Impact of Globalization on Land and Water and Identity Crises of Marginalized People: Case Studies in India

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Globalization has become an integral part of the global economy. It is perceived to be a major force to accelerate economic growth and social development. It has certain positive and dynamic aspects and at the same time it has raised controversies in many developing countries. In India, it has brought adverse effects on social, cultural and biological survival and identities of marginalized people. The corporate power and excessive commercial interests have grossly violated the concerns of environment, democracy, human rights and social justice (Pathak, 2007: 35). The free market economy and drive towards deregulation and privatization have facilitated the aggressive commodification of natural resources like land and water. The democratic governments offer soaps to MNCs and extend them a conducive environment for the growth of globalization and its accompanying processes. But in majority of the cases the displaced persons, people’s groups and civil society organizations are struggling for justice and for the cause of ‘survival of the weakest’ – the marginalized people (George, 2009). Two projects have been purposively selected to explore their respective impacts on the poor and marginalized from the perspectives of land and water acquisition and exploitation. The two projects include (i) Multimodal Infrastructure Project at Nagpur, Maharashtra and (ii) Hindustan Coca Cola Beverage Pvt. Ltd., Maharashtra.

The study broadly aims to highlight the linkages between globalization and the governance policies from the perspective of marginalized groups, whose cultural and social identities are at a stake. The main problem may not be associated with the globalization per se but with its method of execution and inherent threats. It seems essential to conduct qualitative analysis of current situations to find out answers of some moot questions. The study attempts to address few such questions as given below.

1. What could be the decisive factors, which have raised protests from marginalized groups against those projects?

2. Is the fear of displacement a threat to their social and cultural identities?

3. What could be the best possible alternatives to accommodate such projects with the socio-cultural fabric of the society? And

4. What different roles are played by civil society organizations in bringing transparency in corporate and State governance?

Along with the exploration of above questions, the analytical and discussion parts of the paper will certainly raise a debate between the role of a welfare State and its changing roles in free market economy. Also it will try to analyze the scope of biological theory of development (the perspectives of survival of the fittest) and the ethical theory of mutual coexistence (i.e. concern for survival of the weakest) in the process of globalization. More importantly the study aims to explore the perception of people about the conflict between commodification of natural resources and their growing need for conservation. The researcher wants to develop an insight about the impact of commodification of land and water on the social and cultural identities of the marginalized groups. There are relevant sociological and anthropological evidences, which have explained the natural habitat of people on a land as their main source of identity (Kumar, 2005). When there is an identity crisis related to land, natural kin-group solidarity is developed and that becomes a driving force for their agitation and movements. The study wants to verify whether such phenomena are relevant to the selected project sites. If not, then what would be the other possible decisive factors responsible for their agitation and protests? It is expected that the analysis in the study will certainly induce some alternative thought processes, which may result into an effective and people friendly execution of globalization process. If so, then natural resources such as land...
and water will gain recognition as the major sources of identities of the marginalized and poor people. And consequently it will create a balance between the civil society, the corporations and State, which is otherwise necessary for sustainable development.

To fulfill the above objectives and purposes, the study will be based on secondary data analysis, including policy analysis and review of reports and literature. The findings will be presented through two different case studies as mentioned above.

References:
