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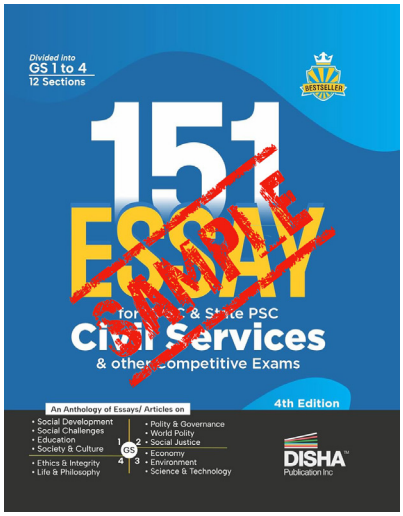

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How has Globalization Affected Indian Society?

According to authors Dr Nayer R.F. and Gerard Stoudmann, Globalisation refers to the processes that encompass causes, courses and consequences that increasingly make the transnational and transcultural integration and interdependency of human and non-human activities.

In layman's words, globalisation refers to the integration of markets across the economies, leading to the increased internationalisation of markets for financial systems, knowledge transfer, goods and services, production and competition with the advancement in communication, transportation and technology.

Three Phases of Globalisation

Globalisation can be divided into three phases: Globalisation 1.0, Globalisation 2.0, and Globalisation 3.0. Globalisation 1.0, dates to Industrial Revolution era when transportation involved wind power by sea and animal power by land. Globalisation 2.0 began after World War II when steam power moved the goods internationally at affordable prices. During this period, the entire world was fond of the "Made in the USA, Made in Japan and Made in Germany" labels on almost every product.

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Globalisation 3.0, the current stage, embarked on around the early 1990s when information and communication technology revolution radically lowered the cost of moving ideas. Globalisation 3.0 is entirely different from the previous version 1.0 and 2.0. In Globalisation 3.0, not only the world become flat but also it squeezed itself went from being small to tiny. Globalisation 3.0 helped the emerging economies to open up to the world and boosted rapid growth of exports, industry and GDP. Whereas the previous phases of globalisation favoured the developed economies such as Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the US. With the emergence of the third phase of globalisation, the playing field was levelled. India and China are competing with each other to cater to the entire globe.

The current phase of globalisation eliminated barriers with regard to geography, distance, time zones and language to make the world a tiny sphere to form a world language to allow everyone to communicate and share technology and transfer knowledge. As a result, diverse technological, market and political forces have converged, and that has produced a global playing field that allowed communication, collaboration, participation and created competition.

Globalisation 2.0, introduced Indians to multinational companies, while Globalisation 3.0 provided the means to Indian companies to become multinational companies and set shop across the world. Small firms to Fortune 500 companies, every foreign entity brought business functions to India and created employment for Indians. The emergence of wireless technologies pumped up collaboration, to make mobile and internet available to every ordinary Indian.

India had tasted the current phase of globalisation when economic liberalisation in India was initiated in 1991 by late Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao. India's economic reforms in 1991 helped the country to integrate with the world economies through the process of cross-national flows of investment, technology, production and goods.

Globalisation brought a plethora of problems, along with abundant opportunities, advantages and profits for Indian society. Thus, globalisation can be termed as a double-edged sword. At this juncture, Indian society's challenge is to maximise the benefits of globalisation and to minimise the negative impacts of globalisation.

Positive Side of Globalisation

Indian citizens and companies gained the freedom and ability to initiate economic transactions with counterparts of other countries. Globalisation had a substantial positive impact on Indian society. Globalisation acted as the engine of India's growth. Globalisation brought technological advancement into India and gave access to global resources. It raised demand, created employment and increased productivity, which in turn fuelled the growth of cross-border trade of commodities and services; the flow of international capital and the extensive and rapid spread of technologies. The intense competition forced firms to produce quality goods and services at affordable prices.

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Indian society is greatly benefited due to Globalisation. People could quickly expand their businesses, services to foreign countries, allowing them to a broader market, which contributes to higher income and sustainable economic development. Business houses have been enjoying the economies of scale due to the wide range of their footprint. The phenomenon led to improving the standard of living along with modernisation. On the other hand, it played a vital role in poverty reduction and upliftment of millions from the below poverty line. Globalisation has created access to higher education and reduced the knowledge gap.

Before globalisation, people used to spend hours at Banks, Railway reservation counters and even at the ticket windows of movie halls. Now, we can do banking, ticketing, and purchasing and investing at the stroke of a key. There is greater access to news, entertainment and infotainment from around the world. Globalisation has dramatically revolutionized many different fields and has changed everyday life.

The boom of the manufacturing and services sectors due to globalisation increased employment creation in cities and towns. This led to rural to urban migration, increased population in cities and infrastructure development in towns.

Globalisation highlighted various social issues and focussed on social awareness and community development. Subsequently, more awareness was created among the society concerning gender equality, human rights, animal rights, and woman empowerment. Correspondingly, Indian women were allowed to get rid of orthodox obstacles and abandon social taboos and emotional aversion. Overall, the values of Indian society and its self-awareness have changed multifold.

The flip side of globalisation

Consumerism has spread across and changed the behaviour of Indian society. Indian society especially the rich and affluent, have developed a penchant for western style of eating habits and products which gradually increased the patterns of behaviour of society and eventually led to embracing the western culture and tradition. Resultantly, western culture and customs have become a symbol of globalisation.

On the positive side, foreign nationals are increasingly embracing Indian culture, customs and cuisine and even classical music. Globalisation facilitated employment, income and affordable housing that led to an increase in nuclear families. Thus, the joint family system of our society has become a thing of past. Teenagers are left alone at homes; toddlers and children being raised by babysitters and crèches. Many changes took place in the upbringing of children between now and before globalisation. Deprivation and neglect in childhood can have a lasting psychological impact in early adulthood. Moreover, gadgets and social media are widening relationships. Because of which, humanity and humility are disappearing and society is becoming more inhuman. Globalisation also aggravates the physiological and behavioural factors of stress.

Globalisation facilitated sweatshop factories and exploitation of labour. Globalisation has also widened the gap by growing inequality between the rich and the poor in their abilities to take advantage of education, employment and investment opportunities. Reduction of labour absorption in the public sector after the globalisation led to an adverse effect on the labour employment situation in India.

Globalisation works both ways; it brought the internet, devices and social media into the hands of ordinary people. Instantaneous news and communication brought by the devices are enabling both mass movements and fake news. How does globalisation affect the environment has been a primary global concern. Globalisation led to an increase in consumption, demand and eventually, production. Therefore, indirectly globalisation is responsible for the exploitation of the labour, the depletion of natural resources and the decay of the environment. Globalisation may translate into increased emissions of greenhouse gases and causing to global warming.

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Only the Youth can Make 21st Century the 'Century of Peace'

The 21st century is characterised by globalisation and urbanisation. The world today is becoming more technologically advanced and highly integrated. The world is also becoming smaller and fragmented. With people lacking unity, it is a less peaceful and unsafe world for the current and future generations. Sustainability in terms of peace and love needs to be nurtured so that the future generations can also live in harmony and comfort. In today's scenario, the nations of the world are fighting for their own selfish good. The environment across the globe is highly heated with tensions, stress, violence, diminishing moral values, reduced tolerance, injustices and no respect for human rights. Countries are making war and the gun culture is at its peak in most of the developing countries. At the receiving end of all this chaos, is the youth of the present and future who deserve a peaceful and better quality of life.

For any country, its youth is one of its richest resources. They define the growth of any nation by developing a universal acceptance of integrity, personal discipline and open mindedness. Youth is the time when passion, emotions, activities and vigour are at their peak. They are ready to take on the world. They have an opinion and do not shy away from expressing it. They are liberal but can also be rigid. They know the language of black or white and are not sugar-coated to see things around the globe becoming worse. The educated youth can be considered the richest wealth of the world. They can take their stand and know what is right and what is wrong. They are upfront and selfless enough to think about the issues which need attention on the priority basis. As they constitute the frontline positions of all the nations, their inputs in development programmes are highly useful in achieving desired objectives. The issue which needs utmost attention of youth at the moment is 'World Peace'. In the 21st century, only the youth can make it as a century of peace.

Youth are rational in their approach. They are practical and do not believe in putting things for the next day. They are quick in their actions and are open to change. To create a culture of peace and conflict free environment, only the youth can lead as they are susceptible to changing their beliefs, attitude towards people, traditions and cultures. The youth can achieve their goal of peace making by 'BECOMING THE CHANGE'. Youth have the advantage over their older counterparts who are rigid and inflexible. The power of youth can be multiplied manifolds, if they learn to combine their enthusiasm with patience, realising the importance of living together and to defend the frontiers of non-violence and peace.

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Efforts should be made at mass level to enhance the leadership and decision making quality of the youth. They should understand their leadership capacity by educating themselves on the need for community leaderships. Youth living in rural and backward areas should also be channelised, trained and educated by conducting various leadership development programmes. These programmes will make the youth to become more vocal and aware as the lack of knowledge about basic decision-making often acts as hurdle in the road to progress and thus results in conflicts.

Youth have the advantage of creating connections with the young and old. They can play an active role in making world a peaceful place by forming a troop of peace missionaries with likeminded and eager people to join in their process. NGO networks can also be developed to work at the grassroot level such as to educate the children of today build their values and spiritually awaken them about their responsibility towards the world.

In the backward countries with prevalent ethnicity and lack of education, youth belonging to different ethnic groups can build up links between cultural minorities and popularise shared values, traditions and culture which have been handed over from generations to generations. They can be trained and educated to eradicate the incidents and acts of violence. To ensure good governance, accountability, citizen participation and transparency in the system, the youth should come forth and engage and join political awareness building programmes. By being in the bureaucracy, they can easily get their voices heard at a larger scale. More participation of youth in the political system of the country will bring in the desired change at a larger prospect.

On the international front, the youth can join hands with peace-making organisations like United Nations and others and become peace ambassadors of their respective countries. This can be a great platform for promoting exchange programmes in education, sports and games, culture, science and technology and in tourism promotions to link all the youth of the country and the world in pursuit and maintenance of peace. Peace-making programmes and seminars should be conducted across the world at various levels to justify non-violence and learning about the skills to deal with matters of conflict in non-violent ways.

The Youth is the leader of today and tomorrow. In this era of globalisation, the youth can act as the vehicle to transport the socio-economic shared values of freedom, equity and solidarity, tolerance, non-violence, respect for nature and shared responsibility. The youth have the dreams and a vision, the social media and the influence to promote peace and make a positive change in the world. To reflect peace in the world, the value of unity and solidarity should also be inculcated such that the people understand that they owe respect to the world and the universe on the whole of which they are a part of. The day they start to appreciate the little things and get them out of the so-called rat race to be on the top of the materialistic world, they will succeed in making the 21st century tolerant, conflict-free, peaceful and united.

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Government Surveillance and Right to Privacy

The lack of data privacy protections by tech companies such as Facebook and Google recently has led to an uproar by the citizens worldwide. Studying comprehensively on the issue, it seems that it is governments which might emerge the biggest threat. The American market research and advisory company Forrester Researcher in its latest report has mentioned that India is among the list of countries where government surveillance has become a major concern from a data privacy perspective.

According to the 2019 Forrester Global Map of Privacy Rights and Regulations, the governments' autocratic access to citizen's personal data, despite protections makes the biggest concern in regard to privacy.

India has been named as a country with minimal restrictions in terms of data privacy and protection where government surveillance is a matter of caution alongside countries with high-level of government surveillance, such as China. India with nil to negligent data privacy norms in place is among the top countries where unchecked government surveillance has led to increased data privacy concerns as per the report. It also termed the surveillance carried by India and others such as China, Austria, Columbia, Kuwait and the UK to be at 'alarming levels'. Among these, India's legal and constitutional provisions for data privacy and protection were reported to be minimal.

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Surveillance by law enforcement agencies has been at the heart of Indian privacy-rights lawmaking. The narrowly tailored surveillance has been established by the early landmark cases of M.P. Sharma, Kharak Singh and Gobind; which were all concerned with physical surveillance by local police. Thus, having a careful glance over these cases depicts the need for a compelling state interest as foundational principles of Indian policy lawmaking.

In India, the fight against surveillance can be traced back to the 1980s and 90s when activists opposed the illegal phone-tapping by the state, carried out under the garb of security requirement. A nationwide outcry against phone-tapping resulted in a probe by Central Bureau of Investigation, which pointed out how the Rajiv Gandhi government used to engage in constant surveillance of the Opposition, and sometimes, members of its own Cabinet. The issue was heard before the Supreme Court after a PIL was filed by the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). In a landmark judgment in the PUCL Vs Union of India case (1996), the court held that illegal phone-tapping was a violation of the citizens' fundamental right to privacy. The court decision also created adequate safeguards to ensure that the state's surveillance powers were not misused.

Test of Privacy

Significant concerns for the protection of the right to privacy in India rose after an office order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in India on 20th December 2018, which authorized excess of security and intelligence agencies to intercept, monitor and decrypt all personal data on computers and networks in India. The Order is issued under Rule 4 of the Information Technology Act Interception Rules 2009, which gives Home Ministry the right to delegate its powers of interception, monitoring and decryption to an 'agency of the Government'.

India's privacy jurisprudence has advanced tremendously since the passing of the IT Act Interception Rules 2009 as the threshold for a constitutional privacy intrusion was increased in the Puttaswamy and Aadhar judgments of the Indian Supreme Court. These judgments depict two insights which prove the old age framework of India's surveillance.

First insight states that right to privacy is now a constitutionally recognized right. The Court in its earlier judgments was concerned with an individual's liberty interest under Article 21 of the Constitution, which is much narrower than the current conceptualization of the right to privacy. The recently recognized aspects of privacy which provide protection for the 'inner domain of consciousness', informational self-determination and decisional autonomy are violated by a surveillance regime that lacks judicial oversight or adequate transparency mechanisms. In the 2018 Aadhar judgment, the Supreme Court recognized this and mandated judicial oversight for information sharing requests for Aadhar data. It analyzed the State's imperative to access information against the parameters of the new, broad right to privacy. This way, the Court ruled that judicial oversight is a necessary pre-condition for limitation of privacy interests.

Secondly, the SC has recognized in both the cases the deeply invasive role of the internet and computers over the last few years. People's lives are deeply interconnected with technology and a vast amount of personal, financial and sensitive data passes through today's computers, at a scale incomparable to the context in which the PUCL guidelines were formulated. The legal foundation of the computer interception directive could be still challenged in court because it has not yet been considered in light of the privacy judgment. However, it is now a matter of Constitutional validity.

The nature of technological interactions today allows for very precise inferences to be drawn about people on the basis of their activity on the internet. This presents serious dangers for freedom of expression, dissent and activism on the internet, especially with all of India's law enforcement watching. Consequently, it appears unwise to deploy a framework developed in the telephone-era to modern surveillance.

One of the primary reasons for the high level of government surveillance in India could be the lack of Constitutional provisions that enable monitoring of government activity. There is very little legislative oversight and there is little judicial decision-making around surveillance. These laws and regulations which govern government surveillance are practically very few.

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Citizen's Right to Privacy

The right to privacy is the right to be free from undue surveillance by Government or anyone else. Surveillance by the State should only occur if absolutely necessary and where authorized by an independent judicial officer. Personal information should only be collected and kept by the State and anyone else for a legitimate purpose authorized by law. Once collected, personal information should be destroyed as soon as it is no longer required. Not only would this protect privacy, it would also improve security. If personal information is only collected when absolutely necessary, it is less likely to fall into the wrong hands. If it is destroyed when it is no longer required, it is less likely to become incorrect and out of date.

The majority of democratic countries have recognized that privacy is a fundamental human right which needs to be protected. An actionable right to privacy would enable individuals to take action against the inappropriate and illegal collection, use or disclosure of their personal information. It would not prevent the lawful collection and use of personal information for legitimate purposes.

The spread of new technologies such as CCTV and GPS presents new threats to privacy which have outpaced the law. It is futile to try to stop the spread of many of these technologies. However, the legal environment in which they spread should discourage the misuse of personal information. The most effective deterrent to the misuse of personal information would be a liability to compensate people whose privacy has been compromised for no legitimate purpose. The right to privacy is associated with the rights to freedom of speech, freedom of movement, and freedom from discrimination and the principle of government accountability.

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A Home without Books is like a Tree without Birds

According to William Shakespeare, books are the nutrition of the whole world; life without books as if there is no sunlight; wisdom without books, just like a bird without wings. There is a very deep connect of books with humans. Ever since the invention of paper, humans have penned down their thoughts, scriptures, stories and various instances on it. Stacks of papers were bind together and kept for references by the great gurus in earlier times. With time, several authors started writing fiction and reality based stories, novels, religious context based on real events and educational and scientific conceptual books. Slowly and steadily, books became an integral part of people of all age groups. Young children and students read education text books and story books, adults read novels and magazines and elderly tend to read more of religious writings. People gather books and keep them in their homes to go back to them whenever they want.

A home without books can be considered synonymous to a room without windows. Similar to how the latter can be suffocating, dull and difficult to live in, a house with books brings in liveliness and character. As a window brings in a breath of fresh air and light into the room, the books bring in the knowledge to enlighten the housemates and also give them an opinion and perspective towards life. A home is defined by the people who live in it and not the materialistic items that decorate it. One may buy expensive rugs, furniture, paintings, ornaments and other décor stuff to beautify their home. All this is a reflection of how much money the owner has got. But if there are books in the house, it signifies the mind and character of the owner. As author Anna Quindlen puts, "I would be most content, if my children grew up to be the kind of people who think decorating consists mostly of building enough bookshelves", describes how books should constitute a defined place in one's house.

In modern day and age, however, people tend to drive towards luxuries of life like car, house, cell phones etc. which cost a bomb on their pockets. But their mindset won't let them buy a book which will cost only a few pennies. This is because they are engrossed in the artificial passion for collecting expensive and rare things which define the luxuries of liver. However, they don't understand how a good collection of books will bring in character and meaning to their lives which will define their taste, attitude, personality and psychology. The habit of reading thus, should be inculcated in early years of growth. Apart from the context books which are mandatory for their school curriculum, young kids should be introduced to story books, novels, magazines and comics which are appropriate for their age. This habit will churn

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out their overall personality which will be reflected in all areas of their life – be it their work ethics, attitude towards life, moral values and social mindset. No matter how big or small a house is, but if it has a little space for books there, the house will bloom with fresh ideas and thoughts.

Books can be considered as the great lighthouses which are erected in the great sea of time. Reading a book takes you to another world. It connects you to the author, the time and era the story talks about and moves you along with it. Life is limited and it is difficult to experience all the wonders oneself, but books can enlarge the experience of being alive.

House without books can also be considered as a body without soul. As a soul defines a person and its overall character, similarly books give meaning and character to homes. The word BOOK can be expanded to stand for each letter: B, bridge that connects one to K, knowledge. Between them are two Os, Objects and Opinions. Books are diverse in nature and consist of all kinds of objects in the world. Authors put them into words and we learn from them through reading. But understanding what is read is utmost otherwise it's like roaming in a circular motion and constraining oneself. Critical thinking of what is read is essential to absorb the contents. This is how one is able to respect the author's view and also create one's opinions. Thus, books act as a bridge which build objects and opinions to knowledge. Knowledge is power and to be powerful, one must cross this bridge.

Books thus act as a ladder for human progress. Books can be considered to be the quietest and most constant of friends whom you can trust blindly; they are also most accessible and wisest of counsellors; and the most patient of teacher. Books are our friends in a real sense. They demand nothing from us and give us immense joy. We also learn a lot from them. They take us into a different world of imagination. They built up one's mental well being and broaden the mind.

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Books let us travel the world without moving our feet. They teach us the norms of the society and show the pathways of life. Books make one lively, content, knowledgeable, enriched and sharp. They thus, should be an integral part of one's life. A tree is defined by its qualities of giving shelter, food and wood. It is an epitome of strength and growth. Similar to how a tree keeps one grounded and connects one to the roots, books bring us closer to our inner self and make us calmer and beholder of deeper things. Trees are shelter to birds. Without birds, trees look deserted. Birds fly all day but at the end come back to the tree. They bring in the life in trees with their chirpiness. Same way humans may wander all around, but it is the books where he will find ultimate solace.