
THE PLIGHT OF THE POOR WOMEN AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN GLOBALIZATION ERA

Archana Thakur

Asst. Prof. in Political Science, Khalsa College, Garhdiwala, Punjab, India

Abstract

The rising tide of globalization has not lifted all section of the society equally. It has further divided the society into haves and have-nots. The small group of world's population holds maximum resources and majority of people are trapped in the vicious circle of poverty. . It is the process has brought prosperity for women ,who are small in number educated, skilled, elite , wealthy, socially, political and economic privileged have access to capital, education, productive assets and resources, but those who are already cash poor, socially and political disadvantaged, before since they compelled to operate in a more aggressive competitive environment without any government support. It is clear that during the process of globalization has not affected all the women groups in the same way. The state, as an institution, has guaranteed social welfare and social justice to the marginalized groups but globalization has reduced the role of a state considerably.

Key Words- Social Justice, Globalization,

“Poor women ,that have double burden of being women and being the poor”

Amartya Sen

Social justice means that every individual is given full opportunities to develop his capacities and the opportunity is given to maximum number of persons in the society. The creation of social justice means the creation of an environment in which every individual has got unreserved and unhindered opportunity for physical and intellectual development. In removing disabilities arising from sex, race, colure, creed, religion or nationality and providing opportunities in a positive way with a view to developing individual faculties lies the essence of social justice.

India is plural society, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic for which democracy is most for balanced social and regional development. However, democracy cannot survive without social justice. But due to economic crisis, government of India adopted the globalization policies in 1991. This new economic policy included reduction in public investment and opening new markets for private sectors. With the passage of time the force of globalization and marketisation have intruded into every sphere of human life: to be urban or rural, poor or rich, literate or illiterate, male or female etc. but when it comes to women, the impact goes deeper and it touch our heart. Double standard causes women in developing nations to develop a double role of survival.

Globalization is like a tide that not lifted all women equally. It is the process has brought prosperity for women ,who are small in number educated, skilled, elite , wealthy, socially, political and economic privileged have access to capital, education, productive assets and resources, but those who are already cash poor, socially and political disadvantaged, before since they compelled to operate in a more aggressive competitive environment without any

government support. It is clear that during the process of globalization has not affected all the women groups in the same way.

Objective

Its aims to understanding changing condition of women in globalization era. It tries to explore some of the ways in which directly or indirectly, it impacts everyday life of Indian women. One must keep in mind that women are not a homogeneous category. While united as a gender, they are also divided by class, ethnicity, religion, age sexual preference and ideology. Therefore the impacts of globalization on women need to be analyzed in the light of these differences. Because of this difference, the impacts of globalization are felt quite differently on women.

Research question

Keeping these things in mind, the present paper tries to access what are the socio-economic, commercial, environmental and cultural effects of globalization on poor women in India?

Methodology

The present article has been prepared on the basis of reliable secondary data. The research used various books, journals, documents and other available written materials.

IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON POOR WOMEN

Gender equality is critical to the development process. The process of globalization 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. Despite the positive effects of globalization through increased employment opportunities for women, globalization has a darker, more sinister 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. 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. Among the workers in the informal sector a large number of them are women, who have no job security. They are often unskilled workers who receive low wages. Availability of work is irregular; and when work is available, women must work long hours. It is not only in the unorganized sector or in small enterprises, but also in the modern sectors like the Information Technology and the automobile sectors where working women are forced to work for 12 hours while the local governments ignore this open flouting of the labor laws. The uncertainties of obtaining work and the dire need to retain a position in the midst of intense competition cause mental tension, strained social relationships, psychological problems and chronic fatigue, all of which are difficult to prove as work-related.

The advent of assembly line jobs and the increased use of machinery have resulted in a degradation of working conditions for women in India. For example, piece rated work, where assembly line workers are paid per piece produced, contributes significantly to the level of fatigue felt by the workers. The wages of piece rated workers depend on the speed with which they work. When a person's compensation is tied to increased physical output,

negative health consequences will almost inevitably ensue. While women working in piece meal industries have seen machines negatively impact their health, women in other sectors have lost their jobs as a result of technological advances. For example, several traditional industries where women work in large numbers like handloom and food processing have undergone changes in the forms of production with the introduction of machines, power looms etc, which have result in the loss of employment for large number of women. This subset of workers does not have any social security or health care benefits. As a result, the work-related illnesses, which they suffer from, remain hidden. Furthermore, long-term unemployment constitutes a serious risk for the worker's emotional stability, because it leads to poverty and deteriorates self-image and self-esteem.

Though more and more women seek paid employment, the stereotypical attitude towards women and their perceived role in the familial hierarchy has not undergone much change. Women continue to be perceived as weak, inferior, second-class citizens. For working women, this discrimination is extended to the workplace also. The improper and insufficient dietary intake along with the heavy workload results in nutritional disorders. In addition, this perception that they alone are responsible for the domestic work, leads to a feeling of guilt when they are not able to look after the children or family members due to their official work, often resulting in emotional disorders. 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. In the rural sectors, women have been independent and strong-headed. They have been the primary breadwinners in several cases. But due to globalization they affected the most.

Globalization has had adverse effects on women especially in the developing countries. As consumers, women are increasingly facing a consumer culture which reduces them to commodities and as producers; women are exposed to work exploitation and occupational hazards. Owing to their many roles, as would-be mothers, as mothers responsible for the health of their children and families, as working women at home and outside they are major consumers of healthcare products. In recent years a serious issue has come to light where many products related to women's health, found to be dangerous and banned or restricted in the developed countries, were marketed in the developing countries.

Agriculture is the main employer of women informal workers. 75% of the total female workforce and 85% of rural women are employed in agriculture as wage workers or workers on own/contracted household farms. But, even with increasing feminization of agriculture, few women have direct access to agricultural land affecting their ability. 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. 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. Migration of women especially for economic reasons often gives rise to exploitation and trafficking in women at the local, regional and global levels. Basically, Liberalization and Globalization of the Economy will marginalize majority of women in India due to reduction of employment opportunities,

reduction of wages, casualisation of jobs and women workers, execution from the modernized production process due to lack of education and training.

Globalization has a wide role to play worldwide. It has left back its footprints at every sphere of life. Not only in India, but the interchange of world views and ideas has resulted in a major transformation of the lifestyle and living standard of people globally. Indian culture is no bar to this transformation process. Our deep rooted traditions and customs have loosened up their hold with the emergence of globalization. The joint families have become a strange surprise to the Indians especially to those residing in the metropolitan cities in the small flat culture with the nuclear families blooming up like mushrooms in the rain. We have lost the patience to get adjusted into the joint family, imbibing the values of the elders and getting the young ones brought up under the shadow of their grandparents. Children have started treating grandparents like guests or visitors, and such an upbringing is one of the main reasons of increasing old age homes, as those children consider their own parents as burden in their state of adulthood. In such situation women feel insecure and double burden of family work. Similarly, marriages have also lost their values. It is very much evident from the increasing number of divorce cases and the extra-marital affairs reported every now and then. Marriage used to be considered as bonding of the souls which will be linked even after the death; but today marriage is like a professional bond or a so-called commitment to share life without compromising their self-interests. The ego factor into the Indian youth is again a product of globalization.

Market driven globalization process has also affected women respect, which is increasingly being commercialized and commoditized. The woman as an object of desire is so promoted by media and culture that women have to go to extreme lengths to look like the prescribed "body". The cosmetic industry thrives on this insecurity. It promotes notions of ideal body shape. Women and their body parts sell everything from food to cars. Popular film and television actresses are becoming younger, taller and thinner. The adjectives used are taken to be metonymies' - saying one is to imply all the others, by the logic of this sign system that groups itself around the figure of woman. This serves to confine feminism into a single seamless totality, an adjective rather than a form of praxis, Women have always received contradictory messages about their bodies.

Trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation therefore needs to be understood within the processes of gendered labor and migration patterns that have arisen under conditions of globalization. State does not own any major social responsibility primarily of health care and Old age it is the family which takes care of the individuals in times of crisis. Today there is a disintegration of traditional family ties and the support structure provided by the family and hence with this break up and migration to urban areas many young women fall into the hands of traffickers with a rosy picture of a secure livelihood for future. The growing casualization of female labor in recent years is in fact one major factor that is seen to have increased the vulnerability of women to trafficking. With the erosion of traditional livelihood options and increasing feminization of poverty, and accompanying changes in social and cultural relations, including the pursuit of alternative livelihood options by women themselves, they become prime targets of traffickers who offer them an escape from their situation with promises of opportunities for a better life elsewhere. The worst victims have been those with less status, less education and skills and limited work

options – particularly women and girls from among landless and small farmer families or a lower caste background

Conclusion

From above discussion it is clear that the process of globalization affected the social justice in India. No doubt economic class, privileged and other advantage social group of women have been able to benefit from economic globalization. But those who are poor's, politically, socially disadvantaged, less education, less resourceful face tremendous difficulties and find themselves in much plight position than before. Globalization has changed the intrahousehold responsibilities for males and females, where females are given more responsibility over the survival of the family. Therefore, women's work continues to be stigmatized as inferior, in comparison to males work, regardless of their increased responsibilities in society. Elimination of government subsidies for health, education, employment and other social services has adversely affected the poor women groups. Although women's roles in the labor force have changed from traditional agricultural and domestic roles, to manufacturing and assembly production, the overall effect of globalization has proven to be negative.

To counter the negative impacts of globalization, the state should take effective measures to establish social justice in society. It should widen safety networks and focus on rural development, education and employment facilities for under privileged women. Another way the establishment of various NGOs around the globe and the collaborative efforts of these organizations have improved the lives of women in developing nations.. Representatives from NGOs agreed that global feminism should be established to reduce the inequality facing women in these nations and to improve the advancement of women in society. The economic policies and structural adjustments associated with globalization create the most negative impact on women in the developing world. The denial of social and economic rights is the most inhumane aspect associated with the formal and informal sectors. Economists and policy makers who implement these adjustments need to consider the impact of the current policies on women's lives and the inequalities that exist between men and women. Without these changes, women will continue to suffer in their subordinate positions within the economic market.

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