



IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The world is becoming more and more integrated. What started with greater trade openness is translating into growing global economic integration and interdependence, as transnational movement of people and capital accelerate and information become even more accessible. Technological developments are rapidly changing the way people learn, work and communicate. Globalization advocates premise their arguments for increasing external liberalization on the beneficial outcomes in terms of economic growth, employment and human welfare. Over the times, women in India have faced many problems. They do not enjoy equal status and their condition is far from satisfactory. There is need to evaluate the impact of globalization on gender equality in India and also to know the positive & negative impacts of it on the position of women in India at present. It not only impacted countries, nations but also impacted each and every creature; human being is also one of them. The largest impact has been on the women and focus of my paper will be on women & globalization.

Key Words: Globalization, Women, Impact, gender equality, Technology

INTRODUCTION

Globalization is a colorful and ambiguous term. The globalization is an invention of American business schools. It suggests that only those companies preparing themselves in good time and without any reservations will be able to survive. Accordingly, the sole ones having a chance of survival are those who become global players, expanding their activities on a global scale, instead of restricting themselves to safeguarding local assets. Globalization does not only refer to the economic dimension, but also to communication technologies, ecology, organization of work, culture and the civil society. Globalization can be defined as “a complex, economic, political, cultural and geographical process in which the mobility of capital, organizations, ideas, discourses and people has taken a global or transactional form transnational corporations are using the profit motive to guide their factories towards developing nations in search of “cheap” female labor. Globalization is the process of growing, developing and expanding the business, services and technologies throughout the world. Globalization enthusiasts argue, will translate into higher rates of economic growth and improvements in people’s standard of living. Globalization is increasing substantially and is creating new opportunities for especially developing countries, which are now able to attract foreign investors and foreign capital.

WOMEN & GLOBALISATION

The current wave of globalization has greatly improved the lives of women worldwide, particularly the lives of those women in the developing world. Nevertheless, women remain disadvantaged in many areas of life including education, employment, health and civil rights. In particular care for women during maternity is still lacking in many parts of the world. Approximately 529000 women die annually during pregnancy and childbirth (Gender statistics 2010). Countries with the lowest maternal mortality rate (deaths per 100000 live births) includes Estonia (2), Singapore (3) and Greece (3) while the highest mortality rates can be found in Chad (1100), Somalia (1000) and sierra Leone (890) (CIA world fact book). To help remedy worldwide gender disparities, the UN’s millennium development goals prioritize gender equality and empowerment of women. Politicians and scientists stress the opportunities of an international division of labor in order to increase the prosperity of nations and of individuals (Lafontaine 1997). Are, however opportunities distributed equally along gender lines?

In the industrialized countries, the process of globalization bears a different impact on women than on women. Nevertheless, they are not affected as a group, but in different ways according to their class and ethnicity. More women than men belong to temporary staff. Those, who drop out of gainful employment, are also predominantly women. Already in seventies, the international division of labor was accelerated by transferring labor intensive steps of production of the clothing and electronic industries from the industrial nations of the north to the countries of south. Thus, cost of wages and additional wage costs were reduced step by step in the highly industrialized countries. This happened already at the expense of jobs for women, as labor intensive production was and still is performed predominantly by the female gender. Often this is called “remaining work” that could not yet be replaced by machines, at least not more cost effectively than women do. Women work in “low wage countries” for a lower wage, as the name already points out, local companies lead by these low wages. They are also interested in saving

additional wage costs and taxes. And in the “low wage countries” women work more willingly because only few of them are union members. Corporations prefer female labor over male labor because women are considered to be “docile” workers, who are willing to obey production demands at any price. In developing nations, certain types of work, such as garment assembly is considered to be an extension of female household roles. Therefore, cultural influences in developing nations also impacts employment stratification. Bringing a high demand of employment opportunities for women in developing nations creates an expeditious change within the social structure of these societies. Although the demand for female employment brings about an array of opportunities and sense of independence, the glass ceiling continues to exist with the “feminization of poverty” (Moghadam 1999).

GLOBALIZATION’S IMPACT ON GENDER EQUALITY

India has some of the highest levels of sex discrimination at birth. According to 2017 analysis of demographic data, India will continue to have the worst sex ratio in south Asia even in 2050. The 918 girls for 1000 boys’ ratio (2011) have urged the government to take action in the form of ‘beti bachao, beti padhao’ programme to provide survival, safety & education to the girl child. It can diminish countries ability to compete internationally – particularly for countries with export potential in goods and services with high female employment, moreover, gender inequality can also hurt country’s international standing. All the factors strengthen the incentives for policy action towards gender equality around the world. But in the absence of public policy, globalization alone cannot reduce gender inequality. The new forces associated with globalization – understood as the combination of economic integration, technological diffusion and greater access to information have operated through markets, formal institutions and informal institutions to lift some of the constraints to greater gender equality.

- Trade openness and the diffusion of new information and communication technologies have translated into more jobs and stronger connections to markets for many women, increasing their access to economic opportunities.
- Greater access to information has allowed many to learn about life and mores in other parts, possibly affecting attitude and behaviors.

POSITIVE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN

Globalization has increased the exports of different countries and wages in export sectors are much higher than other sectors and in many cases women get higher wages than men in formal industrial sectors. So globalization has increase average wages of women, also the bigger portion of wages goes to women. With globalization, women’s employment opportunities have increase, and now they are also contributing in family expenses which support the creation of new resources and raise the level of income of family. Along with increase in family income, with the help of globalization, social choices of women has increased. Women do lot of family work without any wages, at the same time that all women’s work all over the world is not valued or undervalued the paid work has increased women’s social choices and life choices, in addition to giving them self-confidence and increasing their morale. More and more countries participate in international economy through exports, creates new employment opportunities. Many countries, especially low income countries, have increased its participation in international trade.

If the agricultural work is done with traditional methods, this trend has very serious gender implications. In small farms where crops are grown in traditional way, the demand for women’s work is very high, but their wages are low. The increase of profitability of cash crops in the international markets increases the independence of women. Because of globalization, there are structural changes in agricultural production. Many countries started manufacturing of agricultural products to increase their export values and it is especially for women, who got benefitted from this because these activities are a good source of high wages than working in their family farms. Women health conditions are also improved by working in companies rather than farms. By working in family farms, women paid nothing or very low wages but women get higher wages while working in companies especially in export industries.

While talking about impact of globalization on women, we cannot ignore the impact of service sector. At present time, service sector is the most important sector. It will not be wrong to say; service sector is equally important to industrial sector. Some service sectors like communication & information technology are achieving the same progress achieved by industrial sector. In terms of output, this sector is considered to be largest sector of all the economic sectors in terms of output and the employment opportunities which is provides in many countries. By working in informal sector, specially small business is considered the most important income source for the poor women (Dr. Hooda Sobhy). In some of the fastest growing service sectors, demand for female employment is increasing like data processing sector, industrial export sector, airlines, railways, banks and insurance companies. In developed countries due to expansion in the service sector, women get plenty of quality work.

Multinational companies offer job without discriminating between men and women because they work in competitive environment and choose the best employees regardless of their gender. It motivates more women to get the jobs. Globalization has opened up many ways for men and women in India. As India was a restricted economy before 1991. After launching of “liberalization”, ”globalization”, ”privatization” policy, many opportunities in the form of new jobs are available for women. With globalization women are getting higher wages, which raises self-

confidence and independency among them. Globalization has the power to uproot the traditional views towards women so they can take an equal stance in society. As India is a agriculturist country, women get many opportunities to increase their income level in agriculture sector. Women's ratio in agriculture work is more than as compared to men. Not only in agriculture sector, women are getting benefits from industrial sector and service sector too. After the globalization has emerged, it has increased the living standard of people and specially for women.

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN

Women work two full time jobs. As they moved to work places but their household responsibilities have not been decreased. For household responsibilities they paid nothing. Women double responsibilities – long working hours at work place along with attending household chores like cooking, baby care hinders their performance and came in the way of success. Although some women enjoy the freedom of delaying marriage, they soon realize that this form of independence might actually be a burden because finding a husband later in life is not as easy as in their youth. Moreover women are exploited by paying lower wages than men. This is not a single problem, women are facing at work place, due to sexual harassment at work place, many women resist to work. The position of urban women is better than women living in rural areas. Due to illiteracy and unawareness rural area women are more exploited than urban area women. No doubt globalization has paved many ways for women to improve. Globalization has promoted equality between the sexes, something that Indian women have been struggling with their entire life but still it has many negative consequences.

The rising trend of globalization has not lifted everybody. Gender differences in endowments, time use patterns, access to productive inputs and agency have muted positive impacts for some and added to inequalities between men and women. Gender differences in education have limited women's access to new employment opportunities. In agriculture, besides having a positive impact on productivity, education improves farmer's capacity to adopt new methods of improving results. But because of lower education levels, female producers experience more constraints in accessing international markets than males. Gender responsibilities can prevent women from seizing new opportunities in the commercial sector, if no other household member can take on their duties. That is particularly true when new opportunities arise in formal sector, where longer working hours and fixed schedules are prevailing.

Women's weaker property rights and limited access to productive inputs also constrain their capacity to benefit from trade openness. Gender norms for mobility and women role in economic sphere can disproportionately affect women's access to technology. At home, men often control television remotes, radios, and mobile phones. At work, men think that a computer is something; women cannot learn to operate. If decreased government revenues are compensated through decreased social services, women are more directly affected than men. Many new jobs in growth sectors have low wages, insecure tenure and limited training or promotional prospects. These conditions may be exacerbated by the relaxation of labor standards as a means to attract investment. Some gender obstacles hinders the effect of women's paid work, sometimes businessmen cut down the women wages, women sometimes have to give all her wages or part of it to her family, which increase gender inequalities.

In agriculture, gender impact on trade differs according to the type of agriculture & region. For example; in Asia and Latin America, women almost do not have any rights in the agriculture system. The farmer's chance to enter the export sector leads to conflicts with respect to gender because the returns are always biased against women. Some studies suggested that the gender impact of the expansion of industrial production and export is stronger in low income countries than in the medium income countries, where the expansion of trade caused the increase of women employment, but in the medium income countries women are employed and men still get the better paid jobs. Export opportunities are not available in equal manner to women all over the world. In some countries, women can enter the international market like men, but it is noticed that in some countries women adapt slower than men to the export opportunities.

There are several reasons responsible for women slower growth like restrictions on women for getting the necessary loans, inputs and access to marketing channels compared to men, which decreases their ability to move to large scale of production. As service sector is offering many benefits to women but the benefit is limited because very few employment opportunities are offered by service sector to poor uneducated women, compared to those offered by industrial and agricultural sector. Moreover women are employed for middle and lower managerial level, but women's participation in the higher managerial level in the private sector is still limited.

Globalization has provided for an easier means of exploiting those living in poverty who are seeking better lives, it also has provided for dramatic improvements in transportation and communications with which to facilitate the physical processing of persons. Within the past two decades, globalization has created a tremendous impact on the lives of women's in developing nations. Globalization has improved the living standard of Indian women, due to media and advertisements people needs are increased. Therefore women need to work and contribute to the household income to afford a good lifestyle. So many nonprofit organizations are working for women empowerment. These organizations have given women the skill they need to advance such as literacy and vocational skills. The self-employed women's association in India is a union of women laborers willing to work hard and seize any work opportunities they might get. Globalization has aided their opportunities in many ways.

SEWA has established a women's co-operative bank with 125000 members and with the help of globalization, they have even reached the women in rural areas of India. Markets in different areas can now be reached by Indian women who have a part in business.

Women for women, an international organization has empowered women around the world, particularly in Asia and Africa through education, medical aid and development. These women are encouraged to become leaders in their own communities and also these women encourage other community members to find their voices and increase involvement in social and economic development. NGOs have been a prime actor in educating women and producing some great leaders in our global society today. Although women may feel a sense of empowerment but their wages are substantially low in comparison to their male counterpart. As India's 75 percent population is living in rural areas and is uneducated and has conservative thinking. Only a small portion of women work in stores, factories, companies. The informal sector is very important for women. There are estimates that over 90 percent of working women are involved in informal sector. These jobs are unskilled and low paying but still they feel sense of empowerment.

“Working is no longer an adjustment, but a necessity.”

Women have now not only found their place in work places but also want their part in governance. The voice of women is increasingly heard in parliament, courts. While women in the west had to fight for over a century to get some of their basic rights, like the right to vote, the constitution of India gave women equal rights with men from the beginning. Unfortunately, women in this country are mostly unaware of their rights because of illiteracy and the oppressive traditions. Media has also played an incredible role in upgrading women's standard of living.

CONCLUSION

The role of women in globalization in India has been changing these days. With the rise of NGOs in the 21st century, various organizations have been founded and created to defend the rights of women around the world. No doubt, globalization offers women great opportunities but equally new and unique challenges. Gender inequality springs from many sources, and it is often difficult to determine which forms of inequality are being eliminated by effects of globalization and which are exacerbated. Gender inequality has more costs in an integrated world. Women have to work so much harder to get equal status in society. So globalization proves more bad than good for women. In several cases women are bread winner for family but society does not want to accept this truth. The culture of India is like that most of people thought that if a woman chooses to be a working women, it will adversely affect their family and children. But it is not true so. A women career would not be at the cost of neglecting the family and children. At last, the truth is that globalization is unleashing competition between women and men.

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