

# ROLE OF WOMEN UNDER GLOBALIZATION

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## INTRODUCTION

The term globalization has been associated with key areas of change, which have led to a marked transformation of the world order. Globalization in India is generally taken to mean integrating the economy of the country with the world. This, in turn, implies opening up the economy to foreign direct investment by providing facilities to foreign companies to invest in different fields of economic activity in India. The main policy initiated towards globalization by the Government of India can be discussed under many headings. Globalization can be a major force for prosperity only if it is backed by adequate national policies and conducive social and economic environment. The various impacts of globalization on the society as well on women in India were also highlighted in the paper. The data thus collected shows the status of globalization in India, the significant role played by the new economic policy in promoting the Indian Economy, Does globalization cause poverty, Why are so many people opposed to globalization and Can globalization be controlled. A large group of working women of India is in the rural and unorganized sectors. Socially the majority of Indian women is still tradition bound and is in a disadvantageous position. Since globalization is opening up the Indian economy suddenly at a very high speed, without the required economic and social policies to provide the much required safety net, women who have been involved with production in the traditional ways, have to cope with numerous problems and yet try to avail of the opportunities which an open economy promises. With this background, this

paper mainly focuses on the Anthropological vision and critical reality on the impact of globalization on Indian rural women from various angles.

## **Globalization in India**

Globalization is a fact of life, which has come to stay. It is expected to be a major force for prosperity. The essentials of the New Economic Policy which gave impetus to the progress of Indian economy includes Privatization, Globalization, Modernization and Improving productivity and growth rate. Globalization in India is generally taken to mean ‘integrating’ the economy of the country with the world economy. This, in turn, implies opening up the economy to foreign direct investment by providing facilities to foreign companies to invest in different fields of economic activity in India; quantitative restrictions over a period of six years beginning 1997. Moreover, as a part of the agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), the Government of India issued a Presidential Ordinance of January 8, 1999 granting Exclusive Marketing Rights (EMRs) in the field of pharmaceutical and agricultural chemical products pending the adoption of product patent in 2005. As a further step towards globalization and opening up, India notified the Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) maintained by it.

## **Globalization; Indian women**

This paper tries to give an overview of what is in store for women in India in this process of globalisation and what type of information needs are likely to evolve due to this major change in the new socio-economic scenario.

The new Structural Adjustment Programmes to usher in globalisation in traditional economies like India will reach the expected goal only IF the process of globalisation is well backed by properly planned national policies in a conducive social and economic environment.

Globalisation 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 the benefit of social security, government subsidy

protection of labour rights and than 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.

### **Problems encountered by Indian women over the ages:-**

- o Patriarchy and social pressures.
- o Caste based discrimination and social restrictions
- o Inadequate access to productive resources
- o Poverty
- o Insufficient advancement facilities
- o Powerlessness

These basic problems have plagued the lives of Indian women with little respite. But in the new circumstances created by SAP for globalisation are diverse and encompass all aspects of women's lives in India. It has affected both the quantity and the quality of work available to the majority of women in India.

### **Unfavorable Effects of the New Economic Policy on Women**

Globalization has had negative implication for Indian women. Their plight is similar to those of women in other developing regions such as Africa and Asia. According to Vandana Shiva, an Indian ecofeminist 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 track devalues the worth of people's lives and work. Though globalization has brought jobs to rural India, the work available to women is almost always poorly paid, mentally and physically unhealthy, decreasing or insecure.

- The traditional role of women in agriculture, livestock and animal husbandry, khadi 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.
- Privatization and reduction of public services will reduce regular employment opportunities for women.
- Globalization has increased the number of low paid, part-time and exploitative jobs.
- Occupational sex segregation will be a stark reality in the open economy. This will tend to result in worse working conditions, lower pay and inferior career opportunities.
- Curtailment of state provisions in child care, community care and social security, will increase the dual burden of employment and family responsibilities for women in general.
- With male migration on the increase from the rural to urban sectors, the women have to bear the triple burden of caring, farming and paid employment in the rural sector.
- In the neo liberal work practices, contract work, unsocial hours sectors, the women have to bear the triple burden of caring, farming and paid employment in the rural sector.
- With the disappearing social and financial safety nets and government subsidy, the poverty alleviation programmes, universal education and woman oriented health programmes will be adversely affected.
- Trade liberalization will allow MNCS to enter into food processing and other feminised industries which will lead to reduction in low skilled women labour.
- Privatisation of education and training will increase the cost of getting educated. When family budgets are readjusted, the female children will be the



main casualty because most of the resources will be spent to educate the male children.

- Migration of women especially for economic reasons often gives rise to exploitation and trafficking in women at the local, regional and global levels.
- Open market economy leads to price rise in food and other basic necessities. Women who have to directly deal with family subsistence have to cope with such changes.

### **Steps to Cope with the Changing Scenario**

It is seen that the situation facing the majority of Indian women is far from positive.

However, efforts are underway to circumvent many of these problems through governmental and the non- governmental programmes. Both the government and NGOs seem to be aware of the fact that the globalization process requires proper focus on rural development, education, health and child care and proper gainful employment for the underprivileged at the initial stages.

The price rise associated with desubsidisation, marketisation and liberal export – import policy, have an adverse impact on consumption by the poor in general and that of women in particular. The rising food prices and the reduced or stagnant food subsidies adversely affect the nutritional intake and the nutritional status of the poor women. Similarly, the declining real expenditure on medical and health services adversely affect the status of women as well as children.

Since poverty alleviation programmes are the main responsibilities of the Government, there are direct and sector wise schemes. Some of the important schemes are:

- Public Distribution System for Food Security
- Work Security through various Schemes
- Health Schemes and Services
- Child Care Schemes

- Credit Schemes
- Insurance Schemes

## **Possibilities and Opportunities**

On the positive side, globalization has contributed to bring about welcome changes in the lives of women who have been able to avail of the opportunities, which have opened up in the various sectors of development. These are –

1. Enhanced opportunities for women in sectors as a result of marketization, privatization and larger foreign investment
2. The scope for productivity and wage increase is greater with new technology
3. A large number of opportunities in the export oriented industries such as computer software, modern food processing, handicrafts where India enjoys comparative advantage are now available to women
4. The rapid growth expected from the new economic policy is expected to generate large employment opportunities for both men and women. Besides, the policy will provide greater opportunities for migration and vertical mobility
5. The introduction of modern household gadgets is expected to reduce the drudgery of women associated with the domestic work.
6. The new economic climate under which decentralization, individualized based working is likely to increase may reduce the burden on the women. Women can perform some of the jobs at home without sacrificing the other tasks such as home managers, child bearers, and care takers.
7. Prospects of higher and quality education have become feasible for those women who can afford them, economically and socially.
8. Employment in technological and other advanced sectors, which have global bearing, has opened up for suitably qualified women.
9. With changing attitude towards women, especially in the urban areas, women enjoy more egalitarian set of gender relationship.

10. 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.

### **Conclusion**

It is only through full understanding of the plight of women in the Globalization process can the government, NGOs, decision makers and information managers prepare proper strategies to empower women and bring them into the mainstream developmental process. This is the greatest challenge, which confronts India and its women because globalization will stay but with half the population suffering under its yoke will only make it draconian and not a facilitator of progress.

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