

Globalization, Displacement & the Livelihood Issues of Indigenous Communities in Developing Countries

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Abstract: In the recent decades, the impact of globalization can be seen in various forms around the world. Though majority hold an extreme positive or negative view, there is no doubt that this process has created winners as well as losers. Where on one side we see the beneficial impact of change in technology, trade, policies, communication and culture, the impact of globalization on the indigenous community has a negative impact on both, their natural environment and well-being. However, one cannot selectively regard only adverse consequences of globalization blinding themselves to the opportunities and means for resistance created by such global integration. Thus, the effect of global integration has had a mixed result, its impact is more deleterious than beneficial on the indigenous groups across the globe.

Keywords: Indigenous Communities, Globalization, Displacement & the Livelihood Issues, Developing Countries

I. INTRODUCTION

The bearing of globalization on these indigenous groups is manifold, and seldom are they positively influenced. As a result of global integration, it is the indigenous community that is left to face the bouts of large-scale developmental projects. Cases of 'attrition' of these tribal populations are not uncommon in India or around other developing countries, thereby depriving them of their own land and forests, having their rivers polluted by industrial waste, deforestation etc. However, the greatest oppression faced by these indigenous communities across the globe is "ethnocide", that being the killing of their culture and breaking down of their community. Hunters, gatherers, inland and marine fishermen, forest produce collector's, and the rural artisans are the true victims of globalization and modern development through appropriation of their resources for industrial advancement, especially related to the machine-based capital-intensive technology.

The fast-growing global economy has led to an increase in the demand for natural resources. As a result, authorities are focusing on massive extraction of natural resources in order to export them so as to increase exports and generate income; and most resources are found in the habitat of these indigenous people who use these resources for their daily survival. As a result of which the land, settlement and wellbeing of these indigenous communities are under grave threat and is often seen in violation of human rights of such communities. According to Ms. Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the majority of the world's remaining natural resources –

minerals, freshwater, potential energy sources and more – are found within indigenous territories.¹

II. IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

With the world leapfrogging towards economic development, the rights of indigenous groups are affected with negative impacts of globalization on their life, liberty and well-being. The effects of global integration on this group can be understood as hereunder: -

Human Rights

Protection of indigenous population is considered to be a hallmark of any civilized nation. Growing public interest in tribal people and a long process of international negotiations involving indigenous organizations prompted the international community to proclaim 1993 as the international year of the world's indigenous people and the period of 1995-2004 as the international decade of world's indigenous people, in order to focus on issues of concern to tribal people. Each of these gestures are important in the struggle for recognition of the rights of indigenous people. The steps are more meaningful with the 15th anniversary of UDHR.² The UDHR recognizes inherent dignity of every human being "without distinction of any kind such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".

Right on land

Most indigenous groups live by the notion wherein land is collectively owned by the tribe and not individually by any person or family. Thus, there is no legal claim on the title or

¹ See 'United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Backgrounder, Indigenous Peoples – Lands, Territories and Natural Resources' available at http://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday/pdf/Backgrounder_LTNR_FINAL.pdf.

² See 'United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples', Resolution No. 61/295 vide 107th plenary meeting held on 13 September 2007 available at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf.

ownership of the land on which these tribes live and survive. Despite the fact that, the collective rights of these groups are recognized as ancestral territories by the ILO and UNDRIP thereby giving these groups a collective right to their land; but very few countries recognize such rights. Particularly when there is a commercial interest in natural resources located on such land. Large scale extraction of natural resources on these lands in order to export them so as to increase exports and generate income often lead to eviction of these groups from their land to satisfy commercial needs without taking their prior, free and informed consent.

Right to Environment

There is no denying the fact that the economic race amongst nations has led to great degradation in the environment. The habitat of these indigenous groups is probably the only habitat rich in natural resources. However, with lack of land recognition, exploitation is being carried on their land and areas around it resulting in land degradation, pollution and loss in biodiversity. Since, these groups depend entirely on their land and its biodiversity, these indigenous groups are being displaced as their land is rendered uninhabitable. It is noteworthy that right to clean environment is a fundamental under Article 21;³ however, their loss of land, habitat and livelihood is compensated by a meager amount of compensation.

Poverty

The increasing exploitation of land and resources has caused deterioration in the environment. With no land left it is the habitat of these tribes which are rich in natural resources and biodiversity that is now being targeted. This has led to the pollution of their land as well as the area around it leading to degradation of land, environment and diversity. With negligible support from the governments these tribes are forced to displace from their habitat as a result of which they are left to be the poorest community in the world. As per the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) they are straggling far behind the rest of the world with minimum medical assistance, no economic exposure and no government support.

Right to livelihood

Growing commercial activities have adversely affected the traditional knowledge and skills of the indigenous groups and influenced the traditionally insulated culture and lifestyle of these indigenous groups. It is expected that roughly 90 percent of all existing languages may become extinct within the next 100 years⁴; the associated traditional ecological knowledge will also be lost. The impact can be seen in the dwindling number of cottage industries in India; which has rendered these tribes jobless and therefore making them the

poorest community in the world. Thus, it is apparent that the effect of globalization can be held blamable for the social unrest, drugs, increase in violence, trafficking of people, and neo-colonization that can be called 'homogenization'.

III. INDIGENOUS GROUPS IN INDIA

Indigenous communities in India are called '*adivaasis*' connoting as the 'original inhabitants' of that land. As per the survey report of the Anthropological Survey of India, India has around 732 indigenous groups or tribal groups in India. India has world's second largest tribal population being around 67.6 million and counts to roughly around 7% of the total population of the country, second only to Africa.⁵

It houses a huge tribal population which also constitutes one of the most backward ethnic group in India. The Constitution under Article 366(25) recognizes as Scheduled Tribes those communities that have been identified as scheduled as per Article 342 of the Constitution which enlists certain communities that have been declared through public notification as Schedule Tribes by the President. These communities have been distinguished from the rest of the society based on the guidelines that enlisted the following identifications:⁶

- "a) indications of primitive traits;
- b) distinctive culture;
- c) shyness of contact with the community at large;
- d) geographical isolation; and
- e) backwardness"

Though Constitution of India provides protection to tribal populace still they are amongst the most economically, socially and politically backward classes in India. What is even more shocking is that tribal are even more backward as compared to scheduled caste and it has been observed that even after years of reservation towards tribal people has not been able to make much impact over their development and they are struggling to survive in the globalized world where they are fighting to protect their natural resources and forests which occupy central position in any tribal culture. It is ironical that the poorest people in India are living in the areas with richest natural resources and are struggling and fighting the big guns and governments in trying to protect these resources.

One of the major issues that is faced in India in relation to the indigenous communities is the encroachment of forests and lands that have been with tribes for centuries. The 1991 New Economic Policy that acted as a herald of globalization in India may have proved highly beneficial to the economy of India, but took a toll on these small groups of tribes as the boon of the developing economy failed to reach these poor

³ Recognised as a fundamental right for the first time by the Supreme Court in *Chhetriya Pardushan Mukti v. State Of U.P* 1990 SCR (3) 739.

⁴ Christian Mair, *The Politics of English as a World Language: New Horizons in Postcolonial Cultural Studies* (Rodopy: 2003; ISBN No. 9789042008762) pg 34.

⁵ Ram Babu Mallavarapu, '*Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation: An Action Anthropological Study on Kovvada Reservoir in West Godavari Agency of Andhra*

Pradesh, India', World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering Vol: 2, No:5, 2008.

⁶ Section 1, Demographic Status of Scheduled Tribe population and its distribution available at <http://tribal.nic.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/file/ScheduledTribesData/Section1.pdf>.

sections of our society and caused radical erosion of cultural, social and traditional lives of the country particularly impacting the indigenous communities.

Constitution of India enshrines the ideologies of equality, democracy and socialist polity in the country. India is supposed to be a casteless and secular society with every program of development to be made applicable for all but due to inefficient and corrupt bureaucracy these developmental plans have not been made effective towards the indigenous communities and as a result they have not been able to integrate themselves into the so-called mainstream polity and society and have not seen the impacts of modernization and globalization reaching towards them.

IV. IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDEGENOUS GROUPS IN INDIA

Displacement

Displacement is one the major issues faced by indigenous communities and it has been estimated that the construction of over 1500 major irrigation development projects, since independence has led to displacement of more than 16 million people out of which 40% belong to tribal population.⁷ The government and the planners are well aware of the effects of eroding natural resource base over the heritage of tribal population as well as the disruption of life and environment over the tribal population and still the so called development process continues unmindful of displacement.

What globalization as process has contributed towards this process is that previously this exploitation of natural resources was very difficult and uneconomical due to the remoteness and marginal quality of resources under tribal population but due to the technological advancement and entry of large multi nationals have led to introduction of research and developments which has made this process of exploitation and extraction economical as well as very effortless.

There are more than 87 large scale hydropower projects which has been funded by World Bank in the country. Now nearly 60% of these dams are located in central and western India where about 80% of tribal live. In recent times Narmada Dam project has been the most controversial hydro project. States like Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are epicenter of tribal population in the country. Ironically all the massive steel plants such as BALCO, NALCO are located in this belt. What is even more distressing is the fact that even after this heavy industrialization in the belt where this large population of tribal resides, the tribal employment in these modern industries and enterprises is negligible. It is an upsetting scenario that people who are forced to leave their lands in name of development are not even provided with adequate means to lead their lives and are forced to live in juxtaposition with alien capitalist. They are being steadily and slowly crushed into clutches of poverty and oblivion. This is nothing short of "ethnocide", a phrase academicians love to associate with the plight of these people. What is even more distressing is that there is no reliable and complete

information indicating the number of tribal that have been displaced in the name of development and globalization. This displacement is not only connected to movement of people but to the deterioration of their culture, heritage, identity and survival support.

Globalization and Corresponding Privatization

Second important effect of globalization is the process of privatization. One of the methods of globalization in India is through disinvestment or resultant privatization. Many of public sector enterprises are being sold off or public equity in them is being divested towards private entities. Profit making public enterprises such as BALCO have been privatized resulting in job loss for tribal people. Privatization of enterprises which are present in tribal belts had been beneficial towards employment of tribal but their privatization has adversely affected the tribal population.

One of the motives of providing reservation by the founding fathers of Indian Constitution was to ensure that the backwards classes are given an equal opportunity for economic growth in par with other classes. This was also the aim behind the Indian government's restrictive policies towards liberalization was to ensure social and economic inclusion of all classes and was the reason government had made huge investments in all the sectors. With these huge corporations being privatized, the basic aim of government cannot be fulfilled and is adversely affecting the employment for tribal population.

Case Studies

The constitutional provisions had meant to protect the tribal from merciless exploitation of their resources, labor and habitat but even with a cursory examination we can see that these protective legislations have far from succeeded in protecting the interests of the tribal. Development carnage under the New Economic Policy and the subsequent globalization has led to a very conscious and systematic annihilation of our "Adivasis" or the tribal. This new economic policy is a complete reversal of the welfare and socialistic essence of the constitution of India. Following we present few case studies to highlight the impact of globalization on the tribal communities in India:

Narmada People's Struggle

The Narmada valley development project comprises of 30 large dams, 133 medium size dams and 3000 small dams along with 75,000 km of canal network stretching between Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra, approx of 1,300 kms with a large population of *adivasis* who have been fighting a tenacious struggle against displacement, state repression and destruction of natural resources since 1985.

With World Bank's acceptance of funding the people decided to oppose openly the project and question the project's claim to "public purpose". The NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN, was formed to fight against the project on not only right of environment and livelihood but also for humanity and personhood. The movement went with the policy of "Amra gaon ma amra raj", "Hum sab ek hain!" and "Vikas Chaiyea, vinas nahin" to resist state collusion with

⁷ Saroj Vardiwale, 'Psycho-Social Study of Project Affected Families Of Sardar Sarovar Project (Gujarat)', April 2007. pg. 2.

globalization forces as well as a refusal to bow down to the tactics of division or intimidation of numbers thrown on them. Voices were raised all over the country against the rampage of these so-called development which were considered more like demons in disguise to destroy the natural resources, traditional knowledge and vibrant communities.

Bhopal Gas Tragedy⁸

On the fateful night of December 2-3, 1984, the Bhopal Plant of UCIL (Union Carbide) leaked massive amount of methyl Isocyanate gas (MIC) causing death of 2,347 people and injury to nearly 40,000 villagers residing in the nearby villages. The exposure to the toxic gas has been a result of continuing deaths, illness, and deformities in that region making it uninhabitable till date. The tragedy resulted in the commencement of the Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Processing of Claims) Act, of 1985 in order to ensure proper compensation to the victims. However, the victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy are still awaiting a compensation for their suffering and illness caused by the toxins. The water there is still not drinkable due to the leaked toxins in it. The decision of the Fed Court of New York to dismiss their case against Union Carbide Corporation calls for solidarity in today's time.

Odisha State

Many indigenous groups are settled in the Eastern Ghat belt of India stretching towards the south and East of the large sub-continent. The indigenous communities of Odisha or Orissa are spread over Lanjigada belt of Odisha's Kalahandi district in the Eastern Ghats behind the beautiful Niyamgiri hills. Called as the Jarene, they are Odisha's most unique and rich in tradition tribes spread over 90 villages.

The macro-economic policies of the State promote industrialization and globalization in the state has nearly caused the homes of these tribes to be bulldozed.

Nearly 360 families were to be forcefully pushed to the brink of survival as a result of the Sterlite Industries Alumina Refinery project in the year 2004. The project was an ambitious move by Mr. Anil Agarwal to make Odisha project a global mining leader, which earned him a mammoth amount of a billion pounds in the London Stock Exchange.⁹ The reason for the project to be initiated in the foothills of Niyamgiri ranges was its large reserve of Bauxite. the project would have affected the lands of these tribes which lie right beneath the plant. Moreover, the project would have destroyed the polluted the springs and rivers of the area thereby impacting the water source of these families. the proposed area of the project was to expand to 1073 hectares of which 601 hectares would have encroached into Kalahandi of which 85% area fell under 'reserved forest'.

Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh has nearly 35 tribes¹⁰, Savara, Gadaba, Khonds and Koya being the major tribes of Andhra. Their livelihood is primarily depend on occupations such as making baskets, toys, mats, apiculture and collecting leaves *et al.*

Andhra Pradesh has been gaining world recognition as the first state in Asia to invite the World Bank to India to implement the 'Structural Adjustment Programme' which has invited large amount of foreign investment, private investment and technological investment in this fast-track state. However, this happens to be the biggest tragedy of the state as the benefit of the investments financially and technologically is not reaching the indigenous communities of the state. All this being done under the liberalization move of the state.

The Kovvada reservoir built on the stream of Kovvala on a total area of 11137 km sq was intended to supply irrigation water to the agricultural lands on the non-tribal land and also to supply drinking water to the uplands of Andhra and industries. The project which came as a boom to many non-tribal sectors, it acted as a bane to the two tribes of that regain namely Reddigudem and Lakshmipuram which comprise of a population of 600 people and 140 families. The Kovvada reservoir resulted in submerging of 700 acres of land most of which originally belonged to these two tribes and included their agricultural land, cashew orchards and forest. The communities who traditionally relied on shifting cultivation for their livelihood were forced to displace and relocated to Buttayagudem village, a less rich land, with a meager compensation of Rs. 80,000 plus Rs. 60,000 per acre for both land and vegetation including rich cashew trees. The tribes fought a long battle thereby spending most of their compensation without any proper relief. The Polavaram project comes as another threat as it shall lead to nearly 270 villages being submerged in the neighboring region again belonging to the indigenous groups.

The tribal women belonging to the PND Palem village of Vishakapatnam district were brutally beaten up by liquor mafia and the local police when they protested against the setting up of their liquor stores in their villages. They were put under unlawful detention, beaten, tortured, forced to drink urine of those men as a result of which one of the protestors succumbed to injuries. A legal battle was initiated which provided no relief and only exposed these women to further harassment by the authorities.

Though the Andhra government has implemented the Andhra Pradesh Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) Policy of 2005, however it still contains certain defects as it fails to suggest the basic issues faced by the displaced indigenous communities and proper means to be adopted to ensure proper rehabilitation, assessment of their losses and special protection measures to be taken in their favor.

⁸ Union Carbide Corporation vs Union Of India, 1989 SCC (2) 540

⁹ Rakesh Kalshian, "Sterlite Brings Darkness to India's Indigenous Peoples", India Resource Center, 16 June 2004, available at

<http://www.indiaresource.org/issues/globalization/2004/sterlite.html> last seen on 17 March 2016.

¹⁰ State wise Scheduled Tribes, Andhra Pradesh available at http://tribal.nic.in/WriteReadData/CMS/Documents/201212_010400522558593File1043.pdf last accessed on 17 March 2016.

V. LAWS RELATING TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES GLOBALLY AND IN INDIA

In the past decades some important standards have been developed to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. Two of the most relevant are:

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

The UNDRIP adopted by the United Nations in the year 2007 for the first time declared the rights of 'indigenous people' as a legal right. Under its Article 29 obliges all states to protect and preserve the "natural environment" of the indigenous territories; while Article 32 ensures the right to "free", "prior" and "informed consent" before carrying out any activity on their territory.

International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169¹¹

Convention No. 169 (1989) of the International Labour Organisation pertaining to the "*Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*" is the only international treaty exclusively on the subject of the rights of indigenous peoples.¹² The convention attends to the issues of land, resources and territory of the indigenous group and ensures them the right to participate and be consulted in decisions that shall have an impact on them. However, the Convention has only been ratified by 22 countries; other nations, including India follow the Convention No. 107.

Laws in India: No community can develop and protect themselves in today's time without express protection from their country's laws and regulations. The same is the case with the tribal populace of India. India has been a leader in this ambit as it recognized that it will have to make special laws for the upliftment and development of its tribal populace which has been at a disadvantage throughout the colonial period. The framers of Indian constitution knew and understood the plight of tribal population in India and therefore drafted explicit laws in favor and protection of their lives and liberties. The drafters of Indian constitution had accepted the ideals of equality and justice in Indian constitution and it would have been a blunder on their part if they had not incorporated special provisions for protection of rights of tribal populace. The ideals of democratic equality could not have achieved without the advancement of socially and economically backward sections of the society. The Indian constitution provides for following articles in the Indian constitution for the upliftment and protection of tribal population.

Social Safeguards: Articles 17, 23 and 24 of the Indian constitution provides for social safeguards towards tribal. Article 17 abolishes untouchability, thus aiming towards social inclusion of tribals. Subsequently to attain the goal parliament enacted The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1989 and the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention

of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Article 23 prohibits human trafficking and abolishes forced labour. Though this article doesn't speak specifically about tribal populace but they form the majority of bonded labor. For achieving this the Parliament enacted the Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act, 1976. Article 24 prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 years in any factory or mine or of hazardous nature.

Economic Safeguards: Article 46 provides for Directives Principles of State Policy and provides that "the states shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." Articles 23 and 24 also provides for economic safeguards.

Educational and Cultural Safeguards: Article 15(4) specifically provides that state shall make special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and for scheduled castes. In this respect state has made reservation of seats in favor of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes.

Political Safeguards: One of the measures that has been taken by the government is the reservation of seats in favor of indigenous communities which has helped them secure social inclusion and political participation. Article 243D makes reservation in the Panchayat, article 243T makes reservation in Municipalities, Article 330 then provides for reservation in the House of People or Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, and lastly Article 332 provides for corresponding reservations in the Legislative Assemblies of every State.

Service Safeguards: Reservations has also been made under Article 16(4), 16(4A) and 335 in favor of services in government departments and more recently in the year 2001 amendment was made to have reservations in matters of promotions too. Thus, we see that that Indian constitution has provided for special provisions in protection, promotion and development of tribal people. These laws no doubt have helped these communities to come out of the crutches of poverty and underdevelopment. But whether these laws have saved them from the negative impact of globalization is a question which has not been satisfactorily answered. No doubt the laws protect them economically, socially as well as politically but there are no laws in place to save their lives and their tribal land from the harmful impact of globalization. There are several glaring examples where the basic rights of these communities have been garbed in disguise of development and modernization. One such controversy has been the Narmada Dam Scheme in Gujarat where thousands of tribal people had been displaced to make a dam. Whether or not such a decision was just is a question left unanswered by the government.

¹¹ The predated ILO's Convention No. 107 for Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, (1957) has been replaced by Convention No. 169, however many countries that have not ratified that latter are still enforcing the former Convention.

¹² "*Corporate Social Responsibility*", 31 October 2010 available at <http://indigenouspeoples.nl/our-issues/corporate-social-responsibility/introduction#voetnoot>, last visited on 17.03.2016

VI. CONCLUSION

The Indigenous communities of India, though distinct in language, dialect, and livelihood from the rest of the communities, are an integral part of the Indian society. Globalization may have benefitted the urban society with increased job opportunities, larger market space, and influx of foreign investments; however, it has affected the tribal groups differently; foremost fact being that the benefits of globalization fail to reach these poorer sections. The trade aspects of globalization also alter the context of many issues and areas affecting tribal, in some cases intensifying problems and in other cases affecting the policy actions required to address the problems.¹³

There is no denying that the process of Globalization shall also prove beneficial for these groups by improving quality of goods through competition, making their produce available to the global market, fair pricing of their product, wider market space; however, to truly benefit from the process they need to be trained to adapt to the current technology of computers and internet which currently is not

accessible to majority of this section. These indigenous communities will benefit from long-term economic growth that shall come:

- By amending price distortions in the market by making it more competitive.
- By improving agricultural methods to increase produce quantity and quality which in turn shall increase income for these groups and
- By expanding the industrial sector particularly in their products thereby generating both income and employment among them.

Furthermore, the need for exclusive policies to address the needs of these indigenous groups is dire at this point. However, development of this group cannot be done by outsiders as they do not understand their needs and problems, therefore their participation is needed in decisions for matters that directly or indirectly affect them. The tribal can participate in their development programme only if they are considered to be equals¹⁴ and if unique identities are respected.

¹³ Jawaaid Iqbal, *Human Development in South Asia 2001*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002; ISBN:0195797647) p.50.

¹⁴ Vidyt Joshi, *TRIBAL SITUATION IN INDIA*, (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, Ed. 1998) Pg. 25.