



Tribes in India and Economic Globalization

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Commentary

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Abstract

India has the second-largest concentration of tribal population in the world after that of the African continent. The STs have been occupying compact and isolated areas, which are generally hilly and undulating terrain. The land is the mainstay of the tribal's. It is the basic resource of their livelihood, economic empowerment, social status and dignity. The present article aimed at highlighting the interpretational information related to Economic Globalization and Tribes in India. This article presents an overview of the Economic globalism in India, Globalization and Tribals' resistance, Leasing/Mining in Scheduled Areas. Lastly, it may be stated that globalism has promoted exclusive growth of the super-rich instead of inclusive growth of the common people

Keywords: Globalization; Tribes; Tribals' Resistance; Economic Globalization

Introduction

Globalization is a system of policies that promote a free market in a Borderless world and cut back on state powers that do not favour business. It endeavours to free all economic resources to serve the needs of multinational corporations at the cost of common people and the community. Economic globalization involves the most fundamental redesign of the political and economic arrangements of the world [1,2]. The goal of globalization is to establish a corporate regime through trade liberalization, privatization and deregulation. Trade liberalization refers to free trade or the removal of trade barriers, such as tariffs and quotas. Privatization requires the sale of public enterprises and assets to private owners. Deregulation constitutes the removal of government restrictions and interventions on capital to allow market forces to act as a self-regulating mechanism. This new system envisages the integration of national economies into a global economy through structural adjustment programmes [3-5].

Economic Globalism in India

In July 1991, almost immediately following the formation of a new Congress government of India under P.V. Narasimha

Rao as Prime Minister and Manmohan Singh as Finance Minister, in the face of the financial crisis, had introduced the structural adjustment package and applied for a loan of \$2.3 billion from the International Monetary Fund [6,7]. India agreed to accept various conditions, including two successive devaluations, and introduce economic reforms involving liberalization, privatization, and deregulation. India had to initiate several economic reforms, including reforms in tax and labour laws, withdrawal of export subsidies, privatization of public assets, relaxation for entry of multinational companies into the Indian market and structural changes according to the imposed free-market ideology. The new policy called for a drastic shift in the economy's direction from state regulation to the free-market regime or from socialism to economic globalism [8,7]. It was propagated intensely through media that it would be a panacea to alleviate poverty and usher in an era of prosperity and that the benefits of prosperity would trickle down to the common person [7,4].

However, it has been a disappointing experience since the introduction of globalisation. The trickle-down theory of prosperity of the common person is proved to be a false promise. Benefits of prosperity have trickled down to the

super-rich section of the society. Globalism has not failed to alleviate poverty but also aggravated poverty, particularly among the tribals who are facing displacement from their traditional habitation. Successive governments have been encouraging “crony capitalism” in the guise of economic liberalization [9,10,4].

Globalization and Tribals’ Resistance

Globalization has badly impacted the tribals of India, which constitute about 10% of the total population. India has the largest Scheduled tribes population in the world. They occupy nearly 15% of the total geographical area of the country. Their habitation areas hold about 70% of the forest area, 80% of the mineral resources, and 50% of the water resources. Despite all this, the tribal communities face a real challenge of their survival due to the indiscreet process of globalisation, causing serious exploitation, deprivation, and pressure on land and natural resources [11,4]. This situation is being faced after the rise of the state as a formal system of political and administrative authority in contrast to traditional tribal society managing its affairs through its institutions.

The Scheduled Areas notified in nine states under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution to protect the dominant tribal population are full of mineral resources. 80-90% of the main metallic and non-metallic minerals of India are found in these areas. The main minerals include iron ore, bauxite, aluminium, zinc and lead ore, copper ore, gypsum, chromite, coal, marble, granite, soapstone, limestone, asbestos, etc. These areas are under severe attack of globalization due to the pressure of Multinational Corporations and large industries for mining minerals. Mining is one of the largest industries in India, and the same is necessary for development. But it has been observed that indiscreet mining is causing a serious threat to the survival of the scheduled tribes and the environment. Tribal land transfer laws and regulations in the Scheduled Areas are being diluted or amended by the Centre and the people, including the tribals. In the Kalinganagar area of Odisha, the state governments under deceptive garb of economic development of tribals are agitating against forceful acquisition of their lands for steel states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra plant, which resulted in the killing of 13 tribals. Tribals in the mineral-rich Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, etc., are agitating over mining rights or land acquisition for steel plants [12]. Depletion of the land and other resources has led to the pauperisation of tribal communities. Some of the Scheduled Areas have been witness to such destruction where such mining projects were allowed. The aggressive nature of resource exploitation has the peace-loving tribals to violence in their struggle for social justice and survival. Unfortunately, the tribal struggle for justice is not treated

as a law and order problem. Displacement of the peasants and tribals has now become a tool to nourish a sustainable militant response [13,14,4].

Leasing/Mining in Scheduled Areas

In the Samatha case (1997), the Supreme Court has prohibited the leasing of tribal land for mining activities in the scheduled areas. It has ruled that the executive is urged to protect social, economic and educational interests of the tribals and when the state leases out the lands in the Scheduled Areas to the non-tribals for exploitation of mineral resources, it transmits the correlative obligation to those who undertake to exploit the natural resources that they should also improve social, economic and educational empowerment the tribals [15,16]. As a part of the administration of the project, the licensee or lessee should incur expenditure for:

1. Re-forestation and maintenance of ecology in the Scheduled Areas;
2. Maintenance of roads and communication facilities in Scheduled Areas where operation of the industry has the impact;
3. Supply of potable water to the tribals;
4. Establishment of schools for imparting free education primary and secondary level and providing vocational training to the tribals to enable them to be qualified, competent confident in the pursuit of employment;
5. Employing the tribals according to their qualification in their establishment/factory;
6. Establishment of hospitals and camps for providing free medical aid and treatment to the tribals in the Scheduled Areas;
7. Maintenance of sanitation;
8. Construction of houses for tribals in the Scheduled Areas as enclosures [4].

The Court has also ruled that expenditure for the above projects should be part of its Annual Budget of the industry, establishment or business avocation/venture. On this behalf, at least 20% of the net profits should be set apart as a permanent fund for industrial /business activity to establish and maintain water resources, schools, hospitals, sanitation and transport facilities by laying roads, etc. This 20% allocation would not include the expenditure for re-forestation and maintenance of ecology [13,4,17].

Conclusion

Lastly, it may be stated that globalism has promoted exclusive growth of the super-rich instead of inclusive growth of the common people [18]. Educated youths are agitated against the gradual dismantling of ‘welfare estate’ and its gradual replacement by ‘corporate state. The common

people, particularly the tribals, seem to be fully disillusioned with the rhetoric of the 'trickle down' theory of prosperity under globalism. The tribals are now demanding distributive justice and protection of their lands and culture.

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