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Review Paper

Understanding The Process of Globalization Through Parameters of Gandhian Political Economy

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ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization much of the stress has been given to the free trade and capitalist system order for mass production instead of production by masses. In the process of economic globalization due to the impact of capitalist mode of production violence is increasing in socio-economic sphere in larger context. In alternative terms we can put an argument for the establishment of non-violent economic order in Gandhian principles for resolving this contemporary economic crisis. Do we really need a high growth conflict intensive economy where exclusion, disparities and disturbance. These violent parameters make an economy in the trap of conflict-oriented peace less society. The burning socio-economic issues in the last few years have been the increasing conflicts amongst nations, individuals and civilization and continuously increasing the inequalities in all domains. These socio-economic evils indicate that economies of world are still in destructive in nature and in the trap of "Parasitic economy". According to J.C Kumarappa in the "Parasitic economy" "every economic activity is based on self-interested and violence is an essential part of social-political system. Understanding the globalization through parameters of Gandhian political economy requires both qualitative and quantitative aspect of research. Involving the thoughts of J.B Kriplani, Vinoba bhawe, Kaka Kalekar and Shriman Naryan agarwal in multidimensional framework in the aspect of economic globalization will make this research work theologically strong. This paper will follow the following schemes; this paper attempts to look at the above aspects and is divided in to three parts. In the first part, the theoretical relationship between globalization and principles of Gandhian political economy has been discussed. The Second part deals with the Gandhian perspective on sustainable economy with special reference to the contemporary problems occurred due to process of economic and cultural globalization. The third part deals with the relevance of Gandhian economic ideas with specific focus on "Non-Violent global Economic Order".

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Theoretical relationship between globalization and Gandhian political economy:

One of the core features of globalization is associated with internationalization of monopoly capital for accumulation. This monopolization led to intensification of global exploitation and it further leads to create violent global social order. Under this process of globalization states are forced to bail out the big corporations and seek to clear up the resulting financial crisis by cutting back on social services (Brahme, 2011). Globalization is not a new process but it exists since ancient times. Imperialism and colonialism is an example of globalization but as process and can be a narrow, purely economic view of the process, a broader but still an anthropocentric view, and a still broader view comprising the whole global eco-system (Nadkarni, 2014). In the detailed context, globalization and its relation to parameters of Gandhian political economy one can understand these dynamics through essential writings of Gandhi and as well as another Gandhian scholar. Globalization induces the idea of monopoly capitalism and exploitation global political order. One of the other dimensions related to aspects of conflict resolution. Many studies have proven that after consensus of Washington consensus all types of conflicts have increased in global political scenario. It was Gandhi, who first understands the impact of civilizational change of globalization on nation (Gandhi, 1920). During the period of British regime in India, globalization, dominantly economic sense was not an issue of during the days of Gandhi. Instead, it was colonialism –also a globalizing force. Gandhi understood these dynamics of globalization through freedom struggle and his sense of understanding of economic history of Colonial India. His conceptualization towards globalization was present in his writings and speeches. So, Gandhian perspective gives a set of useful criteria to analyse and evaluate, rather than a priori settled conclusions leaving his followers to do their own analysis. (Pani, 2001)

In fact, Gandhi was aware about the role of institution and individual in process of globalization. To him, globalization is not evil and individual and institutions are part of this process of integration but on the grounds of conflict resolution and ethical standards, there must be debate on the civilization aspects of globalization. While scholars need to also understand this universal fact that Gandhi himself was the product of process of globalization. The adverse effect of exploitative global order of colonial rule was resultant in the form of mass poverty and drain of resources (Naroji, 1920). In contrast to colonial globalization, modern globalization dealt with the issue of inequalities, conflict and process of social alienation. Needless to mention that with increasing globalization there is an increase in the global responsibility in tackling mass poverty, illiteracy, and ill –health in averting environmental crisis, implementing human rights and in achieving global peace.

Globalization is not a new phenomenon but has been there for ages but the reason it has become a regular feature of socio-economic and socio-political debates is that because its

form has change and there is hegemony of capitalist countries leading to concentration of power and resources, thus, destabilizing the world as a whole. The word “globalization” has different connotations in different perspectives but all of it leads to the same outcome of a united world with no boundaries and manifests itself as the saviour of mankind. In recent years it has swayed the nations to a new sort of neo-liberal orthodoxy which claims to create a homogenous state which benefits the majority. David Harvey (2005) writes about neo-liberalization as a system which “becomes hegemonic as a mode of discourse...has become incorporated into the common sense many of us interpret, live in and understand the world”. The flow of international finance capital has led to the concept of global village creating vacuum on the way as there is a tendency towards homogenizing the world. A major issue in this is that the counter narrative of socialism has not a provided a strong alternative as the disintegration of USSR led to fragmentation in other communist countries too, around the world and the ones that are left are mired in cases of corruption- both political and economic. Dollarization of the world economy and emergence of English language as the lingua franca has further contributed towards globalization. People in general and the civil society in particular looks at consolidation of countries due to advanced means of communication as one of the greatest gifts of globalization as they can air their views on many public issues relevant for the society. An interesting aspect is that post WTO there has been an upsurge of democracy in many parts of the world with the clamour becoming louder for democratic structure, secularism but most of these “democracies” are sponsored by the “invisible hand” of capital encouraging mass consumerism and public policies which would lead to more trade. However, in recent years this same clamour for democracy have been replace with “nationalist agendas”, pluralism to be replace with totalitarianism, secularism has become an anathema and globalization is perceived to be the benevolence of America to be honoured by all. In this backdrop, traditional public administration and policy formulation is a myth. The non-state actors have started playing a much bigger role which consequently changes the role of state bureaucracy as they have to be more inclusive of their inputs. This entire process of globalization has initiated a debate, especially between developed and developing nations regarding the real purpose behind this process. There is a whole set of literature which supports the view that globalization is a garb for imperialist forces to recapture the lost ground (Prabhat Patnaik, 1986, 2014). The country-wise or spatial analysis shows that the imperialist forces like America have supported democracy and then globalization in those countries which are resource rich, coercing them to frame policies that are in Favor of the imperialists. In India too, in recent years many policies have been influenced by the forces of globalization.

Deepak Nayyar ((2015) writes that economies have become global but politics is national which was true at the start of the New Economic Policy in India, but over the years politics

has also become global as the imperialist forces have extended their reach in the domestic politics of the countries by supporting the parties and regime which are in favor of them. The external factors like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, WTO and others have had great impact on the policy formulation in other countries (Heldge and Nordhaug, 2002). In India the policies in the post liberalization period have been extensively influenced by these Bretton Woods institutions in spite of them advocating procedures which are against the economic health of the country.

The concept of space is very important in the globalized world where the imperialist powers have created struggles out of the praxis administered on it. In the developing nations the despotic powers of the West created fissures in the societies and the existence of the nation states were challenged so as to capture the space (Banerjee, 2011). The imperialist, authoritarian powers sold the concept of "global village" which was basically a network created within the framework of urban space in the name of equality and freedom of movement of goods, capital, technology and profits but very limited movement of labour (Harvey, (2006), Chomsky (2007)). India too fell for this "dream" and adopted the neo liberal policy in 1991 along with the many colonial cousins of Asia, growing at a high rate for the next decade like many Western countries and adopting policies and programs having global outlook. This return to neo liberalism was not new to India as it was the policy that the empire had followed in India when they ruled the country and the feudal lords of yesteryears who later became the businessmen helped this transformation in the nineties very easily. It is very clear that new economic policy of India adopted in 1991 was the manifestation of globalization.

Gandhian Perspective of Globalization:

Since the Russian revolution, the world has been broadly divided into the socialist and capitalist sphere. However, with the demise of the USSR, the communist ideology has been thrown in the 'dustbin of history' by many theorists Francis Fukuyama being the most prominent. However, evils of liberal hegemony are also coming to the forefront increasing inequality in countries embracing capitalism, huge balance of trade deficits tying up developing countries to western corporations and WTO/IMF norms leading to crisis and bankruptcy in many countries. In such a scenario, Gandhi and his ideas on the economy are being hailed by many as the 'Third Way' a suitable compromise between the leftists and free marketeers that ought to suit all classes.⁵ However, if we scrutinise Gandhian attitudes towards economics, we find a lot of similarities with both liberalism and communism. For instance, through the Swadeshi Movement, Gandhi advocated rejection of western textile and home spinning of cotton for Indians this amounts to very much left-wing protectionism which Nehruvian India adopted for over 35 years until under Dr. Manmohan Singh, India began its journey to free market economics.⁶ On the other hand, Gandhi backed small and

decentralised form of government which sided very much with liberal views. This, however, was rejected by India ever since independence and a huge bureaucracy was established under Nehru, the brunt of which is still borne by India. Thus, Gandhi held a very idealist view of economic globalisation where states would be self-sufficient on most accounts but mutually dependent on some. His view negated the cornerstone of the principle of succeeding in modern economics rapid industrialisation. Self-sufficiency can only be maintained by maintaining a competitive edge in today's world of free market. Without unique selling points, domestic industries are bound to be overrun by a foreign competitor. Gandhi's views rested on the principles of co-operation and understanding today it's more about competition and profit making. However, Gandhi's desire to safeguard peasants' rights seems valid even today, where one of the most heated debates on the WTO is between the US, EU and G20 led by India and Brazil about agricultural subsidies.

Gandhian Critique of Capitalist Globalization and the Parasitic Economy

Gandhi's critique of the global capitalist order aligns with the arguments of J.C. Kumarappa, who introduced the concept of a "Parasitic Economy." Kumarappa argued that modern economies exploit resources and people for self-interest, creating violence and unrest within societies (Kumarappa, 1945). In the parasitic economy, wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, leading to greater inequality and socio-political instability. According to T.N. Khosoo, this economic violence perpetuates environmental degradation, as industrial growth depletes natural resources and prioritizes profit over sustainability (Khosoo, 1989). In contrast, Gandhi advocated for an economy based on moral values, decentralization, and local self-sufficiency, where the welfare of the masses is prioritized over mass production.

Sustainable Development and Gandhian Economic Thought

Gandhi's ideas on sustainable development have become increasingly relevant in the context of today's environmental crises. Kumarappa and Vinoba Bhave both emphasized the need for an "Economy of Permanence," a concept that echoes modern sustainability goals (Bhave, 1955). Bhave's ideas about land reforms and self-sustaining villages were directly inspired by Gandhian philosophy, promoting a lifestyle in harmony with nature. The work of R.K.V. Rao highlights how Gandhi's emphasis on small-scale, self-reliant communities presents an alternative to the large-scale, resource-intensive industries that characterize capitalist economies (Rao, 1991). Such a model of sustainable economic growth was intended to counteract the destructive forces of global capitalism and promote long-term ecological balance.

Non-Violent Economic Order and Conflict Resolution

The Gandhian vision of a non-violent economic order stands in opposition to the conflict-driven nature of capitalist globalization. As R.P. Mishra points out, Gandhi's focus on non-violence extended beyond personal ethics to encompass social and economic relations (Mishra, 2000). Mishra argues that Gandhi's concept of "Sarvodaya," the welfare of all, provides the foundation for building a non-violent global economic order where resources are distributed equitably, and conflicts arising from economic disparities are minimized. Bhikhu Parekh, in his analysis of Gandhian philosophy, further highlights the importance of peaceful conflict resolution and how Gandhi's ideas could guide international relations in an increasingly polarized world (Parekh, 1989).

Gandhian Influence on Feminist Economics and Social Justice

Devaki Jain, a noted feminist economist, brings a unique perspective to Gandhian economics by integrating feminist principles with Gandhi's ideas on equality and justice (Jain, 1985). Jain argues that Gandhi's vision of decentralization and local governance resonates with contemporary feminist critiques of globalization, particularly in how it affects marginalized communities, including women. Jain's analysis underscores how Gandhi's emphasis on community welfare and self-reliance aligns with efforts to address gender-based economic inequalities. In her critique of globalization, Jain points out that women, especially in the Global South, bear the brunt of economic restructuring policies promoted by global institutions like the IMF and WTO, which perpetuate patriarchal systems.

Gandhian Economic Ideals and Modern Globalization: Critical Reflections

Several contemporary scholars have revisited Gandhian economics in light of modern global challenges. Ajit K. Das Gupta and B.N. Ghosh have both emphasized the relevance of Gandhian principles for addressing issues like poverty and inequality in an era dominated by neoliberal globalization (Das Gupta, 1996; Ghosh, 2007). Das Gupta points out that Gandhi's emphasis on Swadeshi, or local production, can serve as a counterbalance to the homogenizing forces of globalization that tend to undermine local economies. Meanwhile, Mark Lurz's work highlights the practical applications of Gandhian economics in contemporary policy-making, particularly in areas such as sustainable agriculture and ethical consumerism (Lurz, 2008). These scholars collectively argue that while Gandhi's ideals may seem utopian, they offer valuable insights for creating a more equitable and just global economy.

Civilizational Perspective of Globalization

Globalization is not merely an economic phenomenon but a multifaceted process with cultural, political, and social dimensions, often leading to conflict and homogenization of societies. Mahatma Gandhi, in his works like *Hind Swaraj*

(1909) and *India of My Dreams*, emphasized the destructive nature of Western civilization, characterized by its industrialism, materialism, and emphasis on economic growth at the cost of human welfare and ethics. Gandhi's critique of the West provides a solid foundation to analyse the civilizational perspective of globalization. He believed that true civilization is not about the pursuit of wealth and power but about living in harmony with nature and one's surroundings, promoting human dignity, non-violence, and self-reliance. His principles of *Swaraj* (self-rule), *Swadeshi* (self-reliance), and *Sarvodaya* (welfare of all) form the core of his vision for a just and equitable world order.

The Civilizational Critique of Globalization

Gandhi's view on civilization stands in stark contrast to the modern, Western notion of progress, which often equates development with material growth, technological advancement, and capital accumulation. He argued that this form of "progress" led to the degradation of human values and fostered violence, inequality, and exploitation. As Gandhi remarked, "Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants" (Gandhi, 1927). His civilizational critique was directed not just at British colonialism but at the broader capitalist mode of production, which continues to shape globalization today. Gandhi's vision of a just society was one that prioritized human needs over corporate greed and where communities lived in harmony rather than being pitted against each other in a race for resources.

Shashi Prabha Sharma (2010) echoes Gandhi's concerns by arguing that the process of globalization, driven by the pursuit of profit, exacerbates socio-economic inequalities and alienates individuals from their communities and environment. The Western model of globalization, according to Sharma, represents a form of cultural imperialism, imposing its values, systems, and institutions on the rest of the world. This imposition leads to the erosion of local traditions and the homogenization of diverse cultures. In contrast, Gandhi's civilizational approach called for a return to indigenous values that emphasized sustainability, mutual cooperation, and non-violence.

L.M. Bhole, in his analysis of Gandhian economics, pointed out that the capitalist mode of globalization undermines local economies by promoting large-scale industrialization and centralization of wealth. He supports Gandhi's idea of decentralization and village-based economies as a sustainable alternative to modern globalization (Bhole, 1998). Bhole argues that Gandhi's concept of *Swadeshi* encourages self-reliance, not just in terms of production but also in terms of ethical and spiritual development. By advocating for the use of local resources and small-scale industries, Gandhi presented a model of globalization that was inclusive and respectful of local cultures and communities.

Economic and Social Dimensions of Globalization

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya's philosophy of *Integral Humanism* aligns with Gandhi's thoughts on economic decentralization. Upadhyaya critiqued Western-style modernization and advocated for an economic system that respected the individual, family, and community. Like Gandhi, Upadhyaya stressed that economic systems should serve human needs, not the other way around. He believed that globalization, driven by capitalist forces, created an exploitative economic structure that alienated individuals from their cultural roots and disrupted social harmony (Upadhyaya, 1965). His concept of *Antyodaya*, or the upliftment of the last person, is in line with Gandhi's vision of *Sarvodaya*.

Jai Prakash Narayan also critiqued the capitalist system of globalization for its role in increasing inequalities and fostering violence. Narayan, who worked closely with Gandhi during India's freedom movement, shared his mentor's vision of a non-violent economic order. He believed that globalization in its current form prioritized profit over people, leading to the exploitation of the poor and marginalized (Narayan, 1988). Narayan's advocacy for decentralization and *Lokniti* (people's politics) was rooted in Gandhi's ideas of *Swaraj* and *Swadeshi*.

Anil Dutta Mishra (2005) argues that Gandhi's vision of globalization was fundamentally different from the neoliberal model that dominates today. For Gandhi, globalization should not mean the destruction of local economies or the imposition of a uniform global culture. Instead, it should be about mutual respect, cooperation, and learning from different civilizations. Mishra stresses that Gandhi's economic philosophy, with its focus on self-reliance, non-violence, and sustainability, offers a viable alternative to the current global economic order, which is based on competition, consumerism, and exploitation.

Gandhi's Vision of a Non-Violent Global Order

Gandhi's idea of a non-violent global order, as outlined in *Hind Swaraj* and later elaborated in *India of My Dreams*, emphasizes the need for economic systems to be grounded in ethical values. He believed that modern industrialization, with its focus on mass production, inherently led to violence — both physical and structural — as it marginalized the poor and exploited natural resources without regard for sustainability. Gandhi famously stated, "An unjust law is itself a species of violence. Arrest for its breach is more so" (Gandhi, 1927). This insight is particularly relevant when considering the socio-economic violence that globalization has inflicted on developing nations.

D.M. Diwakar (2012) expands on this idea by arguing that the current form of globalization is inherently violent because it perpetuates inequality and marginalization. Diwakar highlights how Gandhi's concept of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) is not just limited to the political realm but extends to the economic and social spheres. In Gandhi's view, economic systems should promote the well-being of all, rather than concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a few. Diwakar contends that a non-violent global order would

require a fundamental restructuring of the global economy, where the focus shifts from profit maximization to the well-being of people and the planet.

The works of J.N. Sharma and R.P. Mishra also reflect on how Gandhi's principles can offer solutions to the crises created by neoliberal globalization. Sharma (1995) argues that Gandhi's emphasis on moral and ethical values in economics provides a framework for creating a just and equitable global order. Mishra (2008), on the other hand, highlights how Gandhi's focus on self-reliance and decentralization can help developing nations resist the pressures of globalization and maintain their sovereignty over economic policies.

Relevance of Gandhian Ideas in the Modern Globalized World

The current wave of globalization, characterized by economic liberalization, privatization, and the dominance of multinational corporations, has led to increasing inequalities and environmental degradation. In this context, Gandhi's vision of a sustainable, non-violent global order becomes highly relevant. B.N. Ghosh (2007) argues that Gandhi's critique of materialism and his focus on spiritual development provide a much-needed counter-narrative to the dominant global economic order. Ghosh suggests that by adopting Gandhi's principles of *Swadeshi* and *Swaraj*, nations can achieve economic independence without compromising their ethical values.

Mark Lurz (2005) and Ajit K. Das Gupta (1996) further expand on the relevance of Gandhian economics in the age of globalization. Lurz highlights how Gandhi's ideas of cooperation, self-reliance, and non-violence can help create a more equitable and sustainable global economy. Das Gupta, on the other hand, focuses on the practical applications of Gandhian economics, particularly in the context of sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

In conclusion, Gandhi's civilizational critique of globalization offers a profound alternative to the dominant neoliberal model. His vision of a non-violent global order, rooted in ethical values, self-reliance, and sustainability, challenges the current global economic system that prioritizes profit over people. By drawing on the works of scholars like L.M. Bhole, Shashi Prapha Sharma, Anil Dutta Mishra, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Jai Prakash Narayan, and D.M. Diwakar, this analysis highlights the relevance of Gandhian thought in addressing the crises of globalization. As Gandhi himself said, "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed" (Gandhi, 1947). His timeless wisdom continues to inspire movements for a more just, equitable, and peaceful world order.

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