

Editorial

Prof Gitanjali Chawla & Dr Saumya Shukla

The process of globalisation has been a major driving force behind the development of the modern world for several decades. The system has created economic links between different countries, which resulted not only in economic growth but also in international trade of goods and services, expanding knowledge base and making systems more efficient than ever before. The system that has existed until now shows signs of breaking down. The global economy is experiencing a fundamental transformation. The combination of wars and political tensions, together with supply chain problems and increasing protectionism have transformed how nations conduct their trade and diplomatic relations. The global economic system which used to depend on free trade has now become less important in many regions throughout the world because national governments have turned away from its core principles. People used to think that globalization only moved in one direction. The expansion of international trade led to the reduced significance of national boundaries because businesses needed to establish ties with other nations through their products and services and technological capabilities. The world seemed to progress towards becoming a single unified economic system. On the contrary, the system now appears even more vulnerable because of three major problems, namely COVID-19, rising geopolitical tensions and international trade bans. Globalization has not ended yet. It continues to exist, but its current form shows significant transformation. The current state of globalization is a weaker one because of various factors that are operative now.

The main factor driving this situation emerges from countries implementing protectionist trade measures. Countries from around the world implement tariffs and subsidies while they work to reduce their dependency on imported goods. The current focus has moved away from achieving cost efficiency towards establishing safety measures and building self-sufficient capabilities. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about another significant change that transformed all aspects of society. Countries learned that excessive dependency on specific geographic areas for essential products creates a dangerous situation after global supply chains collapsed. Companies began to establish production

facilities in different locations while maintaining operations close to their main markets. Geopolitical factors now have an increased influence on how organizations make their financial choices. Modern trade operations extend beyond commercial activities because they now serve as instruments for nations to establish dominance, safeguard their interests, and create future strategies. Major power conflicts are leading to global divisions that prevent countries from forming a unified international system.

As India maintains a strong connection with the global economy, all worldwide economic shifts directly impact the country. India relies on foreign countries to supply its entire crude oil requirements. The increase in global oil prices leads to higher costs for all products, including fuel, transport and food. The process affects household budgets without delay. There are additional expenses because of increased oil prices, which force the country to pay higher import costs. The rupee loses value, which also creates additional costs for imports and drives inflation rates higher. The government uses tax reductions and subsidy programs as tools to protect citizens from increasing fuel costs. This short-term solution provides immediate assistance but at the same time reduces funds to support the development of infrastructure, educational institutions and healthcare facilities. The Reserve Bank of India faces difficult responsibilities; it must choose between raising interest rates to control inflation, along with lower economic growth, and maintaining low rates to support economic expansion, but also accept higher inflation. The global economic downturn has also decreased demand for Indian goods and services, exerting pressure on industries such as textiles, manufacturing and IT services.

India's international connections are changing because of rising global uncertainty. Countries need to identify dependable relationships which can offer them better choices in obtaining essential goods. India can use this opportunity to establish itself as a center for manufacturing and service industries. India maintains its vital connection with Middle Eastern countries which continue to hold great strategic value. The region supplies most of India's oil and is also home to millions of Indian workers. The workers send money back home to their families which helps sustain their households while boosting economic growth. India is also strengthening its relationships with other developing nations. Multiple partnerships need to be established to decrease risks that arise from reliance on any one specific area in a world characterized by increasing divisions. The process of balancing competing interests proves to be a challenging task. Countries expect that India will declare its position because current global conflicts require such actions. India, however, prefers to keep its diplomatic options open with all nations. The current world needs an approach that combines strategic independence with diplomatic relations.

The current situation is showing the way to a new way for globalization to operate. The world is developing as a collection of regional systems that operate with greater restraint, instead of forming one interconnected global network. Countries maintain their trading relationships while working together, but now exercise greater caution regarding their choice of trading partners. The expansion of digital globalization continues to progress with strong momentum. The worldwide distribution of data and services, together with online employment activities, enables people to connect across international boundaries at unprecedented levels, even though physical trade experiences a decline. Globalization exists in a state of transformation because it operates at multiple levels, creating new complexities that shape its future development. The situation presents India with both obstacles and advantages. The increasing worldwide uncertainty brings fear of inflation, decline in trade and lower economic progress. However, India also has an opportunity to enhance its international supply chain networks while establishing closer relationships with various global regions. The world has moved away from its previous path which led to total system integration. It is now developing into separate parts which operate with increased caution and follow political motivations.

The drivers of globalization continue to operate through their existing systems. The ongoing development of technological innovations decreases communication and transportation expenses while economic incentives motivate international business partnerships. Human beings maintain their natural drive to explore new frontiers, enabling cultural and intellectual exchanges. The existing forces in the world maintain their power to create worldwide connections despite the more fragmented state of international relations. Globalization persists, but its form has changed from earlier times.

The articles in this issue of *Indian Journal of Social Enquiry* reflect processes of change be it in geopolitics or cultural matrices. The opening article by Shambhu Nath Dubey interrogates the legal, political and ethical dimensions of India's proactive strategic response to terrorism, its reinforcing its supremacy through indigenization. Using Operation Sindoor as a case study, the research brings to the fore, the systemic structural paradigmatic shift in India's approach to provocation; the precision in use of military forces and strategic investments in indigenising its defence capabilities.

Astha Priya examines the shifts evident in NEP 2020 and NCFSE 2023 as it nurtures and cultivates scientific temper in learners and at the same time highlights the gaps in policy frameworks and pedagogical realities. Her research is undergirded by Piaget's constructivism, Vygotsky's social scaffolding, Dewey's inquiry-based pragmatism, and

Kolb's experiential learning. Savita Singh in her article titled, 'Inflation, Algorithms, and Real Wage Compression: Evidence from India's Gig Delivery Workforce' presents a tour de force in urban economies led by the gig delivery workforce is a bubble that is waiting to burst. Using a combined macro-micro framework, her research reveals the dark underbelly of this algorithm controlled labour, making a strong case for policy shifts that should factor in the realities of income insecurity and urban precarity.

In a pertinent article, Mehak Sharma & Anuradha Sharma highlight the potential threats of Artificial Intelligence using data from government organizations and prominent academic institutions such as Yoshua Bengio's 2025 study, The International AI Safety study (2025), World Economic Forum assessments, McKinsey Global Institute projections, OECD monitoring frameworks, MIT Technology Review, and research from the International Labor Organization amongst others. They make a strong case of policy framework for effective and ethical governance of AI.

For our literature enthusiasts, we have two interesting and engaging articles – one by Anupama Jaidev & Nishtha Dev titled, 'Translating the In-Scribed Body: Cultural Alterity and a Draupadi's Counter Narrative' and 'Spectacle of Wrestling: The Narrativization of Nation-State and Citizenship in Gopinath Mohanty's Short Story 'The Somersault' by Indrani Das Gupta. Anupama and Nishtha explore un-making of the legendary Draupadi in Mahasweta Devi's short story as representative of the subaltern consciousness, highlighting the disrobing of the tribal identity while drawing cultural parallels and exploring the interstices of both gender and caste as "heterotopic spaces of alterity". Indrani delves the Indian nation-state's politics of inequality and disparity by examining Gopinath Mohanty's short story, 'The Somersault', highlighting the difference in wrestling (Bhartiya Kushti) as an "ethico-somatic framework" and it being a commodified spectacle entrenched in the politics of the time.

The closing article by Srijana Sidharth challenges assumptions surrounding 'common sense', as neutral, or universal, devoid of influences of ideologies or hegemonies; instead she foregrounds it as "historically constructed and shaped by dominant social groups". She draws on postulations by Antonio Gramsci and Satish Deshpande to support her arguments effectively. All articles in the volume interrogate prevailing worldviews and perspectives, and offer new insights for readers to delve into; they pave the way for new research. We also would like to place on record our appreciation and gratitude for our reviewers whose efforts go a long way in enhancing the quality of our articles. We continue to strive in our endeavour to offer a platform for insightful and pertinent research.