



SWADESHI IN THE GLOBALISING WORLD

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ABSTRACT:

Crossborder production of goods and services has virtually changed the dimensions of the international economic order. Termed as globalisation the process has resulted into a world where markets as indispensable part of human life are no longer isolated from each other. By making use of the latest technology, at competitive cost goods of high quality are produced as a package of end product. The various components manufactured in one part of the world on account of labour cost advantage are assembled in another part whereas sold somewhere else. As an example, an interconnection can be seen between the iron ore industry of Brazil and steel plate making in Mexico and its close association with the automobile industry of USA or that of Japan.Globalisation has a preference for large units of production controlled from overseas. In such type of gigantism and bigger units of production, capital rules the human beings. They are treated as things and assets rather than living beings, leading to alienation of labour from the product. The process of globalisation is irreversible. We cannot fight it to end. Rather we should not waste our reserve of energy in fighting with the process, we should fight to bring it down to our basic realities. We should use it to provide input to the concept of Swadeshi which means small is beautiful.

At the same time Swadeshi also has to widen its horizon to cooperate with the increasing global activities. Then and only then harmonised development is possible. Swadeshi does not leave any scope for coexistence of the poor and the rich or the weak and the strong nations. When taken to higher levels it means that after everyone's basic needs have been satisfied there should be some overall constraints on material demands so that resources can be diverted towards the fulfilment of man's non-material needs.

KEYWORDS: Swadeshi, Globalisation, Self-reliance, Sovereignty, Barrierless.

INTRODUCTION : Transboundary production of goods and services has virtually changed the dimensions of the international economic order. Termed as globalisation the process has resulted into a world where markets as indispensable part of human life are no longer isolated from each other. Making use of the latest technology, at competitive cost goods of high quality are produced as a package of end product. Components manufactured in one part of the world on account of labour cost advantage are assembled in another part whereas sold somewhere else. As an example, an interconnection can be seen between the iron ore industry of Brazil and steel plate making in Mexico and its close association with the automobile industry of USA or that of Japan.

Changes in technology have generally triggered industrial revolutions and the methods of production. First industrial revolution transformed manual into mechanical and the second transformed mechanical into automatic process of production. Advancement of technology in the post industrial society, is marked by the shift from automation to information and knowledge based transformation of production processes, led and guided by computer programming techniques and microchips. Today's process of globalisation is the outcome of the third industrial revolution.

Globalisation is a supra-national phenomenon with far reaching political, economic, social and cultural consequences for all countries of the world. Spearheaded by business community itself rather by the efforts of nation states, it equally profoundly influences the policies of national governments. Its impact on developing countries is undeniable and holds the Janus-like promise, for some, of greater integration, for others, of stagnation or further marginalisation in the world economy.

Swadeshi on the other hand is founded on the premise of 'use of country made goods in preference to others'. It emphasises on the service to and of the immediate neighbours excluding the distant one. It takes into account the limited physical capacity of the human beings. It restricts all Indian to the exclusive use of articles made in India. It is not that Swadeshi advocates isolated development or

cooperation among individuals in the country only. Rather in Swadeshi there is a hierarchy of cooperation.

At the initial stage, in Swadeshi, individual serves and gets the services of the immediate neighbours. He makes use of the things produced by them and vice-versa even if these are inferior in quality than those available from outside. Then the circle widens and cooperation comes at the village level. One neighbouring village tries to fulfil the need and requirements of another after satisfying its own needs. In this way there is an interaction between villages. The third stage comes at province or state level. One state makes available to the other, the goods and services in lieu of the similar kind or in other form. And last stage comes at the cooperation among nations. One nation is supposed to treat most favoured nation in terms of trade, the immediate neighbouring nation. For example, under Swadeshi if India can buy one commodity from Pakistan at cheaper rate, then India should not go for buying the same commodity from USA or France. If that commodity is not available in the neighbouring state, then that can be imported from outer world. One should not starve one's neighbour and claim to serve one's distant cousin, for one should not serve one's distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. This is not only the lesson taught by all the religions in the world but also the foundation of humane economics.

Globalisation advocates barrierless trade whereas Swadeshi supports least import from other countries. It emphasises that almost all the things of basic necessity should be produced in India and as far as possible only Indian made good should be used in India in exclusion of others. It does not consider consumer sovereignty, rather it takes into account a collective sacrifice at individual level.

The doctrine of 'Swadeshi' is based upon morality, humanity and is also dictated by our own limitations simultaneously. The doctrine advocates that moral standards must be applied to selling as well as buying of the goods and services. It is our duty to inquire into the antecedents of the articles we buy as every produced article has a human life attached to it in its production. But this becomes a Herculean task when commodities are traded with far off countries and far off areas even in the same

country. In this process the human touch between the consumers and producers is lost. The main consideration is not the benefit of the society but maximisation of profit.

Nature has arranged human life in such a way that the things existing in man's surroundings must be the objects of his first care. Swadeshi recognises it when it emphasises that our immediate neighbour should get the top priority. We are trustees of our wealth, talents and capacities and we can function as trustees more efficiently in the local environsⁱ.

In this way there seems a contradiction between globalisation and Swadeshi. Both seem to be in diametrically opposite directions. One advocates market based demand and supply whereas the other advocates morality based production. One calls for providing any one having capacity to pay, almost all the humanly possible facilities anywhere in the world whereas the other requires the spirit of sacrifice for the good of community at large. One strives for concentration of wealth in a few hands who will decide the future of the humanity on the other hand, the other calls for distributive justice among the individuals in different countries. One aims at self-reliance of the country whereas the other tries to bring every development of the world to consumer's door step on payment basis and thereby adding to material development of one's own country irrespective of the method used in this gain. There is a difference of means applied to bring welfare of the humanity at large.

Swadeshi is a pyramid where service and sacrifice lies at the base but in the pyramid of globalisation profit motive of the producer lies everywhere. Swadeshi means service to the immediate first and then going further whereas globalisation will cover lakhs of miles if profit is there leaving aside the immediate human beings. Contract will be granted to the highest bidder and not to the country which is in need of such goods.

Often equated concepts with Swadeshi are self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency rules out imports and stresses on indigenous production of goods and services required by the country within its boundaries without depending on others. Whereas, self-reliance implies that a country generates enough surplus to buy from

others what it needs. The country does not depend upon others for the resources of funds needed to acquire. Self-reliance allows imports from other countries provided it has the capacity to pay for the same.

Development of the human beings as societal being must stem from the inner core of the society. It must make full use of people's strength, creativity and wisdom. A national development must use its own resources, cultural as well as natural heritage. This type of indigenous development or self-reliant development makes the country accountable for their own development within the framework of increased political and economic independence. "It builds development around individuals and groups rather than people around development and it attempts to achieve this through the deployment of local resources and indigenous efforts"ⁱⁱ.

In this way creative energies of people themselves is utilised directly to attack on poverty, alienation and frustration. This also helps the nation to reduce its vulnerability to decisions and events falling outside its control as it relies more on local resources rather than borrowed institutions and technologies. At local level it implies decentralisation in the fields of political, economic and creation of small self-determining, self-regulating communities. At national level self-reliance means that each nation is responsible for its own essential well being and balanced development. It gives the nation its right to organise itself according to the various needs and circumstances.

At international level it lays stress on cooperation at equal terms and conditions based upon mutual interests, benefits and exchange of goods and services required to make up for the deficiencies.

Swadeshi is conducive to the establishment of a non-violent social order where free flow of internal and external resources and wealth will be checked. In the process of development there has been antagonism between the city and village or between the industry and the agriculture. One has always tried to dominate the other. This tussle has resulted in colonisation of the country. But Swadeshi provides the solution to these problems, by keeping international as well as intra-national trade within limits. It is agreed that under such conditions our real India (villages) will not be able to

lead a highly luxurious life but they will not be poor either, rather they will be self-reliant eliminating the evils of poverty, unemployment, inequality, exploitation etc.

In such a scenario there will be economic equality, self-reliance and interdependence of equally needy people. People will not have to wait for their daily necessities to be brought about from the outer world. Under Swadeshi small is beautiful. Globalisation has a preference for large units of production controlled from overseas. In such type of gigantism and bigger units of production, capital rules the human beings. They are treated as things and assets rather than living beings, leading to alienation of labour from the product.

All this no doubt leads to material prosperity but life of contentment and peace is lost in return. Swadeshi with small units and simple modes of production provides solution to this social and human crisis by crating bonds of mutual cooperation, intimacy and dependency. Technology is used to overcome the distance and reduce the time spent for covering long distances. Huge quantities of goods are transported from one corner of the country to another and back under the illusion and euphoria of generating wealth. But one thing we forgot is that, the monetary and real sources spent on producing, using and maintaining the modern huge and complicated transportation and communication system-aeroplanes, ships, railways, trucks, buses, taxis, auto-rickshaws, telephones etc., are huge indeedⁱⁱⁱ. Moreover what is the logic behind transporting for example, vegetables of the same class grown at one place, from that place to another and vice versa.

Modern development aims at the creation of monoculture by destroying the economic, social, cultural, political as well as biological diversity. Bio-diversity maintains a balance in nature whereas cultural diversity allows the human potential to be expressed in many different forms. Diversity is essential to enhance global quality of human life as no single culture is capable of incarnating all-important aspects of different cultures. While the external environment is becoming harmonized, there are also signs of discontent and conflict within various societies. Standardisation of organisation on single line method, advanced technology, similar ways of life-styles and behavioural patterns are all trying to bring uniformity around

the world on lines advocated and supported by the developed countries. These guidelines do not take into account the problems and prospects of developing countries. This is nothing but colonisation in a different form. Swadeshi by its nature would aim at recreation and preservation of the diversity all over the world. It will not allow any affluent country or society to take over the others.

One can argue that Swadeshi means to return to the primitive social order which is neither possible nor desirable in this hi-tech world. For this we have to go deep into the so-called developed countries of today. This is now coming to light by research time and again that development of free market, export base and supply side has eroded the economic base of these countries. The inner-city neighbourhood and rural areas have benefited very little from the rising affluence of these countries. There are feelings of insecurity and stress among the people who are becoming powerless to control their own economic destinies day by day. In countries like USA, local governments and community groups are trying to find out ways to rebuild their economic and employment base. The rural areas are creating their own approaches for stimulating local economic activities.

Under Swadeshi such a situation hardly arises in such proportion. It rather allows one's to initiate and participate in the process of creating a self-reliant, democratic socio-economic-political order based on interdependence.

Even in the process of globalisation Swadeshi has been there in the form of regional cooperation groups trying to fulfil their mutual needs at reasonable rates and also creating new ways of providing foundation to their globalisation affected economies. A few of such groups are NAFTA, SAPTA, EU, SAARC, EEC, etc. These regional blocks have tended to be a strong force in the international arena.

In the concept of global village the idea is that whatever is produced anywhere in the world at a cheaper rate should be made available to everyone at the same price. This may be true rationally upto some extent but it is also a hindrance to nation's efforts towards self-reliance. In this process of making available same product all over the world, the importing country becomes dependent upon the producing country. In return the nation loses its economic independence and the developed countries

exploit the poor countries according to their requirements. The demand and supply of the poor countries is controlled by the rich countries.

Long time back Darwin gave the theory of Origin of Species. According to this theory big fish eat the small and eliminate them completely or in other words finish them to their end without leaving any traces. Darwinism is based on 'Survival of the Fittest'. Whereas it is quite evident in the new international economic order that the developed countries do not eliminate the poor countries to their end. Rather they keep them at a stage where they are – just surviving. They are not allowed to die a death of their own or rise to their full capabilities.

This International Economic Darwinism as termed by J.D. Sethi, "is a set of relations between nations and people on the principle of the survival of the fittest, except that nations or people do not disappear, if only because it is neither in the interests of the fittest nor in their power to make the unfit completely disappear. They are obliged to make the least fit survive, but only marginally as a destitute living in ghettos"^{iv}.

A rising tide of wealth is supposed to lift all boats. Out of these boats some are more seaworthy than others. It is quite evident that the yachts and ocean liners are rising in response to the new opportunities, but the rafts and row boats are taking on water and some are sinking fast. In spite of the mixed metaphor, the meaning is clear – the rich are benefiting by globalisation, the poor are losing and sinking.

The idea of increasing interdependence is also false. Interdependence is the capacity to influence the economic behaviour of the other nations or international organisations. Where one nation runs on the mercy of the other nation or if one state is in such a position that it can destroy the other any time, it cannot be termed as interdependence. The relation for instance, between America and Bangladesh, Japan and Nepal etc., cannot be termed as interdependence rather it is dependence. An exploiting nation always has a deep interest in maintaining the static position of the dependent in the same way as the imperialism had the need for colonies. Many new nations even after their political independence find themselves still bound by economic dependency. For a long time it was believed that the solution to this

problem was aid and assistance. But this external aid is like a sulpha-drug, one must know when to use it, when to stop it and one must always have a B-complex to neutralise its effects.

In such a scenario Swadeshi with its true features of interdependence is nothing but the need of the hour. During freedom struggle period our national leaders advocated and supported Swadeshi to make India a self-reliant country. It was their approach which gave new dimensions to the concept of Swadeshi. But now the scene has changed manifold. Our own representatives and intelligentsia is advocating economic reforms and liberalisation of economy. This means that whatever we were doing till now was redundant. USA or Japan are not asking us to liberalise, it is Narasimha Rao, Manmohan Singh and the like who are telling us to liberalise the economy.

In modern times when all the countries of the world have come so close that they are regarded as one global village, one cannot afford to remain isolated. One has to be cooperative and a participant in the development. But it does not mean that country's sovereignty be curtailed or developed countries be given freedom to overpower and overrule the nation families of the global village. Leaving aside the case of whole world, even in a village every family has its own typical character, proper steps are required to protect the interest of the families of the village while at the same time enhancing the common interest of the whole village.

Apparently, there seems to be contradiction between globalisation and Swadeshi. But there is not much of a difference between the two if we approach from a different point of view. Both are based on the concept of dependent origination, which advocates that humanity progresses through cooperation and coordination of its comprising units. These units are human beings at the individual level and communities and nations at the group level.

Conclusions and Recommendations :

The process of globalisation is irreversible. We cannot fight it to end. Rather we should not waste our reserve of energy in fighting with the process, we should fight

to bring it down to our basic realities. We should use it to provide input to the concept of Swadeshi.

At the same time Swadeshi also has to widen its horizon to cooperate with the increasing global activities. Then and only then harmonised development is possible. Swadeshi does not leave any scope for coexistence of the poor and the rich or the weak and the strong nations. When taken to higher levels it means that after everyone's basic needs have been satisfied there should be some overall constraints on material demands so that resources can be diverted towards the fulfilment of man's non-material needs.the

It is true that when the window is open fresh air as well as insects and mosquitoes come in. The solution is not to shut the window, but to put a screen or to install an insect repellent. This would allow only the fresh air in, leaving aside all the harmful elements. Similarly, the process of globalisation should be allowed to penetrate through the safety nets.

Globalisation free from its ill effects can work hand in hand with Swadeshi for the development of the country. For this Swadeshi also has to be raised to a level where it can make use of the process of globalisation to ameliorate living standard of common man keeping in mind his life as an integrated whole. As a result Swadeshi will have to widen its wings and globalisation has to come down to the basic realities.

ⁱ Bhole, L.M., *Essays on Gandhian Socio-Economic Thought* (Delhi: Shipra Publications), 2000, p. 185

ⁱⁱ Tinbergen, Jan, *Reshaping the International Order* (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd.), 1977, p.66

ⁱⁱⁱ Bhole, L.M., *op.cit.*, p. 188

^{iv} Sethi, J.D., *International Economic Disorder and A Gandhian Solution* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies), 1990, p.15