

EMPOWERING MUSLIM WOMEN IN THE NEW WAKE OF GLOBALISATION

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Abstract:

The term 'Empowerment' means the manifestation of redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and the male dominance. The term Empowerment has been popularly used in perspective of women. Women empowerment means to increase and improve the social, economical, political and educational strength of any women in our society. A Muslim is someone who follows or practices Islam as their religion. Muslim women are the most backward in our country. From the history of Muslim women's education in India we can observe that during the Mughal period, the Muslim women of etiquette family were only being educated. In the British period the entire Muslim community especially the women lagged behind educationally. But after independence, Muslim women were made a considerable progress in education. From 19th century people witness the advent of modern globalization. Now in 21st century it is the third era of globalization where the trend of interaction between people or companies increase on a worldwide scale due to advances in transportation, interaction and communication technology. In this era of globalization the Indian government grants the right to Equality and Right to Freedom of Religion and Protection of Interests of Minorities in regard to educational right. Equality is highly necessary to bring about an egalitarian human society. In this era empowerment is one of the pivotal concerns while addressing human right and development. So in 21st century empowerment of women, especially the Muslim women are a great challenge, which aims at increasing women's self-reliance, self-confidence and internal strength to determine their own choice in their life. This paper will discuss the role of globalization in empowering Muslim women in West Bengal.

Keywords: Women empowerment, Challenge, Education, Muslim, Globalization.

Introduction:

The three wheels of international forum are LPG- Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization. This three has dramatically changed the lives of both men and women over the world. Rapid social change, higher education, job opportunities, increasing violence, loss of tolerance are all features of the present globalised society. Globalization offers both blessings and curse to women all over the world. Globalization has given women a new identity, financial independence, freedom of expression, social status, etc. By bringing women into workforce, globalization has given women the power to fight against poverty and exploitation. In the era of globalization, privatization of education and health sectors has the worst impact on women in the country. Feminization of poverty and feminization of employment are new phenomenon created by globalization. Due to gender inequality, the impact of globalization is felt differently by men and women and also women belonging to different race and culture. But we cannot deny that there is huge effect of globalization on women empowerment in the whole world. From many years Muslim women are being exploited in all sphere of life. The effect of globalization also reached to the Muslim women in our country as well as our state West Bengal. In West Bengal Muslim women are still now remain in darkness. So, it's the duty of our nation to make the Muslim women empowered.

Objective of the study:

The main objectives of this paper are as follows:

1. To define and discuss the term 'Women Empowerment'.
2. To briefly explain the term, 'Globalization'.
3. To discuss the various issues of Muslim women empowerment in the new wake of globalization.
4. To explain globalization as a gateway to Muslim women empowerment in West Bengal.

Methodology:

This paper is theoretical and descriptive in nature. The sources used in this paper are purely secondary sources of data, which is appropriate for this study.

Importance of the Study:

Gender Equality or the disparity between women and men is unique in our country India. Here discrimination against women starts in the foetus, followed by under nourishment in childhood and deprivation of education in adolescence and ends in domestic

violence and at last burning alive. It is a sin against humanity and civilization. But in the era of globalization it is proved that there is no basic difference in the mental capability of men and women. Women should have the same opportunities as men. "Women rights are human rights". In our country women contribute almost half of the population. By empowering women it will automatically strengthen the national economy. Education is the only way to empower women in our patriarchal society. Globalization has taken long strides to redeem women from male-dominated world by opening up opportunities for them. In the new world of globalization women were successfully attaining higher status and are enjoying greater economic freedom. So, it is a matter of concern for me to explore the effect of globalization on Muslim women empowerment in the state West Bengal.

Women Empowerment:

The Oxford American Dictionary defines, "empowerment" as "to make (someone) stronger and more confident, esp. in controlling their life and claiming their rights". The term 'Empowerment' also means, 'the manifestation of redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and the male dominance'. Thus, empowerment is a multifaceted, multidimensional and multi layered concept. The term 'Empowerment' has been popularly used in relation to women and as well as the backward community. In this contemporary age of globalization, the slogan of women empowerment is getting its peak, while United States of America and its closing states have also a claim of delivering women empowerment within their folds.

Globalization:

According to Advered S. Herman, "Globalisation is the expansion across international borders of management and process. At the same time, it is a condition of facilities and economic relation which is constantly expanding and it's simultaneously changing." Globalization is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Globalization means opening up the economy to facilitate its integration with the world economy. The term "Globalization" has been widely used in 1960's in the Western World and in India in 1990. Globalization is a process of increasing interdependence, interconnectedness and integration of economies and societies to such an extent that an event in one part of the globe affects people in other parts of world. Clearly we can say, globalization refers to something more than just the internationalization of the world economy.

The main principles upon which the entire theory of globalization is based are as follows:

- Sustained economic growth, as measured by gross national product, is the path to human progress.
- Free markets means markets that are free from government intervention, generally result in the most efficient and socially optimal allocation of resources.
- Economic globalization, is achieved by removing barriers to the free flow of goods and money anywhere in the world, which in turn fosters competition, creates jobs, increases economic efficiencies, lowers consumer prices, increases consumer's choice and is generally beneficial to everyone by increasing overall economic growth.
- Privatization, which transfers functions and assets from government to the private sector, improves efficiency.

Needs of Muslim Women Empowerment in the context of globalization:

There is inequality and vulnerability among Muslim women and men in the whole world including our country. Muslim women need to be empowered in all walks of life. Without the active participation of women of all community establishment of a new social order may not be a successful because women constitute half of the population in the India. Muslim women should realize that they have constitutional rights to quality health care, economic security, and access to education and political power. Mahatma Gandhi firmly states that the status of women would not change merely by bringing legislations; it must be supported by change in the women's social circumstances and situations. Fertility rates, marriage age, health and nutrition are very low in our country. Participation of Muslim women in political process at the grass root level enhances their social status and it helps to solve the local problems, particularly drinking water, health, education, child development, social security for aged, disabled and in grass root level planning. Globalization helps to empower the Muslim women across the globe. It is helping the women of all community to involve in different spheres like political, social, economic, sports and cultural.

Globalization as a gateway to Muslim women empowerment in West Bengal:

Globalization is helping most of the countries to eliminate the discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child of all community including Muslims. Globalization helps providing equal access to health care, quality education at all levels, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and also ensuring provisions of the Muslim women's basic needs which would be initiated globally were as follows:

- Ensure food security.
- Arrange for housing and shelter.

- Provide equal education.
- Devise a holistic approach to women health.
- Formulate macro economic and social policies institutionalizing women participation in economic development.
- Arrange support services like child care facility etc to enable the women to come to come at competitive edge to recognized themselves more effectively around the globe.

Positive Effect of Globalization:

'Gender Quake' in the 21st century exposes the myth of women empowerment in the era of globalization. Globalization raises a voice against the discrimination and violence of women in the country. Before Globalization women are being used as commodity or material to be sold in the market, most of them are also employed as maids and sex workers. But after the wake of globalization women get their proper status in the country. The positive effect of globalization is that it has opened up broader communication technology and attracted more companies as well as different organizations into India. This provides opportunities for not only working men, but also women of all community including Muslim, who are now becoming a larger part of the workforce. With new jobs for Muslim women, there are opportunities for higher pay, which raises their self-confidence and brings about independence. This can promote equality between both the sexes in our society. Globalization has the power to uproot the traditional treatment towards Muslim women to afford them an equal stance in society. Agriculture has remained the biggest source of income and livelihood for women in rural areas in West Bengal. Many Muslim women in our state are also engaged in the agriculture. Women's double burden working long hours in the field as well as attending to household chores like cooking and collecting water and fuel for the day is often taken for granted by the male counterparts in our country. The technology used in agriculture is making women to cope with the technology in the era of globalization. Muslim women in the urban settings have become more independent and self-sufficient. The lower middle class is experiencing a shift in the way family relations worked. Traditionally Muslim women stayed at home taking care of domestic needs and children. Now most of the Muslim women are setting out of their private spaces to earn a living. Globalization has created certain needs based on capitalist sentiments.

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India is a union of women labours who are willing to work hard. Globalization has provided them opportunities in various ways. Globalization has given women a stronger voice. People are more accepting of women's rights especially Muslim women in West Bengal. Different non-profit organizations have been brought to India from around the globe. These organizations have given Muslim women the skills they need to advance, such as literacy and vocational skills. The Muslim women in rural settings have been influenced by globalization through media and through numerous intervention programs that are constantly investing in women's issues in big way. Muslim women have now not only found their place in work places but are also want their part in governance. In recent years there have been explicit moves to increase Muslim women's political participation. Now many women have been given representation in the Panchayati Raj system as a sign of political empowerment. Today women of all community are more practical and rational than earlier. Indian women have never been as expressive and independent as she is today just because of the wake of globalization.

Negative Effect of Globalization:

Globalization had negative implications for Indian women including Muslims. Globalization has made many international corporations richer by the billions. However, what most people are not aware of is that many women in these developing countries are suffering enormously due to this expansion of corporate empires. While globalization has brought jobs to rural developing areas such as India where there was previously no employment for women but these jobs seem to be wolves in sheep's clothing. The work available to women is almost always poorly paid. Globalization has increased the number of low paid, part time and exploitative jobs for women in India. Increased prices due to open economy demand more adjustment with changes from women. At the same time, migration of women for economic reasons has led to increased exploitation including sexual exploitation and trafficking. So, Globalization is more bad than good in our so called developing country and specially our state West Bengal. Globalization had adverse effects on women especially in all the developing countries of the world.

Muslim Women Empowerment in West Bengal:

West Bengal has third largest Muslim population in India but the Muslim women of West Bengal are the victim of negligence from mainstreaming. In West Bengal Muslim women's disempowerment in cultural essentialist discourse is neither scientific nor empirical rather, mere reductionism. The development of Muslim women is closely related to the concept of 'empowerment' which denotes a process whereby they are invested with power and status in a particular situation. The path of empowering Muslim women was never easy because patriarchal norms tied their free movement and suppressed their personality. Education is the only fundamental prerequisite for empowering women of Muslim community. Equality and empowerment of Muslim women are necessary to bring about an egalitarian human society.

"Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that a son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine that the child of a farm worker can become the President of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another".
- Nelson Mandela.

According to the Census 2011, Muslims are least literates among all religious communities. To empower women in all sphere of life it is most fundamental to provide proper educational facilities at all level. Globalization also help the Muslim women of West Bengal to empower themselves with the help of positive economic and social policies, so that they can realize their full potential. Globalization is building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations in the state West Bengal. Literacy rate for Muslim women in West Bengal achieved remarkable growth of 11 per cent but still bellow the state average, i.e., 77.16 per cent. Hooghly is alone district in the West Bengal, cross 75% mark in literacy rate. Ten districts having bellow national average literacy rate while eight districts lie between 65% to 75% of the literacy rate.

Empowering Muslim women in West Bengal is not at all an easy task, rather a difficult one because most of the Muslim women are unaware of their rights identity and self esteem. The poverty, illiteracy, orthodoxy, traditional believes are major reasons responsible for deplorable condition of Muslim women in the state. Muslim women due to lack of economic independence cause by illiteracy have to depends on their father before marriage and after on their husband. Muslim women in West Bengal don't enjoy freedom of exercise regarding their notion about vote, freedom of movement away from home without the permission of male member of the family. Both central and West Bengal Government has taken initiative regarding education and trying to empower Muslim women.

Conclusion:

The roles of women in India have been changing and they are now emerging from the past traditions into a new era of freedom and rights due to globalization. Women have made great strides in the corporate world but still the patriarchal nature of Indian society stops from having careers that infringe too much on family life. Women are now supporting their families with dual incomes thereby increasing the voice not only at home but also at Parliament. For Empowerment of women first every society must change their attitude, behavior in positive trend and essential to create congenial environment towards the women and to recognize their rightful place in the decision-making process. In the 21st century, women are achieving their lost identity and enjoying autonomous and independent status. Women are not an 'object', rather a conscious human being. Governmental organizations translate women's empowerment into policies and programs and are creating new models for the future. There are number for improving the social status of women. The National Education system will pay a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women in our country. Globalization brings education, economic independence, property rights which creates self-confidence in women and make them empowered. Globalization attempts to educate illiterate mass through radio, television, news and magazines to end the discrimination against the women. Globalization stands as a gateway to woman empowerment in the whole world.

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