



Social Impact of Globalisation in the Lives of Rural People in West Bengal: A Case Study

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DOI: [10.33329/ijless.12.1.35](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijless.12.1.35)



ABSTRACT

Globalization has put an indelible mark on the lives of villagers of West Bengal. Two-thirds of the population of West Bengal lives in rural areas, and most of this population depends on agricultural activities. The impact of globalization is a double-edged sword. It has significantly impacted on the lives of rural people, bringing both positive and negative effects. It has positive effects like increased market access, potential income growth, technological advancements, expansion of agro-industries, and social upliftment; at the same time, it has negative effects such as increased competition, exploitation of labor, rural-urban migration, cultural erosion, increased inequality, and environmental degradation. Globalization opens up new markets for rural producers like farmers and artisans, allowing them to sell their goods globally and potentially increase income. Investments in infrastructure like roads, Education, and irrigation systems can be facilitated by globalization, improving connectivity, and rural development. Access to new technologies and knowledge can enrich farmers' agricultural practices by improving productivity. Increased awareness and investment can lead to improved opportunities for education and healthcare facilities in rural regions. Rural people's migration to urban areas for work can generate remittances sent back to their families, contributing to rural economies. Rural producers often face intense competition from larger, more established global players, potentially leading to price instability and market displacement. Globalization can lead to labor exploitation in certain rural areas where workers might be vulnerable to low wages and poor working conditions. As opportunities in rural areas become limited, large-scale migration to urban centers can lead to depopulation and social disruption in rural communities. Increased agricultural production to meet global demand can sometimes lead to unsustainable land use practices and environmental damage. Not all rural communities have equal access to the benefits of globalization, often leaving marginalized groups behind. Governments need to implement policies that support rural development and ensure equitable access to the benefits of globalization. More investment in education and skill based training can equip rural populations with the skills needed for participation in the global economy. Promoting sustainable agricultural

practices is crucial to mitigate environmental impact. All these cause certain changes in social phenomena.

Keywords: Globalization, positive and negative effects, inequality, lives of rural people, benefits, agriculture, competition, sustainable development, Changes in social phenomenon.

Introduction

Globalization has brought rapid changes in the lives of the rural people of West Bengal. The term "Globalization" was first used in 1959. According to Robert J. Samuelson, "globalization is a double-edged sword: A powerful vehicle that raises economic growth, spreads new technology and increases living standards in rich and poor countries alike but also an immensely controversial process that assaults national sovereignty, erodes local culture and tradition, and threatens economic and social stability." Globalization helps to increase the income level of people in rural areas which can remove 'the rural urban disparity' and 'rural to rural disparity.' Globalization works as a bridge to remove the gap between people to people and people to government. Globalization also removes mental barriers among people to provide social protection to all. In man dominated areas, globalization works very effectively to provide equality to women. In the era of skill based job market, innovative training programs for unorganized labours, proper training and rural development programmes through gram panchyats, financial freedom to women, credit assistance facility to farmers and to provide small business assistance to youth while study can improve the living standard to the lives of rural people in West Bengal. Globalization has a wide range of social impacts, including economic, cultural, and family-related changes in the lives of rural people in West Bengal. Though globalization has localized in urban areas, and specifically in some developed cities, rural areas are also intertwined with globality, and can become important part in the production and circulation of capital, culture, and ideology. Globalization has resulted in increased rural-to-urban migration as well as international migration from rural areas. Migrants send remittances to their native place which have become a significant source of income for many rural households, influencing local economies. The term 'globalization' conjures images of economic upliftment, interconnected markets, cultural exchanges, social upliftment and technological advancements. For Indian villages, it has meant a dramatic transformation of their traditional ways of life to global ways of life. Due to globalization the world becomes a global village. For this the actual villages of India find themselves at the crossroads of change, grappling with the new opportunities and challenges that globalization presents. Thus globalization has been a double-edged sword for Indian villages that brings about significant changes and challenges in the lives of rural communities. This paper will explain the intricate ways in which globalization has shaped the socio-economic landscape of Indian villages, highlighting the positive advancements as well as the negative repercussions. Due to rural population expansion, incomes from agriculture come under huge pressure. New job creation in agriculture is decreasing. As land size becomes smaller, livelihoods of small and marginal farmers are increasingly becoming unsustainable and they are unable to support their family. Agriculture which is the primary source of income of the rural people has reduced substantially, and they are now increasingly relying on non-farm income sources for their livelihood. They prefer non-farm activities, particularly salaried jobs. Limited opportunity in agriculture forces surplus labour to engage in more productive organized sectors like manufacturing or agro-processing which helps to improve quality of rural livelihood. State Government invests more for the development on rural road connectivity, communication, agriculture based market and irrigation infrastructure in rural areas. The education system in rural areas strengthens in order to improve their standard of living. Rural development can generate more employment opportunities and higher incomes opportunities for the rural men, women. With globalization diversification of agriculture and allied enterprises afford greater opportunities for all.

West Bengal's economy is mainly based on agriculture which dominates both the landscape and the economy of West Bengal. A large portion of the state's workforce is employed in agriculture, and they are contributing a significant share of the state's GDP. Globalization has multidimensional impact on every aspect of human life directly or indirectly in everywhere in the world. The lives of the rural people of West Bengal have been greatly affected by it.

Objectives of the study:

The main objective of my paper is to study the social impact of globalisation in the lives of rural people in West Bengal. In order to examine the changing dimensions of rural livelihood in West Bengal, I have examined social impacts of globalization, including economic, cultural, and family-related changes in the lives of rural people. Globalization strongly put its impact on sustainable development of rural livelihood in West Bengal. All issues and concerns examined here are included challenges and opportunities of globalization for rural areas. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the nature and extent of livelihood in rural areas of West Bengal.
2. To discuss the impact of globalization on the lives of the rural people in West Bengal.
3. To identify the livelihood diversification in the rural area in West Bengal.
4. To identify the constraints in sustainable livelihood diversification in the study area.
5. To examine the impact of globalization on household livelihood security in rural area.
6. To analyze the changing pattern of social and economic trends among the rural people.
7. To suggest strategies for sustainable livelihood diversification in the rural areas.

The Positive impact of Globalization:

Economic growth is one of the most significant impacts of globalization on Indian villages. The rural economics of West Bengal is also greatly impacted by the unstoppable waves of globalization. Globalization has allowed rural products to reach a wider audience by opening up new markets, thereby increasing incomes of the rural people. Besides domestic investment, foreign investment has poured into these areas, creating more job opportunities and fostering economic development in rural areas. The rise of agriculture based business and the integration of local crafts into global supply chains are examples of how globalization has economically empowered rural people in India. Globalization has brought modern concept and technologies to the doorstep of Indian farmers. Day by day improved agricultural productivity and integration into the global economy have been direct results of this technological influx. New innovations such as precision farming and the use of drones for crop monitoring have revolutionized traditional farming methods, leading to more efficient, scientific and sustainable practices. The spread of mobile technology has also played a crucial role, enabling farmers to access up-to-date market information and agricultural advice directly from their cell phones. The development of infrastructure and roads connectivity has been another boon for Indian villages. Improved roads, better access to electricity, and advancements in telecommunications have all contributed to enhanced connectivity and facilities. This, in turn, has facilitated better access to markets and services, driving further economic growth. Exposure to global ideas has catalyzed social reforms in Indian villages. The abolition of untouchability, social discrimination and the implementation of reservation policies are just a few examples of the positive discrimination that has taken root, thanks to globalization. These changes have been instrumental in uplifting marginalized communities and promoting social equality in society. Spread of education in rural areas in West Bengal helps to increase this economical growth. Additionally, the influence of global human rights movements has led to increased awareness and action against social injustices in rural areas. The reach of globalization has extended to healthcare and education, which are the two critical pillars of human well-being. Villagers now have better access to medical facilities and educational institutions, leading to improvements in

health outcomes and literacy rates. Initiatives for user-friendly services like telemedicine and online education platforms have bridged the gap between rural and urban areas, providing villagers with opportunities that were previously out of reach. In short, for social upliftment, rural people need all round development; and globalization gives this opportunity to the people of West Bengal.

The Negative impact of Globalization:

While globalization has introduced growth and diversity in the life of the rural people in India, it has also threatened the fabric of traditional village life. The influx of foreign cultures in the name of modern culture has sometimes led to the erosion of indigenous values and practices, creating a cultural void that is hard to fill. The loss of regional culture, languages and art forms is a testament to the cultural impact of globalization on Indian villages. It is true that all villagers have not been benefited equally from globalization. The gap between the haves and the have-nots has widened day-by-days, creating economic disparities that threaten the fabric of rural society. Rich becomes richer and poor becomes poorer. The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few has led to social tensions and a sense of alienation among those left behind. All these are the darker side of globalization. The exploitation of rural labor is evident of the darker side of globalization. Villagers often find themselves working long hours for meager wages, which is a stark contrast to the promises of economic prosperity that globalization was supposed to bring. The rise of contract farming and the dominance of multinational corporations have sometimes resulted in unfair labor practices and a lack of job security for rural workers. The push for higher productivity has had detrimental effects on the environment and ecology. Practices such as the excessive use of genetically modified seeds, fertilizers and pesticides have led to soil degradation, water pollution and health hazard, compromising the sustainability of agricultural practices in Indian villages. This causes the loss of biodiversity. The depletion of natural resources is additional environmental costs of globalization. Large-scale industrial setup and infrastructure projects in rural areas have sometimes resulted in the displacement of rural communities from their native land. Traditional occupations and lifestyles are uprooted due to globalization, leaving villagers to navigate the uncertainties of a new, globalized world. The construction of roads, dams, mining activities, and the expansion of urban areas have forced many villagers to leave their ancestral lands and seek livelihoods elsewhere.

The impact of globalization on livelihood:

The Green Revolution is a prime example of globalization's impact in rural areas in West Bengal. It leads to a significant increase in agricultural output, and has brought about ecological imbalances and social disparities. Globalization promotes to introduction of high-yield crop varieties and modern farming techniques in agriculture. Though these are beneficial in the short term, they have had long-lasting effects on the rural ecosystem. The dependency on fertilizers and chemical inputs and the reduction in crop diversity have raised concerns about the future of sustainable agriculture in the villages of West Bengal. Contract farming, a system facilitating the production and supply of agricultural produce through forward contracts among producers, suppliers, and farmers, has opened a new trends in farming system in rural areas. The practice of contract farming which is widespread globally, brings a change in the rural areas in West Bengal. International Multi National Companies have engaged in collaborations with Indian villages through contract farming, aiming to enhance farmers' income through boosting up crop quality and production. Several instances illustrate this trend in non-food sectors also. People are forced to leave their traditional method of agricultural production and adopt modern agricultural techniques. Rural people shift away from solely relying on agriculture as a livelihood to non-farm activities like manufacturing, trade, and services. Dependence on agriculture as a primary source of income has reduced substantially and people are now increasingly relying on non-farm income sources for their livelihood. This causes a changing demographic landscape in rural settlements.

The impact globalization on public administration in West Bengal:

Globalization has had a profound impact on public administration in West Bengal. The impact of globalization on public administration is vast and multifaceted. Three tiers Panchayati Raj system is the main pillar of rural development in West Bengal. The primary objectives of Panchayati Raj System are to eradicate poverty, uplift standard of living of people in the rural areas, and bring about a healthy society by creating awareness for hygiene, sanitation and eradication of illiteracy. Gram Panchayats at village levels are expected to perform certain obligatory functions to provide basic services to all the people living in the rural areas. This Panchayati Raj system is influenced by global ideas of self governance; it has led to more democratic and inclusive local governance structures in the rural areas of West Bengal. This system has worked to empower villagers, giving them a voice in the decision-making processes that affect their daily lives. The system works based on the principal of the decentralization of power and the emphasis on grassroots democracy. It has been considered significant steps towards inclusive development in rural India. Actually it is an Institution that ensures development of human resources by providing opportunities like education, training, basic health services and financial assistance necessary for growth and development to the people in villages. Besides all these, it also ensures that all the sections of the society particularly weaker section including women and girl child gets adequate opportunity for developing human resource potential. It can play a major role in development of human resource for weaker section by disseminating information on special development programmes for them. Self-help groups, Voluntary groups and local agencies should be encouraged by PRIs in effective implementation of human resource development programmes for the social upliftment of the rural people. Through all these activities, this Panchayati Raj system works to make villagers suitable for global exposure.

Conclusion

The livelihood in West Bengal is fast diversifying through Globalization. Globalization has left a multidimensional effect on the villages in West Bengal. Globalization has both positive and negative impacts on the socio-economic lives of the rural people in West Bengal. There are positive impacts, such as economic growth, technological advancements, and social upliftment. There are negative impacts such as various challenges, including cultural erosion, increased inequality, and environmental degradation. The real-world examples of the Green Revolution and the Panchayati Raj system underscore the complex nature of globalization's impact. We find a balance between global influences and local needs to ensure inclusive and sustainable development for the rural people of West Bengal. The traditions of Indian villages are challenged by embracing the benefits of globalization. For discussing these benefits a thoughtful and nuanced approach is required. Government policies must be designed to protect the interests of rural communities, ensuring that the winds of change bring prosperity and progress without eroding the essence of village life. The journey of changes in the lives of villages through the landscape of globalization is a testament to their resilience and adaptability, and it is up to us to ensure that this journey leads to a destination where every villager can thrive. Globalization can impact income and working conditions. Globalization can lead to unemployment, inequality, and poverty. However, it can also create new jobs and opportunities. Globalization can impact social protection. Globalization can facilitate the exchange of ideas, values, and cultures. Globalization can lead to the erosion of traditional family and marriage values. Globalization can lead to an increase in inter-caste marriages. Globalization can lead to an increase in the acceptance of live-in relationships. Globalization can lead to a decline in joint family structures and an increase in nuclear families. Globalization can lead to individualism that causes identity crisis. Globalization works as a major driver for social changes in contemporary rural areas. This involves the multiplication, stretching, and intensification of social, economic, political, and cultural relations over space. This Process of changes includes the integration of the global economy, increased flows of national and international migration, and a growing global consciousness and standardization of values impact on

rural areas. All these are affected by established economic structures, prompting changes in agriculture and land management, restructuring populations, challenging traditional cultures, and generating conflicts. The impacts of globalization are varying between rural areas; it is shaped in part by the responses of rural communities through economic development strategies and protest mobilization. For the social well-being of the rural people, state Government needs to allocate a larger share of public expenditure to rural areas to improve access to nutrition and health, increase access to and quality of rural education and implement food security schemes that lower the risk and vulnerability of the rural poor. Social safety net schemes developed for urban areas should be extended to rural areas.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all the Professors, P.G. Department of Sociology, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSMU), Uttar Pradesh, India for their valuable suggestions and insightful comments. Their immense knowledge and plentiful experience have encouraged me in all the time of my academic research. I owe to them in every sense of gratitude for providing me with the facilities throughout the course of investigation. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my respected teacher Dr. Md. Enarul Hoque, Associate Professor, Dr. Meghnad Saha College, Uttar Dinajpur, West Bengal, and Dr. Mukunda Mishra, Vice-Principal, Dr. Meghnad Saha College, Uttar Dinajpur, West Bengal, for their unwavering support and belief in me. I am also grateful to all my friends & colleagues for their encouragement and co-operation in my work.

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