

GLOBALIZATION AND SOVEREIGNTY

What is Globalization?

Globalization is the emergence of a complex web of interconnectedness that means that our lives are increasingly shaped by events that occur, and decisions that are made, at a great distance from us. The central feature of globalization is therefore that geographical distance is of declining relevance and that territorial boundaries, such as those between nation-states, are becoming less significant.

Andrew Heywood says that by no means, however, globalization imply that 'the local' and the 'the national' are subordinate to 'the global'. Rather it highlights the deepening as well as the broadening of the political process, in the sense that local, national and global events (or perhaps local, regional, national, international and global events) constantly interact, as indicated in the figure above.

Roland Robertson defines globalization as "a concept that refers to the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole." Globalization has actually converted the whole world into one single unit or a global village in which events in one part of the world have its impact on another part.

The forces which are fuelling Globalization:

Techniques (Technological Change)
Economics (Markets & Capitalism)
Politics (Power, Interests & Institutions)

The three dimensions of globalization, as per Bernali Sarmah in the edited book *Political Theory: Issues, Concepts and Debates* are listed as under:

- **Economic Globalization:** It refers to the involvement of the MNCs, the free flow of goods in the global market and also the changing nature of the economy in the globalized world.
- **Political Globalization:** Political globalization refers to the 'shifting reach of political power, authority and forms of rule,' as it involves the international organizations and regimes, non-state actors, transnational bodies or national pressure groups, whose activities have their influences in the international arena.
- **Military/Security Globalization:** Traditionally, national security means the acquisition, deployment and use of military force to achieve national goals, but today, military / security globalization redefined and widened the concept of international security as it includes environmental issues, humanitarian issues etc.

IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON THE STATE SOVEREIGNTY

Globalization has led to the transformation of the state – Its Power & Authority. The nature of statehood has changed. The impact is not uniform on the states of this world. The main changes can be summed up as under:-

1. Erosion of State Borders
2. Softening of State Sovereignty
3. Loosening of State's Control
4. Increasing Constraints on State Sovereignty.
5. Diminution of the State

Erosion of State Borders

In today's world borders are gradually becoming irrelevant. The emergence of Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) has led to the internationalization of business. Their interests are global – that is their interests go beyond the borders of the state.

A New Global Culture has come into existence which belittles the importance of borders.

Softening of State Sovereignty

Economic globalization is considered to put an end to the system of independent sovereign state system (Westphalia Model). So it can be said that economic globalization has attained supremacy or triumph of the market over the state. And it is Economics which has become important and not Politics.

Loosening of State's Control

The Globalization (Privatization & Liberalization & Computers) has changed the idea of security. The traditional notion of security has been replaced by modern notion of security. For ensuring this security to human beings state cannot do everything on its own.

Increasing Constraints on State Sovereignty

The changes in International Law have introduced new forms of regulations, rights and duties which act as constraints on states. States are now supposed to obey these laws. For example the provisions of the UN Charter.

Diminution of the State

The state's authority has shrunk in the modern world today. State's authority has got minimised. A minimal state has come into existence which has very less functions and a very limited scope. Taken all together, the trends and factors mentioned above have contributed to what has been described by Bob Jessop as 'hallowing out' of the state both from outside and from inside. Sovereignty as the turbo power of the state is running out of fuel while the state has not only a lot of speed-breakers ahead of it but a so uncharted tracks.