



Changing Role of Social Sciences in the Era of Globalization

KEYWORDS

Dr. B. M. Ratnakar

Asst. Professor. Department of Political Science Karnatak University Dharwad

Transformation has been the key word in the era of globalization. Profound changes in every sphere of human life seem imminent. From science and technology to economy and politics nothing seems to escape its impact. The winds of globalization having a penchant for a freeing the world from the clutches of the hitherto all pervasive state and has argued in favour of market driven society where the role of the nation state is limited. This in turn has put to test the old and the new theories (of the 19th century) of the state vis-à-vis the paradigm shift that is occurring in their status and performance. Social Sciences are experiencing crises of relevance. Its social value and social functions have become abstract devoid of any proclaimed credibility of having served for the betterment of the society or social development. Its practitioners have preoccupied themselves with lifeless abstractions such as "virtue, good citizen and good governance". Thus have failed to make sense of the profound changes the world is experiencing. Much of their exercise in conceptual creativity is fast losing their appeal contradicting their own notions of progress and development. Indeed with the fall of communism there is a growing challenge before these disciplines calling for them to exhibit their relevance in a changing world. There is a hidden challenge for these disciplines to explain in vivid terms the new concerns of the popular consciousness and the new forms of conflicts among nations, to judge events in realistic terms as they unfold, evaluate institutions and practice in realistic terms what is projected in conceptual and verbal forms. From normative social sciences to pragmatic and universalistic social science is the call of the day. Under these circumstances there is a need to have introspection within the social sciences and to counter such allegations of inability, social sciences to have orient themselves to find relevance and respond quickly than others, interpret events in the society, thus giving it an appeal of far reaching effect. The social movements of today not being guided by the social scientists have thus added credibility to these criticisms. Therefore time has come to have this introspection done by the fraternity of social scientists since, the language we use in these disciplines have to have the capability of communicating what we mean in universal category even when they are used in vernacular languages, thus finding social relevance to what we judge as events, evaluate as institutions and interpret as concepts with pragmatic focus. Inability to strengthen this structure and the matrix of social sciences might otherwise lead us to dooms day. Having said that, it is one thing to take an apathetic view of these criticisms and another to respond to it with credibility. However, in doing so one has to be aware of the difficulties involved in responding to such criticisms. To illustrate the following issues could be considered :

Language and Universalism : unlike Science, the language in Social Sciences vary from country to country, society to society and individual to individual depending entirely on once own experience, perception, ability and the meaning he/she delivers/derives given to the arbitrariness of the structure of languages.

Language and Translation : Since translation in social science is a an accepted medium for converting ideas in to Universal categories, the language of social scientists many a time gets restricted either because of the local specific phenomena or become the phenomena that is inexplicable in a medium that is understandable by all. Hence, subjective translations also tend to give narrow interpretations for an otherwise universally exemplified phenomenon.

However with the use of technology and the tools like computer, through simulations and inferences using various software, we have been able to transcend the borders/markets across the world. Yet, our efforts at universalizing social sciences still fall short of the goals set before us. Under these conditions, there is a dire need translate the best of the vernacular texts to give wider readership or to prepare dictionaries of equivalent terms which can be accepted to derive similar meanings (such as a multi-language dictionary) across the world or increase our out reach with scholars around the world through tools like internet etc., thus aiming at widening our horizon to include common concepts and common usage of those in categories already accepted. This in other words will also enable our discipline to gain the required social credibility. As a result, the "Value" of social sciences in general and political sciences in particular will gain currency. As a result, an event like Naxalism, terrorism, or the issues of good governance will gain social appeal and acceptance thus bringing the social scientists to the forefront of social movements, gaining media attention and occupying influential positions in policy making. Policy makers need to consult the social scientists as to make the need based policies and programmes for the welfare of public at large. Today most of the socio economic problems are due to decline of joint family structure. The societal harmonious practices can be understood by social science education. At this juncture it is humbly submitted, that social scientists must take note of these issues seriously irrespective of personal or professional differences and must occupy the positions of influence in society by engaging in social activism-through the in built professionalism and academic excellence. Thus contributing to strengthen Social Science as a relevant and socially useful discipline. I am making sincere efforts through this piece of article to reiterate the importance of social sciences.

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