

# SARASWATI

The Research Journal

Special Issue  
Global and Internal Politics: Issues and Areas



**SBES College of Arts and Commerce,  
Aurangabad, Maharashtra**

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# Impact of Globalization on Developing Countries

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## Introduction:

The policies and development in many countries are influenced by the globalization is not only a movement of ideas, information, Capital, People, technologies, goods and services and labor across the nations – states but has serious implications on Socio-economic, political and public administration sphere of life. There is no denying that globalization has brought about a paradigm shift in the nature and scope of public administration. It has virtually unshackled the discipline from the classical bondage of structure and paved the way for a more flexible, less hierarchical and accommodative kind of discipline informed by networks and collaboration. It shook the very foundation of the discipline and encouraged a few skeptics and self-styled analysts to proclaim and imminent death of public administration. However, more than two decades down the line, ever since globalization was first thrust upon nation states, public administration has not shown absolutely any signs of receding. On the contrary, rendering those dooms-day predictions wrong, public administrations has reincarnated in a readjusted form to cope with the new set of challenges.

In fact, globalization had increased the urgency of having a more proactive public administration. However, the traditional notion of public administration with a sheltered bureaucracy, rigid hierarchy, and organizational principle no longer exists today. Both structurally and functionally, public administration has experienced a metamorphosis of sorts. Structurally speaking, thanks to the sweeping social-economic-political transformation under globalization, the rigid, hierarchical, and bureaucratic form of governance has given way to a more flexible, de – hierarchical, and post-bureaucratic form of governance based on networks and partnership. Similarly, at the functional level, public administration has witnessed a profound transformation in the form of delivery of public goods and services. Until recently, the delivery of goods and services was considered as one of the important functions of public administration. But, the onset of globalization and the eventual rolling back the welfare state ushered in a new collaborative form of public administration, where state administration has had to readjust itself to deliver public goods and services in collaboration with the innumerable other players and NGOs functioning at the societal level. Hence, public administration in the era of globalization has been donning a new robe of the ‘enabler’ or ‘facilitator’ by privatizing the substantial part of welfare delivery functions.

## Concept of Globalization

As a complex interplay of economic, political, and social, or cultural factors, globalization has almost engulfed the world with its sweeping forces. However, the term is ‘notorious’ for its imprecision. There is hardly any consensus among scholars and practitioners alike on the meaning of the term. Even after a couple of decades, the discourse remains as fuzzy and amorphous as ever. However, there is no dearth of literature on the subject as a veritable army of scholars, drawn from almost all the branches of human knowledge, forayed into this field of study. Like the proverbial elephant and the three blind men, the concept of globalization became subject to all kinds of interpretations. Both, the proponents and opponents equally poised in the literature of globalization have ended up making the discourse even more intricate and fuzzy. While the proponents eulogized it as phenomenal event in the history of mankind that facilitated better governance, the opponents were apprehensive of its explicit agenda, especially

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the globalization has meant many things to many people.<sup>1</sup> The ideas are diverse, interchangeable, and broad, so much so that it is easy to fall into a definitional trap. For example, economists consider globalization as an advance step toward a fully integrated world market. Political Scientists view it as a march away from the conventionally defined concept of state with territorial sovereignty and the emergence of supranational and global governing bodies under a new world order. Business school scholars and consultants see globalization as unlimited opportunities in 'borderless world.' Others view globalization as a phenomenon driven only by private sector corporations, not governments. These viewpoints reflect different lenses of seeing the world, and they promote the interests they are supposed to serve.

### **Political aspect of globalization**

Politically speaking, globalization calls for a reconfiguration of the political order. It is said that globalization has ushered in an era of 'geo-centric global politics' instead of 'state-centric geopolitics,' born at the Treaty of Westphalia. Westphalian 'constitution of world-order' emerged out of the Treaty of Westphalia at the end Thirty Years War in 1648 and marked the beginning of the sovereign nation state system. The authority of this system was based on the principles of territoriality, sovereignty, and autonomy. Commentaries have been ranging from total eclipse of a nation state to the substantial curtailment of it.

### **Social/cultural aspect of globalization**

Cultural elements also play significant roles in sustaining the process of globalization. Cultural elements are, both, a component and variant of globalization. Cultural or social elements of globalization primarily consist of two contradictory processes, namely cultural homogenization versus cultural specificities in terms of localization. It is generally argued that the economic integration of global markets and the necessary repositioning of political space can only be possible if the said processes are adequately backed by cultural homogenization. The homogenizations of global cultural space can reinforce the onward march of global capital. Hence, there has been a significant convergence in global cultural practices.<sup>4</sup>

### **Impact of globalization on developing countries**

Most of the developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, have had a common legacy of colonial subjugation and the resultant problems of low agricultural and industrial productivity, poor social index, political underdevelopment, and so on. The peculiarities of these countries have justified the state-led development offensive and consequent elaborate welfare arrangements. Globalization as a neoliberal design of hollowing out of the welfare state has a debilitating impact on developing countries. In this section, we will spell out the apparent vulnerability of developing nations in the wake of the neoliberal recipe of more market and less state.

Globalization has posed a serious challenge to these developing countries. As a part of aid conditionality, the developing countries had to accept a SAP, which among others had a compulsion to open up their national frontiers for international trade and commerce. Though the proponents of globalization have opined that the globalization process, if allowed to function freely, would open up floodgate of opportunities, the adverse impact of it cannot be entirely ruled out. Thanks to inherent in quality and uneven growth of capitalism, globalization had also registered an uneven and stunted growth. While some industrially developed capitalist countries reaped a rich harvest; out of globalization, most of the underdeveloped countries had to bear the burnt in terms of increasing unemployment, pauperization, malnutrition, and marginalization.

Public Administration also includes the administration of justice. It is mostly concerned with issue of justice within the territorial jurisdiction of the nation state. The onset of globalization with increasing enmeshment and interconnectedness has brought the issue of global justice in the forefront, which has so long been considered as cosmopolitan utopia at best. In fact, the success of globalization calls for an order of global justice in the first place. Hence, the recent concern for global justice can be attributed to the political economy of market. In the following section, we shall discuss the concept of global justice and show how globalization has engendered it.<sup>6</sup>

### **Concluding Observations**

Drafting any concluding observation on the assumed correlation between globalization and public administration is by no means a daunting task, as the phenomenon of globalization is yet to reach a conclusive phase. As an all encompassing phenomenon, globalization has unlocked a virtual floodgate of possibilities and problems for public administration, ever since it came into being in the 1990s. On the basis of the foregoing analysis, some observations can be made.

First, it is true that globalization has had a definite impact on public administration and virtually redefined it. The indelible mark of globalization can be discerned in its structural, functional, and attitudinal aspects, if we compare the globalized version of public administration with that of the traditional one. Unlike the traditional variant of public administration drawing largely on pro-market arguments.

Hence, globalization for these countries appeared to be an ordeal as most of them had been caught in a typical dilemma of sorts. Given the historical context, they were neither in position to thwart the onward march of globalization, nor whole hearted accept it, as that implied a severe downsizing of public administration. Nevertheless, the post- colonial countries had to accept willy nilly the neoliberal design of globalization.

Now that we have been through this phenomenon of globalization for more than three decades, it is possible to have a relatively objective assessment of the impact of globalization on public administration. Initial apprehensions notwithstanding, the experiences corroborated that globalization could not downsize public administration altogether. Rather, specificities of these countries have compelled to reinvent public administration to withstand the impending challenges.

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