughts, resulting in the weakening of the caste system.

ii) Inter-Caste Marriages:

Globalization has fostered a more open social environment, leading to a rise in inter-caste marriages, which are considered a key indicator of weakening caste barriers.

iii) Caste Free Division of Labour:

The traditional division of labour started breaking down due to industrialization, and this was further accelerated by globalization.

iv) Decreased Feeling of Castes:

The increased use of modern communication tools and higher interaction among people from different castes has contributed to a decrease in feelings of castes.

v) Increased Awareness and Social Mobility:

Exposure to global ideas through media and education has led to a growing awareness among lower castes about their rights and opportunities, encouraging them to challenge traditional caste hierarchies and seek better social and economic status.

vi) Persistence of Caste-Based Discrimination:

Despite progress, caste-based discrimination continues to exist in various spheres like employment, education, and social interactions, particularly in rural areas.

vii) Unequal Access to Opportunities:

While some lower castes have benefited from globalization, others may still face barriers due to lack of education, skills, and capital, perpetuating social inequalities.

viii) Urban-Rural Divides:

The positive impact of globalization on caste may be more pronounced in urban areas compared to rural regions where traditional caste norms remain stronger.

ix) Economic Opportunities and Migration:

The rise of the service sector and urbanization due to globalization has created new job opportunities in urban areas, allowing people from lower castes to migrate and access better livelihoods, potentially reducing dependence on traditional caste-based occupations.

x) Affirmative Action and Political Mobilization:

Government policies like reservation systems have empowered lower castes politically, enabling them to advocate for their rights and interests more effectively. Caste system in India prevented 85% of the people from participating in economic activity since ages. They were surviving as agricultural labour and other artisans on the mercy of upper caste land lords and rulers. After independence, though courtesy Dr. B. R. Ambedkar India progressed as a democratic nation, it remained poor hitherto as the economic forces are controlled by very few upper caste leaders in ruling and Business men. Opening of doors for global economic forces destroyed India's Agriculture, thus destroying the lives of Dalit's, OBC and minorities and improved the assets of upper caste rich people. In the name of improving efficiency, lives of majority of the people are kept in the hands of few rich company owners belonging to few upper castes.

We conclude and suggest in this paper that all Bahujan, who were the sufferers and who are further getting driven to poverty by the ruling of upper castes, shall consolidate them in to a political force. This is immediate necessity to grab the power from representatives of few upper caste and rich people and to control the economic activity to influence the socio cultural and ethical values of the entire nation by patronizing the rational thinking through Buddhism.

Impact of Globalization on Indian Bahujan (SC, ST, OBC and Minorities):

As explained above, though there were many attempts in the guise to open up the markets to multinationals in the name of globalization, real boon was given during 1990's ruling regime of India. There is a growth in total GDP and India is projected as a third richest country in the world after China and USA. As can be seen from the table, % share of Agriculture is getting diminished and Services share is increasing. Since 1990's there hasn't been much change in Industry's share.

It is evident that there hasn't been much change in the lives of the Majority of people who are called as Bahujan as most of them are either depending on Agriculture or agriculture related areas. Neither Industry nor Services are approachable to these castes and the GDP generated out of these areas doesn't belong to the marginalized castes. In spite of boon in GDP, it can be seen from below graph that Poverty in India hasn't changed much when all the dimensions of poverty are considered. Dr. Ambedkar's View on Globalisation and his solution for Indian "Bahujan" for their permanent emancipation. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar says "My social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words: liberty, equality and fraternity. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political.

Conclusion:

In order to emancipate these masses from the clutches of caste, poverty, discrimination and counter the deleterious effects of globalization, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar towards end of his long journey left only one way. His final option spelt out by him very categorically in his address to his people is Educated employees and middle class of Scheduled caste, Scheduled tribe and other backward classes shall unite all the depressed classes under the leadership of SC and ST to capture the power of controlling political and economic forces and support the Idea converting India as Prabuddha Bharat for establishing their permanent rule. He warned that no Government can be permanent in popular democracy, but the fight and effort to establish the rule of Majority shall continue. The above shall only be the ultimate objective of any Buddhist, Ambedkarist or beneficiaries of reservations, because the spread of Rationality of Buddhism, equality of Ambedkarism and Progress of the nation through the progress of masses can be achieved only through the philosophy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

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