

Unbidden I speak : Ruminations on globalization

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STEPPING into events and out of events, that has been the quintessence of human history. We are in the process of entering an event called "globalisation". Accompanying us are almost every nation on this planet, with the fond hope of creating a new world economic order, based on free trade and open markets. Whether it is going to be a mirage or a reality we have to accept that we are living amidst rapid change. Transformation is fraught with radical reform and onslaught from the naked fury of market forces.

Historically speaking, globalisation is not a new concept. Different periods of human history has witnessed free trade and open market economies. But these paved the way for economic and political subjugation and ultimately culminated in violent upheavals in different parts of the world. The well known gross exploitation of Asian and African continents hardly needs any reiteration here. Looting the natural resources of Asian and African countries is a well established Western tradition pioneered by trading companies.

The present wave of globalisation being spearheaded by a handful of multinational corporations, who are largely accountable to no one except themselves, seeks to impose a monoculture on billions of people spread across the globe. Imagine over one thousand million people, living, as, economic, social and political slaves to a handful of American multinationals. Technological advances are at the root of the strangulating American economic hegemony. The culture of American consumerism is sought to be propagated through the unprecedented development of the Internet, telecommunication and speedy air travel. The imperatives of globalisation are acceptance of English as the lingua franca, unquestioning acceptance of Americanism as represented by fast food giants like Kentucky Fried Chicken, Mc Donald's and soft drink giants like Coca Cola and Pepsi. Hitherto, closed economies like those of India and China are becoming the playground for Americanisation. Valentine and Constantine are triumphantly loitering on the plains of India and China promoting American consumerism and sexism.

The boost to Americanisation of our youth is facilitated by the ever proliferating Call Centres in our cities. By night youths masquerade as Yankees, putting on alien accents and identities. The deceptive vocal identity acquired in the darkness of the night loses its sheen in the light of the day. So it is compensated by visual effects which are reserved for the sunshine hours. Connecting, resonating and completing the American fantasy are the faded jeans outfits, single ear ring, sneakers, walkman belting out heavy metal audio sound {otherwise known as music}. A girl friend with a cell phone propped astride on a mobike and endless rounds of malls, discos and pubs completes the picture of globalisation. Millions of wage earners like these will spell our economic and social doom.

The time has come for our policy makers to prop up our own brand of economic giants who will traverse the globe as multinationals. Let us modify our laws and rules to facilitate the growth of Indian giants. We should not reduce ourselves to a nation of telephone operators!

(The views expressed are strictly personal)