

## EFFECT OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN IN RECENT INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

In India, there have been major changes since 1991 in implementing policies leading to reduction in the industrial licensing and opening up of the economy. The major thrust of the liberalization process has been wide-ranging trade reforms and restructuring labor market with a gradual elimination of restrictions on trade. Economic aspects of globalization bring new opportunities and resources to women. But equally important, globalization promotes the diffusion of ideas and norms of equality for women. However, it is also to a large extent true that, through a globalization, women have gained certain opportunities in terms of widening field of job options and also in terms of recognizing women's rights as a part of the human rights. In this paper, I focus on some of the ways in which, directly or indirectly, globalization impacts the everyday lives of women in India.

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the world is becoming more and more integrated due to Globalization. In 1991, the pace of globalization has created a tremendous impact on the lives of women. It has affected culture, society, environment, education, business and trade, health and so on. It is an attempt through this paper to give an overview of the impact of Globalization on women in India.

## GLOBALIZATION

According to A. Giddens, Globalization refers to the fact that we all increasingly live in one world, so that individuals, groups and nations become ever more interdependent. Globalization can be defined as "a complex economic, political,

cultural, and geographic process in which the mobility of capital, organizations, ideas, discourses, and peoples has taken a global or transnational form (Moghadam 1999). Merriam Webster's definition of Globalization is that it is "the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and with the emergence of bilateral free trade and investment agreements and for more and more foreign direct investment, all in the name of economic growth and development."

## GLOBALIZATION AND WOMAN

Globalization is reshaping how we have traditionally gone about studying the society and culture. The SAP policies is changing women's roles, impacting their status in our society. With their changing role Indian women face a number of challenges everyday as workers, care givers, food providers, and healthcare seekers and so on. The country like India, where economic, social and gender inequalities

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persist historically, and where trade policies are not “gender neutral”, the impact of trade policy on women must be paid serious attention to.

“Globalization is a gendered phenomenon” (Hawkesworth, 2006:2). This means that globalization affects men and women differently and that the socio-economic changes it brought about also affects the power relations.

Globalization is a double edged process as far as women are concerned. On the one hand, majority of women in India and other developing countries find themselves stripped off of the benefit of social security, government subsidy, protection of labour rights and then safety nets. On the other hand there are possibilities of better education facilities and opportunities at the transnational sense which are very attractive to the privileged few. It is however necessary to understand that effective development requires full integration of women in the development process as agents of change as well as beneficiaries because Indian women can be utilized as development resources in many ways. Unfortunately, for economists, women’s work remains invisible, especially in the agriculture sector.

Likewise discourses on land reforms do not talk of women at all. Despite being actively involved in producing food, a very high percentage of women remain anemic. Have we ever pondered as to why the same kitchen produces malnourished women and healthy men?

#### PROBLEMS FACED BY INDIAN WOMEN

Globalization and economic liberalization have often destroyed indigenous subsistence economies and displaced indigenous rural peoples from their own

land. Here the women have lost their livelihoods due to the impact of globalization. Now the countries whole economy is governed by world economy. The traditional role of women in agriculture, livestock and animal husbandry, and village industries including handicrafts, handlooms, fisheries, etc, is being undermined because mechanization and automation is becoming prevalent in the market based economy which will adversely affect the village based traditional economy. From this critical point of view, economic globalization has largely negative consequences for women and their livelihood.

New jobs and occupations confines them to low pay, low status, often part-time jobs that reinforce their subordination and perpetuate the de-valorization of women’s work in most societies (Enloe 1990). The vulnerability to poverty of women is strongly linked to their pattern of employment and to their disadvantaged position in the labor market. The previous situation was that women were working as a supportive hand in their own agricultural land and seed preservation. Now the agricultural sector is converted into a nonprofit sector due to economic policies, minimum subsidy, and high price of chemical fertilizer of TNCs and so on. Apart from this sector women are unskilled labourers. So that women are concentrated to those jobs which bring low earnings, irregular and insecure and are beyond social protection laws. In the current wave of globalization, the serious social problem is ‘feminization of poverty’.

It means women are thought to be more vulnerable to poverty because of the existence of multiple layers of gender discrimination and inequality, resulting in a higher incidence and more severe

experience of poverty among women than men. Frequently cited estimates suggest that as much as 70% of the world's poor are female.

Research has also shown that poverty is greatest among in rural women, with a 50% increase in rural women's poverty from the period 1970 to 2000, compared to a 30% increase for males over this same period. Both the Inequality and poverty contribute to the apparent increase in the international trafficking in women for prostitution and trafficking in both women and men for other kinds of labor (NIKK 2002).

Global changes also affect personal gender relations and identities. For some women, increased -opportunity for paid employment may mean greater autonomy and equality in personal life, or avenues out of oppressive relationships. For others, these changes lead to less security, greater difficulties in taking care of themselves and their families, and, perhaps, the necessity to remain in unsupportive or violent relationships with spouse and other male member in the family. Women's reproductive and domestic responsibilities are generally perceived to be their primary function, which limits the women's access to education, training, land and productive assets, restricts women's time and mobility for productive work and limits their choice of income-earning activities.

The critical issues of gender deprivation and discrimination revolve around the question of unequal wages, lack of maternity benefit, discrimination at work place, lack of childcare facilities. (Sarkar, 2007). As Gosh (1999) has rightly observed "...structural adjustments in the labour market and massive layoffs (retrenchments) have the key to actualization of workforce where women are disproportionately

targeted and victimized". In India, for example, the laws of free trade of a number of commodities have threatened many industries like handloom, weaving, dairying, home based food production unit and even dry land farming (for the coarse grains) which provide source of sustenance to millions of women, due to extinction of employment opportunities, if not erosion of the same(Jain, 2000). Privatization and reduction of public services is reducing regular employment opportunities for women. Because it has increased the number of low paid, part-time and exploitative jobs.

Sometimes Occupational sex segregation will be a stark reality in the open economy. This will tend to result in worse working condition, lower pay and inferior career opportunities. The situation is more critical when trade liberalization allows MNCS to enter into food processing and other feminized industries which lead to reduction in low skilled women labour. As a result of that, the economy will marginalize majority of women due to reduction of employment opportunities, reduction of wages, casualisation of jobs and women workers, exclusion from the modernized production process due to lack of education and training. It also leads to increased exploitation in market for females as they are vulnerable to market conditions, in informal sector.

Another factor is when male member migrates from rural to urban sectors; the women have to bear the triple burden of caring, farming and paid employment in the rural sector. And when migration of women happens especially for economic reasons they face criminal activities like sexual violence, rape, child abuse, wage exploitation and trafficking in women at the local, regional and global levels.

## POSITIVE EFFECT ON WOMEN

On the positive side, globalization has contributed to bring changes in the status of women who have been able to avail of the opportunities. For example, Globalization has opened up broader communication lines and brought more companies as well as different worldwide organizations into India. Greater opportunity of higher and quality education have become feasible for those women who can afford them. Several employments in the field of science and technology and other information service sectors have opened up for suitably qualified women.

This opportunity for not only for workingmen, but also women, who are becoming a larger part of the workforce. This increase in the number of women in paid employment is referred to as the feminization of the labour force. It simply means that, by and large, the proportion of female workers has increased in different sectors of the economy, beyond household-based production.

With the help of new jobs for women, here are hopes of opportunities for higher pay, which raises self-confidence and brings independence. This situation can promote to some extent of equality between the sexes. In this limelight, attitudinal changes towards women's role in the family due to good education, benefits of family planning and health care, child care, good job opportunities etc. will surely help in the development of more confident and healthy women. Globalization has the power to uproot the traditional patriarchy views towards women. So that, they can take an equal stance in society as well as their roles and responsibilities. And it has also positively affected the overall reproductive health are situation in our country.

More and more medical innovations are coming which are improving the health situation in India. The infant mortality rate and the malnutrition rate have significantly come down since the last decade. Sometimes it has given women a stronger voice regarding the choice of marriage and can choose the right time to take part in reproduction. People are more accepting women's rights. In this era, women are more vocal about their needs and rights. There has been a noticeable change in what women can do and what their opportunities are. That has been possible by several NGOs who are fully committed to give the women their due rights.

The government has also done more advertising (TV and radio commercials) portraying women in development process and programmes in the entire tier and to create a leadership roles. The women in rural settings have been influenced by globalization through a media and through a numerous intervention programs of non-profit organizations- that are constantly investing in women's issues in bigger way. These NGOs are creating awareness, advocacy and proposing ways of change. For this intervention, women are increasingly empowered and stronger than before. However, it is obvious that, this change is not universal and does not happen in any particular pattern in throughout the country.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, feminists argue that globalization reinforces or reshapes gender relations, institutions, and inequalities. As men travel to urban centers in search of paid work these women often become household heads and primary wage earners, and their new access to jobs and money gives them more leverage in family decision-making, reshaping gender

relations as the institution of the family changes (Pyle and Ward 2003). Globalization thus constructs gender differentially in women's and men's access to and control of resources, values, identities and choices as it (re)constitutes gender relations. The effects of SAPs fall heavily on women, who have to try to maintain their families' standards of living despite decreased government expenditures on housing, health, education, and food and fuel subsidies. Women take on added household responsibilities and seek additional income-earning activities in the informal sector. Therefore, women absorb the cost of a shrinking welfare state through increased workload, stress, and work-related health hazards. They are the "shock absorbers" of IMF and WB policies

in terms of both their paid and unpaid labour (Denis 2003; Lindio-McGovern 2003; Oririm 2003). Therefore it has "reduced the ability of women... [in developing nations... to find Paid work that offers security and dignity]" (Desai 2002). Instead of all of these, Globalization brings economic growth and development and faster economic opportunity, but may also force women into the informal economy, augment the double burden, perpetuate a gendered division of labour, make women more vulnerable or allow MNCs to exploit women workers to maximize profits. It is high time; Economists and policy makers who implement these adjustments policies need to create considerable changes in context of women's lives.

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