EFFECT OF GLOBALISATION ON WOMEN: AN ANALYSIS

DR. ARSHI PAL KAUR
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF LAWS,
GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY,
REGIONAL CAMPUS
GURDASPUR

Abstract: “The impacts of globalization on women are more prevalent and more complicated. Highlighting the positive aspects of globalization, a number of economists believe that women have mainly acquired noticeable benefits from economic reforms. One of the opportunities that globalization has provided for women is the increase in employment. By expanding mass communication Medias, globalization has also boosted women’s awareness level so that they have better chance to prove themselves and have more chances for selection as well.”

INTRODUCTION:

Though the Constitution of India guarantees equality of all citizens’ before the law still women carry the burden of centuries of subordination thereby making it difficult for them to realized their constitutional rights. Recognizing the real status of women, the Constitution also provides for positive discrimination in favour of women. The Government of India reaffirms its commitment to work for the realization of constitutional guarantee of equality, social justice and non-discrimination on the basis of sex, caste, community, language and religion. This spirit of the Constitution of India as the starting point. In the global development scenario, India has almost become synonymous with low status of women, patriarchal society, feudal customs and values, social polarization along caste lines, high illiteracy and extreme poverty. To some extent, this picture of India may be the contribution of mass media and films. Yet the bitter truth is that girls and women are considered an unwanted burden in Indian society. i The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental Rights, among others, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law. It prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment . Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c) and 42 of the Constitution are of specific importance in this regard. ii

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 India are mostly unaware of their rights because of illiteracy and the oppressive traditions of patriarchal society. Women in India now participate fully in areas such as education, sports, politics, media, art and culture, service sectors, science and technology, etc . iii Kalpana Chawla, the first Indian women in space, Mrs. Indira Gandhi popularly known as the Iron Woman of India was the first women Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Pratibha Patil was the 1st women President of India holds the highest Constitutional post. Beauty Queens like Aishwarya Rai and Susmita Sen, Priyanka Chopra, Manushi Chhillar globally make
Indian Women proud. Flying Officer Avani Chaturvedi scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman fighter pilot to fly solo. Ms. Chaturvedi on February 22, 2018 flew a MiG-21 Bison, which has the highest landing and take-off speed in the world. This was her first training solo sortie and she flew it for 30 minutes in Gujarat’s Jamnagar airbase. The fighter stream was opened for women in 2015 and Avani Chaturvedi, along with two other women - Mohana Singh and Bhawana Kanth – were inducted into the Indian Air Force fighter squadron in 2016. Unfortunately, they are not representatives of the condition of Indian women.

India today, a country where women are becoming more prominent, yet increasing numbers, women are fighting long-standing prejudices. Women still faces enormous pressure to conform to social mores conforming to traditional roles within families poses as much of a barrier to businesswomen in India as the still too thick glass ceiling at companies. Though women have made great strides in the corporate world in the last three decades, women from all income classes are still too often discouraged by family members from having careers that infringe too much on family life.

While globalization has brought an explosion in the jobs market, the benefits for women have been mixed. It has brought one major benefit to most women more paid work. Since 1980 the growth in the labour force of women has been substantially higher than that of men in every region of the world except Africa. In India too, the number of female workers was 7.2 crore in 2001, which is attributed to women’s increasing participation in activities outside home. Prof. Sand Choudury (Trent University, Canada) notes, The economic independence that these jobs provide has for the first time given Third World women the ability to contribute to their families financially; the opportunity to delay marriages and child-bearing, even the means to end oppressive marital relationships. But, while more women may be working, they are still paid less than men. Even in the US, which is a highly developed country, women get less than men for the same work.

WOMEN AND 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. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development and the World Bank, 57 percent of the 72 million primary school aged children who do not attend school are females. Additionally, girls are four percent less likely than boys to complete primary school. In particular, care for women during maternity is still lacking in many parts of the world. Approximately five lakh women die annually during pregnancy and childbirth. Two key international declarations form the basis for this agenda.” As part of its Decade for Women, the UN published the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in 1985 with the purpose of creating a blueprint for global action to achieve women’s equality by the year 2000. Ten years later, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, issued the Beijing Platform for Action, which was designed to update and invigorate the world community’s commitment to gender equality. These
international conferences and documents have served to crystallize the understanding of the unique problems women face worldwide and to promote efforts to address them. More recently, means to monitor the progress of both the understanding of and the struggle to remedy women’s problems have been implemented. vii

Other documents deal with specific challenges to women’s rights. For example, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women vows to guarantee women equal rights with men in all spheres of life, including education, employment, health care, suffrage, nationality, and marriage.

The World Bank’s 2000 report ‘Gender in Transition’ highlights differences between men and women by commenting that globalization has increased gender inequality, hampering socio-economic progress. In many Third world countries, including India, the average working woman earns just over half the income of the average man. Girls are more malnourished than boys. Less than half as many girls as boys are enrolled in higher education. Nearly half the pregnant women do not receive any form of prenatal care, resulting in very high infant mortality rates. Globalization has also increased migration across borders and this has provided women with new opportunities, financial independence and higher status in their home country. Many women are moving to other countries either for higher studies or in search of jobs. There are regions, like Kerala from where women are working abroad in abundance. Women migrants often send remittance back home. At the same time, globalization has contributed to worldwide growth in the numbers of women and girls being trafficked for forced sexual services .viii

Globalization has changed the face of the world, making us all into global consumers and giving us access to instant information. This has deeply affected women’s lives. Women have become products for sale in the form of advertisements. Women’s bodies are used to sell from men’s underwear, perfumes, and motorbikes to cars. Their bodies have become simply objects now as other objects. The ways that women have been marketed at, and used for marketing, have changed considerably in the last decade. ix

Trafficking has become one of the fastest growing criminal activities in the global economy. Widespread poverty in some regions of India forced parents to sell their young daughters wife buying to the men of foreign countries, particularly Middle East, where they are forced to work as prostitutes or concubines. Young girls are lured by the promise of a good job or for marriage in another country. Traffickers exploit women’s desire to make a better life for themselves with promises of jobs as waitresses, dancers, models, maids and nannies. x

This Issue in Depth will examine the effects of globalization on women worldwide, namely on their participation in the economy, representation in the political process, education, health, and sexual slavery. It also will discuss the possibility of globalization’s ability to greatly benefit women in the internationalization of the movement for gender equality, and the legal structure that supports this goal and recognizes women’s rights as basic human rights. xi
EFFECTS OF GLOBALISATION ON WOMEN IN INDIA

(1) Positive Impacts

(a) Changing role in work

Globalization has undermined the traditional role of women in homemaking, farming, livestock, animal husbandry, handicrafts, handlooms etc and resulted in a relatively better environment for women. Women have more jobs, become more active in avenues generally reserved for men, have played a more prominent role in society and not just restricted to the household. It has affected both the quantity and the quality of work available to the majority of women in India. xii

(b) Changing role in Family, Marriage, Caste

Globalisation has posed a major challenge to the institution of patriarchy in India. As women take up jobs and achieve social mobility, they have also begun to stand up for their rights. As nuclear families have become more common, it has become easier for women to assertively claim their rights and ask for equality in an environment not stuck in ancient mores. Marrying within the same caste has become less important, and women have in many cases reserved the right to marry whoever they choose irrespective of caste. As countries come closer, and boundaries disappear in the globalised world, women in India are inspired by women the world over to fight for their rights. Of course, there are some notable exceptions to the above generalisations. But, to a large extent, these changes have received a great push from the new era of globalisation. xiii

(c) Other Positive Impactsxiv

- Prospects of higher and quality education have become feasible for those women who can afford them, economically and socially.
- Employment in technological and other advanced sectors, which have global bearing, has opened up for suitably qualified women.
- With changing attitude towards women, especially in the urban areas, women enjoy more egalitarian set of gender relationship.
- Augmentation of women’s movements through exposures at the international level will help bring about major changes in the economic, social and political lives of women.
- Reduction in gender inequalities will have positive effect on women’s empowerment in the socio economic context.
- 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.
- Positive approach to economic and cultural migration will facilitate women to be exposed to better prospects at the international level.
(2) Negative Impacts

Globalization has increased the number of low paid, part time and exploitative jobs for women. Increased prices due to open economy demand more cope up with changes from women. With increasing nuclear families, the older women’s life has become pitiable, sometimes spending their later days in old age homes and isolation. The feminization of population has further aggravated this problem. Similarly, male migration from rural areas to urban centres has put the women under triple burden of home making, farming and job in rural sector. At the same time, migration of women for economic reasons has led to increased exploitation including sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Despite the positive effects of globalization through increased employment opportunities for women, globalization has a darker side. Out of the total 397 million workers in India, 123.9 million are women and of these women, 96% of female workers are in the unorganized sector. Accordingly, although more women are now seeking paid employment, a vast majority of them obtain only poorly paid, unskilled jobs in the informal sector, without any job security or social security. Additionally working women in India are more likely to be subjected to intense exploitation; they are exposed to more and more risks that cause health hazards and are forced to endure greater levels of physical and mental stress. Thus it would appear, that globalization has made many international corporations richer by the billions at the expense of women who are suffering enormously due to this expansion of corporate empires.

Globalization has had negative implications for Indian women. Their plights are similar to those of women in other developing regions such as Africa and Asia. Globalization has made many international corporations richer by the billions. However, what most people are not aware of is that women in these developing countries are suffering enormously due to this expansion of corporate empires. According to estimates from World Development Indicators, women work two thirds of the world’s working hours, produce half of the world’s food, but earn only ten per cent of the world’s income, and own less than one per cent of the world’s property.

According to Vandana Shiva, and Indian economist and scholar, globalization along with the support of organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have created slave wages. These wages are not necessarily the result of unjust societies, but of the fact that global trade devalues the worth of people’s lives and work. While globalization has brought jobs to rural, developing areas such as India where there was previously no employment, these jobs seem to be wolves in sheep’s clothing. The work available to women is almost always poorly paid, mentally and physically unhealthy, demeaning, or insecure. Women are suffering two fold. As women in developing countries move into the work force, their domestic responsibilities are not alleviated. Women work two full time jobs. One in a factory, where they are paid next to nothing, the second is in the home where they are paid nothing. According to Merlin A. Taber and Sushma Batra, editors of the book Social Strains of Globalization in India, development for poor women has meant the migration of men to cities, higher prices for commodities, poorer job opportunities. The mixture of corporate capitalism and Western culture models is dissolving family and community social controls as witnessed by higher rates of family violence, rape, divorce, and family breakdown. One example of women’s labour being exploited would be the Noida Export Processing Zone, which is 24 km
from New Delhi. These zones prefer to hire women because they are more docile and more productive in men.” In short, “they are easier to control and less likely to retaliate against less than ideal working conditions, which are exactly what thousands of women encounter 2 hours a day. The zone is dangerous, hot, and unsanitary. Unnecessary body searches are routine. There are no maternity benefits and minimum wage is never enforced. Women who become pregnant or marry are immediately fired. Overtime is compulsory but women are paid lower rates than men. In order to avoid being fired, women turn to unsafe abortions performed by unqualified doctors. In the zone, respiratory problems, pelvic inflammatory disease, and severe cases of dehydration and anemia are common.

**WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMY**

(i) **Women’s Participation in Global Economy**

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank encourage developing countries to use export-led growth to expand their economies. Such globalized economies require a labor force of a size that must include women, but women’s employment varies greatly by region. A gender gap exists in employment, with a 24.8 percentage point difference between men and women in the employment-to-population ratio in 2012 (Millennium Development Goals Report, 2013). The new global developing economies demand women in the monetized as well as non-monetized sectors of work. In fact, globalization has the potential to improve women’s economic achievement. Increased employment opportunities for women in non-traditional sectors might enable them to earn and control income, thus providing a source of empowerment and enhancing women’s capacity to negotiate their role and status within the household and society.

However, increased participation in the work force also implies increased hazards for women. Women’s jobs outside the home tend to be the lowest earning, least secure, and most dangerous available in the economy, especially in periods of recession that plague most developing countries. Though globalization may have increased women’s vulnerability and dependency, there is still hope that prioritizing women’s issues has yielded progress and will continue to do so. As the UN has stated, “Women have entered the labour force in unprecedented numbers, increasing the potential for their ability to participate in economic decision making at various levels, starting with the household” (United Nations, 2007). Significant changes in the underlying factors threatening to suppress this potential are necessary before serious progress can be made.

(ii) **Women’s Participation in Indian Economy:**

India has been developing fast, but not always equitably or inclusively. Our development model is very much a work in progress and deep-rooted challenges remain. The biggest issue we face is the empowerment of women. Across the world, educating and empowering women has proven time and again to be the catalyst for rapid socio-economic growth. Conversely, societies where women are repressed are among the most backward. India seems to be somewhere in between.” Women in India make up 7.5% of the world’s total population. While certain development indicators show their quality of life is improving maternal mortality rates declining; literacy rates increasing; more women gaining access to healthcare and education the pace of change is heartbreakingly slow. India ranks 113 out of 135 on the World Economic Forum’s Gender Gap Index. According to India’s 2011 census, the sex ratio for children under six was 914 females to 1,000 males,
a disturbing decline from 927 in 2001. The ranking of Indian women in economic empowerment is 0.3, where 1.0 means equality. This is a dangerous state of affairs for any society. Denying women opportunities to realise their potential is a waste of human capital and bar to economic progress. Women are undoubtedly the foundation of the basic unit of society—the family. Even in traditional roles they demonstrate great innovation, skill, intelligence, hard work and commitment. If we can harness these attributes effectively, India’s growth can be more inclusive and equitable. The education of women is therefore key. But in a country where nearly 70% of the population lives in rural areas, access to educational opportunities is limited. Moreover, poverty puts the girl child at a greater disadvantage. Add to this the social attitudes towards women, and it is obvious that we need a multi-pronged approach if we are to achieve education for women worldwide.

This is where technology or E-education—can help. E-infrastructure can deliver relevant education to both sexes in an efficient and equitable manner, enabling our youth to leapfrog into the internet age. When we educate and empower one woman, we set off a chain reaction that transforms the life of her family and the community she lives in. An exemplary model is the network of trained Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA), created under the National Rural Health Mission, who have played a crucial role in improving the health of women and children across India. Vocational training is equally important to women’s economic independence. The inspirational efforts of the Self Employed Women’s Association, founded by Ela Bhatt, and other successful self help groups, have sowed the spirit of entrepreneurship in hundreds of women. Sewa’s women members are trailblazers, redefining themselves as they add value to their families and the nation. This kind of female empowerment can transform India. Societal perceptions of females and their role are often the biggest barriers to change, because they shape women’s perception of themselves. Across all strata of Indian society, people still believe that women are capable of performing only certain types of jobs and that marriage must take precedence over career. This mind-set, common to both men and women, must change. We must focus on the girl child and help her escape the traditional stereotypes that stifle her potential. Take women in science as an example. The prejudice is that women are less capable of understanding science, despite all the evidence to the contrary.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

For too long, women were viewed as victims of discrimination and illiteracy, of violence, and confined to deferential positions in society because of once-unbreakable cultural and religious traditions. But as the tide of democracy sweeps the globe, women are becoming a growing force on the world stage. We are seeing a new voice of activism emerge, which is speaking out to defend freedom and advance civil liberties and human rights. This movement seeks to dismantle repressive regimes in Asia and the Middle East while working to build more just, progressive and prosperous nations. This revolution is occurring around the world from Asia and the Middle East to America.

Despite the strident clamour for democracy, the role of women in democratization is dramatically less clear and powerful than it should be. Unfortunately, this is precisely the moment when their voices are needed most. The global shift towards democracy is more than a feminist movement calling for women’s rights and gender equality above and beyond democratic progress. Rather, women in states throughout Asia,
the Middle East, and elsewhere are demanding rule of law, strong institutions, social justice, and economic opportunity for all citizens—not just for women. Critically, they stand for the broader cause of democratization, freedom, and self-autonomy.

In recent months, we have seen several political and social shifts. “Consider South Korea’s first ever woman President, America’s improving relationship with Myanmar’s Aung San Suu Kyi, India’s very public condemnation of rape, and Egypt’s “democratic constitution.” Some observers might assume that states, which previously treated women as second class citizens, are becoming more just. Perhaps women are being treated more equally under the law, gaining more respect in society, and acquiring greater power to shape political, economic, and social change. These conclusions, however, are premature and misleading. Worryingly, women have gained very little from these political shifts. To be direct, we have a long way to go in addressing one of this generation’s foremost challenges: strengthening women’s rights and equality.”

(i) Growing Emphasis on Women’s political Empowerment globally

The issue of women’s empowerment, rights, and equality has received dramatic attention in recent years. Consider such public initiatives as Nicholas Kristof’s Half the Sky movement and the role of spokeswomen from Arianna Huffington to Donna Karan.

Women in government, including prominent examples such as Hillary Clinton, Christine Lagarde, Angela Merkel and Michelle Bachelet of Chile, accelerate the modern women’s movement. In 2010, the United Nations took the historic step of championing women’s rights when the General Assembly created the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, better known as UN Women.

Women’s empowerment is a pervasive theme in policy discussions in government and civil society globally. Today, thousands of non-profit organizations support women’s educational, reproductive, political and economic rights and opportunities. Policymakers should understand that the role of women in democratic reform is a pivotal element of development and stability. We see evidence of this shift in Asia and the Middle East. The democratic shifts taking place in greater Asia provide a lens through which to consider the growing social, economic, and political roles of women throughout the region.

(ii) Role of Women in Indian politics

It has been long since women have stepped out of their homes and have gained eminent positions and status in almost every field of society, then be it education or corporate world or Politics. Talking about India women has been involved in politics since ages. The very first name of a woman in Indian politics who became a torch leader for other women was Razia Sultan. She was the only woman to have ruled Delhi ever. Another name that needs a special mention is Nur Jehan (wife of the mughal emperor Jehangir) she was considered the real force behind the mughal throne during the mughal reign.

The role of women in Indian politics witnessed in ancient India widened more in British India. Annie Besant though was not an Indian but became the first women president of Indian National Congress in 1915. In 1916 she launched a Home League Movement to fight for Indians and actively participated in Indian Independence Movement. Then there was Sarojini Naidu who became the first Indian woman to be the president of INC in 1925 and became the Governor of United Provinces present Uttar Pradesh on 15 Aug 1947.
“The status of women in Indian politics was never more significant than after independence. This golden era for women in Indian politics started with the name of Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit. She was an active worker in Indian Nationalist Movement and was the first Indian to be elected the president of UN General Assembly in 1953. Then came Sucheta Kriplani who became Chief Minister of UP in 1963. The most important name in the category of women politicians came in 1966 and that was Mrs. Indira Gandhi. She became the first woman Prime Minister of India in 1966 and made the world stop and notice the immense potential of women. Today as per 73rd and 74th amendment acts, all local elected bodies reserve 1/3rd of their seats for women. The names such as Mamta Banerjee, J.Jayalalitha, Uma Bharti, Vasundhara Raje Sindhia, Sushma Swaraj, Rabdi Devi, Mayawati and last but not the least the two young MP's Agatha Sangma and Supriya Sule are the well known politicians. xxiv

Despite high profile women leaders including Sonia Gandhi, Jayalalithaa, Mamata Bannerjee, Mayawati, Sushma Swaraj etc, the representation of women in Assemblies and Parliament is miniscule. An increase in women’s participation is seen only in the municipal and Panchayat level elections, especially since the reservation in the 1990’s. There is no dearth of women leaders. But the problem is bringing them to the forefront in a party that comprises mostly men. More women are contesting elections now, but because men too are contesting in large numbers, the rise of women is slow. While lineage and capital are important to bring women into politics just as it is for men, there’s no guarantee that a party with a woman leader will give space for more women. Election Commission data have shown that women contest more in SC seats, but not ST seats as compared to general seats. It is observed that women are more likely to win when nominated. But that brings us to the question of caste, which is the very basis of politics in India.”

Why women vote for women cannot be statistically measured, but the question remains: do women vote for their caste or their gender? A look at data on MPs’ participation in debates will tell us that male and female MPs are around the same average. Actually, some women MPs are more active most men. It is certainly not easy for women MPs to speak in Parliament. Senior MPs get more chances to speak, and they mostly tend to be men. In giving all parties a chance to speak, party leaders grab it and again, not so many women are party leaders. Junior MPs often lay their speech on the table because senior MPs overshoot their allocated time limit to speak. Women MPs are, sometimes, expected to participate on behalf of the party to speak on gender issues when they might want to participate in other debates. While men MPs discuss issues such nationalism and secularism, must they not also actively partake in debates on women’s issues ?xxv

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. Globalisation 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. We have often heard of global culture and integration of the world economy. However, as this
process is not consistent throughout the world, it leads to conflict and fragmentation. Globalisation affects different groups of women in different places in different ways. On the one hand it may create new opportunities for women to be forerunners in economic and social progress. With the advent of global communication networks and cross-cultural exchange there seems to be a change in the status of women albeit not to a very large extent. However, globalisation has indeed promoted ideas and norms of equality for women that have brought about an awareness and acted as a catalyst in their struggle for equitable rights and opportunities. On the other hand it may exacerbate gender inequality in a patriarchal society, especially in the developing world. In the economic realm it may lead to further marginalisation of women in the informal labour sector or impoverishment through loss of traditional sources of income. Gender equality is critical to the development process. The process of globalisation may have resulted in new avenues of growth, but due to unequal distribution of its benefits women have been adversely affected in many cases. It calls for creating opportunities for women to be part of this development process. Merely enacting legislation will not help. What is required is its proper implementation.

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