Abstract

Introduction

Globalization is the most widely debated and discussed phenomenon in all over the world. The world opinion is divided on what constitute globalization and whether the globalization is good or bad? Handful of scholars’ perceived globalization as the only way to make the world hunger free and prosperous. On the contrary evidences shows that poverty, both absolute and relative has increased in the countries where these policies are implemented. The various World Bank Reports supports those evidences. This has raised the serious doubt about achieving the Millennium Development Goals, more particularly the first goal to ‘eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015.

Globalization whether good or bad almost every nation state is bound to become a part of a global economy. Some thinkers called it a ‘new world order’. In this so called new world order which does not exists today in its fullest form, what will be the status of welfare and where would the poor go?. The privatization and liberalization of the Indian economy has shaken the very social fabric of the Indian society. The caste system in India which is based on the principle inequality whether those inequalities (Social and Economical) are going to diminished or perpetuated further in the period of globalization? Are they be able to compete with the changing scenario? What will happen with their occupations? Are they able to get quality education? What changes globalization has brought into their lifestyles? Do they have new skills so as to get the benefits of globalization? Is there any social and occupational mobility among them in view of globalization or are they stagnated? Etc. needs to be answered if they have to become a citizen of a global community- dreamed as a knowledge society.

The NeoBuddhist in India are the most vulnerable group assumed to be severely affected by the policies of globalization. The earlier state policies of protective and positive discrimination led a microscopic section of that population
to come up from the vicious cycle of poverty and discrimination. Few of them were on the verge of coming out of age old social and economic slavery. The sudden changed in the role of the state as a facilitator of economy has long-term implications for the poor and disadvantages sections like Neobuddhist in India. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and his legacy to uplift the poor has suffered a set back.

Akola District which comes under the Vidarbha region in Maharashtra, even if, economically and industrially the district is relatively backward as compared to the other districts, on political front it has always been referred as a Model of Dalit Bahujan politics. The district came into limelight recently in connections with series of farmer’s suicides. There were some organized protests against the LPG by the Dalits based political parties and some social organizations supported by the NGOs, which were reported in the news papers. Akola being a native district of the researcher, had added advantage in understanding the various dimensions and the issues pertaining to the problem under study. Keeping this in mind the study was undertaken with the following objectives.

**Objectives of the study:**

1. To study and understand the present Socio-economic conditions of Neobuddhists community in the light of phenomenon of globalization.
2. To study the impact of Globalization on Socio-economic status of Neobuddhist community during the post-reform period.
3. To examine and study the changes in the situation of Neobuddhist particularly with regards to their lifestyle with reference to the globalization.
4. To recommends for the specific social work intervention to face the challenges posed by the globalization.

**Hypothesis:**

1. The process of globalization is presumed to affect the social status of neo Buddhists.
2. The phenomenon of Globalization is likely to be associated with level of education and income of the respondents.
3. The impact of globalization is likely to vary with the occupations of the respondents.

4. Impact of globalization is likely to affect the life style of NeoBuddhist community.

**Operational Definitions:**

**Globalization:** For the purpose of this study, “globalization means the some combination of economic, political, ideological, cultural and sociological phenomenon, which carries with it unanticipated, often contradictory and polarizing consequences with respect to the marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the society”

**Neo Buddhist Community:** The ex-untouchable belonging to ‘Mahar’ caste in traditionally Hindu caste hierarchical structure, residing in the state of Maharashtra who renounced Hinduism and embraced Buddhism in a mass conversion ceremony held at Nagpur on 14th Oct, 1956 under the able leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. The present day followers of Dr. Ambedkar who were formerly called as “Mahars” in Maharashtra, all of them are called as Neo-Buddhists and the same is true for the purpose of this study.

**Universe:** The universe of the study is the neo Buddhists residing in Akola District. The total population of Akola district according to census 2001 is 16,30,239 out of which NeoBuddhists constitutes approximately 1,68,474 of population. The Akola District has total seven blocks out of which three blocks namely Akot, Akola and Murtizapur were selected at random for the purpose of this study.

**Study Design**

The number of variables related to the impact of globalization were identified and processed to establish its association with one another and also with socio-economic status of the respondents (Neo Buddhists). It means that the diagnostic and co relational research design was used by the researcher for the purpose of this study.
Unit of the study  The Neo-Buddhist people living in the villages and towns /city areas of the district Akola were considered as the unit of the study.

Variables Studied:

In the present study the following variables were highlighted and studied: social status, economic status, sources of income, occupational pattern, employment status and nature, wages, political participation, availability of basic amenities, social Status, Life styles, feeling about insecurity, availability of safety nets and its utilization patterns and the impact of globalization on various areas of life of neo-Buddhists community.

Measurement Scales used

1. To measure the socio-economic status of the respondents the SES scale developed by Pareek Udai and T. Venkateswaran Rao was adapted and used by the researcher.
2. To measure the impact of globalization a self anchored scale was developed and used by the researcher.
3. To measure the changes in life styles of the respondents- a self anchored scale was developed and used.

Sampling Procedure

Multistage stratified random sampling method was used. In the first stage sample of three blocks were selected at random. In the second Stage it was decided to select equal number of respondents from each block, keeping in mind the time and approachability to the respondents, it was decided to take 88 respondents from each block which is approximately 0.22 per cant of that total Neobuddhist population of the block. In the third stage, it was also decided to take equal number of respondents from rural and urban areas of the each selected block. As such 44 respondents each were selected from rural and urban areas. Since the study pertains to neobuddhist community, the researcher had used Purposive Sampling Technique to select the respondents. Thus total samples of 264 respondents were interviewed by the researcher.
Method of Data collection

Primary data was collected by interviewing the respondents with the help of predetermined sets of questions (Interview Scheduled). Similarly the data was also collected by way of informal discussions, focused group discussion and by way of participatory observations.

Secondary data was collected from various research Journals, various reports and books.

Data processing and Analysis

The raw data collected by the researcher was scrutinized and entered on the computer with SPSS. Some of the variables were regrouped so as to suit the data for the SPSS system. Descriptive statistics such as mean, mode, median, standard deviation, and quartiles were used. To test the association between variables Pearson’s Chi Square test was used. Univeriate, Bivariate and Trivariate analysis was conducted by using SPSS. The data was presented in a tabular form and figures were analyzed.

Major Findings of the Study

- Out of total of 264 respondents 210 were male and 54 were female. The average age of the respondents was found to be 39 years and majority of the respondents (75.4 percent) were living in nuclear families. The marital status of the respondents revealed that an overwhelming majority of them (83 percent) were married. On examining the type of houses, it was revealed that majority of them (59.5 percent) were living in Kachha houses and most of them (92.8 percent) had their own houses.
- The migration status revealed that a majority of the respondents (71.6 per cent) were non-migrants and about a quarter of them were migrants from nearby villages for seeking employment in cities and towns.
- With reference to the educational status of the respondents it was found that overwhelming majority of the respondents (86.6 per cent) were literate and more than 14 per cent of them were found to be illiterates. The number of
respondents educated up to higher education was found to be negligible. It was revealed in this study that large number children (63.3 percent) in the school going age were enrolled in public schools. But it was also found that one fourth (25 percent) of the respondents perceived that their educational status had deteriorating during the last few years.

- A large number of respondents (52.3 per cent) were from middle income groups and the average income of the respondents was found to be Rs. 3,000/- per month.
- Nearly 46 per cent of the respondents were observed to be working as agricultural laborers and about 15 percent of them were working as daily wage workers. The number of respondents working in government and private services was negligible.
- With reference to the nature of employment it was revealed that overwhelming majority of them (76.1 per cent) were temporarily employed and the similar number of them had no occupational mobility during the last 10 to 15 years. It was also found that majority of them (73.1) were not satisfied with their present work / job.
- While studying the level and magnitude of the prevalence of poverty among the respondents it was found that a large number of them (64 per cent) were reported to be above the poverty line and a large majority of them (67 per cent) did not own any land. On investigating the status of savings it was observed that more than 80 per cent of them had no savings at all and about one fourth of them (24.2 percent) were found to be indebted.
- On examining the religious, cultural life styles of the respondents it was observed that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (97.34 per cent) visits the Baudhda Vihar occasionally and more than 80 per cent of them were aware about the Buddhist rituals (Buddha Vandana) and a large majority (75.4 per cent) of them celebrates Buddhist Festivals including ‘Ambedkar Jayanti.’
On probing social status and social relations it was found that a majority of respondents (59.1 percent) did not participate in a social functions organized by the caste Hindus. Surprisingly, it was also revealed that majority of them (76.5 per cent) did not experience the practice of untouchability in recent past. It was also found that quite a majority them (61 percent) had good relationships with the upper castes people. Thirty seven per cent of them felt that their social status had improved during the last few years.

On examining the Health Status of the respondents it was revealed that more than half of the respondents (51.1 per cent) did not have a primary health centre nearby and overwhelming majority of them (81.8 per cent) were satisfied with the services of private hospital as compared to 28 per cent in case of a government hospitals.

**Impact of Globalization:**

The data on Socio-economic status of the respondents and their perception about the impact of globalization was cross tabulated. The objective was to find the associations between the various variables associated with the socio-economic status and impact of globalization. Seventeen such variables were identified and they were cross tabulated in order to find the degree of associations between them. On cross tabulation it was revealed that out of the 21 variables, 15 of them had shown stastically significant associations’

The impact of globalization was found to be uniforms age wise as well as gender wise. Their association with the impact of globalization was found to be stastically non-significant.

It was observed that a little more than 40 per cent of respondents with a smaller family size had perceived higher impact of globalization compared to the 33 percent respondents with larger family size who felt low impact of globalization.

A majority of respondents(47.7 per cent) living in urban area had perceived high impact of globalization as compared to about 32 per cent respondents
living in rural area. The association between region and impact of globalization was statistically significant.

- It was revealed in this study that a large number of respondents (45.3 per cent) who were migrants had perceived high impact of globalization as compared to the natives.

- It was found that a larger number of low educated respondents (46.8 per cent) perceived high impact of globalization as compared to about 23 per cent of respondents who had high educational status had perceived high impact of globalization. The association between the education and impact of globalization was statistically tested by applying Chi Square test, it was found that the association was statistically significant.

- It was revealed that comparatively a larger number of respondents (47 per cent) who were in high income group perceived high impact of globalization as compared to 20 percent of respondents from low income group who perceived high impact of globalization. The association between the two variables was observed to be statistically significant. It was hypothesized in this study that the impact of globalization was likely to be associated with the level of education and the income of the respondents. On applying Chi Square test, the association between the two variables was found to be statistically significant. Hence, the proposed hypothesis was found to be true and accepted.

- While studying the occupational patterns of the respondents it was revealed in this study that the majority of respondents employed in a sector other than services and agricultural labors had perceived higher impact of globalization. On applying the Chi Square test it was found that the association between the two variables was statistically significant. It was hypothesized in this study that the impact of globalization was likely to vary with the occupational pattern of the respondents. The proposed hypothesis was tested by applying the statistical test (Chi Square) and found to be true and accepted.
It was also found that a large number of respondents (45.5 percent) with lower job security had felt high impact of globalization than the 36 percent of the respondents who had a better job security. However, the association between the job security and the impact of globalization was found to be stastically not-significant.

A large number of the respondents (about 47 percent) of them who were indebted had perceived a high impact of globalization as compared to about 36 per cent of respondents who were not indebted. However, it was observed that association between these two variables was not significant stastically.

It was found that majority of respondents (51.7 per cent) who were going to private hospital for treatment felt a high impact of globalization as compared to 29 per cent of the respondents who did not go to private hospitals for treatment.

It was revealed in this study that a larger number of respondents (37 percent) from high social status had perceived relatively higher impact of globalization than the respondents from low social status. The association between the two variables was tested by applying the Chi. Square test and found to be stastically significant.

On examining the changes in lifestyles and impact of globalization it was found that the large number of respondents with low changes in lifestyles had perceived high impact of globalization as compared to the respondent with high change in their life styles. The association between the two variables was found to be stastically significant. The hypothesis stated in the study that Impact of globalization is likely to affect the life style of NeoBuddhist community was found to be true and therefore accepted.

**Factors affecting the Impact of Globalization**

In order to rule out the possibility of the third variable intervening in the bivariatly associated variables the originally bivariatly associated variables were
reexamined (Trivariate Analysis) and the finding of that reexamination are summarized below:

1) The original bivariate association between education and impact of globalization was found to be conditional when the effect of income was controlled as a third variable. The association persists only in case of respondents with middle income category and disappears in the remaining two categories that is low and high income group category.

2) It was observed that the original bivariated association between the education and the Impact of globalization was spurious when the variable social status was introduced as a control variable. The association was totally accounted for by the third variable social status.

3) It was revealed that original bivariate association between education and impact of globalization was conditional when the effect of occupation was controlled. The original association persists only in case of the respondents whose occupations were other than service and agricultural labors.

It was found that impact of the globalization varies irrespective of education of the respondents when the family type of the respondent was of “nuclear type”.

4) The bivariated association between ‘Total income and impact of Globalization’ was found to be conditional when ‘Social Status’ was introduced as a third variable. The original association persisted only when the respondents had high ‘Social Status.’ similarly, It was observed that bivariate association between them was conditional when the effect of third variable ‘Occupation’ was controlled. The association persisted only in case of respondents whose occupation was service.

5) It was revealed in this study that the bivariate association between the two variables ‘Total income’ and ‘Impact of globalization’ was conditional, it persisted only in case of the respondents who were moderately educated and disappeared in the remaining two categories that is ‘low’ and ‘high’ educated categories of respondents.
6) When the effect of occupation was controlled as a third variable, it was observed that the original bivariated associations between the ‘social status’ and ‘impact of globalization’ was conditional because it persisted only in case of the respondents whose occupation was ‘Service’.

7) It was found that the original bivariated association between the ‘social status’ and ‘Impact of globalization’ was spurious when effect of third variable ‘education’ was controlled. That means there is no direct association between the two variables.

8) The bivariated association between ‘social status’ and Impact of globalization was also found to be spurious and totally accounted for by the third variable, ‘Total income’.

9) It was observed that the bivariate association between ‘Occupation’ and ‘Impact of globalization’ was found to be conditional when the effect of ‘education’ was controlled as a third variable. It was found that the association remained unaffected only in case of the respondents who were moderately educated.

10) The bivariate association between the ‘occupation’ and ‘impact of globalization’ was found to be conditional. When effect of ‘social status’ was controlled it was observed that the original association persisted only in case of respondents from high social status. That means, there is no direct association between occupation and impact of globalization. They are associated with each other through social status.

**Conclusions**

The average age of a large majority of the respondents was 39 years. It shows the majorities of respondents are married and are shouldering the house hold responsibility. It was found that association between the age and impact of globalization and was not stastically significant which means that the impact of globalization was uniform age wise.
• A overwhelming majority of households are male headed. It indicates the general trends that the Indian family system is strongly patriarchal and highly male dominated. The association between the gender and impact of globalization was tested and found to be stastically not significant.

• The majority of the respondents are living in a nuclear type of household. The trends are now becoming very common in rural areas too, which was once known for a traditionally joint family system. This changing nature of family system shows that the people are adapting to the new values based on consumerism and individualism.

• The education is an important factor as for as the development of any society is concerned. It has always been thought as a means of empowerment and lack of education has been a root cause of many problems that we face today. With reference to the literacy level of the respondents it was found that the overwhelming majority of the respondents were observed to be literates. However quite a few them were educated up to higher education. It was found that the large number of highly educated respondents perceived low impact of globalization as compared to the respondents who were less educated. The association between the education and impact of globalization was tested and observed to be stastically significant. However the on reexamining the bivariate association between education and impact of Globalization by introducing income, occupation and social status as third variables, it was reveled that the association between them was conditional in case of income and occupation where as the association was spurious when the effect of a third variable social status was controlled.

• The income of a person plays on important role is determining the socio-eco statues. The quality of life also depends upon the economic status of a person. When the economic status was examined, it was found that the average income of the respondents was Rs. 3000/ p. m. which is hardly sufficient to meet the monthly household expenses. The variable income was associated with the
impact of globalization. It was found that a large majority of respondents from high income group had perceived higher impact of globalization as compared to the respondents from low income groups. The association between them was stastically significant. The hypothesis stated in the study that ‘education and income is likely to be associated with the impact of globalization’ was tasted and proved to be true and accepted. However, on reexamining the bivariated association between total income and impact of globalization by controlling the effect of third variables education, occupation and social status, it was found that the original bivariate association between the income and impact of globalization was conditional and existed only when the respondents were moderated educated with high social status and employed in occupations other than services and agricultural laborers.

- While studying the occupational patterns of the respondents it was revealed in this study that the large numbers of respondents were working as agricultural laborers and very few of them were employed in services. In a bivariate analysis it was found that the respondents working in sectors other than services and agricultural laborers had perceived higher impact of globalization. On applying the Chi Square test it was found that the association between the two variables was stastically significant. It was hypothesized in this study that the impact of globalization was likely to vary with the occupational pattern of the respondents. The proposed hypothesis was tested by applying the stastical test (Chi Square) and found to be true and accepted.

- A large number of the respondents were still living in below poverty line with majority of them had no saving at all and quite a few of them were indebted. It shows that the efforts made so far by the governments and other non-governmental agencies on poverty eradication were having serious lacunas and needs immediate rectifications.

- The phenomenon of Globalization has social dimensions. The relationships patterns amongst the different individuals are likely to be affected because of
the forces of globalization. Keeping this in mind the researcher made a thorough inquiry into the social status of respondents. Contrary to the prevalent belief it was found that majority of the respondents did not experience untouchability and almost equal number of them said that their relationship with the caste Hindus was good and quite a large number of them had said that their social status was improved during the past few years. However, the result of the cross tabulation shows that the large number of respondents with high social status had felt high impact of globalization. It was hypothesized in this study that social status of the respondents was likely to be associated with the impact of globalization. The association between the two variables was tested and found to be statistically significant. The proposed Hypothesis was found to be true and accepted.

- The forces of globalization are likely to change the life style and cultural practice of the people, since the world is going to be a global village. The value system of the people is becoming more and more individualistic and materialistic. The association between the life styles and the impact of globalization was examined and found to be statistically significant. It was observed that the respondents with low change in their life styles had perceived high impact of globalization as compared to the respondent with high change in their life styles. It can therefore be concluded that the majority of respondents who are still perusing their traditional way of livings were more prone to the impact of globalization.

- Health indicates the total well being of an individual. The public health service system is worst hit by the policies of globalization making more and more people to go to private hospital for the treatment. This was bringing extra economic pressure on to the respondents. It was found that the association between the place of treatment and impact of globalization was stastically significant, and the respondents who were going to private hospital had perceived the high impact globalization in compared to the respondents who
did not go for private hospital for treatment and preferred to go Government hospital.

- It was thought that globalization will enhance democratic processes and it will lead to political empowerment of the people. When the opinions of the respondents were investigated with regards to the improvement in their political status and when cross tabulated with impact of globalization as dependent variable, it was observed that the association was statistically significant and the large number of respondents who opined that their political status was improved to some extent perceived high impact of globalization.

The study is expected to draw the attention of the academic community, policy makers and the concerned citizens towards the important issues pertaining to globalization. The study has explored and highlighted some of the facts and figures about impact of globalization on a marginalized community like Neobuddhist. The facts brought out by this study could make significant contribution to the social work knowledge base in terms of developing the new models and techniques of social work interventions so as to face the challenges of globalization.