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❧ **CONTENTS OF ENGLISH PART - II** ❧

| S. No. | Title & Author   | Page No. |
|--------|--|----------|
| 1      | Globalization and its Impact on Tribale Community<br><b>Ajay Hatesing Solanke</b>  | 1-6      |
| 2      | Philosophical Reflection on Globalization, Marginalized Issues and<br>Ambedkar's Political-Economy<br><b>Dr. Amita Valmiki</b> | 7-12     |
| 3      | Constraints and Challenges to Women's Participation in Sport<br><b>Dr. Anuradha Balaji Kamthane</b>                            | 13-16    |
| 4      | Impact of Tourism Industry on Environment<br><b>Dr. Anurath M. Chandre</b>   | 17-22    |
| 5      | Impact of Globalization on Social Life of Korku Tribal of Melghat<br><b>Prof. Dr. Archana Potey-Sapkal</b>                     | 23-27    |
| 6      | Impact of ICT in Library and Information Science<br><b>Ashwini Dnyaneshwar Gulhane</b>   | 28-34    |
| 7      | New Trends of Entrepreneurship in India<br><b>Dr. D. M. Pawar</b><br><b>Dr. Balaji S. Turaikar</b>                             | 35-37    |
| 8      | A Study Lockdown Impact on Indian Industry<br><b>Mr. Chandrakant B. Dhumale</b>  | 38-43    |
| 9      | A Pragmatic Analyses Dealing with Deixis in the Global Novels of<br>Khushwant Singh<br><b>Prof. Chandrakant Ramdas Patil</b>   | 44-48    |
| 10     | Education for Happiness in an Era of Globalization<br><b>Dr. Delia Antão</b>   | 49-56    |
| 11     | The Role of Education in Empowering Women in India<br><b>Mr. Dinesh Atmaram Borase</b>   | 57-64    |
| 12     | Awareness Level of Urban Indian Women about Consumer Rights: A Study<br><b>Dr. K. K. Sunitha</b>                               | 65-72    |

## 2. Philosophical Reflection on Globalization, Marginalized Issues and Ambedkar's Political- Economy

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“Where globalization means, as it so often does, that the rich and powerful now have new means to further enrich and empower themselves at the cost of the poorer and weaker, we have a responsibility to protest in the name of universal freedom.” – Nelson Mandela<sup>1</sup>

“It’s true that globalization, with all its fantastic improvements in the world and the technological progress linked to it, has increased inequality at country level, especially inside countries. And there are people that were left behind – people, sectors, regions – that has created a sense of frustration in the rust belts of the world.” – Antonio Guterres<sup>2</sup>

From the above quotes from the stalwarts like Nelson Mandela and Antonio Guterres explicitly suggests the inherent contradictions in this so called ‘globalized world’. The divide between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ (in Marx’s terminology) is widening; and unfortunately the end doesn’t seem near at all.

The dictionary meaning of ‘globalization’ itself proves that how the chasm between certain communities of the country with direct impact from all over the world gets deeper, broaden and enlarged; “[Globalization is defined as] the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of the capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets.”<sup>3</sup> One has to have a deeper understanding that globalization, though an economic phenomenon is intertwined to world politics, a country’s culture and social norms and customs; more specifically the marginalized groups. The groups comprise of lower castes and dalits (in India), the lower income groups or lower classes, women, the handicraft workers, the ethnic tribes, and other oppressed communities. It is very obvious that the people at the apex of the economic pyramid and to certain extent, those at the centre gets further benefitted; while those on which the pyramid stands, those bounded labourers’ position

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worsens (that which was already horrendous). Therefore certain economic sectors and the marginalized populace are completely sidelined. Their contribution goes on a declining graph and unfortunately is never ever lifted to higher pedestal (unless a major world revolution takes place in political economy.)

The lower wage groups and the bountiful upper crust widen the inequality which already exists. One needs capital to invest which the lower income groups are unable to do so; that deteriorates their condition further. American economist Eric Maskin is of the view that globalization escalates inequality. As he notes that in the globalized economy the potentially skilled laborers are in high demand and therefore their work-compensations are axiomatically high. But the majority of the masses are not highly skilled; again it is deduced that they remain in the backdrop in lower salaries; in fact they were suffering economically and are now suffering further and therefore, lagging behind in every sector. Now they not only continue in the realm of suffrage, but the situation of these not highly qualified labourers deteriorates further. Thence the consequence is resulting 'inequality'. As noted in the book *World Politics: Trend and Transformation*, "Another globalization concerns the distribution of its benefits. Critics of globalization posit that it favors advantaged states, producing new inequalities as the gap between the wealthy and the poor widens. A similar pattern of inequality is apparent within states as well. "[Nobel Laureate Eric] Maskin theorize that while average income has been rising as a result of more trade and global production, so has inequality within countries." (World Bank, 2014a.)<sup>24</sup> Country like India face multiple inequalities; class, caste, religion and gender along with other peripheral divisions of tribe, race etc. Due to globalization, no doubt, in India the easy discharge and correspondence to labour, technological know-how, capital and IT sector has accelerated in pace; but this has also created the wealthy minority and unequal oppressed majority. Basically things operate at contractual schemata and the major crunch falls during the time of recession or war like situation or in present context pandemic of COVID 19 on the per day wage workers and not highly skilled labourers. This pathos cannot be denied, and this is the result of globalization.

In fact globalization expects people to include 'the others' (the marginalized) but de facto, it is absolutely in reverse. The others remained secluded due to competition among the capitalists, the unstoppable individualism, all over the world – xenophobia, and country like India the caste divide deepens. Ethics, to be more precise, the Corporate Ethics remains at par

and the oppressed groups are completely dependent on these powerful capitalists. This pandemic of COVID 19 has proved how globalization, instead of being 'all-inclusive' has turned out to be 'all-exclusive'. Therefore it is nothing but "corporate imperialism" that has given rise to human trafficking, arms and ammunition supplies to make money and gain power and gear up organized crime.<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt the caste and tribe blotch in wake of globalization is obvious; but on the other hand big companies and corporate sector do not entertain caste or tribe stigma to be enforced; the constitution also gives the right to work for every Indians; and precisely for this reason when the marginalized caste or tribe groups gain in prosperity, obviously the upper elite show complete social resistance. This is also in matter of religious diversity. It is indeed a sad state. As stated by Hindwan, "Caste clashes bound to occur so long the unequal socio-political and economic order is not changed and the scheduled castes remain undefended. Despite a number of constitutional safeguards the condition of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes continues to be pathetic. This is an indicative of unequal efforts and inadequate mechanism."<sup>6</sup>

Globalization and Religion has a very complex relationship. On the one hand globalization can circulate information about a particular religion world over making accessible to all; it allows the particular religious community to avail facilities of conveyance and transportation of people and goods to nook and corner to this globe. But the remonstrance and the repercussion of this would be every religious community would like to be dominant and prove themselves to be the best; giving rise to confrontation and conflicts. This is a very deplorable bearing. The world has been witnessing this till date. At the same time, the religious sanctity is also black lashed by dominating economic superpowers where indigenous marginalized communities are further suppressed. Unfortunately the indigenous marginalized religions are losing their identity.<sup>7</sup>

Coming to the gender issue, it is a self-evident truth that women have gained access to new avenues in economic sector, the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) does not demand too much of physical input; and this has relaxed certain norms for women participants. So globalization has benefitted the women community as the picture poses. But really there is no gender bias in this globalized world? As explained by Jacqui True, "Although sexual and gender-based violence are defining characteristics of contemporary conflict, violence against women is not limited to war time or conflict zones; it is highly prevalent in peaceful



settings as well. This violence is endemic in location of apparent economic prosperity and political empowerment such as free trade or special economic areas and new democracies, as well as in conditions of impoverishment and political repression.”<sup>8</sup> As a matter of fact, women were and are suppressed anywhere in the world because of the social customs and conventions that do not permit greater gender equality. The world political-economy may pressurize the countries to have more of women participation in economic sphere. But as mentioned earlier the traditional role of women as house wives or managing domestic chores first, and then jobs or services out of their residence. Even work from home (as it is a pattern in these times of pandemic) seems to follow a conventional pattern, first domestic devoirs and then other than housework. This pattern is till date not changed. Therefore public action is desperately needed to erase gender disparity.

Can there be any potent solution to this problem of globalization and marginalized groups getting further suppressed? Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956) has given highly thought provoking philosophical political-economic ideology that is befitting to Indian scenario in this era of globalization. In fact he was the first Indian economist to propagate the concept of ‘globalization’, free market-trade and agro-based industry much ahead, in around 1923. According to him globalization would give the subaltern the opportunity to equality in status and economically strengthen their position. Also that he was demanding to have a strategic planning for successive free and open commerce. In point of fact he was the member of the Recreation Committee Council and president of Policy Advisory Group for Irrigation and Power. One can gauge the vitality through which he construed India’s economy.<sup>9</sup> For this Ambedkar put forward his exceptionally impressive concept of ‘social justice’. For him building industry which is agro-based would provide job opportunity for dalits. According to Teltumbde, people often are forced to believe that there is no alternative to globalization; and it offers mammoth job opportunities to the subalterns. This was not Ambedkar’s version of globalization but the capitalized version and therefore has to be rethought and reexamined. As noted by Teltumbde, “The social disadvantage suffered by the dalits in India was taken note of in the Constitution of India, which was drafted under the chairmanship of Dr. Ambedkar - a person who had spearheaded the most momentous anti-caste movement of the depressed classes. It provided the dalits with many safeguards, viz., (i) social, educational, cultural and religious safeguards, (ii) economic safeguards, (iii) political safeguards and (iv) safeguards for employment.”<sup>10</sup> But none of these actually worked out

efficiently. Stratification of Indian society in name of caste, class, tribe, religion and gender continued. And therefore it was and is high time that we need to reform our policies by synthesizing the theory and praxis as suggested by Ambedkar.

Ambedkar strongly suggested that globalization should incorporate the principles of Enlightenment and those are Equality, Liberty and Fraternity, along with basic human rights and emphasis on education. As mentioned earlier he was much ahead of his time. So Ambedkar's modernity and globalization was anti-caste, anti Brahmanical Hinduism, was for technology and machinery especially for subalterns like dalits and other backward classes; and this will give rise to 'just society'.<sup>11</sup>

In Ambedkar's concept of globalization there was no distinction of class, caste, race, tribe or gender. In fact the limited working hours that maintain humane standards, maternity leaves and healthy work place and condition are the axioms which were conceptualized by him. Therefore Globalization has two way tracks – the positive and the negative. The negative overlooks the egalitarian standards that are to be maintained; while the positive takes countenance for absolute egalitarian society. Therefore Ambedkar firmly upheld 'Social Democracy' which will encourage free trade but at the same time look after the masses. Ambedkar said, "Men are mortal. So are ideas. An idea needs propagation as much as a plant needs watering. Otherwise both will wither and die."<sup>12</sup>

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