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RELEVANCE OF NAM IN THE GLOBALIZED ERA: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

The process of decolonization in Asia, Africa and Latin American regions in the 20th century led to the origin of new independent states in these regions. These states got independence after a long struggle against the colonial and imperial masters. They adopted non-alignment as the basis of their foreign policy which was later developed as a movement by these newly independent states to protect their hard won independence and sovereignty in the bi-polar world order. The origin of the movement can be traced as the part of the freedom struggle of these states.

KEY WORDS:

Foreign direct investment , Analysis , organization , Economic Policy .

INTRODUCTION

The 'International Congress Against Imperialism' was held in Brussels in February 1927. In which various countries from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America participated and concluded that, "the struggle for freedom and against imperialism required joint deliberations, and where possible, joint action". Another major landmark was the first Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi, from March 23 to April 2, 1947, it brought together the countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America with their respective perceptions and experiences. After other efforts, the Bandung conference was the most important step in the emergence of the Non Aligned Movement; it was held in Bandung (Indonesia) from April 18 to 24, 1955. Twenty nine countries, six from Africa and twenty three from Asia, participated in the conference. Leopold Senghor described it as the most important event, since the renaissance that spelled death to the inferiority complex of colonial peoples". The conference "elaborated the principles of panchsheel into ten principles", and provided a framework for the evolution of NAM. Later on, a meeting between Tito, Nehru and Nasser was held on the island of Brioni (Yugoslavia), in July 1956, in which the basic principles for world peace and cooperation were proposed by the three founders of non-alignment. After that, with a preparatory meeting in Cairo in June 1961, the first conference of the heads of states was held at Belgrade in 1961.

Initially, NAM started as a political movement of the developing countries against colonialism, imperialism, apartheid and support to the liberation movement of the colonialisied countries. In the first conference in 1961, the participant countries discussed peace, peaceful settlement of disputes, general and complete disarmament, effectiveness of UN, right to self determination and human rights as the major objectives of the movement.

In 1970's the economic issues came on the agenda. The demand for the establishment of a new international economic order (NIEO) was raised in the 1970's. Due to the efforts of the non-aligned countries, the UN General Assembly special session passed the declaration and programme of action on the

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establishment of a 'New International Economic Order' in 1974. It was a call for restructuring of international economic relations on the basis of,

...equity, sovereign equality, independence, common interests, and cooperation among all states, irrespective of their economic and social system... (the NIEO) shall correct inequalities and redress injustice, make it possible to eliminate the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries, and ensure steadily accelerating economic and social development, and peace and justice for the present and future generations.

In concrete terms, the developing countries demanded through NIEO a non-discriminatory and preferential treatment for their manufactured goods in the markets of industrial countries, more stable and higher prices for their commodities, renegotiation of their external public debt, codes of conduct for activities of the multinational corporations, more transfer of useful technology to the less developed countries and a greater voice in the management of the world's monetary system.

After the end of cold war, disintegration of Soviet Union and other drastic changes in 1990's the process of globalization with liberalization and privatization started at international level to regularize the economic relations among the states. Globalization is not a new phenomenon only the forces and terminology were different. From Alexander to Chenghis Khan, to Napoleon, Robert Clive and Hitler etc. efforts were made to bring the entire world under one supreme ruler, through they did not succeed, and the centre of decision making was to be located in the capital of the conqueror's country.

Globalisation can be defined in terms of a loose combination of free trade agreements, the internet, and the integration of financial markets in easing borders and uniting the world into a single lucrative, but brutally competitive market place. It was further defined as the process of liberalization and openness of economic markets of state without any trade barriers under the modalities set by the WTO which is the process of interdependence of contemporary states in the world system. In fact, globalisation stands for the free flow of financial and other resources, uninhibited free trade in goods and services and free movement of people to live and work anywhere they like.

The decline of colonialism and emergence of independent states created the problem of surplus capital. This later on changed the economic and political policies of the developed and rich countries. Later on, in the 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet-Union and the disintegration of the world socialist system created greater possibilities for this penetration. This marked a qualitatively new stage in globalisation.

Basically, in the post Cold War era, globalisation has raised various questions about the problems of developing countries and economic relations between the North and South. In 1990's the Non-Aligned countries considered it as a process of opportunity and challenge. In 'The Call from Colombia' declaration at XI summit, it was mentioned that, ...globalisation and interdependence have benefited mainly industrialized countries, and many developing countries, however remain marginalized, broadening the gap between the rich and the poor countries. Globalization has also caused problems and risks to many of the non-aligned countries that are compelled to face such phenomena as environmental degradation and the problem of illicit drugs, which have their origin in the permissiveness prevailing in certain developed countries.

The same question was raised at the Durban conference. In the "Durban Declaration for the New Millennium", it was stated that, ...globalisation can be a threat to newly acquired freedom, unless the interests of the South are carefully protected and promoted... Liberalisation must not provide a cover for the protectionist policies of the rich and powerful, securing their vital interests while the weak are beggared beyond description by being forced to "open up" to the world. In the same conference Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee also reacted in the same manner regarding the new situation. He stated in his speech that ... protectionism has returned in markets of the developed world; trade and investment are being increasingly used to promote political objectives, on labour standards, intellectual property rights, human rights and the environment. Mahathir Mohamed, the Prime Minister of Malaysia called it, "revival of old western colonialism." The chairman of XII NAM summit Nelson Mandela in his Inaugural speech stated that, ...the process of globalisation has imposed on all of us a fashionable orthodox uniformity according to which we must all address such questions as budget deficits, rates of inflation, interest and exchange rates, capital movements, the flexibility of labour markets, the affordability of social welfare systems and so on.

At the XIII NAM summit held at Kuala Lumpur, it was made clear that the process of globalisation is benefiting the interests of the developed countries. In the declaration, it was stated that, ...globalisation presents many challenges and opportunities to the future and viability of all states. In its present form, it perpetuates or even increases the marginalization of developing countries. We must ensure that globalisation will be a positive force for change for all peoples and will benefit the largest number of

countries and not just a few. Globalisation should lead to the prospering and empowering of the developing countries, not their continued impoverishment and dependence on the wealthy and developed world.

In fact, the non-aligned countries are aware of the fact that the process of economic globalisation is being dominated and moulded by the developed states for their interests. The Colombian President Andres Pastrana in his address in the Ministerial meeting (April, 2000) of NAM, called it a big challenge for the developing countries. He stated that ...one of the central questions which lack a complete answer from the movement is how to face the challenges of globalisation. This vacuum is more notorious if we consider the risk of marginalization already faced by the developing countries.

In fact, the economic globalisation has far reaching impact on the economies of the developing countries. It has become an effective weapon for the US and its allies to be used for establishment of economic hegemony in the post Soviet Union economic order. It has provided an opportunity to have trade, technology and free flow of finance through state boundaries. But the fact is that it had provided opportunities to the rich countries to have domination on international economic institutions and impose their way of working, which are going to play more important role in the changed context. The process of globalisation, which is based on the openness and restructuring of the markets has led to the restructuring of international economy in favour of rich countries by the use of rules and regulations of international institutions (IMF, WB).

In the age of globalisation the non-aligned countries are facing challenges at domestic and international levels. The new arrangements in the areas of trade, production and exchange are more protectionists and protect the interests of the developed nations. The west has used the the WTO and MNC as vehicles for their interests. The process of globalisation, and the demise of the communist bloc have further aggravated the problems of poverty, illiteracy, hunger and starvation. Due to the globalisation, the public sector is shrinking; state is withdrawing itself from its basic responsibilities. Which have adversely affected the public utility services and welfare activities of the state? The increasing role of MNCs has affected the indigenous production and markets of the developing countries which have influenced the product, rate and market of poor countries adversely. Lastly, the use of cultural hegemony for the sale of product is another dangerous output of globalisation, which is corrupting the culture of developing countries.

The solutions to all these problems require conducive international economic environment. It can be achieved through international cooperation among the rich and poor countries by improving market access, favourable terms of trade, access to technology and international financial and monetary system, in terms of their stability and provision of liquidity. Transfer of new and additional resources for sustained economic growth and development of the developing countries is needed. For this, cooperation among the developed and the developing countries is a must, which is possible only through North-South dialogue. But, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union it has become more important due to unilateral dominance of USA over the decision making process in the international institutions. It has led to a unique strategic and political asymmetry in the world. Under these conditions the North has promoted and exploited the South to devastating effect using debt as a weapon.

As the Chairperson of the XI Summit Conference, President Suharto stated in his closing address that; sustained economic development in the North is not possible in the absence of stability and development in the South. The countries of South cannot achieve their development goals without the conducive global environment that the policies of North should provide. It therefore makes economic sense for both sides to sit down and discuss how they can manage the massive changes in the international relations in the decades ahead.

The Kuala Lumpur conference advocated relations in the present context. It was stated in the declaration that, ...developing countries should accelerate the establishment of new South-South relations by broadening and intensifying South-South Cooperation including through enhanced regional and sub-regional cooperation, pooling of resources as well as strengthening the South's effectiveness in multilateral processes and organisations. The Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh in his statement at the XV Summit of the Non Aligned Movement on July 15, 2009 stated that, with the benefits and burdens of globalization so unfairly distributed, it will be even harder for our economies to cope with the crisis. If the aftermath of the crisis is not carefully managed, and if the abundance of liquidity leads to a revival of speculative activities, we may well see a period of prolonged stagflation. Crucially for the developing world, a continuing slowdown will force more and more of our people back into poverty, bringing down levels of nutrition, health and education. The progress we have made at great cost and sacrifice will be wiped out. The Millennium Development Goals will become a mirage. It was the apprehension of the developing countries during the phase of economic crisis and economic stagnation.

It is important for the Non-Aligned countries to develop their own economies. They must primarily rely on their own efforts and strengthen South-South cooperation among themselves. In the age of

globalization cooperation should be based on the efforts of the developing countries to uplift themselves by their own bootstraps and work for their own prosperity. They must expand their agriculture and other productions to achieve self-sufficiency in food, increase the capability of processing their own raw materials and diversify their exports. They should take full advantage of the economies of bulk purchasing by pooling their imports on regional or sub-regional basis. They should try to settle payments among themselves in their own currencies. A committee of experts from NAM countries should be set up to draft a set of criteria, techniques and procedures which could make private foreign investment sub serve national development objectives and which provide common tax regimes and incentives for attracting foreign investments.

CONCLUSION

The introduction of globalization in 1990's has provided new opportunities and challenges to the Non-Aligned countries. The openness of economic market, trade liberalization, free flow of goods and other changes are being used as instrument of exploitation by the developed countries. NAM is more relevant in the age of globalization. It has provided opportunities to the developing countries for collective action at the international level. Developing countries can use it as a platform to pressurize North for dialogue on major economic issues. They can play effective role in the UN for their demands. But for all these, they have to change their own vision and approach towards themselves. To keep the movement relevant in the age of globalization they have to set their own house in order. So that the movement can play effective role to protect the interests of the developing countries in the changed scenario

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