

Globalization and Changing Caste and Gender Relations among the Educated Youth in Central Gujarat

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I. Introduction:

Globalization is universal Eco-Social and Cultural process. Basically an economical process involving free trading of Goods and Services across the countries, it also creates International Organizations, transnational community and culture in the world. It also brings about socio-cultural changes in society and thereby become foci of social science research. Started in India during 1980; Globalization has highest impact on educated Indian Youth which hold pro-change or progressive attitude. Accordingly a small empirical study involving 180 post-graduate students of central Gujarat was conducted recently with special reference their perception of globalization and changed caste and gender relations under its impact. The primary data for study was collected through personal interview method conducted with the help of interview-schedule used as research tool. Some of the major findings emerging from the analyzed data are reported and discussed in present research paper.

II. Globalization, Caste and Gender relations defined:

As per the definition of UNO ESCWA (2008) Globalization refers to the “reduction and removal of barriers between National Borders to facilitate the flow of goods, capital, services and labour.” Saskia Sassen (2006) defining the globalization says “It consists of Enormous variety of micro processes to begin to denationalize what has been constructed as national policies, capital subjectivities, urban spaces and emergence of integrated and complex Global system of production and exchange”. Takis Fotopoulous (2001) indicated its two major types: (i) Political Globalization implying emergence of Transnational Elites and Phasing out all powerful nation states. (ii) Cultural Globalization implying the world wide homogenization of culture. In all Globalization implies free trading of goods and services, development of International Organizations like WTO, UNO, World Bank. IMF and transnational community and culture in the world caste relations may be defined as relatively regular pattern or process of social interaction and interrelationship between the persons of several castes in the fields of

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education, occupation, public life, marriage, socio-cultural ceremonies and festivals. Gender refers to cultural construction on sexual differences between man and woman in society currently it is thought of as a process of structuring subjectivity rather than as a structure of fixed relations. Gender relations have been defined as social relations referring to relatively regular patterns or process of social interaction between man and woman in all institutional spheres of life.

III. Socio-Economic background of Students Studied:

Socio-economic conditions of individual determine his social position, life-style, social attitudes, behavioral patterns as well as nature of social relations including caste and gender relations. Accordingly, when social-economic background of students under study was examined it was found that most of them are young (88.8%), unmarried (86.1%), girls(60.5%) coming from nuclear family (75%) of small (28.8%) and middle size (36.1%) secondly large majority of them Hindu (80.5%) belonging to OBC (53.8%), SC (16.6%) and ST (11.1%) communities. Thirdly vast majority of them comes from lower (23.3%) and lower middle class (41.6%) families staying in rural (49.4%) and semi-urban (26.6%) area. Finally with regard to their parental education, it is observed that parents of the majority of students have taken primary (24.4%) and secondary education (37.7%). From these facts, it may be concluded that most of the students were young by age, Female by sex and coming from backward caste-middle class families living in rural and semi-urban area. This also indirectly suggests the changed social composition of student population in higher educational institutions with predominance of backward caste-middle class female students.

IV. Socio-Cultural Impact of Globalization:

Basically an economic process Globalization has certain socio-cultural effects on people of society. These effects particularly imply adoption of modern values, beliefs and behavioral patterns. In this context, when data analyzed it is observed that most of the students while viewing Globalization as socio-cultural process, describe it as an extended form or new version of modernization with greater American impact. They also perceived it as inevitable process. Indicating specific effects of globalization, majority of students reported: (i) Material living and things are more real and important than spiritual one (65.5%), (ii) Increased use of goods of comfort and Luxury (57%) as well as craze for imported goods (54%), (iii) Need based development and use of social relations (69.4%), (iv) equal respect for all religion (74.4%), freedom for Individual in all institutional spheres of life (67%), (v) equality of treatment irrespective of caste, class, religion and gender (63.8%), (vi) competitive attitude (60.5%), (vii) Aspiring for higher and newer goals (62%) desiring perfection and highest achievement (72%) and willingness to go abroad for educational and settlement purpose (49%). Finally, speaking

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specifically about the effect of Globalization most of the students pointed out development and use of utilitarian relations of formal nature in society at large.

V. Changed Caste Relations:

Social relations constitute the social structure of society. In the caste dominated Indian society, caste relations are important social relations. These relations are undergoing changes under the impact of Globalization. When caste relations are examined among the students under present study it is found that majority of students reported about inclusion of students of other castes in their friendship circle and development of friendship relations with them (55%), with regard to the specific form or nature of such relations in terms of patterns of social interaction, majority of them reported co-reading (57%), co-playing (53%) and mutual consultation on personal or academic matter (52%). Similarly, substantial proportion of them reported about joint celebration of socio-religious festivals (47%) eating to gather (45.5%), movies-seeing (48%) and ceremonial attendance (42%). Finally considerable proportion of them also reported home-visit and co-travelling (38%) as well as expressed their belief in inter caste marriage relation (37%). These facts indicate increasing mixing up of students of different castes, declining social distance and discrimination and development of egalitarian relationships among them under the modernizing effect of globalization - suggesting changed and inclusive caste relations.

VI. Changed Gender Relations:

Gender relations are also important social relations constituting social structure of human society. In India Gender relations are traditionally characterized by inequality, discrimination and social restraints particularly on Female partner. These relations are likely to change and become more open, free egalitarian in modern time. The change in Gender relations is expected to be greater among educated youth studying in higher educational institutions. Accordingly when these relations are examined among students under present study, several facts are observed. These include development of friendship relationship (44%), co-travelling (54%), co-playing (41%), movies-seeing (40%) among them. Similarly good number of them also reported Home-visit (25%), ceremonial attendance (22%), co-reading (27%), joint-celebration of college functions or festivals (33%), mutual consultation on personal and academic matters and eating together (20.5%). Finally some students expressing their liberal opinion also approved live-in relationship (16%) and pre-marital relationship (19%) in case of true friendship and committed love affairs respectively. All these facts point out toward increasing mixing-up of male-female students under the liberalizing effect of Globalization – suggesting changed gender relations with greater proximity, equality and openness.

VII. Conclusion:

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On the whole one may conclude that Globalization as a cultural process has mainly modernizing and westernizing effects on educated Indian Youth. Under these effects, the traditional forms of caste and gender relations have changed and become more liberal, open, inclusive egalitarian with greater proximity, lesser social distance and discrimination and restrains.

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