

Taking another look at Face-to-Face Community: What globalisation needs today.

--Jyotirmoy Goswami

It is a fact that we pass through an era of globalisation, of that globalisation that has its own pushes and pulls, its inevitable contradictions in utilizing the so-called wealth of science and technology. It has its strength in its capacity to spread worldwide distributions as well as in executing severe exploitations extending to remotest corner of the globe. The weak states in the world, the weak villages in the states that are not technologically ready to cope with this gigantic power are losing their grounds and imbalances in their societies are shooting up and the gap between the rich and poor in these societies are widening. This accelerating inequality is creating imbalance and, as a result, the quality of life is deteriorating. We have to deal with this problem rationally and pass through this phase keeping all our inquiries open.

It is needless to say that it would not be sensible on the part of the most efficient section of the world---the entrepreneurs, the architects of globalisation---to assume that it attracts unmixed responses from all corners. In most cases, it ensures only 1% new employment. It denies 99% job securities. Consequently world-wide resentments and, sometimes, grave agitations are being seen at present. These may, in the long run, result in revolts and defeat that progress what globalisation wants to accomplish.

For its very sustenance, globalisation should provide worldwide space for inclusive ``islandization``. Piecemeal charity for the poor will not, in any case, going to quench the passion of the poor to burst into revolts.

We can venture for this ``islandization``. We can find out ways for alleviating inequity in the grassroots level. And I would like to propose for one with *Auto-functional Green Movement*, where greenery making will go hand in hand with natural farming and other agro-based industries providing the scope of self-employment. Natural farming and agro-based industries, if combined attentively, will generate self-employments in plenty.

Market and Co-operative Action:

Globalisation is a phenomenon which puts absolute importance on market mechanism. It has its own contradictions. In one part it opens up huge possibility of free trade, in the other, it destroys the freedom of trade in the traditional grass-root economy. In one it allows the market economy to operate and, in the other, it controls, and, even manipulates the market.

Globalisation is welcomed by an exalted class of business society. The word 'society' signifies something typical, fixed and uniform for us. But, in fact, there are societies of two distinct types, which are, in their structure and properties, fundamentally differ from each other. One is traditional society, the other is business society. Rabindranath Tagore termed these societies as *Atmiya Samaj* and *Vaishya Samaj*. He observed their differences. *Vaishya Samaj*, the business society stands upon business relations and *Atmiya Samaj*, *the face-to-face community* stands exclusively upon human relations. We may explore several aspects of further differences. The family is the centre of *Atmiya Samaj* or face-to-face community and the city for the business society. The first one emphasizes love and fraternity, while the other, justice and adjustment. Broadly, the former awaits co-operation and humanization and, the later, competition and rationalization.

For illustration, we may quote Prof. Amartya Sen, one of the brilliant exponents of state welfare and market economy. He writes: "Market and co-operative action are often taken to be antagonistic because the operative principle of the former is competition as opposed to co-operation (P- 58, *Development and Participation* by Jean Dre'ze and Amartya Sen, Pub. Oxford University Press)."

He further writes: "co-operative action and market institutions are often compatible and even complementary. For instance, the efficiency of market mechanism can be greatly enhanced by co-operative social norms that reduce so called 'transaction costs'."

It is sobering to realise that Prof Sen comes here closer to the notion of the other school of thought, who gives much importance to co-operative actions. As a matter of fact, visions of Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and Prof Amlan Dutta get acknowledgement even from an exponent of market mechanism. Our proposal for *Auto-functional Green Movement* takes its origin from no less person than these great thinkers. We remain open to the lessons of the other schools of thought though.

Auto-functional Green Movement is a creative, co-operative and participatory venture. It ensures a certain degree of freedom of the market at the grass-root level which has been thwarted by the mechanism of globalization. It would address the problem of withering employments. We are sure that the ill effects of state intervention in market mechanism can be greatly reduced by introducing this co-operative movement of a creative kind.

What *Auto-functional Green Movement (AGM)* is all about?

Auto-functional Green Movement (AGM) is one kind of initiative at the grass-root level for securing harmony in social, economic and ecological spheres. Its main thrust area is greenery-making in the unused and under-used lands and facilitating natural farming. Production of fodder and protection of produce are its important

areas of work. Processing and marketing of produce, where needed, can be the other inevitable side-activities of the movement.

The main objective of the movement is to make it an Auto-functional one. This movement needs nearly one thousand people. A forum—called Forum for Fraternal Society (FFS)—is to be constituted. It will be the most active part of the total venture. The Forum would provide all assistances needed for the protection of family farming. In exchange of providing all those things to the farmers such as natural fertilizers and pesticides etc to the farmers the members of the Forum will earn substantially and enjoy self-employment for themselves. This self-employment will be made possible by ensuring an extra benefit for the both classes: in one side the landowners and the landless labourers and on the other the mediatory forum. Ultimately, a three-share movement in unused and under-used lands will eventually take place.

Organizational Aspects:

- A) Advisory Committee: It is to be constituted selecting all the members (20 to 30) and its head unanimously taking from every section of the society. The FFS will take the guidance from this committee.
- B) The forum FFS will be the most active part amongst all. 15 to 50 persons will have their self-employment in their course of pursuing the greenery mission. MGNREGA can be involved with this movement and with the same allotment it would be extended to 200 to 300 days of work gradually.
- C) All other persons, who are included in greenery mission, will have their share of wealth initially by getting approximately 10 trees—big or small—individually. They will give 2 to 3 days of voluntary labour in a month or fees as will be fixed of by the Advisory committee. But everyone has to have an opportunity to get and give something, which ultimately will make a flow of huge production and its distribution.
- D) The forum will gradually have several sub-committees: i) Advisory sub-committee, ii) Fodder Sub-committee, iii) Security Sub-committee, iv) Processing Sub-committee, v) Marketing Sub-committee etc.
- E) The FFS of grass-root level needs gradually to be connected with it's to- be-formed higher forum.

Initiation of work:

Steps-

- 1) Selection of a geographically conducive location.
- 2) Availability of human resource is to be seriously looked into.
- 3) The place of work should initially be much away from the hassles of city-life.
- 4) Village should be remote but within the range of transportability.

Budget:

At the time of preparing budget one should keep it in mind that many things are generally available from the society itself and from the government or non-governmental sources. (Such as, (i) NREGA can be introduced in it; (ii) Saplings can be had from so many sources etc.) However, for the smooth functioning of the Greenery mission necessary funds are obviously needed. Therefore, the budget is to be prepared judiciously.

It must be looked into cautiously that monetary over-flow from outside should not make the society as well as the individual inert and indifferent and deceive the society from its valued right to dignity and right to give.

Before conclusion I must strongly assert that after trying sincerely, some way or other, to give the society a chance for performing its responsibility there may appear a failure. Any venture may, in the initial days, seem to be a futility. But it is to be kept in mind that futile refuse for some times, are more fertile when properly used. There can be gains even from the debris of losses. And consequent upon this we can venture upon reviving our village life. Our project or movement does not need a huge capital. It primarily needs reorientation and readjustment of the existing schemes. The more it is less obsessed with city-centric approaches, the more it is free from big failure. It is only for exploring the endless potential of relationship and of love. And it is surely going to be a kind of investment which would unearth the latent vigour of that capital which is essential for social, economic and ecological harmony. This investment would not lead to one sided development in which a major portion of common people falls outside the development process. None can deny that this is happening at the present.