Glocalisation And Development Of North-Eastern Region

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Abstract: Socio-cultural variations in Northeast India, particularly in Assam and Meghalaya, can be beneficially examined in terms of the concepts of globalization. Cities of the region which are the arenas of global interaction, have redefined the conditions and the processes of regional and local developments and have regenerated the new infrastructural conditions of the global economy while seeking to identify their advantages, assets and power to compete with other cities of the country. The region has been affected from the globalization process due to its geographical and strategic location, historical and cultural assets, dynamism and functional capacities. While the emergence of new development modes such as foreign direct investments and attractiveness of the service sector has been observed in the socio-economical and spatial aspects at the national and local level, other new developments have emerged in providing services to neighboring state at the international level. The impacts of these developments are great on both the spatial growth and the planning process. Actually, NER redifines the conditions of regional and local developments to become the center point of “South East Asia”. In contradiction of this background, the aim of this paper is to evaluate the impact of glocalization in the region.

Index Terms: Glocalization, MNCs, LCDs, Ethno-medicine, NER

1 INTRODUCTION

Glocalization is a fashionable term used in the socio-economic analysis now a days which essentially involves the process of confronting the challenges faced by the local economies in several parts of the world due to predominant globalization. The fact is that theoretically globalization ensures optimum utilization of world potential and resources by eliminating all kinds of anthropocentric barriers of mobilizing natural, physical and human capital along with other economic goods & services and technology among the sovereign nations. But according to some of the social scientists globalization is a paradox and thrill as it does not tell anything about the 50% people living with absolute poverty, discrimination- both intra-societal and inter societal. It only empowers the process of discrimination and deprivation by enriching the wealthier sections of the society as well as developed nations of the world. Therefore advocacy has been strongly growing in support of glocalisation which is essentially a fruitful strategy to these problems leading by the process globalization.

2 NORTH EASTERN REGION (NER) IN THE UPCOMING PROCESS OF GLOCALISATION

2.1 GLOCALISATION: A CONCEPTUAL SPECTRUM:

The introduction of the term ‘glocalisation’ to the English lexicon and also to the various branches of social sciences is mainly attributed to the British Sociologist Roland Robertson in the early 1990s (H. H. Khondeker). Later on Canadian sociologist Keith Hampton articulated it in a profound way along with his contemporary Zygment Bauman in the late 1990s at a time when globalization moved one step closer from being an aspiration of business to reality. The dictionary meaning of the noun ‘glocalisation’ is “the practice of conducting business according to both local and global considerations” (Oxford Dictionary).

From derivative point of view the word has been derived from Japanese ideographs ‘do’, ‘chaku’ and ‘ka’ which mean land, arrive and process of respectively in English. Therefore it is the process of adapting farming techniques to one’s own local condition. In the business world the idea was adopted to refer global localization. According to Wordspy glocalisation means “the creation of products or services intended for global market but customized to suit the local cultures”. So it can easily be understood that the concept of glocalisation emanated in the field of global business arena where giant Multi-National Companies (MNCs) were facing problems in selling their products in several parts of world particularly the lucrative markets of less developed countries (LDCs). The MNCs always try to maximize their profit by introducing innovations in production, standardization, distribution and marketing chain. But the global brands like Coca Cola, McDonald etc were not familiar with the local cultures, tests and flavors of the then emerging economies. That is why in 1990s former chairman of Coca Cola said “the world had changed and we had not- the world was demanding greater flexibility, responsiveness and local sensitivity which we were further consolidating decision making and standardizing our practices. The next big evolutionary step of going global now has to be going local” (D. Luigi & V.Simona). This forced the MNCs to adopt the technique of glocalisation giving full respect to local test, aspirations and demand since 1990s. But it is not a concept of the business world alone now and has been increasingly used in almost every field of social sciences. Therefore it is “the ability of a culture when it encounters other strong cultures, to absorb influences that naturally fit into and can enrich the culture to resist those things that are truly alien, and to compartmentalize those things which different, can nevertheless be enjoyed and celebrated as different” (Thomas Friedman). Hence it is not mere a concept rather a revolutionary process which inherits the judicious chemistry of globalization and localization and thereby creates a new diplomatic as well as self-reinforcing path of development.

3. PRESENTING NER OF INDIA IN A GLOCALISED WORLD:

The NER of unique India comprising eight aesthetic states carries abundant availability of natural and human resources. But the state of physical resources such as transportation and
communication has not been able to meet the need and anticipation of the people of this landlocked region even after more than sixty two years of sovereign five year economic planning. This is one the most important growth hindering factors which has been enhancing the social evils like terrorism, separatist movement etc. Globalisation is a myth for the people of LDCs as it strongly generates the problem of deprivation and exploitation of the poor due to ever spreading socio-economic backwardness in those nations. It truly applies for NER also. Globalization has been bestowing several curses on the people of this region. The meritorious doctors of this region have been flowing away from this region and country and at the same time lakhs of people are dying without having proper medical treatment caused by scarcity of doctors. We are creating efficient engineers but benefits are bought by the MNCs and hence we do not have efficient engineers to solve the problem, geologists to solve the problem of flood, erosion etc. The fundamental problem is that we are inviting these colourful but devastating effects without any question and if it continues NER will face the challenge of existence very soon. So glocalisation may be a strong movement against this direction. The region is feeding 3.8% of the country’s population covering 8% of the total geographical area. Out of these eight states of highly hilly terrains Assam has the highest population above 3.12 crores (2011 Census). The most important feature of the population is that it is the homeland of extraordinarily diverse mosaic of ethnic groups living with distinctive socio-economic and cultural identity more akin to their South Asian neighbours than mainland India. There are about 145 tribal communities of which 78 are large each with a population of more than 5000 in this region. This represents a warm potential of the process globalisation. Because it needs empowered and rich local and indigenous knowledge, green but distinctive socio-economic operations. These local features may be converted into very fruitful globalised products by using the branded production and marketing techniques of the global giants. For example the cuisines used by the people of this region are quite healthy and nature based i.e organic food. At present due to unprecedented use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers in agricultural activities the quality of food production is deteriorating throughout the world. It a great threat to the food and nutritional security of the human being. Essentially the demand for organic food has been mounting as people are becoming more aware about health. In this scenario if we can bring out the traditional cuisines in a modified and upgraded form without hampering their originality to the world then it will gain a huge market. Moreover it will open up a new path of employment, income generation to the youth of this region as well as it will generate a positive effect on the ongoing movement of separation, terrorism etc in the long run. A successful example has already been established by some youths under Nitul Das. Nitul Das and his companions have been trying to place the ethnic cuisines of NER in the national level and gradually at the international level. Their Samaroh En Dees Dhaba has already become favourite among travelers crossing the Koliya Bhumora Bridge (The Sentinel, 10th June 2013). The fact is that the concept of Dhaba to NER and India is not new. But earlier it was mere a resting and dining place of travel weary truck drivers which has now become a outing place for entire family. The notable characteristic of this Dhaba is that it serves a wide range of ethnic food recipes along with other national and foreign dishes at any time on consumers’ demand. The so called lucrative Assamese dishes like Duck with Komora, bamboo shoot or fried in papper, spicy pigeon curry, barbeque pork are some of the dishes available in the Dhaba. By doing so they are taking our traditional cuisines to the national level. The nutritional value of ethnic cuisines is out questions and hence they have a huge possibility of covering a huge market like Pizza. But in order to realize its actual potential the youths, investors need to think globally but act locally. The richness of the ethnic cuisines requires hybridization and standardization. Hybridization is “a process whereby cultural forms literally moves through time and space where they interact with other cultural forms and settings, influence each other, produce a new form and change the cultural setting” (Lull, 2000). It is an organic process. The great example in this regard is the evolution of Pizza. Pizza in some form or another is said to have been around since Neolithic Age. But Pizza as we recognize now had originated in the 18th century Naples. But after wide range of hybridization it has now become popular food staffs. The implication for NER is that we need to adopt hybridization for glocalisation but not in an inorganic way. This is one of the most important strength of NER in a glocalised world. Strength of NER in this direction is ethno medical practices followed by the tribes from ages to cure diseases and ailments. People may seem it awkward to advocate the ethno medical practices during this era of scientific knowledge explosion and modern medical inventions. But in reality these are the practices on the basis of which modern medical sciences have developed so much. These are not insignificant and unscientific as they are the part of glorious indigenous knowledge system prevalent among the tribes. According to Foster and Anderson (1978) “ethno-medicine denotes to the totality of knowledge, values, beliefs, skills and practices of indigenous people including all the clinical and non-clinical activities that relate to their health needs”. The fact is that ethno-medical knowledge’s prevailing in the NER can be categorized into two broad categories:-

a) Herbal or material medicine which means the treatment of diseases caused by pathogens and natural agencies.

b) Magico-religious and spiritual i.e. the treatment of diseases caused by supernatural agencies. (R. Sonowal and I. Boruah) The later one is not scientific and hence does not carry any potential in the glocalised world. But the earlier one is of mounting importance because medicine industry is the most fast growing industries of the world. Studies made by S.K. Borthakur and S.K. Jain (1980), S. Malakshmi Dutta and S. Nath (1999), A.K. Das and H. Tag(2006), B. Saikia, S.K. Borthakur and N. Saikia(2010) etc. have revealed the glorious and scientific ethnomedical practices based on nature and natural components among the tribes of NER. Diseases like bronchial asthma, burn injuries, carbuncle, cough, Dog bite, Dysentery, Gastric, Jaundice, Melina, Gynocological disorders, High blood pressure, Piles , phneumonia etc. have been treated successfully by the local people if the diseases are detected at proper time. But the problem is that such practices have been transmitted orally from one generation to the other. So it needs to be documented properly very soon. Otherwise we will lose several glorious and valuable ethno-medical practices. The educated youths of this region need to do sincere research in this regard to find out the reality and scientific value of these
practices. If it happens then we may be able to capture a strong place in the modern medical sciences as well as in a globalised world. Like this the NER may be a strong partner in the process of globalisation which will not only defend anomalies of so called globalization but will create a resourceful path of self reliant and sustainable economic development in the region also. But the most important problem in this regard is the scarcity of capital formation along with the absence of healthy investment environment. The above mentioned industries may be grouped as small scale and cottage industries. But India or NER is quite unfortunate in this regard as the small scale industries are following the path of death due to several socio-economic and political reasons. But in the process of glocalisation these industries play a pivotal role as an initiator and accelerator of the pace of development. For that the state and central government need to take some reformatory and innovative initiatives for these industries. We can see the successful stories of SSIs in China. We will see that the government is giving sincere attention to these industries. They are registering the SSIS in stock exchanges. The government India and NER may also take this approach as scarcity of investment and capital are major hindrances in this regard. The inclusion of SSIs in stock market will create a heavy flow of investible funds to this sector. Like the above discussion there is huge potentiality in the glocalised world. The everest potentiality in the field of tourism, other ethnic knowledge system present it as a strong opponent in this field. But in order to any of its we need to take care of the weaknesses.

4. **Conclusion**

Glocalisation believes in treatment of the problems generated by the so called process of globalization especially in the underdeveloped and developing nations. It can be easily portrayed that several judicious alternative solutions may be available in glocalisation while facing plague like problems such as terrorism, separatist movement, widening socio-economic disparity, fear of existence etc. The successful implementation of look east policy may be a powerful platform for glocalisation in this region. So the educated people need reverse brain drain to drive out the strengths of NER in front of the uneducated people and make them aware about their role to play in this participatory and inclusive process of socio-economic transformation.

**References**


