

Globalization Conference – Santa Clara University

Personal Reflections

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Insights Obtained

One of the most important learning experience from the Globalization Conference, Santa Clara University was the myths 'Globalisation is a fact of life, is a natural phenomenon and There is No Alternative [TINA] to globalisation' were challenged by the participants from all the continents of the universe. This conference provided a platform for the participants to share the evil impact and various attempts made to resist globalisation.

This fact also was highlighted that globalisation offers both opportunities and challenges. Opportunities in terms of networking for global solidarity and commitment; innovation in health sector; technological development utilized for global networking and advocacy. The challenges highlighted were equating economic development with reduction of poverty; feminisation of labour; negative growth in real wages; religious fundamentalism operating hand in hand with globalising process etc.

Another intuition was globalisation impacts different regions in the following manner: The caste system and religious fundamentalism are raising there ugly head in South Asia; ethnic conflict is destroying the East Africa; due to impact on resources class struggle is becoming more crisis bound in Latin America and in the United States racial discrimination is coming to the forefront.

One of the impacts of globalisation that haunted me during and after the conference was 'the problem is not jobless growth but workers exist more than the market forces could engage; the consequence is that if the labour force is ready to work like slaves then more 'employment opportunities' exist'. Employment opportunity is presented as a positive impact of globalisation by political establishments all over the globe.

The double standard with regard to migrant labourers was exposed. A high standard is set for those jobs at the higher sectors. Since the local labour force is not trained they are not hired and these jobs are given to migrants. On the other hand, the jobs at the lower rung are open for both the local citizens and the migrants and both compete for this and thus labour force gets divided. Thus an age-old divide and rule policy is maintained successfully.

While the developed countries are insisting upon technological advancement and structural adjustment, the developing countries are left only with ethics to argue their case. But this is a game between unequals. Even at the theoretical realm if it is agreed that technology can introduce fundamental change what would that technology mean to the marginalized and vulnerable communities all over the universe remains a serious social, political, ethical and spiritual question.

Points of Convergence

We need to enhance global solidarity to counter the corporate intervention in all the sectors of human life and initiate dialogue between our collaborators and co-workers who promote or oppose globalisation.

The international financial institutions and corporate agencies who propagated structural adjustment programmes do not have any agenda today. They are dealing with human beings as if they are dealing with numbers and there is no social democratic project to counter them.

One of the most pertinent points of convergence was the insistence on the praxis of solidarity, that is, empathy-analysis-solidarity.

Pointers for Future

We need to network and collaborate with people of various religious traditions to confront the monoculture with plural form of life, existence and operations.

The success stories of local, regional, national and international initiatives that opposed the negative impact of globalisation need to be multiplied to ensure greater force of humanity against the globalising forces.

Another demand made on the participants of the conference was to unravel the ramifications of the authoritarian pedagogy being imposed by the globalising forces and engage in exploring avenues of democratic pedagogy.

One of the options open to religious leaders is to join hands with the like minded people all over the globe to initiate collective action to uphold a pluralistic, democratic and egalitarian world order against the attempt by market forces to homogenize and hegemonies a 'global village'.

Finally, our universities and centers of learning should harness and enhance the influence of popular culture and religiosity against fundamentalist forces who are working hand in gloves with the globalising forces. We also need to bring the analysis and research done by our centers to the classrooms and have an impact on the student community.

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9.1.2003