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INDEX

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Subject	Page No.
1	Antipyretic Activity Of Tagetes Patula	K.Shakila, D.Sukumar, G.Madhubala	Chemistry	1-2
2	Benefits Derived From Warehouse Management System By Small Manufacturing Firms	Dr. Vipul Chalotra, Prof Neetu Andotra	Commerce	3-4
3	Women Welfare Through Prime Minister Rozghar Yojana At Coimbatore District	Swapna Kurian	Commerce	5-7
4	Sources Of College Funds In Assam-An Overview	Dr. Niranjan Kakati	Commerce	8-9
5	Mgnarega- For Socio-Economic Transformation Of Rural Society In J&K	TARSEM LAL	Commerce	10-11
6	Performance Appraisal And Career Growth	Dr. J.K. Sehgal	Commerce	12-13
7	Corporate Governance Practices - Emerging Trends	Dr. V.Rajendran	Commerce	14-16
8	A Text Mining Framework: Promises And Challenges	Prof.Sangeeta Mahesh Borde, Prof.Bareen Kayyum Shaikh	Computer Science	17-19
9	Effects Of Infant Mortalty Rates On Fertility	Mrs. Nazia Ansari, Mrs. Aqsa Khatri	Economics	20-21
10	Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives In India	Dr. Shradha H. Budhedeo, Parinda Doshi	Economics	22-25
11	Economics Of Corruption	Prof. Dr. K.J. Thankachan	Economics	26-27
12	A Study On Attitude Of High School Students Towards Physics Lessons And Physical Experiments	Dr. Kotreshwaraswamy A. Surapuramath	Education	28-30
13	Utilization Of Science Laboratories At High Schools	Dr. Praveena K. B.	Education	31-33
14	Mutidimensional Techniques For Mathematical Operations	M.Kavitha , Dr.AR. Saravanakumar	Education	34-36
15	Scientific Approach of Communication Theory	Dr. Mujibul Hasan Siddiqui	Education	37-38
16	Design And Implementation Of Ethernet Controller On Fpga	Jesika Benani	Engineering	39-41
17	Development of Control Algorithm to Reduce Harmonic in Boost Converter	Mitulkumar R. Dave, Prof. K.C. Dave	Engineering	42-43
18	Development Of Control Algorithm To Reduce Harmonics In Buck Converter	Vipul C. Rajyaguru, Keerti S.Vashishtha, K. C. Dave	Engineering	44-46
19	Gandhian Principles And Women Empowerment Through Self-Help Groups	Dr. Chetankumar N. Trivedi	English	47-48
20	Kathal- its medicinal uses	Dr. Sneh Harshendra Sharma	Environment	49-50
21	Extemporize Employee Engagement: Challenges.	Dr.Pooja Arora	Management	51-53
22	Conceptual Study To Understand The E-Governance Prestige Values Associated With Nagar Nigam	Dr.Murlidhar Panga , Mr.Arpit Neema	Management	54-56
23	Impact Of Globalization On Environment	Ankita Soni	Management	57-58
24	A Study On Strategic Cost Management Of Tanishq	Mr. Suresh A.S, Mr. Bharath R	Management	59-61

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Subject	Page No.
25	Impact Of Soap Operas Among The Housewives And Working Woman Of Silchar Town	Dr Partha Sarkar	Mass Communication	62-64
26	A Tool For Sex Identification	Dr. Renuka B. Adgaonkar, Dr. M. P. Ambali	Medical Science	65-67
27	Ideal characters in Sanskrit literature	Dr. Labhuben Maldebhai Karavdara	Sanskrit	68
28	Progresive life in vaidik life	Dr. Labhuben Maldebhai Karavdara	Sanskrit	69
29	Familisation or family in Vaidik Literature	Dr. Labhuben Maldebhai Karavdara	Sanskrit	70
30	Morden Moral Of Modern Environment In Nature's Description Of Vishnupuran	Dr. Labhuben Maldebhai Karavdara	Sanskrit	71-72
31	India's Small Holder Dairying In Liberalized Era	Dr Ashish.K.Makwana	Science	73-74
32	Common Man And The Uncommon Law : An Overview	Dr. Shereen Sadiq	Social Science	75-77
33	Perspectives Of Counselling	Dr, R.DhakshinaMurthy	Social Sciences	78-80
34	Sri Sri And His Literary Works: Some Social Reflections	Dr. M. Sreedevi Xavier	Social Sciences	81-83

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Research Paper

Management

Impact Of Globalization On Environment

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ABSTRACT

This paper tries to examine that what will be the impact of globalization on Indian environment. A major purpose of this paper is try to study the impact of globalization on Indian Land, water and biodiversity, The very basis of survival and the source of livelihoods of the two thirds majority – are being privatized, corporatized and eroded. Dams, highways, mines and industrial agriculture are leading to a takeover of the lands on which tribal and peasants have sustained themselves over millennia. Fifty million people have been displaced in India because of development projects over the past fifty years. This figure dwarfs into significance in light of two mega projects linked to globalization – one to divert India's rivers, the other to build superhighways for "connectivity" to global markets.

KEYWORDS: Globalization, environment, Biodiversity

Introduction

Globalization, a term that was used infrequently before the 1990s, is now in Common parlance. It refers primarily to an economic system in which raw-materials, manufactured goods, intellectual property and financial transactions. Flow freely (although not equally) across international borders under the supervision only of an international trade authority. It also refers to the homogenization of language and cultural identity that accompanies this flux of material, ideas and money. Despite its growing strength, the side effects of this pervasive economic Strategy remain poorly understood, perhaps because the great majority of them are indirect. This is especially true of the environmental effects. The march of globalization is often described as inexorable, leading to a final state in which a few, very large corporations dominate world commerce, under the regulation notof nation states but one or a small number of regulatory bodies. These bodies are not run by statesmen, jurists or ecologists, but by economists whose viewpoints harmonize with those of the multinationals they regulate.The spread of globalization has been so rapid and comprehensive that its effects are being felt in the smallest and most remote human communities and natural areas in both developed and undeveloped countries. Indeed, the words 'developed' and 'undeveloped' assume a direction and inevitability of change towards a uniform economic condition that leaves no alternatives. Nevertheless, it would be unwise to accept the assumption that globalization as an economic system is here to stay, although many of its more profound environmental consequences are likely to prove extremely long-lasting. Immense power always creates an impression of permanence, but a conjunction of formidable limiting factors is even now acting to curb and modify the process of globalization—perhaps to end it altogether.

In this paper, I first describe the effect of globalization on water, land, principal biological, environmental, social and spiritual effects of globalization, likely to alter its course and the actions that will have to be taken to maintain the stability of both environment and society.

The Effects Of Globalization

Nobody knows all of the environmental and social effects of globalization. The following listing is necessarily incomplete and brief. I have devoted the most space to the biological effects of globalization. Items are in no particular order Water scarcity, The "River Linking" project of India will cost Rs. 56 trillion. It has been offered as a miracle cure for water scarcity. However, since it is based on the engineering paradigm, which discounts the ecology of water, river basins and ecosystems, it will in fact aggravate the water crisis. Water has become the biggest problem of 21st century. Global consumption of freshwater increased six fold from 1900 to 1995, at a rate greater than twice the rate of population growth. If the present trend continues, two out of every three people on Earth will have to live in water stressed conditions by the year 2025. About 20% of the world's population does not have access to safe drinking water,and 40% does not have sufficient water for adequate living and hygiene. More than 2.2 million people die each year from diseases related to contaminated drinking water and poor living conditions, faced with water scarcity. For India, the problem is more acute. The population growth is spurring a demographic change, especially as towns become cities and cities become mega cities. Concerns on availability of freshwater have arisen, since India with 16% of world's population has only 2.5% of the world's land resources and 4% of the fresh water resources. Industrial agriculture has emerged as the worst depleter and polluter of water, as industrialn farming increases water use by a factor of ten, leading to groundwater withdrawals beyond recharge capacity, thus driving the push for large dams and intensive irrigation projects. Pollution by agrochemicals has contaminated drinking water sources as the recent scandal of pesticide residues in soft drinks highlights the scale of water contamination The combination of overuse and pollution has caused a severe cris The per capita availability of fresh water in the country has dropped from an acceptable 5,180 cubic metres in 1951 to1,820 cubic metres in 2001. It is estimated that it would drop to1,340 by 2025 and 1,140 cubic metres by 2050. This is alarming, as the threshold per capita value for water stress is 1,000 cubic metres. Women's struggle for water Women bear a disproportionate burden of water scarcity and water pollution.

The per capita availability of fresh water in the country

Year	Cubic metres
1951	5,180
2001	1,820
2025	1,340
2050.	1,140

Super highways

Super highways are being built across India as part of the globalization agenda. The super highways have been at the core of the "India Shining" campaign of the Government. However the price people are paying for expressways and super highways in terms of the social and ecological costs outweigh the benefits a handful of elite are gaining by speedier road travel. Contrary to what the government claims, the highway projects are not an indigenous, swadeshi innovation emerging from the needs and socioeconomic and ecological context of India. The National Highway project is not really the symbol of indigenous development and democratic choices of the Indian people. It is driven by international financial institutions like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, who are using the expansion of highways to create markets for automobiles on one hand and privatization of infrastructure on the other. Expressways rob people of freedom and create a centralized, excluding "nationalism" for the elite and privileged. National highways area recipe for displacement and uprooting of people and ecosystems. The government has amended the Land Acquisition Act for acquiring land for highways which then gets privatized. A legislation on the Control of National Highways for prevention of encroachment, traffic regulation etc. on national highways has been enacted. The highway robbery of farm lands and forests dwarfs the 15 million displacement figures since Independence. Not only are peoples' freedom and farmers land being robbed by the Highway project, the project is a highway robbery of public funds.

Loss of Biodiversity

Reduced Genetic Diversity in Agriculture A profound reduction of genetic diversity in agriculture is now underway. The process has been well docu-

mented for food plants, and pertains to vegetables, grains and tree crops.

Since 1970, pharmaceutical, petrochemical and other transnational corporations have purchased more than 1,000 once-independent seed companies (Fowler and Mooney 1990; Hobbelink 1991; RAFI 1998, 1999, 2001). Loss of germplasm occurs as transnationals drop all but the most profitable seed varieties from their inventories. For example, the fifth edition of the Garden Seed Inventory (Seed Savers Exchange 1999), a list of all commercially available, non-hybrid vegetable varieties in the United States and Canada, shows that sugar beets, broccoli, cabbage cauliflower, onions and garden peas lost an average of 41 per cent of named varieties between 1981 and 1998. New commercial varieties also appeared during this time, but these were mostly introduced by tiny, independent seed companies, some of them non-profit, and typically represent the commercialisation of preexisting private varieties, not the result of new breeding efforts.

Loss of Wild Species

The massive, anthropogenic die-off of plant and animal species now occurring far exceeds the usual extinction rates that have prevailed throughout most of evolutionary history. In 1995, Pimm et al. estimated that extinction rates of taxonomically diverse groups of species from widely different environments were 100–1,000 times their prehuman levels. In 2000, the IUCN's Red List of endangered species showed that 24 per cent of mammals were faced with extinction (Hilton-Taylor 2000), an extraordinary die-off even when compared with that of the late Pleistocene ice ages. During the second half of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first, when global trade and the global expansion of new technologies and exploitation of natural areas have been increasing rapidly, species losses have become comparable to those of the, great extinctions of earlier geological epochs. It is impossible to determine the particular contribution of globalisation to the current extinction rate, or even to separate globalisation from other, interrelated factors such as human population growth. Nevertheless, it is evident that globalization is making a profound contribution to the great reduction in biodiversity that is now taking place (Ehrenfeld 2002). The negative impact of globalization on wild species is caused by the following factors: (i) increased development and exploitation of populations and natural areas to satisfy new demands of production and trade, including increased logging, land clearing for production agriculture, overfishing of marine fisheries, road-building (Laurance and Fearnside 2002), mining and dam construction (Diamond 2001); (ii) secondary effects of pollution-from production agriculture (Withgott 2002), fish farming (Edwards 2002; Murrayet al. 2002), vehicles burning fossil fuel, added electricity generation, nuclear wastes and other sources; (iii) tertiary effects of climatic change from excess carbon dioxide, methane, fluorocarbons and other chemicals; (iv) adverse effects of ecotourism on wild flora and fauna (Klein et al. 1995); and (v) the impact of the soaring numbers of exotic species, carried by the tremendous plane, ship, rail and truck traffic of global trade, on local flora and fauna (Cronk and Fuller 1995; Murray et al. 2002.

Environmental Costs of Globalisation

The principal environmental costs of global free trade are well known. They include water, air and soil pollution, exhaustion of non-renewable and slowly renewable resources and global climatic change—all caused by globalisation-related increases in industrial activity, production agriculture and the fossil fuel energy used in the free trade-related transport of raw and finished materials, and by the overriding of local and national protective laws and customs. Regulating the environmental side effects of globalisation is another matter. As Yu et al. (2002) state, 'A country importing "dirty" products essentially "leaks" its pollution to exporting countries that have less strict standards.' Also, 'the conflict between trade and environment arises because countries with weak property rights appear to be more productive even when they are not, and export their natural resources unsustainably'

Social Disruption

The social costs of globalisation are numerous and severe. Although a detailed discussion of them is beyond the scope of this article, some of these costs can be listed. They include: (i) a widening gap between rich and poor (both individuals and nations)—the richest 20 per cent spend 86 per cent of the world's wealth; (ii) the growing power of multinational corporations and the global interlinkage of financial markets, causing regional instability from resource extinctions and rapid, geographic shifts of production and financial assets; (iii) social unrest leading to greatly increased prison populations (the number of people in jail in the US has gone from less than 200,000 in 1970 to 1. prison populations have also been marked in other countries, such as Great Britain and New Zealand, after joining the global free trade economy); (iv) the dissolution of families and communities; (v) the weakening of democracy where it previously existed; (vi) the privatisation and consequent deterioration of health care, education and other social services, especially in the US; (vii) the reduction in foreign aid generated by wealthy nations; (viii) a sharp increase in the numbers of environmental/ economic refugees; (ix) an increase in regional wars and international, terrorism; (x) the loss of many of the world's languages; (xi) crippling of feedback and self-criticism (including the elimination of local control over local events); (xii) loss of knowledge and essential skills; and (xiii) the instability of highly complex and interlinked socio-economic systems (Abramovitz 2001; Ehrenfeld 1993, 1999; Goldsmith 1994; Gray 1998, 2002; Hertz 2001; Mander and Goldsmith 1996; McKnight 1995; Nettle and Romaine 2000; New Scientist 2002; Tainter 1988).

Spiritual Disruption

The Islamic scholar Sayyed Hossein Nasr (1996), author of perhaps the best book on comparative religious attitudes towards nature, has written extensively about the spiritual reasons for and consequences of the global spread of the materialism driven science and technology that originated in the West. Western religious thinkers, he notes, have been dealing for decades with our spiritual alienation from and destruction of the natural world, the earthly form 'in which the Sacred has manifested itself'. But 'only now is it beginning to dawn upon [the non-Western religions] that the present predicament is primarily the consequence of the loss of a sapiential knowledge of nature and an inner spiritual crisis and not simply the result of bad engineering.' As Nasr points out: 'Non-Western societies are forced into a global "economic order" within which they have little choice but to follow models of so-called development that are formulated in the West and in which non-Western religions and philosophies hardly play a role.' This, of course, is true, but it is not only the non-Western religions whose environmentally wise teachings have been thrust aside by the globalisation bulldozer.

Conclusion

It is far easier—and more realistic—to predict the disruption and possible demise of globalisation than to devise strategies to cope with the environmental upheavals to come. Presumably, physical environmental changes, including increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide, changes in temperature, melting of permafrost and oxidation of boreal peat deposits, changes in the distribution and abundance of rainfall and storm events, sea level rise and changes in the ozone shield will have to be dealt with primarily on an ad hoc basis, to the limited extent possible.

Many biological changes, such as introductions of exotic species and extinctions will similarly have effects that are easy to describe but difficult or impossible to counter, especially with the reduced economic resources available. Nevertheless, opponents of the worst abuses of globalisation have no excuse to abandon their efforts and wait for nature to bring globalisation to bay. In the realm of social and economic life, much work needs to be done to end the evils of the growing disparities of wealth, the exploitation of South by North, community disempowerment, and cultural and moral impoverishment—all of which globalization fosters. Responsible critics of globalisation must do more to show the connection between globalisation and its dangerous side-effects, and to keep this association in the public eye. Nor is the task entirely negative; we face the challenge of developing workable socio-economic systems that have a strong regional element and are not dependent on centralised, complex technologies—systems that preserve and enhance wealth in a sustainable way. And we must do this before the chaos of resource exhaustion, ecosystem collapse and global climate change makes the job even more difficult—or impossible. International trade in goods and ideas will and should continue, but the only form of globalisation that is acceptable is one that unites nations in meeting global threats and in preserving the environments, life forms and civilisations of this planet.

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