



Globalization's Impact on Tribal Social Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities in West Bengal

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Abstract

This study investigated the multifaceted impact of globalization on tribal social mobility, delineating the challenges and opportunities faced by indigenous communities in navigating the processes of economic, social, and cultural change. Through a qualitative research approach incorporating the existing knowledge and debates on globalization, indigenous rights, social mobility, and related topics to inform the research design and analysis. Analyzing news articles, documentaries, multimedia presentations, and online platforms to understand public discourse, media representations, and narratives surrounding globalization and its impacts on tribal social mobility. Findings revealed that while globalization presents opportunities for economic diversification, access to education, and cultural exchange, it also poses challenges such as economic displacement, cultural erosion, social marginalization, and loss of sovereignty. By identifying these dynamics within the context of tribal social mobility, the study aims to inform evidence-based policies and interventions that promote inclusive development, preserve cultural heritage, and enhance the well-being of tribal populations in an increasingly interconnected world.

Keywords: Globalization, Tribal Communities, Social Mobility, Challenges, Opportunities.

1. Introduction

Globalization has emerged as a defining force shaping the modern world, influencing various facets of human life, including economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Its impact on traditional tribal societies, characterized by distinct cultural practices, communal living, and isolated economic systems, has been both profound and complex. Tribal societies, existing on the margins of mainstream development, have historically maintained unique social structures and cultural identities¹. However, the advent of globalization, marked by increased interconnectedness and integration of markets, technologies, and ideas on a global scale, has brought about significant transformations within these communities². While globalization has opened up new avenues for communication, trade, and economic development, it has also introduced challenges that threaten the

¹Kapila, K. (2008). The measure of a tribe: the cultural politics of constitutional reclassification in North India.

² Kluver, R. (2000). Globalization, informatization, and intercultural communication.

traditional way of life and social fabric of tribal societies. One of the key areas of concern is the impact of globalization on tribal social mobility. Social mobility refers to the ability of individuals or groups to move within or between social strata over time. According to P.A. Sorokin: "By social mobility is meant any transition of individual from one position to another in a constellation of social group and strata." In the context of tribal communities, social mobility encompasses not only economic advancement but also changes in social status, access to education, healthcare, and participation in decision-making processes. Globalization's influence on these aspects of social mobility within tribal societies is multifaceted and requires a nuanced analysis (Parvis A. R., 2023). On one hand, globalization has facilitated increased access to markets, technology, and education, providing tribal communities with opportunities for economic advancement and social integration. Improved infrastructure, communication networks, and exposure to global markets have enabled some tribal members to engage in entrepreneurial activities, access higher education, and seek employment opportunities beyond traditional occupations. These opportunities have the potential to uplift individuals and families out of poverty, enhance their quality of life, and empower them to participate more actively in broader social and political spheres. However, alongside these opportunities, globalization has also introduced several challenges that hinder tribal social mobility. Rapid economic changes, influx of external influences, and encroachment on traditional lands and resources have disrupted traditional livelihoods and cultural practices, leading to social dislocation and marginalization³. Moreover, unequal power dynamics, exploitation of natural resources, and lack of inclusive policies often exacerbate existing disparities and perpetuate social inequalities within tribal communities. Understanding the nuances of globalization's impact on tribal social mobility is essential for devising strategies to address the challenges and harness the opportunities it presents. This study aims to shed light on effective approaches for promoting inclusive development, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering sustainable livelihoods within the context of globalization. Ultimately, it seeks to contribute to the discourse on indigenous rights, social justice, and equitable development in an increasingly interconnected world.

1.1. The Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem for the study on "Globalization's Impact on Tribal Social Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities" delineated the need to comprehensively understand how globalization processes affect the social mobility of tribal communities. It seeks to address the multifaceted challenges tribal communities face, including economic displacement, cultural erosion, social marginalization, and loss of sovereignty, while also identifying the opportunities globalization presents, such as economic diversification, access to education, and cultural exchange. The statement underscores the urgency of examining these dynamics within the context of tribal social mobility to develop informed strategies and policies that mitigate negative impacts and harness the potential benefits of globalization for tribal development and empowerment.

³ Umamaheshwari, R. (2016). Dislocations, Marginalization, Past and Present: Pain-Experiences of Two Marginalized Communities. *Cultural Ontology of the Self in Pain*, 227-247.

1.2. The Significance of the Study

The significance of the study on "Globalization's Impact on Tribal Social Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities in West Bengal" lies in its potential to provide crucial insights into the complex interactions between globalization processes and the social mobility of tribal communities. By comprehensively examining the challenges and opportunities arising from globalization, the study can inform evidence-based policies and interventions aimed at promoting inclusive development, preserving cultural heritage, and enhancing the well-being of tribal populations. Furthermore, the study's findings can contribute to broader discourses on indigenous rights, social justice, and sustainable development, fostering greater understanding and awareness of the unique challenges faced by tribal communities in the context of globalization. Ultimately, by shedding light on effective strategies for addressing the impacts of globalization on tribal social mobility, the study facilitated the empowerment and resilience of tribal communities in navigating the complexities of the modern world.

1.3. The Objectives of the Study

1. To focus on the impacts of various dimensions of globalization on tribal communities, concentrating to social mobility as a central theme.
2. To identify the challenges faced by tribal communities in navigating the processes of globalization.
3. To determine the opportunities created by globalization for tribal social mobility.
4. To explore the strategies and best practices for mitigating the negative impacts of globalization on tribal social mobility.

2. The Review of Related Literature

Brown, T., Scrase, T. J., & Ganguly-Scrase, R. (2020). Globalised dreams, local constraints: migration and youth aspirations in an Indian regional town. Drawing on interviews and ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Darjeeling, a regional town in West Bengal, we demonstrate that regional youth feel disadvantaged in their access to middle-class jobs, modern education and lifestyles associated with neoliberal globalisation. Consequently, they express strong desires for 'exposure,' which can only be met through migration, particularly to India's metropolitan cities. They are frustrated in their aspiration to migrate, however, as they feel constrained by the traditional family structure, discrimination in the larger cities and the uneven temporalities between regional towns and 'global India.' Their experiences highlight the geographically uneven effects of neoliberal globalisation.

Hackl, A. (2018). Mobility equity in a globalized world: Reducing inequalities in the sustainable development agenda. Mobility equity offers such an approach and rests on two main foundations: people's equal capacity and freedom to be mobile in empowering ways, and the equal and inclusive regulation of mobility in all its forms, including human, social and digital mobility. The approach goes beyond income inequality and migrants' remittances to incorporate the differential mobility capacities among people in different contexts. This includes categorically excluded groups such as refugees, racialized minorities, and lower castes, but also tens of millions of workers in the global digital economy.

Chutia, S. (2018). Globalization and tribal identity crisis in north east India: A challenge. Globalization. Globalization now plays a key role to increase the tension of conflicts between ethnic groups and the feeling of deprivation in terms of resource sharing led it to insurgency, inharmonious and politically unrest. The methodology of this paper based on secondary evidences collected form published books, journals, reports, article, news paper and online sources. In this paper a descriptive-analytical has been employed.

Barla, A. (2017). Social Mobility and Tribes: An Effect of Globalization. Tribes always somewhere down the line culturally lag and can cope with the globalization era of modern instruments very little. It is not true as well to say tribes are not capable of mobile but, it is the mainstream or opportunist who did not allow the proper opportunity to this margin section of society. And many times margin section of society while coming up makes the mainstream jealous and uncomfortable. And for which they denied their quality, capability, and qualification in various forms. Therefore, tribes extremely lack social, economic, political, education, health facilities- since many times they are unaware of the government policy or many basic facilities.

2.1.The Research Gap

While existing literature acknowledges the impact of globalization on various aspects of society, including migration patterns, economic opportunities, and cultural identities, there is a notable lack of focus on the specific experiences and challenges faced by tribal communities within the context of globalization. Although some studies touch upon the broader effects of globalization on marginalized groups, such as regional youth or racialized minorities, there is a dearth of research specifically examining how globalization influences social mobility within tribal populations. Moreover, the reviews highlight the need for nuanced exploration of the intersecting factors shaping tribal social mobility, including traditional family structures, discrimination in urban centers, and temporal disparities between regional towns and cosmopolitan hubs. Therefore, the research gap lies in the absence of comprehensive studies that investigate the unique dynamics of globalization's impact on tribal social mobility, taking into account the complex interplay of socio-cultural, economic, and geographical factors specific to indigenous communities.

3. The Methodology of the Study

The study is qualitative nature. Reviewing scholarly articles, research papers, and academic publications in fields such as anthropology, sociology, development studies, and indigenous studies to identify theoretical frameworks, conceptual models, and empirical findings relevant to the study. This involves synthesizing existing knowledge and debates on globalization, indigenous rights, social mobility, and related topics to inform the research design and analysis. Analyzing news articles, documentaries, multimedia presentations, and online platforms to understand public discourse, media representations, and narratives surrounding globalization and its impacts on tribal social mobility. This includes examining how mainstream media, social media, and alternative media platforms portray issues such as economic displacement, cultural erosion, social marginalization, and resistance movements within tribal communities.

4. The Analysis and Interpretation

Pertaining to Objective 1

O₁: To focus on the impacts of various dimensions of globalization on tribal communities, concentrating to social mobility as a central theme.

The impacts of various dimensions of globalization on tribal communities, with a focus on social mobility, are multifaceted and complex. Here the detailed exploration of these impacts:

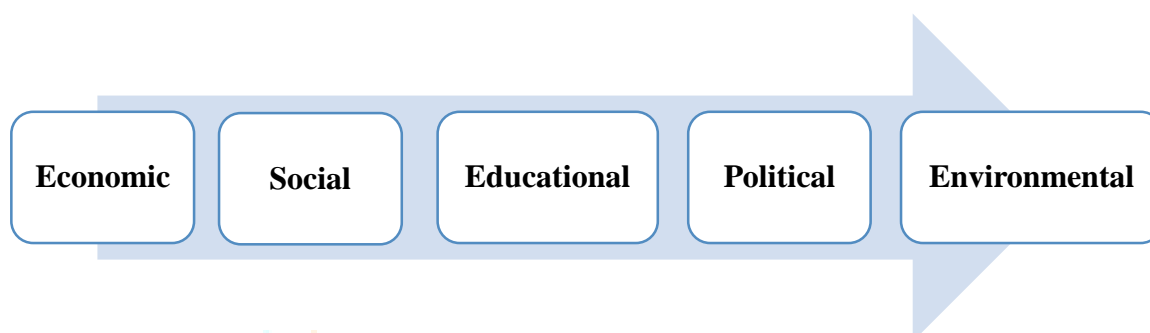


Figure 4.1: Showing the Various Dimensions of Globalization on Tribal Communities
Source: Made by Investigator

Economic Impact:

Opportunities: Globalization has opened up new economic opportunities for some tribal communities through increased access to global markets, technological advancements, and the diversification of livelihood options. This include participation in cash crop cultivation, artisanal crafts trade, or employment in industries such as tourism and hospitality.

Challenges: However, globalization has also led to the marginalization of traditional economic activities, such as subsistence farming, hunting, and gathering, due to competition from larger commercial enterprises. This resulted in loss of land rights, decreased access to natural resources, and economic vulnerability among tribal populations.

Social Impact:

Integration: Globalization has facilitated increased interaction and integration between tribal communities and mainstream society through improved communication channels, migration, and cultural exchange. This lead to greater social integration and exposure to diverse perspectives, ideas, and lifestyles.

Identity: At the same time, globalization pose a threat to tribal cultural identities and social cohesion. The spread of dominant cultural norms, consumerism, and Westernization eroded traditional values, languages, and customs, leading to a sense of cultural loss and identity crisis among tribal youth.

Educational Impact:

Access: Globalization has improved access to formal education for some tribal communities, offering opportunities for social mobility through acquiring knowledge and skills relevant to modern industries and professions.

Quality: However, disparities in educational quality and resources persist, particularly in remote tribal areas with limited infrastructure and trained teachers. Cultural barriers, language differences, and discrimination may also hinder educational attainment and social mobility for tribal students.

Political Impact:

Representation: Globalization has brought attention to indigenous rights and increased advocacy for the political representation and empowerment of tribal communities on national and international platforms.

Marginalization: Yet, tribal communities continued to face marginalization and exclusion from decision-making processes, especially regarding land rights, resource management, and development projects. Power imbalances, corruption, and lack of legal protection exacerbate these challenges.

Environmental Impact:

Resource Extraction: Globalization often drives increased resource extraction and environmental degradation in tribal territories, leading to displacement, loss of livelihoods, and ecological disruptions.

Climate Change: Additionally, globalization contributes to climate change, which disproportionately affects indigenous peoples who rely heavily on natural resources for their sustenance and livelihoods.

In summary, globalization's impact on tribal communities' social mobility was shaped by a complex interplay of economic, social, political, educational, and environmental factors. While it presents opportunities for economic advancement, cultural exchange, and political empowerment, it also poses significant challenges related to cultural preservation, economic marginalization, social exclusion, and environmental degradation. Effective interventions and policies must address these challenges while respecting the rights, identities, and aspirations of tribal communities.

Pertaining to Objective 2

O2: To identify the challenges faced by tribal communities in navigating the processes of globalization.

Tribal communities face a multitude of challenges in navigating the processes of globalization, which significantly impact their social mobility. These challenges arise from various dimensions of globalization and can have profound effects on their livelihoods, cultures, and overall well-being. Some of the key challenges include:

Economic Displacement: Globalization often brings about economic changes that disrupt traditional livelihoods of tribal communities. For instance, opening up of markets and competition from larger corporations marginalized local industries and force tribal members out of their traditional occupations such as farming, fishing, or artisanal crafts. This economic displacement lead to unemployment, loss of income, and heightened poverty among tribal populations.

Land Encroachment and Resource Exploitation: The expansion of industries, mining activities, and infrastructure projects associated with globalization often encroach upon tribal lands and territories. This resulted in forced displacement of communities, loss of access to natural resources essential for their

livelihoods, and degradation of their environment. Furthermore, tribal communities were excluded from decision-making processes regarding land use and resource management, exacerbating their vulnerability to exploitation and displacement.

Cultural Erosion: Globalization contributed to the erosion of indigenous cultures and traditional knowledge systems. Increased exposure to mainstream media, consumer culture, and homogenizing influences lead to the dilution of cultural practices, languages, and values within tribal communities. Moreover, the integration of global cultural norms undermined the transmission of traditional knowledge from one generation to the next, posing a threat to the cultural identity and cohesion of tribal societies.

Social Marginalization and Discrimination: Despite efforts towards inclusion and diversity, globalization can exacerbate social marginalization and discrimination faced by tribal communities. Pre-existing power imbalances, discrimination based on ethnicity or indigenous status, and unequal access to resources and opportunities can further entrench social inequalities within these communities. Additionally, globalization introduced new forms of social stratification based on education, employment, or access to technology, which perpetuated exclusion and marginalization among tribal populations.

Health and Well-being Challenges: Globalization affected the health and well-being of tribal communities in significant ways. Rapid urbanization, lifestyle changes, and exposure to new diseases can lead to health disparities and challenges in accessing healthcare services. Additionally, environmental degradation resulting from globalization-related activities such as deforestation or pollution can have detrimental effects on the physical and mental health of tribal populations, who rely on natural ecosystems for their sustenance and cultural practices.

Loss of Sovereignty and Autonomy: Tribal communities may experience challenges to their sovereignty and autonomy because of globalization processes. International trade agreements, land concessions to multinational corporations, and policies favoring economic development may undermine the self-governance and decision-making authority of indigenous peoples over their lands and resources. This loss of autonomy further exacerbate feelings of disempowerment and disenfranchisement within tribal communities.

In summary, the challenges faced by tribal communities in navigating globalization are multifaceted and interconnected, spanning economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions. Addressing these challenges requires holistic approaches that recognize the rights, agency, and unique identities of tribal peoples, while promoting inclusive development and safeguarding their cultural heritage and environmental resources.

Pertaining to Objective 3

O₃: To determine the opportunities created by globalization for tribal social mobility.

Globalization presents several opportunities for tribal social mobility, offering avenues for economic, social, and cultural advancement within tribal communities. These opportunities arise from increased connectivity, access to information, and participation in global networks. Some of the key opportunities created by globalization for tribal social mobility include:



Figure 4.2: Showing the Opportunities Created by Globalization for Tribal Social Mobility
Source: Made by Investigator

Economic Diversification: Globalization opens up new markets and economic opportunities for tribal communities, allowing them to diversify their sources of income beyond traditional livelihoods. Access to global markets through e-commerce platforms, tourism, and international trade can enable tribal artisans, farmers, and entrepreneurs to reach a wider customer base and increase their incomes. Moreover, globalization facilitated the integration of tribal products and services into global value chains, enhancing their competitiveness and profitability.

Access to Education and Skills Development: Globalization provides increased access to education, training, and skill development opportunities for tribal youth and adults. Through online learning platforms, scholarships, and exchange programs, tribal members acquired new knowledge and skills that are essential for participating in the modern economy. Education empowers tribal individuals to pursue higher-paying jobs, entrepreneurship ventures, and leadership roles within their communities and beyond, thereby enhancing their social mobility and economic prospects.

Technology Adoption and Innovation: Globalization facilitates the adoption of new technologies and innovations within tribal communities, which improved productivity, efficiency, and quality of life. Access to mobile phones, internet connectivity, and digital tools enables tribal members to overcome geographical barriers, access information, and engage with global networks. Furthermore, technological innovations in sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, and renewable energy offer opportunities for sustainable development and economic empowerment within tribal territories.

Cultural Exchange and Revitalization: Globalization fosters cultural exchange and dialogue, providing opportunities for tribal communities to showcase their unique cultural heritage and traditions on a global stage. Through festivals, cultural exchanges, and tourism initiatives, tribal cultures gain recognition, appreciation, and economic value. Moreover, globalization facilitates the revitalization of indigenous languages, arts, and crafts, empowering tribal youth to reclaim their cultural identity and heritage while engaging with the broader global community.

Advocacy and International Solidarity: Globalization enables tribal communities to connect with global networks of indigenous peoples, human rights organizations, and advocacy groups, amplifying their voices and mobilizing support for their rights and interests. Through international forums, conferences, and social media platforms, tribal activists and leaders can raise awareness about issues affecting their communities,

advocate for policy reforms, and build alliances with allies around the world. This international solidarity strengthened the resilience and agency of tribal communities in asserting their rights and aspirations in the face of globalization-related challenges.

In summary, globalization offers tribal communities opportunities for economic prosperity, social inclusion, cultural revitalization, and advocacy on the global stage. By leveraging these opportunities and building partnerships with external stakeholders, tribal communities can enhance their social mobility and pursue sustainable development pathways that uphold their rights, values, and aspirations.

Pertaining to Objective 4

O4: To explore the strategies and best practices for mitigating the negative impacts of globalization on tribal social mobility.

Mitigating the negative impacts of globalization on tribal social mobility requires a comprehensive approach that addresses economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions. Here are some strategies and best practices:

Strengthening Indigenous Rights and Governance: Empowering tribal communities through legal recognition of their land rights, self-governance institutions, and decision-making processes is essential for protecting their territories, resources, and cultural heritage from external exploitation. Governments should ensure the implementation of international conventions such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and engage in meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal representatives in policy-making processes.

Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development: Encouraging sustainable economic development initiatives that prioritize the needs and aspirations of tribal communities can mitigate the negative impacts of globalization on their livelihoods. This includes supporting community-based enterprises, cooperatives, and sustainable resource management practices that generate income, create employment opportunities, and preserve traditional knowledge and ecological diversity.

Investing in Education and Skill Development: Enhancing access to quality education, vocational training, and lifelong learning opportunities is critical for equipping tribal youth and adults with the knowledge and skills needed to participate in the modern economy. Governments, civil society organizations, and private sector partners should collaborate to establish educational infrastructure, scholarships, and skills development programs tailored to the needs of tribal communities, including indigenous language and cultural education.

Fostering Cultural Revitalization and Preservation: Promoting cultural revitalization initiatives that celebrate indigenous languages, arts, crafts, and traditions helps strengthen tribal identity, resilience, and social cohesion in the face of globalization-related cultural homogenization. Supporting cultural exchange programs, community festivals, and heritage preservation projects can empower tribal communities to reclaim their cultural heritage and assert their unique identity on the global stage.

Building Resilience to Environmental Changes: Strengthening the resilience of tribal communities to environmental changes and natural disasters requires sustainable land and resource management practices, climate adaptation strategies, and access to clean water and sanitation services. Investing in community-based conservation initiatives, agroecological farming methods and renewable energy technologies can enhance the adaptive capacity of tribal communities and reduce their vulnerability to globalization-induced environmental degradation.

Facilitating Access to Healthcare and Social Services: Improving access to healthcare services, social protection programs, and basic infrastructure in tribal areas is essential for addressing health disparities, reducing poverty, and promoting social mobility. Governments should prioritize investments in healthcare infrastructure, mobile health clinics, and culturally sensitive healthcare providers to ensure equitable access to essential health services for tribal communities

Fostering Dialogue and Partnerships: Facilitating dialogue and partnerships among tribal communities, governments, civil society organizations, and private sector actors fosters mutual understanding, trust, and collaboration in addressing the challenges of globalization. Platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement, such as community forums, participatory decision-making processes, and collaborative projects, can facilitate the co-creation of solutions that promote inclusive development and social justice for tribal communities.

By implementing these strategies and best practices in a coordinated and participatory manner, stakeholders can mitigate the negative impacts of globalization on tribal social mobility and promote equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development pathways for indigenous peoples around the world.

5. Conclusion

Globalization has undoubtedly reshaped the landscape of tribal social mobility, presenting both challenges and opportunities for indigenous communities worldwide. While the process has brought unprecedented connectivity, access to information, and economic opportunities, it has also posed significant threats to indigenous cultures, identities, and traditional ways of life. One of the most pronounced challenges is the erosion of cultural identities and social cohesion within tribal communities. As globalization spreads Western ideals and consumer culture, indigenous populations often find themselves grappling with identity crises and a loss of connection to their heritage. This cultural erosion not only undermines the unique traditions and knowledge systems of indigenous peoples but also exacerbates social disparities within these communities. Moreover, globalization has frequently led to the exploitation of tribal lands and resources by external actors, resulting in environmental degradation and economic marginalization for indigenous populations. Extractive industries, tourism ventures, and large-scale development projects often encroach upon tribal territories, displacing communities and disrupting their traditional livelihoods. The resulting loss of land, biodiversity, and access to natural resources further perpetuates cycles of poverty and social inequality among indigenous peoples. However, amidst these challenges, globalization also presents opportunities for tribal social mobility and empowerment. Increased access to education, technology, and global networks has enabled some indigenous communities to assert their rights, preserve their cultures, and advocate for social and environmental justice on a global scale. Through international collaborations, indigenous activists have

amplified their voices, mobilized support, and influenced policy decisions to safeguard their rights and territories. Furthermore, globalization has facilitated the emergence of indigenous-owned enterprises, sustainable development initiatives, and cultural tourism ventures that empower tribal communities economically while promoting cultural preservation and environmental conservation. By leveraging their unique cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, indigenous entrepreneurs have created pathways for social mobility, economic self-sufficiency, and community development. In conclusion, the impact of globalization on tribal social mobility is multifaceted, encompassing both challenges and opportunities. While globalization threatens indigenous cultures, identities, and livelihoods, it also provides avenues for empowerment, advocacy, and economic development. To harness the benefits of globalization while mitigating its adverse effects, it is essential for policymakers, civil society organizations, and indigenous communities to collaborate in promoting inclusive and sustainable approaches that respect the rights, aspirations, and autonomy of tribal peoples in a rapidly changing world.

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