

A SOCIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF GLOBALIZATION'S SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS ON ASEAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

In this paper the center of attention has been made on a number of constituent parts fundamental to Globalization, and cultural changes across the globe in general and ASEAN countries in particular. Analysis has begun with introduction and definition of Globalization and social transformation, their relationship and impact on inequality and socio-cultural development. Next step has been taken forward to the discussion of sources, history and institutions of globalization and theories of development and underdevelopment. Finally, in this paper sociological approaches at their good effect are used to analysis and get insight into gender inequality and changing socio-cultural patterns in ASEAN countries. In simple this paper will review the gender inequality as the consequence of socialization process, and globalization with special reference to ASEAN countries. Then the paper will also discuss both bright and dark sides of the cultural development in ASEAN member countries.

Introduction

Most of the sociologists are of the opinion and argue that people and institutions across the world are becoming gradually more, aware of, and dependent on one another in their social life to seek cooperation and exchange goods and services from one corner to another. This tendency of interdependency of people globally beyond the borders is known as globalization. Globalization is the result of advances in communication, transportation, and information technologies. It describes the growing economic, political, technological, and cultural

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linkages that connect individuals, communities, businesses, and governments around the world. Globalization on the whole is a combination of economic, technological, socio-cultural and political factors that bring changes whether acceptable or not to governments or people of that country.

Globalization has both negative and positive aspects. Among globalization's benefits are a sharing of basic knowledge, technology, investments, resources, and ethical values. Among the negative aspects are the rapid spread of diseases, illicit drugs, crime, terrorism and extremism, and uncontrolled migration, and the very strong challenge of globalization is global inequality. Global inequality has increased tremendously since industrialization and urbanization and is still increasing on. Global inequality has two competing explanations; one stresses how the differences of some societies contribute to their own lack of economic growth. The other stresses how the history of social relations among countries enriched some nations at the expense of the others. Inequality between rich and poor countries remains deplorable. Arguably, rather than spreading the wealth, globalized industries and technologies may be turning the world into a more unequal place.

In this paper globalization has been approached in two ways one as a process contributing social developing across the world in general and in ASEAN countries in particular the other is globalization as means of social inequality in most of the ASEAN countries. These approaches utilized from sociological perspective and analyzed to understand whether globalization is contributing social development or resulting in inequality worldwide.

Definition of Globalization

Globalization could be defined in various ways and different approaches are used to study globalization, as an idea, as a pattern or project, as a process of human being's history, as a probable future, as a situation, and as a trend, because it is not subject matter

to a single discipline; however it as subject matter is being studied under the disciplines like Sociology, Cultural Studies, International relations, Political Science and Economics.. Globalization means different things to different people. Some say it is the movement of people, language, ideas, and products around the world. Others see it as the dominance of multinational corporations and the destruction of cultural identities. Globalization can be defined as the integration of economic, political and social cultures and is related to the spreading of modernization throughout the world. Advocates of globalization say it ensures growing prosperity for everyone; doubters say that some groups and nations will be at disadvantage and also point to the downside of economic independence.¹

Sources for Globalization

The majority of professionals feature globalization to enhancements in communication, transportation, and information technologies. For example, not simply currencies, but also stock, bonds, and other financial assets can be traded around the clock and around the world due to innovations in communication and information processing. People can be almost anywhere and remain in instant communication with their employers, customers, or families 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Advances in communications instantly unite people around the globe. Improvements in transportation are also part of globalization. The world becomes smaller due to next-day delivery by jet airplane. Even slow, ocean going vessels have streamlined transportation and lowered costs due to innovations such as containerized shipping. Advances in information technologies have also lowered business costs. Not only do goods, money, and information move great distances quickly, but also more people are moving great distances as well. Migration, both legal and illegal, is a major feature of this era of globalization.

The History of Globalization

The historical origins of globalization are the subject of on-going debate. Some scholars are of opinion that the globalization is newly concept of modern industrialized world while others regard it as a phenomenon with a long history. Perhaps the most extreme proponent of a deep historical origin for globalization was Andre Gunder Frank, an economist associated with dependency theory. Frank argued that a form of globalization has been in existence since the rise of trade links between Sumer and the Indus Valley Civilization in the third millennium B.C.² In the sixteenth century (renaissance) New World began to engage in substantial cultural, material and biologic exchange with Africa and Eurasia. In the 17th century, globalization emerged as a business phenomenon with the establishment of British East India Company, first Multinational Corporation, Dutch East India Company, and the Portuguese East India Company. The 19th century is sometimes called "The First Era of Globalization."³ The extent of globalization since about 1980 is unprecedented in the world history. The term globalization has been used in the social sciences since the 1960s; but the term has been publicized in last two decades. An early description of globalization was penned by the American entrepreneur-turned-minister Charles Taze Russell who coined the term 'corporate giants' in 1897. Since its popularization by economists and journalists in the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of globalization has inspired numerous competing definitions and interpretations⁴ The nation state is still major centre of power in the world. National borders remain important. Truly transnational corporations are rare; most concentrate their business in a single country. Many developing countries are poorly integrated into the global economy. Most people in the world have little or no access to the advanced technologies that exemplify globalization, such as e-mail. Cultural differences remain substantial across the planet.

Theories of Development and Underdevelopment

Originally men and women lived in small, self-sufficient communities, dependent on things they found in their environment. If food, fuel, or materials ran out, they would simply move on. One of the first significant social and technological developments was the transition from this nomadic way of life to agricultural cultivation in settled communities, from which societies began as we know them today.

Economists distinguish between *growth*, by which they basically mean more of the same—more goods and services—and *development*, by which they mean growth with structural and technological change. Typically, in the early stages of development economies have most of their production and labor force in agriculture. Later, the manufacturing and service sectors become larger. The service sector includes government, defense, construction, transport, finance, insurance, banking, and the like, as well as the work of people who do not produce physical objects such as cars or radios. Thus, accountants, lawyers, teachers, and hairdressers are considered part of the service sector.

Modernization Theory: A Functionalist Approach

According to the classical theories of industrialization, and economic and social modernization, developed earlier in the 20th century, industrialization and labor relations of a country depend on domestic factors such as technology or rationalization; and societies experience similar trajectories of progressive social and economic change with industrialization. Modernization theory not only stresses the process of change, but also the response to that change. It also looks at internal dynamics referring to social and cultural structure and the adaptation of new technologies.

Recently, the increasing integration of national economies with the rise of the latest wave of the economic globalization led many to

believe that industrialization and related social changes in less developed countries are defined more by the dynamics of the new global economy than the domestic factors. The recent wave of globalization also brought the issue of the role of the states under further scrutiny, predominantly in less developed countries including most of the ASEAN countries. The studies of industrialization and development in less developed countries have given special attention to the role of the state, and the bureaucracies and politicians who constituted the state elites. Modernization theory holds that economic underdevelopment results from poor countries lacking western attributes. These attributes include western values, business practice, levels of investment capital and stable government. According to modernization theory, global inequality results from worse dysfunctional characteristics of poor societies themselves. Societies characterized by these dysfunctions are poor. It follows that people living in rich countries can best help their poor cousins by transforming western culture and capital to them and eliminating the dysfunctions. Only then will the poor countries be able to cap population growth, stimulate democracy, and invigorate agricultural and industrial production. Government-to-government foreign aid can accomplish some of this much work also needs to be done, encourage western businesses to invest directly in poor countries and to increase trade between rich and poor countries.

Dependency Theory: A Conflict Approach

Dependency theory is a body of social science theories which are predicated on the notion that resources flow from a "periphery" of poor and underdeveloped states to a "core" of wealthy states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former. It is a central contention of dependency theory that poor states are impoverished and rich ones enriched by the way poor states are integrated into the "world system."⁵ For the last 500 years, the most powerful countries in the world deliberately impoverished the less powerful countries.

Focusing on internal characteristics blames the victim rather than the perpetrator of the crime. It follows that an adequate theory of global inequality should not focus on the internal characteristics of poor countries themselves. Instead, it ought to follow the principles of conflict theory and focus on patterns of domination and submission—specifically in this case, on the relationship between rich and poor countries. Around 1780 the industrial revolution begins. It enabled the western European countries, Russia, Japan and the United States to amass enormous wealth, which they used to extend their global reach. They forced their colonies to become a source of raw materials, cheap labor, investment opportunities, and markets for the conquering nations. In the decades following World War II, nearly all of the colonies in the world became politically independent. However, dependency theorists say the exploitation by direct political control was soon replaced by new means of achieving the same end: substantial foreign investment, support for authoritarian governments, and mounting debt.

Socio-Cultural Impacts of Globalization on ASEAN

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), comprises ten countries: Burma, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam was established in 1967. ASEAN aims to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to promote regional peace and stability through the rule of law and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Culture is defined as patterns of human activity and the symbols that give these activities significance. Culture is what people eat, how they dress, beliefs they hold, and activities they practice. Erla Zwingle, from the National Geographic article titled “Globalization” states, “When cultures receive outside influences, they ignore some and adopt others, and then almost immediately start to transform them.”⁶ Cultural globalization, driven by communication technology

and the worldwide marketing of Western cultural industries, was understood at first as a process of homogenization, as the global domination of American culture at the expense of traditional diversity. However, a contrasting trend soon became evident in the emergence of movements protesting against globalization and giving new momentum to the defense of local uniqueness, individuality, and identity, but largely without success.

One classic culture aspect is food. McDonalds, an American fast food company is the best example of cultural diffusion and changing cultural pattern throughout world. American Sociologist George Ritzer counted the term 'McDonalization' to describe the wide ranging socio-cultural process by which principles of fast food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world⁷. Meditation has been a sacred practice for centuries in Indian culture, but now same has been common in worldwide. Another common practice brought about by globalization is Chinese symbol tattoos. These tattoos are popular with today's younger generation despite the fact that, in China, tattoos are not thought of as cool Also, the Westerners who get these tattoos often don't know what they mean, making this an example of cultural appropriation⁸.

Advancement of information technologies (Internet) breaks down cultural boundaries across the world by providing people with easy access to communicate and share. Information and communication technology has arisen both optimism and pessimism.⁹ The impacts of globalization have been observed and noticed at internal and external sides which are either positive or negative. There is no doubt that ASEAN countries have accepted dramatic changes in last three decades after the globalization, urbanization, liberalization and modernization at regional and international level. Not a single state in the world is secure from these rapid unexpected changes. Singapore that was known as 'Cultural Desert' at the time of its independence in 1965, but Singapore government making the

numerous changes in cultural policy their city a "Global City for the Arts".¹⁰ The ASEAN Member Countries and the Republic of Korea (RoK) accelerated by the Dialogue Partnership since 1989 and by the Comprehensive Partnership declared on 30 November 2004 in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic. They made a commitment to the establishment of a Centre to promote ASEAN-ROK economic and socio-cultural relations, which was endorsed at the Tenth ASEAN-ROK Summit of 14 January 2007 in Cebu, the Philippines.

At the external level impacts of globalization are such as the development of international conventions, protocols and agreements in labour, migration, human rights, defense, terrorism, education, transportation, communications, tourism, environment, intellectual property rights, etc.; where as at internal level freedom of speech and association, gender equality, racial, ethnic and religious non-discrimination, parliamentary democracy, multi-party system, disclosure of public information, civil society, formation of non-governmental organizations, popular culture and urbanization.

Positive Impact

Globalization has paved the path for the competition and provided states with more opportunities to enhance their trade with other countries, made easier and cost-effective access to international capital, technology and professional manpower markets, expanding business opportunities overseas, enhanced international flows of people, information, knowledge and ideas, leading to the concept of a global village. With ASEAN Nations there is an improvement in quality of production and decrease in the price due to more effective competition among firms and as well as economic and cultural reforms. The emergence of non-governmental organization, networks in the ASEAN Nations have promoted the human rights and reduced the gender inequality, gender gap, work and cost based discrimination, racial and ethnic discrimination, ensured the greater

participation of community in decision making processes. These NGOs have played a vital role in changing the centuries old myths and attitudes towards women and underprivileged groups.

Negative Impact

The sharper distinction between winners and losers at the international level including greater disparities among both industrial and developing countries, a higher external dependence, globalization of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, loss of cultural diversity, and rise of ill-directed nationalism and patriotism have created tension among the states throughout world and that may be leading to international terrorism and international conflicts. The emergence of concepts such as terrorism, militancy, insurgency, religious extremism and intolerance might be the result of globalization and uneven economic disparity between advanced and less developed countries. Internally, widening regional (sub-national) disparities and dislocation of people, growing income disparities among people at the national and local levels, loss of individual identity, money as determinant of individual status and behaviour, loss of the sense of community at family, neighbourhood and township levels are the some growing trends because of globalization, which have wiped out the intimacy and proximity among community and given birth to communal and ethnic conflicts.

Conclusion

Globalization is the growing interdependence and mutual awareness of individuals and economic, political, and social institutions. It is a response to many forces. Some technological, such as, the development of inexpensive means of rapid international communication, other economic e.g. burgeoning international trade and investment, and still others political, the creation of transnational organizations that limit the sovereign powers of nation

states. Globalization has complex consequences it evokes an anti-globalization reactions.

Globalization has a long history. Its origin can be traced to the beginning of long-distance migration and trade. However, it was the beginning of European exploration and capitalism about 500 years ago that really put the spurs to globalization. Global inequality and poverty are staggering and in some aspects getting worse. The income gap between rich and poor countries and rich and poor individuals has grown worldwide since the 19th century. In the recent decades the number of desperately poor people has declined absolutely and in percentage terms worldwide, but it has increased in the less developed countries and ASEAN nations where there is lack of democratic and stable governance. Modernization theory argues that global inequality occurs as a result of some countries lacking sufficient capital, western values, rational business practices, and stable governments. Dependency theory counters that global inequality results from the exploitative relationship between rich and poor countries. An important test of the two theories concerns the effect of foreign investment on economic growth, but research on this subject is equivocal. Apparently, historical, social-structural, and policy factors matter greatly in determining how a particular country responds to international trade and foreign direct investment. The poor countries best able to emerge from poverty have a colonial past that left them with industrial infrastructures. They also enjoy a favorable geopolitical position. They implement strong, growth-oriented economic policies, and they have socially cohesive populations.

References

¹ Neeru Kothari, *Dictionary of Political Science*, OMEGA, New Delhi, 2008, P-74.

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³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dependency_theory

⁶ <http://magma.nationalgeographic.com / 2000 / culture / global /section1.html>

⁷ Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, P-71.

⁸ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle / lostinshowbiz / 2008 / aug / 18/bodyartblunders>

⁹ Sumit Roy, *Globalization, ICT and Developing Nations*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 2005, P-105

¹⁰ <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com / journal / 118787549 /abstract? CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>