

## **GLOBALISATION, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

By the process of globalisation India has connected itself economically with the global market by aligning itself with the international laws of trade and also removing barriers to free trade in the country. On the economic fronts, the Liberalisation, Privatisation, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) etc. have resulted into good gains to India. The article is an attempt to study the effect of globalisation in the social sector and means for correction, if any. With the national government withdrawing from the social sector – direct governmental assistance towards education, housing and health service is reducing. With a complex socio-economic marginalisation based on caste, ethnicity, religion etc in India the impact of globalisation is enormous. In the present scenario there is need for vital role to be played by civil society if desired social gains are to be achieved. The government also have to encourage civil society to work for societal development with special emphasis towards marginalised groups if equitable and all round growth and development is to be achieved.

**Keywords: Civil society, Development, Social justice, Globalization**

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## 1. Introduction

Since 1950s India had economic policy to achieve socialistic pattern of development with greater equality of wealth and income. These policies were mostly inward looking, protective and centrally guided. India opened up its economy in 1991 with adoption of “New Economic Policy” (NEP) that included structural adjustment programme in addition to liberalization and globalization. This also included devaluation of the rupee, decrease in interest rates, reduction in public investment and expenditure, privatization of public sector units, reduction in subsidies. The NEP led to domination of market against the state and gradual withdrawal of state from development and social welfare sector (Kothari, 2010: 73). So, though economic indicators of the country is steadily improving and so is the political influence in the world, benefit to all sections of population inside the country is lagging behind. The following sections highlight on why and how the role of civil society is crucial for social well being in India.

## 2. Economic and social indicators in India

Over the years India has come out from agriculture being its main economic activity. The service sector has grown tremendously and became much bigger contributor which indicates that overall living standard of the citizens have improved. These improvements have accelerated after the adoption of NEP. Following tables show data in some selected economic and social sectors.

**Table A: Per capita net National income (in Rs.)**

Year	At current prices	At 2004-05 prices
1950-51	264	7114
1960-61	373	8889
1970-71	763	10016
1980-81	1852	10712
1990-91	5621	14330
2000-01	17381	20418
2010-11	54021	36202

Source: Economic Survey 2013-14

**Table B: Sector wise contribution (in %) of Gross Domestic Production in current cost**

Year	Primary Sector: Agricultural, forestry, fishing etc total	Secondary Sector: Manufacturing, construction, electricity etc.	Tertiary Sector: Service sector, Finance, insurance etc.
1950-51	53	13	34
1960-61	44	18	38
1970-71	43	19	39
1980-81	30	23	40
1990-91	32	24	44
2000-01	25	24	51
2010-11	21	24	55

Source: Calculated from data of Economic Survey 2013-14

**Table C: Literacy rate and Life expectancy at birth**

Year	Literacy rate	Life expectancy at birth
1950-51	18.3	32.1
1960-61	28.3	41.3
1970-71	34.5	45.6
1980-81	43.6	50.4
1990-91	52.2	58.7
2000-01	64.8	62.5
2010-11	73.0	>66.0

Source: Economic Survey 2013-14 & Economic Survey 2008-09

Impact of NEP has been both positive and negative. In the economic sector the positive impact include growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), reduction in poverty and considerable improvement in balance of payments. There is significant growth in per capita net National Income and establishment of service sector a major contributor to GDP. On the social sector

there is markable improvement in the literacy rate and life expectancy at birth. The negative side indicated low growth of overall employment upto 2000. Replacement of traditional technology by modern technology had negative effect on employment. However, new employment opportunities due to development of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and expanding service sector is positive impact. India is now one of the biggest IT capitals of the modern world and all the major players in the world IT sector are present in the country.

Now, India is a member of G-20, a group of major economies in the world that account for around 85% of the gross world product and 80% of world trade. It is also member of BRICS ie five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. India is actively pursuing its entry as permanent member of United Nations Security Council.

### 3. Economic Power vs Social Well Being and Development

The economic indicators and growing influence of the country would of little use if social benefits in terms of improved quality of life and overall well-being are not achieved. This aspect is studied from the data of Human Development Index (HDI) and other indices, estimated and published for various countries by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in their Human Development Reports. HDI is a composite statistic of life expectancy, education, and income per capita indicators. A country scores higher HDI when the life expectancy at birth is longer, the education period is longer, and the income per capita is higher. In the latest report released in December, 2015 (based on the data of 2014) India ranked 130 out of 188 countries and categorized in the group ‘medium human development’ of out of four categories viz. very high human development, high human development, medium human development and low human development.

**Table D: HDI and its components for India and selected countries in 2015**

Country	HDI rank	HDI value	Life expectancy at birth in years	Expected years of schooling in years	Mean years of schooling in years	Gross national income (GNI) per capita (in

						2011 PPP \$)
Norway	1	0.944	81.6	17.5	12.6	64,992
USA	8	0.915	79.1	16.5	12.9	52,947
Singapore	11	0.912	83.0	15.4	10.6	76,628
Malaysia	62	0.779	74.7	12.7	10.0	22,762
Sri Lanka	73	0.757	74.9	13.7	10.8	9,779
Maldives	104	0.706	76.8	13.0	5.8	12,328
India	130	0.609	68.0	11.7	5.4	5,497
Bhutan	132	0.605	69.5	12.6	3.0	7,176
Bangladesh	142	0.570	71.6	10.0	5.1	3,191
Nepal	146	0.548	69.6	12.4	3.3	2,311
Pakistan	147	0.538	66.2	7.8	4.7	4,866
Niger	188	0.348	61.4	5.4	1.5	908

Source: Human Development Report 2015, UNDP

**Table E: Trend of HDI for India since 1990**

Year	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
HDI value	0.428	0.496	0.586	0.597	0.600	0.604	0.609

Source: Human Development Report 2015, UNDP

The data indicate that South Asian neighbours Sri Lanka and Maldives with better HDI than India have been categorized under high human development. Only solace is continuous improvement in the HDI value. However, this is not a satisfactory position considering its economic power and influence in the world politics.

The UNDP report of 2015 also presented Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) that looks beyond the average achievements of a country in health, education and income to show how these achievements are distributed among its residents. The IHDI can be interpreted as the level of human development when inequality is accounted for. IHDI value for India comes to 0.435 which is 28.6% less than HDI. UNDP estimated inequality in life expectancy, education

and income to be 25.0, 42.1 and 16.1 respectively for India which is significantly high compared to countries with higher human development.

The challenges faced by India include adverse impact on rural agricultural economy and rural unemployment by the NEP due to policies adopted under WTO (World Trade Organisation) dictates and the withdrawal of subsidies to farmers. Moreover there is also concern about upliftment of marginalized sections of society who were hit by rising cost of higher education and diminishing job prospects in organized sectors.

#### **4. Role of civil society on social development**

Broadly speaking, civil society consist of wide variety of structured or unstructured organizations that do not form part of state and market but may interact with them regularly to achieve their objectives. They may be registered under various Acts such as the Societies Registration Acts, the Indian Trusts Acts, the Co-operative Societies Acts, the Trade Union Acts, Section 25 of the Indian Companies Act, the Religious Endowment Act, the Charitable and Religious Trust Act, Wakf Act etc or may be unregistered also. Various NGOs, welfare and charity organizations are part of civil society.

Initially, after the independence the Government of India looked civil society as voluntary organizations with its role in social welfare activities as the government took responsibility of social and economic development of the country. In 1980s more voluntary organizations were encouraged for welfare schemes to complement the government's efforts and to channelize funds for development. By 1990 the government conceded that anti-poverty and minimum need programmes require huge voluntary efforts from civil society as the magnitude is too vast.

In the world scenario, set of 10 economic policy prescriptions of the 'Washington Consensus (1989)' for Third-world countries by international financial and lending institutions, insisted for withdrawal of state from social sector and freedom of market from all constraints. It was in this particular historical conjunction that NGOs emerged on the horizon to take over functions hitherto reserved for the state, such as providing health and education, instituting income-generating schemes, creating safety nets, and encouraging people to be self-reliant (Chandhoke,

2002: 43). The failure of Washington consensus has resulted post-Washington consensus that added emphasis on appropriate institutions for growth and social safety nets that further strengthened the role of the non-governmental sector by making its role as collaborative partners in decision making.

In India, the liberalization, privatization and globalization in 1990s on one hand resulted into economic power to the country but on the other hand increased inequalities between the classes and regions. One of the reasons for this is reduction in government's activity in social sector under the pressure of International financial and trade organizations. As the government gradually withdrawing from social sectors owing to economic reforms and its machinery are also being inadequate, it promoted civil society to increase its operations in the areas of social sector vacated by the state. Government has visualized increased involvement of NGOs for program implementation on social sector and other poverty alleviation also due to realization that machineries and resources were inadequate to reach to vast population and to remote corners. Moreover, centralized plans are many times in effective in solving local socio-economic problems.

The planning commission recognized civil society as partner to development and highlighted its strengths, namely their advocacy skills, organizational skills and being closer to the people that could be used to the advantage of all concerned. Role of civil society as public 'watch dog', check on arbitrary exercise of power by the Executive and effective fight against corruption is appreciated (Planning Commission, 2007: 236). For the 12th 5 – Year Plan (2012-2017) as many as 900 Civil Society Organizations have been consulted through workshops and other fora to take inputs at plan stage itself.

A democratic government cannot neglect social issues and thus it passed and enacted certain Laws/Acts that are considered instrumental to take care of marginalized sections and for reduction of inequality and aimed for overall social justice and development. Some of the important initiatives are

- Right to Information Act, 2005
- National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (renamed in 2009 as MGNREGA, after the name of Mahatma Gandhi)
- The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, (popularly Forest Rights Act)
- The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008
- Right to Education Act, 2009
- National Food Security Act, 2013 (also known as Right to Food Act)
- The Companies Act, 2013 incorporating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

With the NEP, large numbers of indigenous civil society organizations in the form of variety of NGOs have emerged in India because of changed policies. There is entry of many global civil society organizations also. They function at various level right from grass root level to national and international level. Aims and purposes vary from fight for citizen's causes, implementation of various government policies to global agendas like campaign for safe environment, campaign against nuclear power. However, for achieving equitable role of civil society is crucial for creating awareness, sensitization and to assist citizens for obtaining benefits from the various rights. Civil society also need to engage itself in providing education, training, campaign and other capacity building programs to various section of society. Setting of self help groups and other measures for empowerment of marginalized groups are important functions of present day civil society. Other activities include pressurization, encouraging citizen engagement and supporting the rights of citizens. It conducts various programs at grassroot level (including health and family welfare schemes), social mobilization and capacity building to help Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to take up the tasks assigned to them.

## **5. Conclusion**

The NEP that caused revolutionary economic reforms popularly known as liberalization, privatization and globalization had both positive and negative impact. Though India emerged as economic and political power in the world, human development indicators have not improved significantly and there is no balanced development in the society. The current day governments have visualized a crucial role of civil society in social sector for all round well being because if



its vast reach, including at remote and isolated locations, its flexibility in operations and its nearness to local population. Despite emergence of large number and variety of modern day civil society organizations, mostly known as NGOs, desired results towards equitable developments are yet to be seen. There appears to be shortage of right type of civil society that works seriously with marginalized and less developed sections of society. India is a democratic country with all sorts of push and pull for governance. There are many factors such as caste, religious and regional that has its own influence. However, in the times to come it is expected that democratic forces would pressurize the governments to encourage and support suitable civil society organizations that work for human development and empowerment, with special attention towards marginalized section and reduce several of forms inequalities presently seen in India. Civil society also needs to contribute more actively in policy advocacy to government, supplement education, health services and service delivery to ensure widespread benefit of government's right based policies and thus to achieve social goals in real terms.

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