

# AMELIORATING THE EFFECTS OF GLOBAL CRISIS ON HUMAN RESOURCES

**Wilfred UKPERE**

Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management  
Faculty of Management  
University of Johannesburg  
South Africa  
wilfredukpere@gmail.com

## **Abstract**

*Capitalist globalisation has produced certain negative consequences for human resources, industrial democracy and humanity in general. Globalisation is a powerful force that cannot be denied, however, conversely, it has also threatened life, in a broader sense. Globalisation was perceived by globalisers as a worldwide remedy for worldwide problems, but is viewed with great pessimism amongst proletariat (workers). In fact, current globalisation has an enormous negative impact on human resources, industrial democracy and humanity, at large. Hence, the aim of this paper is to proffer mechanisms, which can ameliorate negative impacts of globalisation on human resources, industrial democracy and humanity. It is the author's belief that if current postulates are considered, globalisation might present a different picture, which could have positive effects on human resources, industrial democracy and humanity, in general.*

**Key-words:** *globalisation, ameliorating mechanisms, human resources, industrial democracy, humanism, labour standard*

**JEL Classification:** E<sub>24</sub>

## **Introduction**

Following the end of other alternatives, capitalist globalisation has produced some calamitous consequences for human resources, industrial democracy and humanity in general. Globalisation is presently a fundamental force that cannot be denied, as it affords obvious benefits to a large number of people, however, conversely, it threatens life, in a broader sense. Society currently manifests diverse ills, and it is postulated that protracted civil disturbance and revolutions could isolate governments from their subjects (Slabbert, 2005:738). In fact, globalisation has been endorsed as a worldwide remedy for worldwide problems. However, globalisation as a worldwide remedy, is perceived from the viewpoint of globalisers, but is viewed with pessimism amongst proletariat (workers). According to Ukpere (2007:454), *Globalisation, as extreme internationalism and globalisation as capitalist globalism, have produced the worst nightmare for human resources and industrial democracy.* COSATU (1997) has stated: *In the name of globalisation and international competitiveness, there is a new ideological attack on workers' rights, trade unions, and labour standards. Increasing investments are shifted to countries where no unions are allowed.* While expressing

his resentment towards globalisation, the commander of the Zapatistas National Liberation Front of Mexico, Subcommandante Marcos (1996:1), has opined: *In the name of globalisation, a new world order has begun, but now it is against humanity, as in all world wars, what is at stake, is a new division. This new division of world class consists of increasing the power of the powerful and the misery of the miserable.* Ukpere and Slabbert (2007:356) have argued that the negative impact of globalisation on human resources overwhelm the positive aspects.

### **The bottlenecks of current globalisation**

Negative impacts of globalisation on human resources have been clearly delineated as a growing downward spiral on wages and working conditions; job destruction and losses; a race to the bottom in labour standards; effects of corporate mergers on workers; problems of unemployment; effects of flexibility and casualisation on labour; less training for workers; more expenditure on advertisements and less on workers; expanded global inequality; an increasing rate of poverty; restricted labour mobility; workers' exploitation and abuse in the EPZs; abusive labour relationships and employee killings; industrial actions and violent protests; an increase in crimes; congested jails and forced labour; child labour; footloose speculative capital; the effects of technology on workers; erosion of labour unions' powers and demotion of industrial democracy (for details see Ukpere, 2007; Ukpere and Slabbert, 2007).

Industrial democracy, also known as workers' participation in management, which was one way of introducing democratic principles and industrial humanism into the work place, seems to have been demoted in the present economic era (Uriarte, 1999; Klein, 2001). Industrial democracy, which stressed involvement of workers in the decision-making process in such a way that workers feel a sense of pride in and belonging to their organisations (Tripathi, 2001:492), is presently considered a threat to trade and profit maximisation by transnational corporations (TNCs) and globalising institutions. Workers' participation in the form of co-partnership, labour directors, work committees, collective bargaining and the power to unionise have become irrelevant to most TNCs.

As a matter of fact, certain criteria should be met before a nation or organisation can achieve industrial democracy, which include a need for labour representatives, collective bargaining mechanisms, friendly industrial atmosphere, authority and responsibility, permanent adult workers, respect for workers' democratic rights, good industrial relations, an understanding management team, good consultation avenues, idea sharing, good remuneration to workers, industrial partnerships, job security, good working conditions, management by exception (MBE), management by objective (MBO) and motivational incentives (Sharma, 2000; Bendix, 2004). Other major prerequisites are profit sharing, labour directors, joint decision-making bodies and labour shareholders (Tripathi, 2001; Kumar, 2000). However, regrettably, these enumerated ingredients of industrial democracy have been demoted owing to a weakening of labour unions by automation, flexible employment patterns, lapsed labour laws, rising unemployment, less consultation, autocratic management styles, greed for abnormal profit, use of children and

women labour, in addition to the use of forced labour (Ukpere & Slabbert, 2008:43). These multifaceted, but circular variables within the global economy could be responsible for the dwindling state of workers' quality of working life (QWL).

In fact, the major TNCs seem to have turned a blind eye to the '*Human relations approach*' and have embraced '*Technological Taylorism*', which promises to rout more havoc than previous *Taylorism*. Meanwhile, any threat of workers' actions by unions in one part of the globe is reciprocated by threats of relocation and outsourcing by most TNCs (Martin and Schumann, 1997; Klein, 2001). No wonder that since the advent of globalisation, a continuous weakened labour union, much work flexibility, an increase in the number of temporary workers, increasingly less bargaining power to workers, retrenchment and unemployment have deepened (Went, 2000; Ukpere & Slabbert, 2007). The consequence is a decrease in real wage, wealth concentration and a decline of labour wage shares in national income (Uriarte, 1999:5-6). This situation has also been exacerbated by increasing innovations in technologies.

Technological innovations within the global economy have increased the pace of outsourcing, re-engineering and retrenchments. Collectively, these trends have increased the level of global unemployment, which adversely affects current and potential workers. Moreover, technology has brought about virtual corporation (Prasad, 2004:112). The current virtual corporation promises a reduction of labour force as more and more purchases can be made electronically (Ukpere and Slabbert, 2007b:6). In addition, most corporations are presently empowered to send their data processing to any part of the world that could do the work more cheaply (Martin & Schumann, 1997; BBC News, 8 March, 2006). This is similar to the '*race to the bottom*,' which is detrimental to global workers as they under-bid themselves (Matthews, 1998; Bhagwati, 2004). Furthermore, the virtual corporation does not promote industrial democracy as it deals with invisible workers, nor does it promote unionism, which is an essential ingredient for industrial democracy. An absence of worker representatives and, indeed, industrial democracy, has laid a solid foundation for workers' exploitation (Ukpere, 2007:455). No wonder that since the era of globalisation, workers have experienced the worst exploitation in the form of depleted wages, temporary employment, increasing hours of work, particularly in the EPZs, an uncongenial working atmosphere and a poor quality of work life (Martin & Schumann, 1997; Bloch, 1998). A former belief that an employee is the most vital resource within the organisation who should be developed through education and training, have become passé because it would be unwise to train a person who would be retrenched sooner or later as market forces dictate, since profit is all that matters within a global economy, no matter how it is achieved (Klein, 2001; Ukpere & Slabbert, 2007). This current state of affairs has triggered opposition voices against the current logic. Sklair (2002:1) has observed: *However, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, in the aftermath of the battle of Seattle and many other challenges to capitalist hegemony, it is difficult to deny the centrality of the struggle between the forces for and against capitalist globalisation.*

### **Ameliorating mechanisms**

The divide between the capitalists and workers have distended owing to the exploitation of the latter. These exploitations, in varying degrees, have expanded the level of inequality in societies, and have intensified the divide between the haves and the have-nots, the poorest poor and the richest rich, as well as capitalist globalisers and the proletariat (Bataoel 2003:1; Martin and Schumann, 1997:23; Sklair, 2002:48). The current development has resulted in ill-feelings within societies as major global cities have become a centre for recurring protests and street battles, which should be a warning sign that urgent solutions are desirable, if society should be rescued from the wreckage of an atrocious economic system, otherwise a global catastrophe could be pre-ordained within a few years. Based on this concern, therefore, the present author has charted out some tangible, but not exclusive, suggestions towards building of a more inclusive and fairer globalisation that could ameliorate the plight of global workers, while promoting industrial democracy for the benefit of humanity. These suggestions are outlined below.

### **A global commitment towards the enshrinement of industrial humanism in the workplace**

There is an urgent need for a global commitment towards the enshrinement of industrial humanism in the workplace. A global industrial humanism would focus on the rights and dignity of the human person within the workplace. More than that, industrial humanism would point to the fact that just like the capitalists, workers are also human beings striving for development, growth and self-actualisation, and not machines that simply respond to external pressures. Therefore, there should be a need for a global realisation that, just like organisations, humans, including workers, have an innate inclination towards psychological growth and self fulfilment. Unlike Taylorism, industrial humanism should direct focus on the positive aspects of the conscious mental activity of human elements within the organisations.

Therefore, organisations should assist workers to become their authentic selves, have positive views about themselves and find meaning in the work they do. It should eradicate the impersonal, mechanistic life of alienation and marginalisation of workers in the workplace. In fact, employers should focus on the human person, as a whole, and give consideration to the feelings, thinking and perceptions of workers. Management should consider the impacts of their decisions on the feelings, emotions and esteem of their workers. Indeed, there is the need for management to realise that workers have the ability to take responsibility and, that, if provided with the right opportunities, such as challenging work, and participation in decision-making, through, for example, power sharing, profit sharing and labour directors, they will be effective and satisfied workers. The problems in the workplace should be solved in a humanistic way. In fact, the South African spirit of '*Ubuntu*' should be inculcated into the global workplace. In that sense, both workers and employers should cater for one another and avoid any kind of '*industrial madness*'. Under such circumstances, the role of women in society

should be respected in the workplace – maternity leave should be granted to them during pregnancy, crèches should be provided for their children after birth. In addition, their young children should be assisted to go to school, which would reduce the menace of child labour and child crimes. The commitments to observe industrial humanism could be enforced through the ILO conventions whereby member states can be requested to inculcate it into their industrial relations system.

### **Extension of the general democratic principles to the work-place on a global level**

In respect of industrial humanism, there is a need to extend the general, democratic principles to the workplace on a global level. A majority of the civilised world cannot profess democracy when authoritarian regimes of managers rule the global workplace. Democracy, which refers to a government of the people for the people and by the people, should extend to every nook and cranny of society, including the workplace. In that case, management cannot take decisions affecting the organisation and workers without a general consensus. In fact, workers should be consulted on issues affecting them. Management should no longer take decisions on outsourcing, automation, re-engineering and retrenchment, without the consent and sanction of workers. The decisions on the working conditions of workers and the organization of the working environment should be democratically structured and oriented on a global scale. In fact, countries that profess democracy should be informed that limited democracy is not a democracy at all. Real democracy implies the recognition of the fundamental rights of the human person, including the right to gainful employment or work. Therefore, the USA as a nation, spreading democracy around the globe, should also be called upon, as an example, by inculcating democratic values into its workplaces, as increasing job losses, unemployment, inequality and insecurity are, indeed, threats to democracy and true democratic spirit.

### **A global commitment to adhere to core ILO labour standards**

In addition to the extension of democracy, there is a need for a global commitment to adhere to some important ILO labour standards, such as those core labour standards that are contained in ILO Conventions No. 87 and 98, which revolve around the freedom of association and collective bargaining, freedom from forced labour, non-discrimination and the abolition of child labour. The need to adhere to these standards is morally justified on the grounds that they are basic human rights. This does not suggest that other labour standards, such as minimum wages, employment guarantee and health and safety measures, are not equally important, however, the implementation of core standards helps to fulfil other standards. For example, freedom of association would help to produce an effective union that can bargain properly on behalf of its members with regard to issues concerning wages and working conditions. Collective bargaining would assist workers' representatives to put down on paper issues regarding employment contracts, including the tenure of employees and health measures in place in the

workplace. Freedom from forced labour addresses issues of slave and bonded labour. Therefore, granting slaves and bonded labourer their freedom in recognition of their human rights is also important. Freedom from discrimination will ensure that nobody is discriminated against owing to his/her gender, colour, race, religion, culture, taste or belief within the workplace, because they are fundamental human rights, which harmonises with the general spirit of humanism. Abolition of child labour will promise hope for future generations as more children will return to school. In fact, the maintenance of labour standards would assist to reduce industrial disharmony by providing an institutionalised way of minimizing disruption, improving co-operation between employers and employees and, thereby, create a favourable atmosphere for investment, which would generate employment and greater growth in the economy.

It was argued by some southern countries that adherence to some of the core labour standards would reduce their '*comparative advantages*' over the advanced nations in terms of labour supply, productivity and export. However, the present author does not sympathise with this argument. Human rights cannot be sacrificed for productivity and export and should be respected at all times. Moreover, it is important to remark here that most exports from south to north are produced by a small number of NICs, while the vast majority of developing countries export only a meagre of the total. Hence, the implementation of core labour standards will not broadly affect developing countries' comparative advantage in production and trade. Nevertheless, there is a need for expansion in a number of core Conventions, which would make them inclusive and relevant to the needs of the global working population.

#### **A global agenda to improve the quality of work life for workers**

Attuned with a commitment to adhere to some core labour standards, should be a global agenda to improve the quality of work life (QWL) for workers. The study has shown that, since the advent of globalisation, there has been a downward spiral on the QWL of global workers, particularly in the EPZs. Most of the jobs in those zones have reflected abusive working relationships, casualisation of employment, poor working conditions, depleted wages, long working hours and less worker participation in decisions. There are also signs that these poor working practices have also crept into the advanced countries, as there is a tendency to sacrifice civilisation for competition. Hence, in order to address this issue, the need for government monitoring of the QWL of workers on a global scale, is, indeed, necessary. The significant predictors of QWL, that governments should consider in their monitoring, should include the degree to which management treat employees with respect and display confidence in their abilities; variety in daily work routine; amount of challenge in work; the degree to which present work leads to good future work opportunity; self esteem; extent to which life outside work affects life at work; and the extent to which work contributes to society. In addition, opportunities should be provided for employees' psychological and material growth. Their jobs should be enriched to make the jobs more pleasurable through

job rotation and multi-skilling, which would meet with the changing circumstances in a dynamic world.

### **Adoption of the human relations approach of management in the global workplace**

In agreement with good QWL, there is a necessity to adopt the human relations approach of management in the global workplace. Every organisation should have an industrial psychologist to assist workers with their emotional problems. This measure is in full recognition of the fact that workers are human beings with emotions, have blood flowing in them, and have feelings. The presence of a psychologist alone can give workers some level of job satisfaction, as long as they can see someone in a professional capacity to speak to when they feel that they are weighed down. Apart from a psychologist, the workplace should be properly laid-out with good ventilation and lighting, which implies that the presence of a good operation or project engineer is required in the workplace. More than that, there is a need for global managers to permit the existence of informal groups in the organisation, as this could motivate workers more than the former structures because group influences are contagious. Moreover, managers should try, as much as possible, to be concerned, friendly and attentive towards workers. This attitude positively affects productivity and boosts further investment, which keeps everyone happy. Also, workers should be communicated with about the rationality of any decisions taken by management in due course. In fact, the participation of workers, in most decisions, will reduce further questioning. Any conflict or dispute should be resolved through dialogue, which would promote industrial harmony. The rationale of adopting human relations in the workplace is that it would integrate all partners in the workplace so that they are motivated to work together productively, co-operatively and with economic, psychological and social satisfaction. The end-game of this measure would be productivity increase, expanded investments and a reduction in the level of unemployment.

### **Utilisation of industrial democracy as a motivational imperative in the workplace**

In addition to the other suggestions, global organisations should endeavour to give room to industrial democracy in the workplace. Industrial democracy can only thrive in the presence of effective unionism and collective bargaining. Unions can help to tackle those external and internal issues concerning workers. Moreover, workers should be given a voice in day-to-day decisions, which affect them in the workplace because association of workers with management provides them with a sense of importance and involvement and self-expression, while they would consider themselves as an indispensable constituent of the organisation. This would help to create a feeling of belonging and motivate them to give all to the organisation. More than that, workers should be freed to have additional-say in planning their personal career paths, and in the way their work is performed. This measure would help to give them a sense of ownership in their jobs and helps them tackle the problems arising from job performance. There is a need to empower

workers through industrial democracy so that instead of running away from responsibility, they will begin to contribute to organisational growth. Indeed, workers need empowerment because empowerment gives workers a feeling of control over their future, and this has important implications for their feelings of self-worth, motivation, mental health and participation in the organisation. Thus, having a sense of control of their future, particularly their work destiny, is important for their psychological state and level of motivation. This would lead to greater productivity, investment and growth. Therefore, it is important that global managers take into consideration this often ignored motivational imperative, namely industrial democracy when dealing with global workers.

#### **A global government policy and commitment towards job creation and security**

Still on the list is a global government policy and commitment towards job creation and security. In other words, there should be a government policy which creates decent and permanent jobs. Therefore, any policy that is contrary to this objective should be discouraged or curtailed. The implication of this is that those business practices of casualisation and flexibilisation of employment relations without security and benefits should be properly documented, monitored and, as much as possible, be minimised. The goal of the government and private sectors should be focussed on an expansion of employment opportunities. Instead of full privatisation, the government should enter into a joint venture with the private sector. This will ensure that more jobs are not destroyed. Moreover, instead of selling government enterprises to rich politicians and philanthropists that have embezzled the nation, workers can be requested to purchase the business, which will be sold. This will give higher responsibility to workers and they will endeavour to turn the inefficient business into an efficient one without the discharge of many workers. In fact, this is one way of job creation, retention and security. Moreover, instead of retrenching workers, the government should create jobs for them by encouraging and supporting them to venture into small-scale industries and cooperative societies. Thus, if the removal of state monopolies on communication and energy, as well as the opening up of previously protected sectors of the market, has a devastating effect on the labour market, then any call for liberalisation and openness should be suspended until there is a substantial reduction in unemployment.

#### **Regulation of technologies that destroy job faster**

In line with government policy to create lasting employment, there should be some kind of regulation of technologies that destroy jobs faster and bring misery to workers. The rationale for technology creation and promotion should be to serve human interests. As such, technologies, which dehumanise human beings and render them obsolete, should not be promoted. Technologies should be created to enhance the working person's potentialities. It should be created to serve humans and not otherwise, because it is greatly unjust for the creator to serve the created. One possible way to regulate some of these technologies should be through higher



taxation on energies and resources that are used for the manufacturing of these technologies, so that the cost and prices of technologies can push up. Under such circumstances, human labour would be more highly valued, and energy-intensive automation would be less profitable. Moreover, governments of the world should try to regulate other activities, which technology has promoted to the detriment of workers. Activities such as outsourcing, re-engineering and retrenchment, which are all by-products of the technological revolution, should be regulated so that workers are not adversely affected. More than that, before the introduction of technology into the workplace, management should see to it that there is already a place in the organisation to accommodate workers who are displaced by technology in a higher position. In addition to that, men like Bill Gates, who has benefited immensely from technology production and promotion, should also be called upon to contribute, in a philanthropic way, in assisting to ameliorate the plight of workers who are so adversely affected by what they have created and promoted. It could also be part of the general social responsibility of business to workers as community members.

### **Complementary and comprehensive ideological order**

The regulation of technologies, commitment to create jobs and adoption of core labour standards would be futile in the absence of a complementary and comprehensive ideological order. Socialism has failed and capitalism is in the process of failing. Therefore, the only hope left to resurrect socialism and resuscitate capitalism is a complementary and comprehensive ideological order. In that sense, capitalism should be ready to marry socialism, and socialism should be ready to work with capitalism. In fact, there is a need to complement the positive aspects of both ideologies. This is not to postulate the mixed economic system of the 1960s and 1970s because, even then, there was a competitive, but not complementary, relationship between both ideologies. Thus, the difference between the previous ideological set-up and the current one, which the present author is referring to, is that, instead of competitive ideological orders, there should be a complementary and comprehensive one.

In a nutshell, there could be other, better global alternatives to the current single capitalist triumphant orthodoxy. This particular view is reinforced by the recurring protests and confrontations around the world. The first large public protest against the current logic came in Seattle November 1999, at the WTO Ministerial Conference. This was followed by street protests in Bangkok, in February (during the UNCTAD conference), in Washington, in April (during the World Bank-IMF Spring meeting), and in Melbourne (during the Asian Summit of the World Economic Forum), in Prague (during the World Bank-IMF annual meeting) and in Cancun, at Doha, to name a few. These popular protests across the world are basic reflections of the majority's yearning for an alternative ideological-cum-global-order. Hence, as opposed to Francis Fukuyamas' assertion, history has not actually ended and there are many symptoms that capitalism may not after all, be the '*last man standing*'. There could still be the possibility of a complementary relationship between capitalism and socialism (effective state), so that a higher

human, social and economic order is realised (Ukpere & Slabbert, 2008b: 421). This is actually what Slabbert (1996:49) meant by '*capisocism*'.

### **The power of the state should increase**

In fact, the suggestions mentioned above cannot be realised in the absence of an effective state, which would be strong enough to regulate and coordinate the activities of the economy and nation. No matter how small a state is, it should be in-charge of all policies within its territorial boundaries. There should be no excuse that the state could not act because of the enormous powers of the TNCs. In fact, the powers of the TNCs should be made smaller in comparison to the state as the custodian of society. More than that, the state should be free to carry its daily functions and should not be stampeded into rash decisions by the influences of big private business. It also shows that the public's interest should not be sacrificed for self interest. An effective state alone can make policies that are favourable to the majority of the populace. The state should be a powerful participator in the labour relations system of the country. Hence, the state cannot be a passive onlooker of industrial disharmony, because humans, in search of peace and progress, have surrendered their sovereign identity to the state. The state is, indeed, a fine product of human civilisation. It is the authoritative supreme power – the actual sovereign, which has to formulate and execute the will of the people. In this regard, there is a need for a '*developmental state*' – a state, which is democratic and interventionist in nature, with the capability of regulating the operations of the market forces. In other words, the state should not be a passive onlooker of the propagandist slogans of capitalist triumphalism, but should play a catalytic, facilitating role, encouraging and complementing the activities of private businesses and individuals. This would be the best remedy towards a sustainable human, social and economic development in the current post Cold War era, particularly in developing nations (Ukpere & Slabbert, 2008).

### **Debt cancellation and more developmental aids to the poor nations of the world**

There is a need for a global agreement to cancel the debts of poor nations. The efforts of jubilee 2000 towards this direction is quite commendable, however, additional efforts should be made to ensure that all debts owed by poor nations to the advanced nations, are stroked off once and for all. Debt payment and servicing has kept most of these Third World nations backward from venturing into developmental projects that could enhance the living standards of their people. More than that, debt payment and servicing have disabled most poor nations' governments from providing social services, including decent jobs for their people. In fact, it should be remembered that most of these so-called debts arose from the advanced countries' irresponsible lending to Third World dictators who have used this money for self-aggrandisement, and the arduous debts inherited from the colonial masters.

Therefore, it is unreasonable that the poor people in these countries should face the brunt of these irresponsible lending and mounting debts that refuses to

finish or stop. Thus, it is high time that the world is free and cleansed from debt and debt crises. Indeed, if globalisation means a new economic world order, it would then be reasonable that everyone or nations should be freed to start anew. This would minimise the already unevenness in globalisation. Furthermore, not only should debt be cancelled, but the developed countries should assist the developing countries with trade and developmental aids. This would boost investment and employment in the developing countries, making it difficult for the TNCs to hover around poor nations looking for the next cheap shore to exploit. In fact, it is high time to realise that most of the jobs created by the TNCs in the poor nations are merely artificial jobs that could evaporate at any moment. Therefore, the best job should be those that are created by the people, for the people and of the people. However, these dreams could only be realised if the debt of poor countries are cancelled, in addition to a balance in trade and developmental assistance.

#### **A global commitment to alleviate and eradicate poverty**

In congruence with debt cancellation, there should be a global commitment to alleviate and eradicate poverty. Jeffrey Sachs, in his book, *The End of Poverty* (2005), has already reminded the world that it is possible to eradicate poverty. Therefore, every hand should be on deck to ensure that this vision is realised. Poverty cannot be eradicated if millions within the global populace are without a decent job. Poverty cannot be eradicated if a majority of the world's workers earn less than the \$1 per day poverty line. In that case, the solution to alleviate poverty lies in the creation of decent jobs, in addition to good remuneration. Hence, instead of depleting the wages of workers as has been witnessed in the global economy, there should be conscientious efforts to improve the amounts that are paid to workers for their inputs in production. More than that, there is a great need to supply the poorest nations in Sub-Saharan Africa, with high variety yield seeds and fertilisers to cultivate enough food for their hungry population because a hungry person is a listless and angry person, who does not have interest in growth and development, except that their immediate problem (hunger) is solved. In fact, wars in Chad, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan could probably be attributed to hunger. Thus, hunger and poverty are positively correlated. Poverty alleviation should include sending of more children to school, and empowering small scale businesses in the rural areas. This will reduce the number of workers rushing to the cities to create the worst nightmare of city slums, as witnessed in most global centres.

#### **A progressive taxation system on a global level**

The objective of poverty alleviation can only be achieved if a progressive taxation system is instituted around the globe. Even world Monarchs and Presidents need not be excluded from progressive taxation. The rich should be taxed according to their wealth. It is blatantly unfair for the rich to be displaying their wealth and flamboyant lives on televisions to the intimidation and misery of the poor without paying or showing for it. Progressive taxation simply means that the rich should give back more than the poor to the society where they have made

their fortune and are still amassing wealth in addition to their riches. The proceeds of taxation can be used to create employment in the economy, thereby reducing the scourge of poverty and the menace of criminalities. For example, if Bill Gates and others, who are as rich as or richer than him, are properly taxed, the proceeds from such taxation could solve the problem of hunger in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. Progressive taxation does not only apply to individuals. In fact, most of the TNCs in the Third World enjoying tax heavens should be properly taxed for the poor nations to attend to the developmental requirements of their people. Tax holidays, environmental concessions and permission to TNCs to plunder the economy and workers of the Third World are a great injustice to the people. Thus, there is need for attitudinal change in Third World governments, and TNCs should pay accordingly for all resources extracted or used in the poor countries. Moreover, all monies moving across the globe, for speculative activities, should be heavily taxed. In fact, Tobin Tax initiatives will not be sufficient alone to address this issue. In short, fund movement that does not create value for the indigenous of the destination country should, as much as possible, be restricted. There should be a certification that at least 50% of the funds moved across the globe generates employment.

### **Discouragement of cut-throat global competition**

Additionally, there is a great need for the global government to discourage unhealthy or cut-throat global competition that has taken place since the advent of globalisation. In fact, competition is good as long as it brings general development to a wider section of the masses. Competition is good if additional value is given to a product due to it. However, if competition leads to the economic exclusion of a greater number of people in the community, as witnessed since the era of globalisation, then that competition becomes cut-throat, unhealthy, counterproductive and should as much as possible, be discouraged. Competitions should direct towards the positive impact it creates for the society. For example, organisations could be made to compete on the number of jobs they create in the society, and not on the number of jobs they were able to destroy in order to earn a profit. In this regard, a report card could be kept by the world governments and awards could be given to organisations, which were able to enhance the wellbeing of a community by creating additional jobs or adding value to products or services. This would go a long way to promoting goodwill and, of course, profitability of organisations that have done better. In fact, global corporate managers should be made to understand that job destruction does not enhance competitiveness. They should realise that they can still enhance their profitability without killing jobs. As far as the present author is concerned, competition in the global village has turned to a trade war between global corporations, which has also trickled down as a war between organisations and their workers. Thus, as corporations fight external wars with other corporations, they also come back to fight an internal war with their organisational members through retrenchment. This is, in fact, unethical, unhealthy and unwarranted. Therefore, any competition that tore organisations and nations

apart should be discouraged as much as possible. In short, competition should be directed towards positive ends.

### **More democratic decision-making international bodies**

Furthermore, there is a need for more democratic decision-making international bodies. Indeed, multi-lateral organisations should have multi-lateral decision-making bodies. Decision making in the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank should incorporate the views and aspirations of all member states. No longer should any nation be given special treatment in organisations that represent the world family. There is an urgent need to encourage the participation of more Third World nations in most of these international bodies. America and Britain should learn not to take unilateral actions on behalf of organisations that are purported to represent the world family. The decisions to enforce any resolution should be sanctioned by the majority of the member states. The activities of American corporate lobbyists in most of these organisations should be documented and, as much as possible, discouraged. Few corporations should not be allowed to determine the fate of 6 billion people through their influence within the international bodies. They should be told the truth no matter how bitter it may sound. The focus of the international organisations should be to create a better and equal world of opportunity for all. This measure would create a kind of balance equation in the global economy.

### **A global affirmative action**

Almost in close relation to equal world of opportunity and poverty eradication, there should be a need for a global affirmative action. Economic empowerment and affirmative action should not only be utilised in South Africa to redress the legacy of apartheid, but should be extended around the globe to address issues that have kept some members of the global communities backward. Needless to mention here that apartheid is not only a South African phenomenon – it is, indeed, everywhere. The segregation between the rich and the poor in societies around the world is, in fact, apartheid of the highest order. The retrenchment of large numbers of workers from civil services and corporations around the world, at the dawn of globalisation, is worse than apartheid. Apartheid is racism, and the world cannot deny the fact that the level of racism is high across the globe.

Today, as Mugabe continues to unleash intolerable conditions for workers and citizens in Zimbabwe, someone should at least remind him that his actions are reminiscent of apartheid of the highest level. Apartheid need not be distinguished by the colour of the skin or by race. It should be told that the oppression of a black man by another black man is apartheid at the highest level. A situation where few groups have been in power since the independence of that nation, as witnessed in most African countries, and amassing wealth for even their families who have yet to be born. They should learn more about the meaning of apartheid in the true sense of it. In America, Europe, Africa and Asia, the gap between the rich and the poor has by far distended. All these issues should be attended through a global affirmative action whereby the cases of previously oppressed people should be

attended to first, before any other case. This will also address the issues of unemployment, poverty and insecurity.

#### **A global solidarity of workers**

In mutuality with affirmative action, there is a need for a global solidarity of workers. This calls for unity amongst labour unions and workers around the world. Workers in the north should be empathetic to the plights of their counterparts in the south, and vice versa. Indeed, the call by Karl Marx, more than 100 years ago, for an international solidarity of workers sounds louder here today. The weakness of workers' solidarity is the reason why company workforces, in different countries, can be played off against each other by TNCs. Therefore, if worker representatives should end their myopic ways of reasoning, the efficiently organised corporate lobbies would lose their superiority in the international bodies. The great failing of workers around the world has been their neglect to build a united, powerful international front that could counteract the activities of international business. In fact, the more the extension of material inequality threatens social cohesion in societies around the world, the more necessary it becomes for workers all over the world to defend themselves with regard to their fundamental human rights, and to intensify international social solidarity. This measure will provide scope for the opposition of the free market radicalism that has excluded the majority of the economically weak global workers. Hence, global cooperation and networking between workers in different parts of the world could give much greater reach to the promise made to billions of people at the advent of globalisation. Indeed, every hand should be on deck to shape a better destiny for humanity.

#### **A more humane approach to global issues**

Finally, but not in the least, is the need for a more humane approach to global issues. This very suggestion covers all other suggestions. There is a need for everyone to realise that every human being emerged from one source, and will return to that very source. The difference between people of colour is merely a result of biological incident. Otherwise, human beings are from the same source, created according to religious books in the image and likeness of God. That being the case, it is imperative that humans approach one another in a humane way. In that regard, corporations should always reconsider if their decision to retrench lots of workers when the company is still making profits has been done from a humane angle. Also, every person should consider if his action has been done from a humane perspective. Employers should consider if wages paid to workers are sufficient to carry them and their families. The very rich should reconsider if their wealth is worth the billions that are suffering of hunger. Humane approaches to doing things would take away irrationality. If America and Britain had adopted a humane approach, they would not have gone to war with Iraq for the sake of one man. Consider the wastage of human resources through the lives that have been lost in that war, from both sides. In fact, as far as the present author is concerned, that is the highest level of barbarism. The modern world cannot claim to be

civilised when a majority of the people are still exhibiting barbaric tendencies. If humans could adopt humane approaches to solving problems, it is the belief of the author that even terrorism will diminish and die a natural death. Humane approaches call for rationality, consensus and understanding. It also encourages cooperation and mutual sentiment. It radiates the message that everyone should be his brother's keeper. In that case, people cannot be throwing away food in the advanced countries when their brothers and sisters in Africa are dying of kwashiorkor (a medical condition caused by hunger). Humane approaches will make world leaders empathic to the plight of the poorest of the poor. Mother Theresa showed the world an example in this direction and there is a need for more people to emulate her. It takes charity, mercy and love to undertake this mission.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, capitalist globalisation has produced some disastrous consequences for human resources, industrial democracy and humanity, at large. There is indeed a negative relationship between globalisation, human resources and industrial democracy. Certainly, there may be other suggestions by various authors towards creating a better globalisation. However, if the suggestions postulated above are taken into consideration, globalisation might present a different picture, which could have a positive effect for human resources, industrial democracy and humanity, in general.

### **REFERENCES**

- Bataoel, L. 2003. *Globalisation: Myth or a Reality?* [Online] Available: <http://nuntia.cs.depaul.edu/globalization/bataoel.htm>.
- BBC News, 8 March, 2006. *Annan Outline Radical UN reforms*. [Online]. Available: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4784494.stm> [10 October 2006].
- Bendix, S. 2005. *Industrial Relations in South Africa*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Bhagwati, J. 2004. *Anti-globalisation: Why?* "Journal of Policy Modeling", 26: 439-463.
- Bloch, B. 1998. *Globalisation's Assault on the Labour Market: A German Perspective*. "European Business Review", 98(1) 13-24.
- COSATU 6<sup>th</sup> Congress Resolutions, September 1997.
- Klein, N. 2001. *No Logo: No Space, No Choice, No Job*. London: Flamingo.
- Kumar, P. 2000. *Personnel Management and Industrial Relations*. Meerut: Kedar Nath Ram Nath.
- Martin, H-P. & Schumann, H. 1997. *The Global Trap: Globalization and the Assault on Prosperity and Democracy*. Pretoria: HSRC.
- Matthews, R. 1998. *The Myth of Global Competition and the Nature of Work*. "Journal of Organisational Change Management", 11(5): 378-398.
- National Liberation Front (Mexico). 1996. *Statement by Subcommandante Marcos, Commander of the Zapatistas*.
- Prasad, L.M. 2004. *Principles and Practices of Management*. New Delhi: Sultan Chand.

- Sachs, J. D. 2005. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time (Forward by Bono)*. New York: Penguin.
- Sharma, R. 2000. *Human Resources Management*. Agra: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal.
- Sklair, L. 2002. *Globalisation: Capitalism and Its Alternatives*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Slabbert, A. 2005. *The Hypothetical (assumed?) Relationship between Power and Economic Suppression (Econocide)*. "Pakistani Journal of Social Sciences", 3 (5): 733-740.
- Tripathi, P.C. 2001. *Personnel Management and Industrial Relations*. New Delhi: Sultan Chand.
- Ukpere, W.I. 2007. *The Functional Relationship between Globalisation, Internationalisation, Human Resources and Industrial Democracy*. Cape Town: Cape Peninsula University of Technology (PhD. Thesis).
- Ukpere W.I. & Slabbert A.D. 2007. *The Correlation between Globalisation and Human Resources*. "The Asian Economic Review", 49(3):347-358.
- Ukpere, W.I & Slabbert, A.D. 2007b. *Is Socialism Actually Dead and Buried?*. "World Journal of Organisational Dynamics", 1(1) 3-7.
- Ukpere, W.I. & Slabbert, A.D. 2008. *Division of Labour as Exploitative Mechanism of Workers*. "Journal of Business and Management Dynamics", 1(1): 40-44.
- Ukpere, W.I. & Slabbert A.D. 2008b. *Triumphant Capitalism and the Future of Human, Social and Economic Progress in the Post Cold War Era*. "International Journal of Social Economics", 35(6):417-422.
- Uriarte, O.E. 1999. *Globalisation and Labour Relations*. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/publ/sasa/ermida/global.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/publ/sasa/ermida/globaliz/global.pdf) [19 December 2003].
- Went, R. 2000. *Globalisation Neoliberal Challenge, Radical Response*. London: Pluto Press.