

Views globalization



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Globalization has been defined as the process of intensification of cross-area and cross-border social relations between actors from very distant locations, and of growing transnational interdependence of economic and social activities (Beck, 2000; Giddens, 1990). Brakman, Garretsen, van Marrewijk, and van Witteloostuijn (2006) also hold both the economy and society are being affected by the globalization process.

However, Giddens (1990) views globalization in terms of networking and the interconnection between different social contexts or regions. Moreover, Bauman (2000) argues that globalization is on everybody's lips and for some people, it is the driver for happiness while for others, it is the main cause of unhappiness and miseries. Multinational and transnational companies have become very powerful and they are believed to be the ones which decide on the socio-economic policies of various nation states, more particularly the developing countries.

Korten (1995) (Cited in Seeds of Fire, 2000) seems to be right when he points out that with the formation and expansion of big global corporations and the dismantling of trade and investment barriers, government and people of many countries have been disempowered. The roles and functions of many national governments to control the behavior of foreign corporations and investors have been reduced nowadays. Developing societies rely much on the foreign direct investment for development and modernization purposes.

Consequently, they are most of the times at the mercy of the big global corporate sector. Globalization is, in fact, affecting the world economy. However, the intensity of its impact varies from country to country. It is

difficult to give a universal meaning to the term ' globalization'. Different authors have conceptualized it differently to suit their research purposes. For Khoo (2003), globalization is understood as the trans-boundary movements of capital, people, goods, information and culture, burst into intellectual awareness in the late 1980s and the 1990s.

The proponents of globalization, mainly the multi-billion businesses, international financial organizations and the core capitalist states, marketed it as a new and inevitable process that would benefit all societies, particularly the developing countries. Nevertheless, the financial crises in the 1990s, both in Europe and in the Asian countries, undermined globalization as a process that is beneficial. It became clear to the world that globalization was simply the furtherance of the imperialist project in a disguised way (Khoo, 2003).

On the other hand, George (1997) (Cited in Seeds Of Fire, 2000) argued that economic globalization contributed to accelerate the process of global inequalities as increased world trade had little to offer to the poor. Even the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 1997 Human Development Report (Cited in Seeds of Fire, 2000) clearly mentioned that the greatest benefits of globalization have been garnered by a fortunate few.

The UNDP report recommended a better management of globalization in order to avoid world financial crises, and also offer opportunities for poor countries to have access to private capital, strengthening domestic institutions and inducing transnational and multi-nationals corporations to promote growth for poverty reduction. A quick glance at the world situation demonstrates clearly that none of the recommendations were realized given

that world poverty has increased considerably, financial and economic crises have become common, and the disparities between the rich and poor countries have increased.

TNCs and MNCs, the representatives of the capitalists, have become so powerful that they are believed to be the ones who decide on the policies to be undertaken by the different nation states. Their organizational culture has become the mainstream culture. Countries the world over have no other choice than to adopt and adapt to the culture of the big corporations. The world is becoming more and more integrated with globalization.

What started with greater trade openness is translating into growing global economic integration and interdependence, as transnational movements of people and capital accelerate and information becomes ever more accessible. Technological developments are rapidly changing the way people learn, work, and communicate. And the world population is concentrating in medium and large cities. The new forces associated with globalization such as neo-liberalism, religious fundamentalism, cultural imperialism and global warming have impacts on different spheres of the Mauritian society.

Globalization has caused a change in the culture of a big majority of people irrespective of their ethnicity, age, gender, place of origin. Many people have adopted the foreign lifestyles and they have incorporated the western cultural behavior as regards their eating habits, dress codes and buying behavior. Quite a large number of the population has become addicted to foreign ways of living which might account for the excessive reliance on foreign products and the phenomena of living beyond their means. More to

that, there are environmental changes which need to be dealt with to ensure a sustainable Mauritius.

The policy makers need to develop strategies to ensure that the country can face these changes and also inculcate appropriate values like responsible purchasing and encourage saving behaviour in the population to promote economic sustainability. Religious leaders, on the other hand, should work hard to promote the preservation of traditional values, rites and rituals for the survival of ancestral culture and values. As a last point, it is to be noted that the forces of globalization needs proper management in order to ensure a peaceful, equitable and sustainable society.