

Chapter 21

Plastic Pollution and Its Management in the Age of Globalization With Special Reference to India

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ABSTRACT

Globalization as a process has undeniably been involved in an ever-increasing mobility of both men and material. The ever-increasing mobility and free flow of goods, which also include plastic-made commodities, has turned globalization into a severe cause of plastic pollution for developing countries like India. Consequently, in India, consciously or unconsciously, the large-scale consumption of plastic items has potentially opened its gates for plastic pollution. By taking the aspect of free flow of plastic items into consideration, a process perceived as an integral part of globalization, this chapter explores globalization as a prime cause of plastic pollution in India. Further, this chapter locates the need to view globalization and its free flow of plastic commodities critically, so as to manage the menace of plastic pollution in India.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has over the years become a buzzword. And Globalization as a complex phenomenon has been full of contradictions, complications and multiple meanings. Due to multiple facets, globalization has emerged as one of the most hotly debated issues of the present era. In its face value it promises a utopian world of uniform development and equal opportunities of progress for human societies living across the globe. And on the other hand its practical form and function has proved it far from being what it seems and what it advocates. Under the rubric of economic development it has been able to achieve

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a neo imperialistic world, much exploitative and devastating, much complex in evolving a greater capitalistic and corporate sector hegemony undermining the role, sovereignty and status of various states and their welfare programmes. The global neo imperialistic order creating claims of homogeneity has inaugurated and extended levels of differentiation and further exploitation of under developed economies. All that and many more evils associated with globalization seem to have turned it into an unceasing form of unchecked corporate anarchy.

Globalization for its multiple implications has been defined differently. For some, it is a cover concept for global capitalism, and rejoinder to imperialism by assigning it a new face, phase and a fundamental structure. Its functioning involves initiatives taken by capitalist countries in collaboration with a microscopic section of underdeveloped economies. Sensing these detrimental features of globalism it has accordingly been condemned as another form of the imposition of the logic of capital and the market on evermore regions of the world and spheres of life. Being perceived differently globalization, for others, acts an evolutionary historical moment seeking nothing but integration and more modernization. Accordingly they would term it a continuation of modernization, a pivotal force of progress, an expression of increased wealth, an era of greater freedom, determination, democracy and happiness.

To the advocates and defenders, globalization is a welcome process, all beneficial and offering fresh economic opportunities. And on political front it enhances political democratization, cooperation, cultural diversity and the opening to an exciting new world. They presume it as an efficient mean to reduce the extent of global inequality for globalization suggests a homogeneous world. However detractors of globalization view it from opposite direction and they presume it as harmful. By treating it as an advanced stage of capitalistic domination and extension of power based on capital, their belief is that, globalization would bring about increased domination and control by the wealthier overdeveloped nations over the poor underdeveloped countries, thus increasing the hegemony of the “haves” over the “have-nots.” In addition, globalization critics assert that globalization produces an undermining of democracy, a cultural homogenization, and increased destruction of natural species and the environment. Globalization to them is simply a kind of economic development that takes a serious toll on the environment.

The complexity of globalization is evident from being curial as subject matter of multiple studies and critically involves number of stakeholders with a lot of history and politics. Globalization is viewed as ever increasing phenomena of multiple implications, perceived both positive as well as negative and a result of intentional and unintentional actions and outcome of profit-oriented strategies. Globalization crucially involves many actors varying from social, political, technological and capital. The list includes commercial markets, social relations, flow of trading goods and essential commodities, decisions of capital and capital possessing nations, evolving technologies, ideas, forms of culture, and people across national boundaries via a global networked society (see Castells 1996, 1997,1998; Held et al. 1999). Capitalist domination is buttressed and hence applied by the invisible hands of technology comprised of computerized networks of communication. The rapid development in the means of communication and transportation and technological revolution helps in the free movement of goods, information and peoples across national boundaries to sustain global order of contemporary times. The Internet based technological infrastructure, computerized networks, satellite-communication systems and allied means provides an infrastructure for the global economy and society (see Gilder1989, 2000; Kaku 1997; Best and Kellner 2001). From this perspective, any understanding of globalization requires to comprehend the scientific and technological revolutions offering scope for global restructuring of capital and globalization. The current order of globalization completely relies on scientific infrastructure provided by globally interconnected network of computer and capital.

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