
Over the past quarter century the humankind has entered the era of globalisation. In popular parlance, globalisation is a process of rapidly increasing economic interdependence and integration across country borders. But, there are also other facets of globalisation which are no less important. In the case of the third world countries, it is the multilateral agencies like the World Bank and IMF which have directed/facilitated the introduction of a package of reforms, first called as structural adjustment programme (SAP) and later as ‘good governance’ reforms to promote their closer integration with the world economy in particular. Both globalisation and the associated reforms have generated high-voltage disputations in the circles of academics, media, and civil society, and even hostile protestations by anti-globalisation activists all over the world. In such a contentious scenario it was very much enlightening to find the book under review which very successfully clears up the haze and gives a clear understanding of the current situation.

This book is an important contribution to the theme of globalisation, governance reforms and development in India, in particular. Globalisation is mainly interpreted from a disciplinary perspective. Moreover, there is a serious lack of theoretical anchorage in the analysis. But this book has made an appreciable attempt, in the very first chapter on introduction, to clearly explicate the multiple meanings and the major conceptual-theoretical contours in the studies on globalisation, governance reforms and development.

The most common trend in social science is its narrow, though specialized disciplinary orientation, which may not be much useful in understanding a multi-dimensional phenomenon such as globalisation. In fact, a very important current concern in the social sciences is to adopt an interdisciplinary approach, though there is not much progress seen in this regard. By adopting such a perspective, this book makes a very significant contribution in that direction. The volume has an overarching scope which includes a systematic analysis of the social, cultural and political dimensions of globalisation and reforms in India. The economic dimension of globalisation is also touched upon in the analysis of state-level reforms which have not yet been studied in much detail. The conceptual-theoretical horizon and the substantive discussions on different facets of globalisation have been presented in such a manner in the book that these offer a very broad and integrated synoptic view on the subject. Given its interdisciplinary orientation, the volume very appropriately includes contributions by noted scholars in major social science disciplines, such as sociology, economics, political science and media studies.

The book provides an integrated view of different dimensions of globalisation, governance reforms and development in India. Its thematic organization is very well done. It is the product of a workshop organised on the theme. It is divided into five sections. Section I provides the conceptual-theoretical framework. It has three chapters. Chapter 1 forms the introduction of the book. It is very comprehensive and overarching in nature, giving a rigorous analysis of the theme with clearly explicating the conceptual-theoretical contours of the debates on globalisation and reforms, which may not be easily found in any other publication on the subject in recent years. Chapters 2 and 3 critically analyse the important issues of institutional reorganization under and democratic deficits of globalisation. Section II covers the World Bank and ADB-aided state-level reforms in India in four select
states (Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Bihar) which maybe considered to be at high, middle and lower levels in terms of introduction of reforms and present a mix of both Left ruled and non-Left ruled states. Sections III focuses on the analysis of social dimensions of globalisation and reforms covering their impact and dynamics relating to caste and class structures, farmers, labour, dalits, tribals, the poor, and also the Indian diaspora. Section IV concerns the cultural dimensions of globalisation and reforms with focused discussions on mass media — the press (newspaper), TV, and ICT. Political aspects of globalisation and reforms have been analysed in Section V with specific focus on the issues of nation state, welfare state (with reference to the health sector) and the responses to globalization and reforms in India.

It very well emerges from the volume that globalisation in the case of India signifies a systematic attempt made by the domestic ruling regimes in negotiated collaboration with the multilateral and bilateral development institutions to integrate its economy in particular and society in general along neoliberal lines with the emerging global economy and society in the current time. The agenda of good governance, as advocated by the multilaterals and bilaterals and adopted in the country is not confined to procedural administrative reforms as one would understand in conventional sense; rather it involves resetting the relationship among of the state, market/private sector and civil society in which they are made partners in the overall governance and development, and market is made the major agency of growth in place of the state-centrality in the past. The agenda of good governance, as packaged by the multilaterals is shown to be basically similar to the earlier structural adjustment programme.

There are innumerable studies which focus on the positive aspects of globalisation and reforms. There are countries and peoples (including peoples in the developing countries like India and China) who have immensely benefited from this model of development. But it is also equally difficult to negate that there are those who are left behind excluded. No wonder, the book underlines the need for removing the multiple deficits with the currently dominant mode of globalisation. It advocates the need of serious and systematic efforts to make the model of development socially equitous, economically inclusive, politically participatory, and environmentally sustainable, and that obviously would be beneficial to all the countries and peoples in the world. There are some specific suggestions made in this regard in the book. Some chapters in the volume also identify certain important issues for further research in the area.

It needs to be appreciated that the editor of the volume has very successfully integrated both the theoretical-conceptual frameworks and analysis of the substantive dimensions of the highly contentious issue of globalisation and governance reforms. Particularly, the comprehensive introductory chapter is so overarching in its scope and analysis that it would be very useful to the general reader to make sense of globalisation and to researchers in understanding as well as formulating studies on the issue with great clarity. The book would be relevant to the field of social science as a whole. It is an invaluable contribution to the tradition of interdisciplinary social science for which a great need is being felt in recent years. In fact, editor has a strong interdisciplinary orientation which has also been amplified in his previous work, ‘Intellectuals and Society’ (Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, 2004).

This book is undoubtedly an excellent contribution on the theme, especially from the perspective of the third world. It would be greatly useful to researchers, teachers and students in social sciences in general, policymakers, and civil society organizations and activists who are concerned with making the world better for all.

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