

# Human Rights and Globalization

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Globalization is conceived as turning the whole world into one global village in which all people are increasingly interconnected and all the fences or barriers are removed, so that the world witnesses a new state of fast and free flow of people, capital, goods and ideas then the world would be witnessing unprecedented enjoyment of human rights everywhere because globalization is bringing prosperity to all the corners of the globe together with the spread of the highly cherished values of democracy, freedom and justice.<sup>1</sup> The impact of globalization on the world economy and the resulting changes in the international order, create new challenges and new opportunities for the implementation of human rights.<sup>2</sup> Globalization also permits countries to share experiences and to learn from one another their achievements and difficulties, and promotes a cross fertilization of ideas, cultural values and aspirations. In analyzing the pull and preserve of globalization process of human right there is contradiction between different scholars. Some of the scholars advocate that a 'New Era of Human Rights' has started, which they propound, 'Globalization of Human Rights'. Can-Saro viva of Nigeria, Mukhtaran Mai of Pakistan, are the perfect examples of the Globalization of Human Rights. On the other hand some scholars, believe that market forces involved in the process of Globalization are creating new problems and tensions for the better and effective implementation of the concept of human right. The Workers Group of the ILO Governing Body pointed out in 1994 that there is generalized unemployment and under employment throughout the world and social tensions are giving rise to internal political instability in many countries.<sup>3</sup>

The critics of globalization lay much more emphasis on its impact on human rights, particularly of the poor people and of the developing countries. Their analysis and conclusions are usually supported by facts and figures drawn from international reports and statistics to prove that human rights have been adversely effected by globalization. They usually relate one or the other aspect of human rights to one or the other aspect of globalization, such as relating poverty in developing countries to debt or relating unemployment to privatization, or relating health deterioration to the monopoly of medicine patents. Or they enumerate the aspects of deterioration in human rights, such as impoverishment and lowering standards of living, increasing inequality discrimination, deprivation of satisfaction of basic needs such as food, clean water, housing, illiteracy etc. and explain these facts by globalization in general through making comparison between the state before globalization (usually before the 1990s) and after. The advocates of globalization do not deny the fact that in some regions basic human rights are not respected during the past decade but they explain this by the resistance of some countries and people to globalization and they claim that globalization must have winners and losers.<sup>4</sup>

So both advocates and critics of globalization agree on the fact that human rights are in some way or the other adversely affected by globalization particularly in the south, but they differ in their explanation of this fact and hence in their prescription for the remedies.

## **Inequality in World Income:**

No doubt that the widespread violation of human rights is related to the widening gap between the rich and the poor, both on the global and the local levels. International statistics prove this fact.<sup>5</sup> It shows that:

Half the world – nearly three billion people – live on less than two dollars a day. The wealthiest nation on the earth has the widest gap between rich and poor of any industrialized nation.

The concept of globalization is stated to be based on 'trickle down theory',<sup>6</sup> which assumes that in its initial years, the benefits would be reaped by the rich and powerful people/nations and would disperse among the rest, later on. Many scholars believe that it has reduced global inequality. Xavier Sala-i-Martin is one of them. He has estimated poverty rates worldwide, using data of ninety seven countries between 1970 and 1998. He concludes:

The last three decades saw a reversal of roles between Africa and Asia the 1970s 11% of the world poor were in Africa and 76% in Asia. By 1998, Africa hosted 66% of the poor and Asia's share had declined to 15%....<sup>7</sup>

Joseph Stiglitz disagree with this view. He says, "Trickle down economics was never more than just a belief, an article of faith."<sup>8</sup> However, the economic scenario of the process of globalization portrays a different picture. Gross inequality in distribution of income exists across the world and the process of globalization is further widening gap. Following reports and data help in justifying the above argument:

- Inequality has grown within countries and among them. A century ago, the wealthiest nations were on average nine times richer than the poorest; today they are more than 100 times as rich. Only 30 years ago, the richest nations in the world had 88 times the wealth of the poorest, today it has more than 270 times the wealth. In the US, nearly all the benefits of growth in the past decade have accrued to the top 10 percent of society; while the top 01 percent has seen income grow 112 percent, the incomes of the bottom 90 percent grew by only 2 percent. The benefits of global growth accrue to fewer people. The richest 1,100 people in the world today have a net worth that's almost double that of the 2.5 billion people earning the least.<sup>9</sup>
- In 1960 per capita GDP in the richest 20 countries was 18 times that in the poorest 20 countries. By 1995 this gap had widened to 37 times.<sup>10</sup>
- According to the World Bank Report 2005, out of six billion world population, only one billion may be called as the rich people/nation and they are controlling 80 percent of the world income.<sup>12</sup>
- The 20 percent rich nations are controlling 86 percent of the world production, 60 percent of energy resources, 87 percent of means of transport, 82 percent of exports, 68 percent of foreign investments and three-fourths of means of communications.<sup>13</sup>
- OECD countries, with 19% of the global population, have 71% of global trade in goods and services, 58% of foreign direct investment and 91% of all internet users.<sup>14</sup>
- The world's 200 richest people more than doubled their net worth in the four years to 1998, to more than \$1 trillion. The assets of the top three billionaires are more than the combined GNP of all least developed countries and their 600 million people.<sup>15</sup>
- In 1993 just 10 countries accounted for 84% of global research and development expenditures and controlled 95% of the US patents of the past two decades. Moreover, more than 80% of patents granted in developing countries belong to residents of industrial countries.<sup>16</sup>

**Table – 1: Global Inequality (in year 2000)**

The Fifth of the world's people living in the highest income countries.	The bottom fifths
82% of World GDP	2.5%
78% of world export market	1.4%
65% of foreign direct investment	1.5%
84% of world telephones lines	2.5%

Source: Human Development Report, 2000 P.3.

- \* A recent view of the global distribution of income among individuals in different parts of the world show clear acute disparities.
- \* In 2011, the top 20% of the world's population have 70% of global income while the bottom quintile must make do with just 2% Even after adjusting for relative prices, the poorest 5% of Americans have 12 times from income than poorest Malians and are richer than 96 percent of Indians. Within countries, disparities are acute, Example, in United States of America. The top 1% of population received nearly one quarter National Income.
- \* A recent International labour organization study examined the experience of 20 developed, 33 developing and 11 transition countries from the 1980 to the early 2005 and showed that three quantities experienced a decline in their wages shares.  
The highest decline in Latin America, where the wage share fell 13% and 9% fell over in Asia and in developing countries. On the functional distribution of income shows a clean worsening from the 1990's through the early 2000's in both developed and developing countries.  
The UNDP's inequality adjusted HDI represents a first effort to compute inequality across income, between 1990 and 2011, analysis of 66 countries found an aggregate loss in HDI owing to inequality of 24 percent and indicated that worsening income inequality offset improvement in Health and education. Health inequality declined across all regions.

**Table – 2: Global Inequality (1960-1989)**

Year	The most rich 20%	The least poor 20%	Ratio between the Rich and Poor
1960	70.2	2.3	30:1
1970	73.3	2.3	32:1
1980	76.3	1.7	45:1
1989	82.7	1.4	59:1

Source: Human Development Report, 1992.

It is discernible from the above table that the global inequality is increasing rapidly. The income of the rich people is increasing with amazing speed since 1960s. In 1960, income of the 20 percent most-rich people was 70.2 percent, which increased to 73.3 percent in 1970, 76.3 percent in 1980 and to 82.7 percent in 1989. On the other hand, the percentage of the least poor people is decreasing almost steadily during the same period. It was 2.3% in 1960 and in 1970 but declined to 1.7 percent in 1980 and to 1.4 percent in 1989.

These facts and survey reports prove that the gap between the rich and the poor countries is still increasing and this policy of globalization is unable to convert the world into a village. In fact, this process is further increasing the global inequality.

Article 28 of the universal declaration of Human right reads 'Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in the declaration can be fully realized.'<sup>17</sup> The dramatic impact of Globalization on world economy is creating new challenges for the legal protection of human rights. The process of Globalization has enhanced income-inequality in the contemporary world which clearly violates human rights.

Many authors provide evidence on the adverse effects of government adoption of globalization economic agreements on basic human rights due to the reduced overall government spending on services and satisfaction of basic human needs and the increasing tendencies towards privatization of these services. Globalization is the diminishing power of the state and its capacity to deal with the economic matter and to some extent.<sup>18</sup> Also political matters challenging the existing nature of territory, sovereignty and nation. For reasons outlined above, the state is no longer monopoly of the state because the state is now operating within and increasingly diverse matrix of international interactions involving other states, inter-governmental institutional corporation and as a whole range of cross-border groups and networks.<sup>19</sup> This scenario is making conducive atmosphere for the violation of human rights ultimately it is state which cares about human rights of its citizen. If the state is weakening then obviously the human rights of its citizen are not safe and secure.

Transnational corporations are presently the main agents of the world economy. In 1993, according to a United National Survey, the combined output of multinationals was around 5.5 million roughly as much as that of the U.S. as a whole.<sup>20</sup> These corporations are much bigger and stronger in the Corporation of other nation states. If we compare GDP of some strongest countries with sales of 'trans-national corporation, we can easily find that the power of nation state is lesser than trans-national companies. Globalization from above is not conducive for safeguard of human right.

Thus, we find that the concept of Globalization of Human Rights is a myth. In the present process of globalization, the violation of human right has become more frequent. Trans-nation companies, the main agent of globalization does not come under any jurisdiction of international human right law. If we really wish to make the process of globalization more egalitarian, democratic and humane, we must follow universal agenda and spirit of Human Right.

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