

Competitive Globalization or Promotion of Values
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Today's we live in a world of globalization. Globalization is not something new, it is not a creation of the 21st century. Globalization began in the 15th century with capitalism when European people started trade with Asia and South Africa and migrated to South America and Australia.

Today globalization has spread all over the world. So we talk of a global village. The various means of communication – the newspapers, radios, television, etc. have reached all the corners of the world. The television and Internet facilities have resulted in an information explosion when news from any corner of the world can reach you in your sitting room or work place.

My sister, Sr Celine who is running a hospital in the small village of Halhal in Eritrea can be contacted at anytime through e-mail (if her power supply or generator is functioning). Globalization is the means of spreading western culture, food, clothing, fashions and the likes.

But when we go deep into the facts of globalization. We realize that the world has not become a global village; on the contrary, the divide between the rich and the poor, the developed and underdeveloped countries has widened. The poor are becoming poorer and the rich, richer. Many human values which we seen at work in the villages such as respect, co-operation, sensitivity, harmony, agreement and tolerance are missing in the world of globalization. Globalization should be evaluated from the point of view of human values, and we should be lead by them rather than blindly be carried away by globalization.

Today the word globalization is used in different meanings. In business it is used as a device to increase productivity through the use of machines and selling the product to more than one state. Industrialists and multinational companies sell in the international market their products made at the cheapest rates in different countries. Plans are made and executed at multinational levels to produce and accumulate a lot of wealth.

In the cultural world, globalization often signifies often American movies, fashions, lifestyles as well as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Pizza and McDonald's.

The main impact of globalization is in the area of economics. After World War II, especially during the last 2 to 3 decades a vast change in world economy has taken place even at grass-root level. Today the money market is no longer under the control of the governments but in the hands of the multi-national companies, the international market, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). This results in the fact that our Finance Minister while preparing the country's budget takes into consideration not only the country's financial situation, but more so the trends in the international financial system.

Due to globalization there is obviously a change in the relationship between the government of a country and her financial market. Governments have become weak and the financial markets and institutions have become stronger, resulting in the change of debtor-creditor relationships. This has lead to not governments, but international financial markets deciding the rate of interest in

business transactions or in borrowing and lending. Capitalists and financial markets cater to their own profits thus prospering and leaving the poor countries poorer due to heavy rates of interest and tariffs.

The effects of globalization on a country depend on the attitude and inclination of the country. If a government accepts globalization without any opposition but as natural and unavoidable, and gives it full support without any control, then that government does not inspire the development of its own country but rather becomes a pliable tool of international market forces and globalization.

Globalization is acceptable as an international phenomenon. One can hardly keep away from being affected by it. But for a country like ours there is no need to become an instrument or slave of globalization. In India, during the last decade due to the influence of globalization and privatization, there has been a marked downfall in the development of industries. Many small scale and cottage industries have collapsed or have been completely closed down or taken over by the multinational companies.

Social worker and revolutionary thinker, Swami Agnivesh in his interview with Lalita Panikar of "The Time of India" has stated that since 1991 after liberalization in our country the rupee has been continuously devalued and more than 6,00,000 small scale industries have been closed down. He said that India has unilaterally opened its doors to multinational companies without any mutual conditions being laid down. Multinationals should have business dealings with us respecting our conditions, but in fact it is not so. Through organizations like GATT and WTO, we have sold our sovereignty in return for which we get nothing substantial.

After giving a free hand to the multinationals in India our unsuspecting leaders and government with its own agenda has called upon the country's industrial units and industrialists to compete with the multinational companies. Indian companies with very limited capital can hardly think of competing with the unlimited capital of the multinationals. India's policy of globalization has resulted in the multinationals purchasing the country's competitor-industrialists and have established their monopoly forcing the small and weaker companies out of business.

Today's need is not competition but cooperation between the multinationals and our small and big industries. I have heard that in Kerala they are not killing our Indian cows replacing them with foreign cows; but they are improving the local breed by continuous cross-breeding with imported bulls and artificial insemination. In cooperation with the foreign dairy business, Kerala has accepted the policy of cross-breeding and has thus improved the quality of cows generation after generation. This has resulted in great improvement in the production of milk in the local environments. In the same way the national dairy farms can compete with the foreign dairy business. Metaphorically speaking, our reformist promoters of globalization have directly or indirectly killed our local cows and have accepted the policy of importing foreign cows. This policy has resulted in something like cutting one's own legs or cutting the branch one sits on.

Today, the need of the hour is not competition between Indian industrialists and businessmen on one side and the multinational companies on the other side, but mutual cooperation. Just as the multinationals do business with China on China's terms and conditions, so also we should allow

the multinationals to do business in India on our terms and conditions.

In business, working in cooperation benefits both the parties while competition only benefits the healthy and wealthy at the cost of the poor. Due to excessive competition the rich are becoming richer and the poor, poorer. Barns are overflowing with grain while the poor are dying of starvation, as they are unable to purchase the grain.

How long will the poor be sacrificed on the altar of globalization? Where is our humanness in these situations? In the name of globalization and progress how long will we allow the poor to live without self-dignity? How long are we going to shut our ears against their cries of misery and starvation death?