

The Effects of Neoliberalism on Labour in the United States, with Some Comparative Notes on India

Michael Goldfield

In this article, I attempt to examine the impact of so-called globalization on workers and their organizations in the Economically Developed Countries (EDCs) and the Lesser Developed Countries (LDCs), with specific reference to the United States and India. It is argued that globalization is a misnomer, since what is really important is its neo-liberal character. Yet, the woes of labour in both India and the United States, while exacerbated greatly by neo-liberalism, pre-date its rise. In India, the post-colonial state played a major role in undermining the struggle of labour, while in the U.S., a statistically documented employer offensive, and the inability or unwillingness of labour organizations to challenge it, can be traced back for over half a century, leading to a continuous decline in labour strength.

Many analysts view the so-called globalization of the contemporary world economy as largely affecting the transfer of wealth to the Economically Developed Countries (EDCs) from the Less Developed Countries (LDCs). While such statements are, in certain broad terms, undoubtedly true, the results have not necessarily been kind to workers in the developed countries. Yet, the question of the exact impact of global changes on workers in both the EDCs and LDCs, is often discussed in ways that are less than precise. In this paper, I will attempt to examine some of these alleged causal links. Attention and data will mostly focus on the United States, the world's largest and richest economy (by all conventional measures). Some attention, however, will also be given to India. Despite a high economic growth rate in recent years and a ranking anywhere from 4th to 15th in rank of its economy in the world (*see*, for example, various rankings in Wikipedia), India has a higher rate of poverty than the countries in sub-Sahara Africa and is home to 1/3 of the world's poorest people. Thus, looking at these two countries together will provide some additional insights into the impact of the global economy on workers and their organizations. I begin, however, with the United States.

Labour movements in the economically developed capitalist countries are weaker today than they have been in decades. And, by a large variety of key

Michael Goldfield, Professor, Department of Political Science, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, USA. This paper has drawn considerably on Goldfield (2008).

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