



IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON INDIAN WOMEN IN ATTAINING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND GENDER EQUALITY

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Abstract

With the advancement of trade and commerce, whole world turned into a small village. Integration of national economy with the world economy led to the advancement of a new era. Opening up to the global economy have translated into more opportunities in terms of job and knowledge in various fields for both men and women. Globalisation involved advertisement and media to increase people's need. Society gradually agreed women's workforce participation to cater the increased needs of households. That increased women's participation in the workforce to make contribution in household income to afford a good lifestyle. Many nonprofit organizations have started giving vocational education to women to help them acquire desired skills and make them fit for earning and becoming self dependent. Media has also played an incredible role in upgrading women's standard of living. The current paper tries to find out whether globalisation has increased women's economic opportunities and helped in reducing gender gap in terms of wages and employment by raising the value of their labour.

Key words: Empowerment, Gender gap, Discrimination.

Introduction:

Globalization has increased job opportunities in all the three sectors. The service sector provides various benefits to its employees that help in improving the standard of living of people. However, compared to industrial and agricultural sector, employment opportunities in service sector is limited for poor uneducated women. In the agricultural sector also women's contribution goes unnoticed because they are not the owner of the agricultural land. Our patriarchal society keep women in lower status than men by denying not only equal educational and

employment opportunities, but also by denying equal access to control over resources (Skalli, 2001). While the women's childbearing and child-rearing functions are respected in many countries, there has been very little recognition of women's actual or potential contribution to the economic, social and cultural states (Roy, 2017). Increasing proportion of world's poor is female. The rise in female poverty is attributed to many factors such as population growth, emigration of men, increasing family break-up, low productivity, deteriorating environment and structural adjustment policies (Moghadam, 2005). An international organization, "Women for Women" has empowered women around the world by giving education, medical aid and many other opportunities and encouraged them to become leaders in their own communities. Media has also played an incredible role in upgrading women's standard of living.

India adopted new economic reform policies in 1991 by opening up its economy to the rest of the world. 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 very beginning. Unfortunately, women in this country are mostly unaware of their rights because of illiteracy and the oppressive traditions. Sex discrimination at birth is very common in India. The demographic data of 2017 has revealed that India will continue to have the worst sex ratio in South Asia even in 2050. The current study tries to find out whether globalization has increased women's economic opportunities and helped in reducing gender gap in terms of wages and employment by raising the value of their labour. The study is descriptive in nature and secondary data has been used for the study.

Positive impact of Globalisation on Women:

The World Development Report of 2012 states that "Trade openness and the spread of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have increased women's access to economic opportunities and in some cases increased their wages relative to men's" (Roy, 2017). Globalisation has increased women's employment opportunities, average wages, ability in asset creation and their contribution in family income. An increase in earning capacity has increased the social choices by boosting the self-confidence and morals. In the formal sector, multinational companies offer job without discriminating between men and women as they choose best employees for their highest benefits regardless of their gender which motivates women to get technical education for getting absorbed in this sector. Globalisation has escalated exports and so the job opportunities in the export sector for both men and women have increased. Globalisation has increased averages wages of women that helped to raise the level of income of households. Though women do a lot of household chores, but are not valued. On the other hand paid work helped them to make social choices, life choices and build their self confidence.

In 1991, restricted Indian economy was altered and made more suitable destination for employment and income generation for both men and women with the help of liberalization, globalization and privatization. These policy changes helped Indian women gradually to be self dependent by raising self-confidence and independency and helped them to improve their standard of living. Women's access to economic resources as a result of paid

employment has reduces their dependence on children for social status and economic security thereby reducing levels of fertility. Female employment has positively influence on their as well as their children's health (Mayer, 2006). In the manufacturing sector, producers prefer female unskilled labourers over male workers as they are submissive and work sincerely. They also agree to work in low wages than men. Women are engaged in temporary job more than men.

Negative impact of globalisation on Women:

Globalization causes gradual wage differences between skilled and unskilled workers. That resulted in difference between rural and urban areas and developed and developing countries. The capacity to promote human development in the developing nations has been greatly weakened by the dominance of rich nations through trade, aid and technologies. As common pool resources are shrinking, it has affected female more. The unorganized sector dominated by poor and under privileged people is worst hit of this progress, marked with income disparity (Pande, 2011). Female workers worldwide go unrecognized and unpaid as it falls under income generating activities within home in areas such as arts and crafts, weaving and cottage industries. Women's entering the global market production system has merely served to reinforce existing gender relations (Moore, 1988).

Women got exploited by men in the informal sector as they were paid lower wages than men for the same work. Other problems such as sexual harassment at work, wage discrimination for the same set of work, increased burden of managing home and workplace, societal problem of finding a life partner at later age of life, health problem arising from delayed pregnancy etc are some of the negative impact of globalization. Women working both in the formal and informal sector started delaying marriage and pregnancy due to the fear of losing their earning opportunities and fear of losing freedom and independence.

In a country like India, certain types of work are considered as an extension of female household work such as, traditional handworks, garments, bidi, incense sticks production etc. Producer or agents provide the raw materials and collect the finished good from their home once completed. Work that can be carried out at home after doing household chores also rewarded with low wages. Females have no objection of low paid wages as they have the flexibility to carry out the work from home. Although the demand for female employment brings an array of opportunities and sense of independence, the glass ceiling continues to exist with the 'feminisation of poverty' (Moghadam, 1999).

Globalisation impacted females of different geographic regions differently. In Zimbabwe, households headed by widows have an income of approximately half that of male-headed households and female-headed households have about three quarters of the income of male headed households (Brenner, 1987). The female headed households are increasing in recent years. One of the prime reasons is out migration of male workers from the rural areas. In India, approximately 35 percent household is female headed against 25 percent in Cambodia, 21.4 percent in Mongolia

and 15.7 percent in Korea (Ng, 2000). The Gender Gap Report of 2023 by World Economic Forum reveals that among 146 countries, India ranks 127th, indicating low gender equality status. Financial empowerment of women will help in reducing the gender gap. However in a country like India, people have an impression that if women become the bread earners, her children and family will be adversely affected.

Conclusions:

According to some researchers, globalization is a double-bladed phenomenon with unequal distribution of benefits and harms (Cagatay and Erturk, 2004). Trade liberalization has resulted in inequality, social disparities and poverty in the process of expanding wealth (Sen, 1996). Women have been affected both positively and negatively by globalisation. In some cases gender bias has aggravated and in some others women succeeded to break traditional norms which were keeping them away from their basic rights. However female marginalization as a result of globalization cannot be denied. Globalisation has led to increase in incidence of poverty among women and made them more vulnerable than earlier due to gradual decline in state support programs.

In India opportunities opened for men and women due to globalization is not equal. Women's gender related constraints and multiple responsibilities can mean that they could not seize the opportunities provided by globalization to the same degree as men. In the absence of public policy, globalization alone cannot reduce gender inequality. Although the current government has come up with program like "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" a decade ago, however the journey towards gender equality in India will be a long one.

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