

## 28. Impact of Globalisation on Education

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### Introduction

Globalisation refers to the increasing flow of technology, finance, trade, knowledge, values and ideas across borders (Knight, J. and de Wit, H. 1997). The meaning of globalisation, for a country in stark terms is global competition and in a competitive world the one who comes second is not good enough. One has to be at the top to count. The tool that will take a country to a pre-eminent position is knowledge. It gives a country the competitive edge. The wealth of a nation is no more land, buildings and money, but knowledge-based systems which add value. Many countries realise the value of the intellectual prowess of their people and equate intellectual capital with real money. (Mashelkar R.A. 1998) The 21st century witnessed various types of changes around the world. These changes have made a country realise that it cannot isolate itself and build walls around it from the rest of the world, neither can it survive without the aid of other developed countries. So globalisation means development on a global scale without any relevance of national boundaries.

Of course, technology, finance, trade, knowledge, people, values and ideas have been flowing across borders for millennia. The speed of the transborder flow has constantly increased, with faster methods of transport of people and equipment and faster methods of communication of information and ideas. However, until the last century, we could move information around no faster than we could move people who know or carried that information. Now, modern communication has converted the world into a global village. Radio and television has brought into our living room events in far-off lands. We can be as immediately informed of a plane crash half a world away as one half a mile away. Air travel is fast. We can have our breakfast in one continent and lunch in another. And there is hardly a city in the world which cannot provide us with a Chinese Restaurant, a hamburger etc. Travel across the sea provided opportunity

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for closer relations between countries. Travel, as we can see now is not for pleasure or adventure alone, but also for trade which can improve the financial status of any country. Science and technology have also accelerated the process of globalisation. The combination of the affordable personal computer, powerful software packages, and cheap inter-connection via world-wide networks has increased the flow of ideas and data by many orders of magnitude. We can now store, retrieve, manipulate and transmit data, representing information, knowledge and ideas. We can do it quickly, conveniently, and in bulk. All these inculcates a mental orientation that further encourages globalisation.

### **Globalisation and Education**

Today, policy-makers, development planners and politicians everywhere are talking about the need of countries to prepare themselves for the challenges which globalisation will pose in this new millennium. I am not sure how one prepares oneself for a millennium, if a millennium is still a thousand years! Nor am I sure what the policy-makers and planners mean when they refer to "globalisation". Some of them seem to be just throwing around an attention-getting term, which is now in vogue. However, it would appear that when many people use the term, they are referring to some kind of economic phenomenon and specifically to increasing integration of national economies into expanding international markets.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its Human Development Report (1999) states that globalisation implies much more than the flow of money and commodities across the globe. Globalisation refers first and foremost to the growing interdependence of the world's people. It is a process of integration involving not only the economy but also technology and governance.

When one examines what has been happening in the area of economic integration at the international level, one cannot but observe the contribution, which the transnational corporations (TNCs) have been making to global economic interdependence. This contribution is revealed not only by the sheer scale of activities of the TNCs, but also by the ways in which the largest companies have integrated their administrative and productive systems worldwide. An excellent example of this is, of course, the car industry. There is, to begin with, the actual car-making. However, there are also the goods and services associated with car-making, namely production and refining of oil, the building of petrol stations, hotels and motels, as well as highway construction. The car industry is one of the most globalised of all manufacturing sectors, and is dominated by a small number of large TNCs. This particular set of large TNCs has a centralised co-ordination of the various tasks which are carried out in many places and countries, a system which may be referred to as vertical integration. It may

also be said that the changes taking place in the car industry are part of a global process of the spatial reorganisation of industry (UNDP, 1999).

Technology and Modern communication has converted the world into a "global village". For example, the civil war in Ivory Coast, the almost unending debate of attacking Iraq, the senseless violence and killings carried out by terrorists, or the plight of the people of Afghanistan are shown on TV, and this helps to familiarise us in little or no time with places some of us had never heard of before. When we add to this the information we get from radio sets and video machines, we begin to have evidence pointing in the direction of a world information order. The cinema, television, advertising and electronic communication further reveal globalisation's awesome force. We should recognise in the process, too, the enormous influence which IBM and Microsoft have over international information flow, particularly in the supply of computer resources. The focus of control over all of this information is definitely to be found in the industrialised countries (Giddens, 1997).

Most people who use the term globalisation give the impression that we are dealing with a phenomenon which is completely new. This is not quite the case. Globalisation dates back to at least two or three centuries when the Western influence started to spread across the world. At the same time, it should be recognised that globalisation today is markedly different in some ways from what it was in the past. There are new markets like the foreign exchange operations and capital markets that are globally linked and operate 24 hours a day. The new actors like the World Trade Organisation (WTO), have authority over national governments; the TNCs, have more economic power than many states and many other groups that transcend national boundaries. These other groups include the United Nations and its affiliated organisations (such as UNESCO), the European Community, which links states or other economic enterprises with mutual international interests, and so on. New tools like, cellular phones, media networks and the like have come into being. There are new rules which comprise multi-lateral property. These agreements are backed by strong enforcement mechanisms, and are binding on governments to the point where they reduce the scope for national policy (UNDP, 1999). In short, the world today is one in which people's lives are being linked more closely and more immediately than ever before through shrinking space, shrinking time and disappearing borders (UNDP, 1999). It is felt that a proper insight and understanding of globalisation can be gained by incorporating globalisation in not only economic policies, but also in the educational policies.

Globalisation of education may have many benefits. There are several important changes which must accompany this process if globalisation

is said to be helping to build a better world for all. The benefits associated with globalisation today have included expanded markets for some countries, as well as the flow of ideas, knowledge and culture through education, in general, from those countries to the rest of the world. However, the opportunities and benefits of globalisation have not been equitably distributed across the globe especially in third world countries. The globalisation which we have been experiencing has been marked by increasing concentration of income, resources and wealth among people, corporations and countries and progress in education has been ignored.

Globalisation of education must be made to work for people. If it is to accomplish this, it must take into account the following six factors, as has been pointed out by the UNDP (1999):

1. *Ethics*: less violation of human rights
2. *Equity*: less disparity within and between nations
3. *Inclusion*: less marginalisation of people and countries
4. *Human security*: less instability of societies and less vulnerability of people
5. *Sustainability*: less environmental destruction, and
6. *Development*: less poverty and deprivation

Globalisation of Education is an important asset for any country. Learning can and does take place in different forms for example, formal settings such as schools, colleges and universities. According to Coombs (1985) education also takes place in non-formal and informal settings. Non-formal education is a handy generic label covering—any organised, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children. It includes, for example, agricultural extension and farmer training programmes, adult literacy programmes, occupational skill training given outside the formal system, youth clubs with substantial educational purposes, and various community programmes of instruction in health, nutrition, family planning, co-operatives, and the like. (Coombs and Ahmed (1974:8) Informal education differs from both formal and non-formal education in that it is by no means organised. To quote Coombs and Ahmed again, as reproduced in Coombs, informal education refers to the life-long process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment at home, at work, at play; from the example and attitudes of family and friends; from travel; reading newspapers and books; or by listening to the radio or viewing films or television. Generally, informal education is unorganised, unsystematic and even unintentional at times, yet it accounts for the great bulk of any person's total lifetime learning – including that of even a highly 'schooled'

person. (*ibid*) Therefore globalisation of education should be incorporated in the formal, non-formal and informal systems. Experiences gained from other countries can be shared and exchange of ideas should be the focus of globalisation of education.

### **Mechanisms of Globalisation**

Globalisation is the magic word today. Satisfactory development, especially in the third world country like ours, may improve if there is a link up with the global market. There are mechanisms for globalisation but mechanisms can remain unused if there are no incentives for their use.

The mechanisms of globalisation are stated below:

- (i) *Travel*: It has become more convenient and affordable for more people, and in educational institutions, this translates into increased staff and student mobility. This in turn brings with it a desire to have international recognition of credits and qualifications to facilitate travel as a current student or recent graduate.
- (ii) *Free Trade Zones*: Many groups of countries are setting up free trade zones, thereby encouraging the flow of trade and finance across the borders within the zone. The trade zones lead to the movement of people to support it. They take their knowledge, values and ideas. For education, this means the need to educate people who are comfortable with operating in different national environments, whose qualifications to do so are accepted by the recipients of whatever service they are providing.
- (iii) *Multinational Companies*: Multinational companies usually wish to be able to employ staff like professionals and other specialists in different countries with known qualifications; or to move their staff internationally and have the staff's qualifications recognised; or to provide staff development activities wherever the staff may be, the results of which must be transferable. This movement is not restricted to free-trade zones.
- (iv) *Education*: Following from the points discussed above, ways are needed to provide internationally, information about the nature, level and quality of education.
- (v) *Mobility of education*: Another educational reason for globalisation is that people learn about the type of educational on offered elsewhere, and want it. This means that the people travel or the education does. There are many ways to achieve the latter the formal, nonformal and informal systems, and each has its own characteristics, benefits and drawbacks.
- (vi) *The business of education*: Building on the needs of a country, education itself has become an international business.

### Role Played by Globalisation on Education

Globalisation is to be realized as a worldwide trend to which our country cannot be a mere spectator. Whenever a process of change begins in a country to reform the socio-economic system, the first priority should be given to education because education is the fundamental necessity for development. But it is seen that the speed of change and reform in the field of education in our country is very slow and unsatisfactory. The main reason for the slow speed of educational reforms process is the mindset, which is not bold enough to experiment with new and unconventional ideas. Even now, the decision to globalise education has not taken shape. Some important prerequisites to globalisation like good quality, is a prerequisite to globalisation which in turn, will keep us on our toes to maintain and improve the quality further. Quality education depends on proper educational and infrastructural facilities like libraries, computers, audio/visual aids, laboratory, workshop, well maintained buildings, furniture, hostels, electricity, water, telephone, etc. and continuously updated syllabi. There should be fundamental change in the policy regarding tuition fees and financing so as to enable institutions to develop the facilities of international standard, which, in turn, will attract more foreign students. Therefore, it is very important to have educational and infrastructural facilities of international standards to entice foreign students. However, these prerequisites have been ignored because to fulfill these prerequisites some radical changes in the policy shall be needed which our mindset does not allow. But the policy makers must appreciate that if we do not go for globalisation whole-heartedly, the benefits coming in shall be limited. (Harsolekar 2000). We can see that the present era is an era of academic globalisation due to the fact that more and more students are aspiring and seeking foreign education. Education, today, is considered as a marketable commodity and is being exported or imported through various mechanisms as stated earlier. Therefore globalisation of education should:

1. Ensure that students have not only mastery of numeracy, reading, and writing (where necessary, in both mother tongue and national language), but also the capacity:
  - (i) as *global citizens*, to live and act in both a knowledge-based learning society and a multi-cultural world
  - (ii) as *communicators*, to integrate themselves into the information revolution and bridge the digital divide that threatens to marginalise them even further
  - (iii) as *workers*, to adapt themselves to, or create new opportunities to work within, the rapidly changing economic circumstances of their society
  - (iv) as *preservers* of their culture, to search for and strengthen

their cultural identity, develop new talents, and expand their creative potential, and

- (v) as *lifelong learners*, to continue to learn from, and contribute to, an increasingly knowledge-based society.
2. Strengthen local and regional responses to globalisation. At the school and community level, supported by national policies and programmes, children can gain initial literacy in their mother tongue, thereby both reinforcing their cultural identity and making easier mastery of the national language. They can also be helped to understand how their traditions and beliefs, when nurtured and developed rather than repressed and ignored, can strengthen, rather than fragment, national identity. And at the regional inter-country level, we can work to build a stronger regional identity and a common front in response to the processes of globalisation.
  3. “Humanise” the often harmful impact of globalisation on education systems. This impact is only starting to be seen and is reflected in the following trends found in many countries:
    - (i) the increasing privatisation of education, beginning with an explosion of private institutions of higher education but often expanding downward to lower levels of the system
    - (ii) the further decentralisation of education, but where such decentralisation largely transfers only financial responsibility for education – rather than genuine control of content and process – to lower levels of the system
    - (iii) the inability of impoverished, slow-moving education systems to keep up with the ever-changing demands of local – and global – labour markets
    - (iv) the excessive standardisation of educational content, methods, and assessment through curriculum integration, the sharing (often electronically) of teacher training and classroom materials, and the development of standard systems of quality assurance, evaluation, accreditation, and accountability
    - (v) the increasing domination in education of new information and communication technologies, in schools, across schools, and across nations, usually to the disadvantage of those on the wrong side of the “digital divide”.

The role of educators in this context, therefore, is to “humanise” these potentially harmful impacts, first by recognising that they exist by analysing carefully their differential impact on population groups in the country and finally by taking action to ensure the harm is redressed.

In doing so, governments and their ministries of education must:

1. reconfirm their commitment to ensuring education for all – not leaving the task solely to the private sector
2. promote decentralisation which ensures genuine local community participation in education and management
3. teach new competencies – more relevant life and livelihood skills—not narrowly attached to quickly outmoded jobs but rather able to be adapted to new opportunities and new kinds of competition and employment in a globalising world
4. continue to promote the diversification of educational content and methods and ensure that standardisation of content, methods, and assessment does not lead to the homogenisation of knowledge – at the expense of local, traditional, indigenous knowledge – or the dismissal of systems and schools that don't make the grade as not deserving of further help
5. seriously attempt to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that new information and communication technologies are used to reduce disparities in educational access and quality rather than increase them.

Above all, governments must continue to insist on the autonomy of national education systems, on their responsiveness to local needs and contexts, and on their resistance to the ideological package of globalisation that can affect the delivery of schooling by influencing negatively fundamental education paradigms, national policies, and local practices. The traditional goals of a good education – the flowering of human potential and the development of “complete” persons – must not be replaced by more instrumental targets of labour productivity and industrial competitiveness.

### **Impact of Globalisation on Education**

In the attempt to humanise globalisation, we should try to promote more alternative dialogues around issues of globalisation, build cultural and communication bridges among people most affected by the process, maintain and defend cultural heritage under threat, and empower and connect those excluded from the process. This is not an easy task when the process we face is such a daunting one. But we should face this task with greater understanding and, ultimately, greater success. Education must reflect this reality, but in order to understand the likely impact of globalisation on education, we must first get under the surface of the concept itself.

There are currently three different models describing the likely impact of globalisation.

1. *Hyperglobalisation model*: This is the most extreme in predicting that obsolete nations will be replaced by the global market.

Indeed, it goes further, suggesting that decisions are taken more rationally by the market than by governments.

2. *Global skeptics Model*: The global skeptics recognises hyperglobalisation as a political doctrine but not as an economic reality. Instead, it argues that trade is increasingly located within transnational economic blocs which in practice exclude more nations than they embrace. The developed nations are becoming even richer at the expense of the under-developed nations which cannot afford the membership fee to the new global club. The increasing violence of anti-WTO protests is one manifestation of global skepticism.
3. *Transformationalist model*: It insists that global markets are not replacing nations, but are transforming the relationships within and between them that we have lived with for so long. The role of the family, for example, will be completely different in a globalised economy that takes for granted equal gender rights. Paradoxically, the global will encourage the local and we shall need to learn to operate at a series of different political levels, the national and the local.

The transformationalist model of globalisation seems the one most likely to describe the future of education. Governments will not be willing to let education go, but they will come to recognise the need for an international dimension to their programmes. The search is on across the world for the right balance between education for national citizenship and education for participation in global affairs.

The prize is more than economic achievement. All three models of globalisation point to the increasing cultural mix that will take place within national borders. As the world shrinks, the ability to live with, to understand and then to value cultural diversity will become one of the most precious lessons of education. The educational system has much to offer. Its programmes should be based upon the fundamental appreciation of diversity not just as a practical expediency, but rather as a necessary human strength. Through its language policy, its broad curriculum and its varied styles of learning, it provides the means to study diversity, to understand it and to draw appropriate conclusions from that understanding.

### **Characteristics of Globalisation**

In light of these many debates, it could be extremely risky to advance a description of the characteristics of globalisation that most closely affect education, but these seem to include, at the very least:

- in *economic terms*, a transition from one form of organisation to another; a rise in internationalised advertising and consumption

- patterns; a reduction in barriers to the free flow of goods, workers, and investments across national borders; and, correspondingly, new pressures on the roles of worker and consumer in society;
- in *political terms*, a certain loss of nation-state sovereignty, or at least the erosion of national autonomy; and, correspondingly, a weakening of the notion of the “citizen” as a unified and unifying concept, a concept that can be characterized by precise roles, rights, obligations, and status.
  - in *cultural terms*, a tension between the ways in which globalisation brings forth more standardisation and cultural homogeneity, while also bringing more fragmentation through the rise of locally oriented movements. However, a third theoretical alternative identifies a more conflicted and dialectical situation, with both cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity appearing simultaneously in the cultural landscape.

### **The Dilemmas of Globalisation**

The most obvious “evils” of globalisation are structural unemployment, the erosion of organised labor as a political and economic force, social exclusion, and an increase in the gap between rich and poor within nations and, especially, worldwide. Some people associate globalisation with an increase in urban insecurity due to growing urban violence; with the growing presence of extra-territorial, extra-state movements that thwart international development and may pose serious threats to security, peace, stability, and development (such as drug trafficking, mafias, merchants of weapons of mass destruction, or terrorist organisations).

China or Malaysia for example, have become increasingly suspicious of globalisation and have tried to find ways to constrain its effects on their national way of life. Yet, at the same time they desire some of the benefits of participation in a global economy and exchange of goods and information. A major question today is the extent to which societies will be able to pick and choose the ways in which, and the degree to which, they can participate in a global world; or whether there is no halfway alternative.

Similarly, both below and beyond the national level, there are clearly regional and traditional movements for whom globalisation is something to be resisted vigorously. The rise of some new social movements and the role of local and international non-governmental organisations exert an influence that may be termed “counterglobalisation.” In some instances these groups are equally “global” in character (international human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International; environmental organisations, such as Green peace; or labor organisations such as the ILO). In other cases they are anti-globalisation, profoundly resistant to the economic, political, and cultural interpenetration of different societies and cultures (for example, regionalist

and fundamentalist groups of various types). While globalisation is clearly happening, its form and shape are being determined by patterns of resistance, some with more progressive intentions than others.

Is it possible, then, to give general answers to the question of how globalisation is affecting educational policy and practice worldwide? There can be no single answer; national and local economic, political, and cultural changes are affected by, and actively responding to, globalising trends within a broad range of patterns. Indeed, because education is one of the central arenas in which these adaptations and responses occur, it will be one of the most myriad of institutional contexts. Hence, the answers developed will require a careful analysis of trends in education, including the currently popular policy “buzz words” (privatisation and decentralisation of educational systems) that drive policy formation on education and prevailing research agendas based in rational organisation and management theories, the role of national and international organisations in education, including teacher unions, parent organisations, and social movements.

Questions about the role of participatory action research, and multicultural democratic struggle emerge as central in these debates. From these critical perspectives might emerge new educational models to confront the winds of change, including education in the context of new popular cultures and nontraditional social movements (and hence the role of cultural studies to understand them); new models of rural education for marginalised areas and the education of the poor; new models for migrant education, for the education of street children, for the education of girls and women in general, but particularly in the context of traditional societies and cultures that have suppressed women’s educational aspirations; new models of partnerships for education (between state, NGO, and in some instances religious or private organisations); new models for adult literacy and nonformal education; new models of university/business relationships; and new models for educational financing and school organisation.

UNESCO and other UN agencies have actively supported some reform initiatives. These include, for instance, reforms toward universal literacy and universal access to education; educational quality as a key component of equity; education as lifelong education; education as a human right; education for peace, tolerance, and democracy; eco-pedagogy, or how education can contribute to sustainable ecological development (and hence to an eco-economy); and educational access and new technologies of information and communication. Thus, the influence of globalisation upon educational policies and practices can be seen to have multiple and conflicting, effects. Not all of these can be classified simply as beneficial or not, and some are being shaped by active tensions and struggles.

## **Conclusion**

At the economic level, because globalisation is affecting employment, it touches upon one of the primary traditional goals of education, preparation for work. Educational institutions will need to reconsider this mission in light of changing job markets in a work environment; new skills and the flexibility to adapt to changing job demands and, for that matter, changing jobs over a lifetime; and dealing with an increasingly competitive international labor pool. Yet, educational institutions should not only be concerned with preparing students as producers; but they should help shape consumer attitudes and practices as well. Sponsorship of educational institutions for both curricular and co-curricular, that confront students every day in their classrooms should be encouraged. This sponsorship can become remarkably bold and explicit in its intentions.

The broader economic effects of globalisation tend to force national educational policies that emphasise “doing more with less”; promoting market approaches to educational institution’s choice (particularly vouchers); rational management of the educational institution’s organisations; performance assessment (testing); and deregulation in order to encourage new providers (including online providers) of educational services.

At the political level, a repeated point here has been the constraint on national/state policy making posed by external demands from transnational institutions. Yet, at the same time economic coordination and exchange have become increasingly well-regulated, and as stronger institutions emerge to regulate global economic activity, there has also been a growing internationalisation of global conflict, crime, terrorism, and environmental issues, but with an inadequate development of political institutions to address them. Here, again, educational institutions may have a crucial role to play in addressing these problems, and the complex network of intended and unintended human consequences that have followed from the growth of global corporations, global mobility, global communication, and global expansion. In part, this awareness may help to foster a more critical conception of what education for “world citizenship” requires.

The global context presents a fundamentally different sort of challenge to education. Previously education was more focused on the needs and development of the individual, with an eye toward helping the person fit into a community defined by relative proximity, homogeneity, and familiarity. Education for life in a global world broadens the outlines of “community” beyond the family, the region, or the nation. Today the communities of potential affiliation are multiple, dislocated, provisional, and ever changing. Family, work, and citizenship, the main sources of identification in enlightenment education, remain important, certainly,

but are becoming more ephemeral, compromised by mobility (whether voluntary or diasporic) and competition with other sources of affiliation, including the full range of what can be termed, in Benedict Anderson's phrase, "imagined communities." Whereas educational institutions should prepare learners for a relatively predictable range of future opportunities and challenges, educational institutions today confront a series of conflicting, and changing, ad hoc expectations, directed to unpredictable alternative paths of development and to constantly shifting reference points of identification. Educational aims should have more flexibility and adaptability (for instance, in responding to rapidly changing work demands and opportunities), with learning how to coexist with others in diverse public spaces, and with helping to form and support a sense of identity that can remain viable within multiple contexts of affiliation. Hence in retrospect, it becomes apparent that we should not belittle the traditional goals of education- the development of complete persons. As Jacques Delors proposed education should be throughout live. And one way of achieving this is by using globalisation as a tool to reach the goal.

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