

IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA-AN OVERVIEW

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"Human Development , if not engendered is endangered"

ABSTRACT

"Women do two thirds of the world's work, receive ten percent of the world's work and one percent of the means of production". This is the present picture of women in the era of globalisation. Rapid globalisation. Fast-paced technological progress have greatly altered women's labour market status in recent years. Evidently there are serious constraints which militate against the promotion of an effective role for women in development in those societies which were bound by age-old traditions and beliefs. Patriarchal modes and practices motivated by cultures and/or interpretations of religious sanctions and illiteracy hinder women's freedom to opt for various choices to assert greater mobility in social interactions. Resulting from these situations, women's contribution to agriculture and other sectors in the economy remain concealed and unaccounted for in monitoring economic performance measurement. Consequently, they are generally invisible in plans and programmes. They were, in fact, discriminated against by stereotypes which restrict them to a reproductive role, and denied access to resources which could eventually enhance their social and economic contribution to the society. In terms of the ratio of membership of women in agricultural cooperatives, the percentage is rather low, but they have a strong influence on them – through the heads of the households. Certain obvious barriers restrict their direct and formal entry in agricultural cooperatives. Even in countries like Japan, the ratio of women membership in agricultural cooperative is extremely low.

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The effects of the long –term cumulative process of discrimination against women have been accentuated by underdevelopment. The type of agricultural activities generally expected of women in the rural areas of the underdevelopment countries is highly labour -intensive and the rural women generally do not enjoy the benefits of new technologies. Most of the production, processing, storage and preparation of food is carried out by the women. It is needless to emphasise on the significant contribution of women in agricultural production and food security. They are said to be ‘feeding the world’. Despite their contributions to food security, women tend to be invisible actors in the process of development. Efforts have been directed at empowering them in all fields of development activities. The present paper is an attempt to throw light on the negative impact of globalisation on the human rights of the women in the changing socio-economic conditions.

Key Words: *constitutional safe-guards, , equity, engendered, fundamentalism, , gender division, globalisation, labour-force.*

INTRODUCTION:

“Women do two thirds of the world’s work, receive ten percent of the world’s income and one percent of the means of the production”. This is the present picture of women in the era of globalization. Rapid globalization, fast-paced technological progress have greatly altered women’s labour market status in recent years. Millions of women throughout the world live in conditions of abject deprivation of, and attacks against their fundamental human rights for no other reason that they are women. From coffee to computers, women workers provide the labour that creates the goods. Women workers are good for trade, but is trade good for women? The present seminar paper is an attempt to throw light on the negative impact of globalization on the human rights of the women in the changing socio – economic conditions. Women play a pivotal role in agriculture and in rural development in most countries.

Evidently there are serious constraints which militate against the promotion of an effective role for women in development in those societies which were bound by age-old traditions and beliefs. Patriarchal modes and practices motivated by cultures and/or interpretations of religious sanctions and illiteracy hinder women’s freedom to opt for various choices to assert greater mobility in social interactions. Resulting from these situations, women’s

contribution to agriculture and other sectors in the economy remain concealed and unaccounted for in monitoring economic performance. Consequently, they are generally invisible in plans and programmes. They were, in fact, discriminated against by stereotypes which restrict them to a reproductive role, and denied access to resources which could eventually enhance their social and economic contribution to the society. Millions of women throughout the world live in conditions of abject deprivation of, and attacks against their fundamental human rights. From coffee to computers, women workers provide the labour that creates the goods. In developing countries, among the poor, rural women are the poorest and more vulnerable. Empirical evidences suggest that women in rural areas are more adversely affected by poverty than men. The incidence of poverty among rural women is on the rise in most of the developing countries. The issues of gender bias and equity point to the double burden women have to bear - that on being poor and being a woman. Further strategies and programmes for development had largely overlooked the question of gender equity. Projects aiming to reduce poverty view the poor rural women as the recipient of benefits of development, instead of active participant and still poor rural women have the least access to basic needs such as food, health and education. The present paper is an attempt to through light on the impact of globalisation on women empowerment in India. Responsibilities between men and women in a given society has mainly restricted women to the domestic sphere. Mass poverty and general backwardness has further aggravated the inequalities. 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. The role of women within the family combined with high level of unemployment and under-employment of the population in general, has led to the unequal state of priority

Discrimination against women and Underdevelopment prevails:

It is relevant to consider some aspects of the marginalisation of the status of women in the world by having a look at the figures which are based on the documents of the United Nations. Some of the findings are:

Unemployment Rate: Male unemployment rate decreased by 11% from 1984 to 1988 while that of women, unemployment rate increased by 0.5% during the same period;

Women in the Informal Sector: Without legal protection or security, women depend on informal trade for their survival. In Third World countries, a high percentage of food vendors were women: in Nigeria 94%, Thailand 80%, 63% in the Philippines;

Inequality in Pay: All over the world women earn only two-thirds of men's pay and earn less than three-quarters of the wages of men doing similar jobs. Women form a third of the world's official labour force, but are concentrated in the lowest-paid jobs and are more vulnerable to unemployment than men;

Domestic Work: Women do almost all the world's domestic work and coupled with their additional work in the productive spheres - this means most women work a double day. Unpaid domestic work is regarded as women's work. Though it is vital work, it is invisible work, unpaid, undervalued and unrecognised. Yet, the women's contribution to society in this regard is enormous;

Agriculture: Women grow about half of the world's food, but own hardly any land, have difficulty in obtaining credit and are overlooked by agricultural advisors and projects. In Africa, three-quarters of the agricultural work is done by women while in Asia, Latin America and the Middle-East, women comprise half of the agricultural labour force;

Health: Women provide more health care than all health services combined and have been major beneficiaries of a new global shift in priorities towards prevention of disease and promotion of good health;

Education: Women continue to outnumber men among the world's illiterates by about 3:2 ratio, but school enrollment boom is closing the education gap between boys and girls;

Political Affairs: Due to poorer education, lack of confidence and greater workload, women are still under-represented in the decision-making bodies of their countries. The effects of the long-term cumulative process of discrimination against women have been accentuated by underdevelopment. Graphically, while women represent nearly 50% of the world's adult population and one-third of the total labour force, they labour nearly two-thirds of the total working hours but receive only one-tenth of world income and own less than one per cent of property. The story of overworked women in the rural areas of the developing and underdeveloped countries of the world is too well known. The type of agricultural activities generally expected of women is highly labour-intensive and the rural women generally do not

enjoy the benefits of new technologies. Their wages are generally less because it is assumed that the efficiency of women's labour is poor compared to that of men. Regarding ownership of land, women do not enjoy equal rights, particularly in the developing countries where most of the production, processing, storage and preparation of food is carried out by the women. These account for 50% of the total labour required for food production. Many of these tasks are performed by children, especially the girls. Besides helping the men folk in many farm operations, women have to shoulder the entire responsibilities for household chores. Bringing water from far-off wells and rivers and gathering fuel wood from forests are also part of their daily duties. Such enormous waste of human energy is unnecessary in this technological age.

Gender Division of Labour in Agriculture:

The particular tasks done on farms by men and women have certain common patterns. In general, men undertake the heavy physical labour of land preparation and jobs which are specific to distant locations, such as livestock herding, while women carry out the repetitious, time-consuming tasks like weeding and those which are located close to home, such as care of the kitchen garden. In most cultures the application of pesticides is considered a male task, as women are aware of the danger to their unborn children of exposure to chemicals. Women do a major part of the planting and weeding of crops. Care of livestock is shared, with men looking after the larger animals and women the smaller ones. Marketing is often seen as a female task, although men are most likely to negotiate the sale of crops. Some jobs are gender neutral. The introduction of a new tool may cause a particular job to be reassigned to the opposite sex and men tend to assume tasks that become mechanised. The impact on women of the modernisation of agriculture is both complex and contradictory. Women have often been excluded from agrarian reform and training programmes in new agricultural methods. Where both men and women have equal access to modern methods and inputs there is no evidence that either sex is more efficient than the other. Technological changes in post-harvest processing may even deprive women of a traditional income-earning task.

Gender Equality and Sharing of Opportunities

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognised several dimensions of human rights for all people. Some are tangible and quantifiable, such as access to education, health and a decent standard of living and ability to take part in the government of the country. Others are intangible, such as freedom, dignity, and security of person and participation in the cultural life of the community. The goals of gender equality differ from one country to another, depending on the social, cultural and economic contexts. So, in the struggle for equality, different countries may set different priorities, ranging from more education for girls, to better maternal health, to equal pay for equal work, to more seats in parliament, to removal of discrimination in employment, to protection against violence in the home, to changes in family law, to having men take more responsibility for family life.

Equality is not a technocratic goal – it is a wholesale political commitment. Achieving it requires a long-term process in which all cultural, social, political and economic norms undergo fundamental change. The UNDP Human Development Report-1995 outlines a vision for the 21st century that should build a world order that:

- Embraces full equality of opportunity between women and men as a fundamental concept;
- Eliminates the prevailing disparities between men and women and creates an enabling environment for the full flowering of the productive and creative potential of both sexes;
- Promotes more sharing of work and experience between women and men in the workplace as well as in the household;
- Regarding women as essential agents of change and development and opens many more doors to women to participate more equally in economic and political opportunities;
- Values the work and contribution of women in all fields on par with those of men, solely on merit, without making any distinction;
- Puts people – both women and men – clearly at the centre of all development processes.

The UNDP Report-1995 also states that the GDI [Gender-related Development Index] ranking can be different in different situations, as is shown by the following conclusions of a recent survey:

- No society treats its women as well as its men. Substantial progress on gender

equality has been made in only a few societies;

- Gender equality does not depend on the income level of a society. What it requires is a firm political commitment, not enormous financial wealth;

- Significant progress has been achieved over the past two decades, though there is still a long way to go. Not a single country has slipped back in the march towards greater gender equality at higher levels of capabilities, though the pace of progress has been extremely uneven and slow.

Much progress remains to be made in gender equality in almost every country. And in equality of choice in economic and political participation, industrial countries are not necessarily taking the lead. The areas showing the least progress are parliamentary representation and percentage share of administrators and managers. The clear policy message from this simple exercise is this: "In most countries, industrial or developing, women are not yet allowed into the corridors of economic and political power. In exercising real power or decision-making authority, women are a distinct minority throughout the world."

Women in Agriculture

Women play an indispensable role in farming and in improving the quality of life in rural areas. However, their contributions often remain concealed due to some social barriers and gender bias. Even governmental programmes often fail to focus on women in agriculture. This undermines the potential benefits from programmes, especially those related to food production, household income improvements, nutrition, literacy, poverty alleviation and population control. Equitable access for rural women to educational facilities would certainly improve their performance and liberate them from their marginalised status in the society. Other areas where women's potential could be effectively harnessed are agricultural extension, farming systems development, land reform and rural welfare. Landmark improvements have been recorded in such cases as the extension of institutional credit and domestic water supplies where women's potential have been consciously tapped. Socio-economic goals of productivity, equity and environment stability are closely woven around the agriculture sector policies and new dimensions in programmes

implemented are already emerging as new values. Regardless of the level of development achieved by the respective economies, women play a pivotal role in agriculture and in rural development in most countries of the Asia-Pacific Region.

Asia-Pacific region had witnessed spectacular development in crop yields which even surpassed the population growth rate in the past decade. However, pockets of hunger remain when landless or small farm rural population lack economic access to food because of a lack of remunerative non-farm employment in rural areas, where

80% of Asia-Pacific's 400 million poor live. It has also been suggested that with the acceleration of crop-diversification programmes and the transformation of agriculture to commercial production levels, women's lot had been even further worsened by the addition of new burdens which they have to shoulder in order to realise profits in farm operations.

Rural women who are obliged to attend to all the household chores, children's welfare, nutrition and family cohesion along with farm work, are desperately driven to adopt a survival strategy to save the family food security from total collapse. Rural poverty has increased in the region particularly for farmers as priority has been accorded to the industrial and service sectors: this is both the cause and an effect of rural-urban migration leading to the "feminisation of farming". Thus the numbers and the proportion of rural women among the absolutely poor and destitute, currently around 60%, is expected to increase to 65 to 70% by the year 2000. In spite of social, political and economic constraints, women farmers have proved extremely resourceful and hardworking in their attempt to ensure household food security. Social constraints place barriers around their access to scientific and technological information. Lack of collateral denies them access to agricultural credit. Culture or traditions accord membership of cooperatives only to heads of households – usually a man. Many rural women, even in highly mechanised farming systems such as the Republic of Korea and Japan would have agriculture for work in other sectors if choices were available. After some decades of development, global problems and issues concerning environment, women in development, and poverty have reappeared. All these have emerged in rural communities and threatening their sustainability. Rural communities with norms developed for managing resources are important for the stability of community life. Gender-oriented rural development programmes which focus on role of women to guarantee the stability of life provide a sound basis for integrated development of the quality of life. In

progressive economies like Japan, rural women have shown anxieties over several concerns affecting their livelihood. Some of the priority items include measures for success in agricultural enterprises, expansion of periodic farming resulting in reduced holidays, the need to reduce agricultural work, changes in awareness of rural societies and reduction in the work connected with caring for elderly people. In order to redress these problems, five tasks have been identified for promotion which will result in making rural living more pleasant and comfortable. These tasks include:

- i. Creating awareness of changes and measures pursued to change the status of women by their active participation in agricultural and fisheries cooperatives;
- ii. Improving working conditions and environment;
- iii. Appreciating the positive aspects of living in rural areas and creating a conducive environment which will contribute towards better rural life;
- iv. Acquiring skills to diversify areas of involvement by women supporting women in entrepreneurial roles; and
- v. Adopt a structured approach to execute the vision to improve rural conditions.

Constraints faced by Rural Farm Women

Based on the experiences of farm extension workers, field advisors and rural farm women in the Asia-Pacific Region, the following are the general constraints faced by them:

- High illiteracy rates and poor living conditions among rural women;
- Lack of leadership and inadequate participation in the organisational and economic affairs of their agricultural cooperatives;
- Absence of property inheritance rights, restriction on acquiring membership of agricultural cooperatives consequently being deprived of farm credit etc.;
- Inadequate health care services in rural areas;
- Inadequate water supply for household and farm operations;
- Lack of appropriate agricultural technology aimed at reducing the physical burden of farm women;
- Inadequate access to credit and agricultural inputs and other services;
- Lack of female farm extension workers;

- Lack of marketing facilities and opportunities;
- Traditional, religious, social and cultural obstacles;
- Less participation in decision-making – even within the household;
- Male migration/urban drift which increases pressure on women;
- Lack of opportunities to improve socio-economic status of farm women;
- Lack of skills and attitudes in leadership and management development; and
- Lack of secretariat supporting functions for women's organisations and allocation of funds for them in cooperative organisations.

DENIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS A RESULT OF GLOBALIZATION:

Globalization is a multi-dimensional process of economic, political, cultural and ideological change. It has led to increasing violations of women's economic, political, cultural rights in large measure due to poverty, the expansion of religious fundamentalism, new form of militarism and conflict. The women are facing recurrent inequity in employment and harassment at work places due to low levels of education, limited technological skills etc. Globalization has drawn millions of women into paid employment across the world. The majority of the workers – picking and packing fruit, sewing garments, cutting flowers are women. But these women are systematically being denied their fair share of the benefits brought by globalization. The women are working at high speed for low wages in unhealthy conditions and they are forced to put in long hours and most have no sick or maternity leave and they are not enrolled even in health or unemployment schemes.

Globalization has affected the Indian women workers in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in India. Because of export promotion in this sector, many women have lost their jobs as the newer export friendly systems of cash crop cultivation and especially aquaculture required much less input from women. Instead of harvesting paddy crops, they have to collect snails for feeding fish. This is not only a hazardous and more dangerous task, but it also means much lower pay.

In non-agricultural sector, due to unemployment, many women have been forced to turn to prostitution or to work in informal sectors like construction where they are sexually exploited. The government wants to reduce the work force in our country, the first target are

women in terms of voluntary retirement schemes. Women workers plays a great role in the Export Processing Zones Sector. Women workers constitute 70% to 80% of the total work force and working hours are typically much longer than the specified maximum with out any payment of over time and they are getting rarely even minimum wages.

▪ **CONSTITUTIONAL SAFE GUARDS TO WOMEN IN INDIA:**

- *The constitution of India through Article 14-guarantees to men and women equality of status and opportunities in political, social and economic conditions.*
- *Article 15 pronounces that the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc.*
- *Article 16 provides equality of opportunities in matters of public appointments for all citizens and no citizen shall, on grounds of the religion, race, caste, sex etc be discriminated against in respect of any employment or office under the State.*
- *Article 39 mentions that the State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens, men and women, equally, the right to an equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work.*
- *Article 51-(A) imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen of India to renounce the practices derogatory to dignity of women.*

RIGHTS OF WOMEN NEED SPECIAL ATTENTION:

It has been rightly said that “*Human Development, if not engendered is endangered.*” So equal enjoyment of Human Rights by women and men was the universally accepted principle. The Vienna Declaration on human rights in held in June 1993 reaffirmed the same. But in the current economic turmoil with the winds of change blowing all over the world bringing about fundamental changes in global trade as it diminished the role of the government and thereby caused violation of rights of women. Women still are at the lower end of a segregated labour market and continue to be concentrated in a few occupations, hold positions of little or no authority.

CONCLUSION:

The globalization process has evolved unequally across regions, socio-economic groups within regions and between sexes with multiple consequences that continue to erode the quality of people’s life. Women are not only affected as part of the family and also as a disadvantaged

group of society. No doubt, the aspects of globalization have provided women with increasing opportunities to work in various fields but on the other hand it had led to gender wage differentials and marginalisation of women. Unfavourable working hours, lack of training and skill-up gradation opportunities and lesser career mobility in the Indian economy still prevail. Therefore a new vision for future is required for which we should all work together. Our future should not be the one we leave in now. We need to create an alternative society based on gender justice, ecological sustainability and local global democracy. It is the need of the hour to create feminized culture based on caring, nurturing, mutual help, avoid unhealthy competition and power greed. Women should have the confidence to change their lives and the world. The renewed efforts are required and the government should implement the existing laws in true spirit. The Parliament should amend the existing laws and enact new laws and ensure better implementation. The government should restructure the budget allocations in order to promote economic opportunities, education, training new technology and give them full and equal access in all sectors. It is the need of the hour to ponder over the reasons which have become the root cause of failures with regard to women and the suggestions given above if followed, will be helpful in minimising the menace to some extent. Women have been the focus of attention of all international and national development programmes. Efforts have been directed at empowering them in all fields of activity. Special programmes have been instituted to improve their social and economic status through provision of education, employment, health-care and involvement in social and economic institutions, including cooperatives. Cooperative institutions and especially the agricultural cooperatives are the agencies which hold enormous potential for the development of women, and more particularly the rural women. Rural women are actively involved in the process of food production, processing and marketing. They often lack the legal status which prohibits them to have access to credit, education and technology. Cooperative institutions can help accelerate the process of development and participation of women in their organisational and business activities.

In the past some efforts have been made through which member-organisations, cooperative and agricultural departments all over Asia and Africa have been requested to make special programmes for rural women and set aside budgets for their implementation. In some cases some good responses have been received. While it is generally agreed that education is central to women's development the participation of girls in the national educational system continues to

lag well behind that of boys at every level. Among the factors that are believed to contribute to this gap are women's self-perpetuating negative social status, economic constraints and male-oriented biases in the design and delivery of primary and secondary education.

These limitations have meant that millions of women have not received formal education and that millions more are deprived of the opportunity for more than token participation. Women, however, retain a strong orientation to self-help and group cooperation. They look to their own resources and to other women when faced with a problem of opportunity. This perhaps is the key factor on which women's development programme could be developed. This is their greatest asset. They have kept folk art, family bonds, religious traditions, cultural heritage alive, thriving and vibrant. They have played significant role in food security efforts and rural and small industrial sectors. Overall, it may be concluded that food security in India can be achieved by paying higher attention to issues involved such as agricultural pricing, negative impact of globalization on Indian Agricultural sector etc., and efforts should be made towards achieving food security in true spirit. The government should restructure budget allocations in order to promote economic opportunities, education, training new technology in all sectors to women to achieve food security. It is the need of the hour to create feminized culture based on caring, nurturing, mutual help, avoid unhealthy competition and power greed.

“ONLY GLOBAL WOMEN'S FORCE CAN OVER COME GLOBAL MARKET PLACE”.

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