



## Glocalisation and the sustainability goalposts

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**(Mains GS1&2: Effects of globalisation on Indian society & Development processes and the development industry – the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, institutional and other stakeholders.)**

### **Context:**

- It is not surprising that the raging pandemic has transformed our lives drastically, dramatically, and also differently.
- Although, it may appear that climate change, environmental protection, and pollution control have taken a backseat at the moment, it invariably underscores the need for establishing resilient institutions to achieve an inclusive global governance.

### **Glocal system of global governance will be the future:**

- An intimately interconnected global economy has explicitly debunked the pressures and insecurities of critical supply chains and the overall market behaviour.
- In fact, the pandemic has turned out to be a stress test for not only the process of globalisation but also for the sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- The spread of the virus, breaking all barriers, boundaries, and borders has exposed the inherent weakness and fragility of a highly globalised world.
- Moreover, the circle is abuzz with the growing importance of deglobalisation and in the same breath, the pressing need of glocalisation.
- As observed, both COVID-19 and climate change offer peculiar insights into the highly debated sustainability narrative and the fizzled nature of multilateralism.
- It reflects the vulnerabilities of our current economic system, which is directly encouraging environmental degradation and also the spread of dangerous pandemics.
- Given this context, glocalising our system or setting up a glocal system of global governance to protect the 'global commons' could open up new and possible pathways in the years to come.

## **Globalisation faces serious challenge:**

- The advent of hyper-globalisation in the beginning of the 1990s threw open a plethora of avenues for developing economies like India and other nations in South Asia.
- It offered them opportunities to progress up the economic ladder by providing employment to millions of people, inflow of capital, technological advancements, etc.
- The first serious puncture that deflated the globalisation balloon came in the form of the 2008 financial crisis resulting in a phenomenon popularly termed as 'slowbalisation'.
- Just when the world economy was beginning to get on its feet, more than a decade later, slowbalisation arrived again in the form of COVID-19 pandemic which seriously hit the globalisation bubble.
- However, it does not mean that globalisation is an unwanted phenomenon.
- According to a recent study by the DHL Global Connectedness Index 2020, it has been observed that globalisation would manage a comeback despite the ups and downs of a stormy pandemic.
- Index also interestingly stated that the world is far less globalised, contrary to popular belief.

## **Glocalisation is more inclusive:**

- Building resilience within the domains of the hyper-interconnectedness shared by the developed and developing nations is imperative; something that globalisation has failed to achieve till date and this is where glocalisation comes into the picture.
- Glocalisation is essentially the interpretation and representation of global elements at the local level.
- Although used more frequently in the business sense, glocalisation is equally popular in cultural and social arenas too.
- In the current context, it ought to be given an appropriate space in the environmental domain as well.
- A refined version of globalisation in a post-COVID world could be derived from glocal elements with an awareness of the broader global good, such as sustainable development.
- As the pandemic has provided a major thrust to cutting down on air or rail travel, forcing people to work remotely from home, sourcing things locally, thereby, cutting down on our carbon footprints, glocalisation could possibly present a viable alternative to globalisation.

## **Glocalisation, degrowth, and SDGs**

- The sustainability targets set in consonance by the multilateral institutions, such as the UN and its specialised agencies, are all encompassing in nature.
- Ranging from economic equity to environmental protection to resolving social conflicts, the goals are multifarious in character requiring equally diverse efforts to be applied towards their fulfilment.
- However, the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has provided a renewed impetus to glocalisation with a renewed focus on not just economic growth but on environmental awareness and economic equity.
- The concept of economic degrowth offers a more realistic and sustainable alternative to the development trajectory of the international community and Localising the economies is one pertinent example.
- Involving the local bodies at the grassroots level, sub-national agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other non-state actors in the sustainability debate is undoubtedly being underlined by the ongoing pandemic.
- In fact, it can go a long way in making a sizeable contribution towards the fulfilment of Agenda 2030.
- In present times, glocalisation of environmental movements and climate action can be witnessed in Europe as well as in India through virtual protests and online meetings.
- The idea here is to cut down on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, reduce air travel, push for local production and raise awareness on sustainable consumption and practice.
- Although the notion of degrowth might look more feasible for the developed economies, such as the European Union (EU) and its launch of the European Green Deal; for India, currently, it appears an uphill task.
- Considering the economic fallouts of the COVID lockdown and the resultant migrant labour crisis, India's development trajectory is wobbling to strike a balance between ecological equity and economic growth.

### **Conclusion:**

- With the international community struggling to find its ground in dealing with the deadly virus, climate change is another long-drawn battle to wage.
- If glocalising the global components can be undertaken gradually in dealing with both climate and social emergencies, a paradigmatic shift could possibly be achieved in the sustainability narrative in the coming few years, hopefully before 2030.